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The Effect of Combined Instruction Strategy on Secondary School Students' Listening Comprehension

ABSTRACT

Combined Instruction Strategy regards as a means of fostering the learners' competence in selection and coordination of appropriate strategies for their listening skill uses by students to perceive what the speaker is saying and to interpret what they intend to mean. This study aims to find out the effect of CIS on the EFL secondary school students' achievement in listening comprehension. The population of the present study is (652) students which represents all the students of the fifth secondary classes in Al-Sharqat city during the academic year (2024-2025), The participants consisted of (58) students, EC=39 and CG=19. at Al-Rafal Secondary School, 78.37% of original population. The two groups have been taught the same instructional material "listening comprehension sections" which includes all audios of the three units (two, three, and five) assigned in Student's Book 5 and Activity Book for 12 weeks. Both groups are equalized in their age, the parents educational attainment, and their scores in the previous year. The EG received explicit, and combined instruction strategy bases on process-based listening strategy instruction. The CG received the conventional teaching of listening. Then, achievement posttest of five questions has been constructed on (58) students for the two groups to assess the students' listening comprehension. Also, the students' attainment is improved in listening skills, and this is due to the strategy. The study ends with a number of conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further that are presented in light of the results.

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أثر استراتيجية التدريس المدمجة على الفهم السمعي لدى طلبة المرحلة الثانوية

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الخلاصة:

تُعتبر استراتيجية التعليم المدمجة وسيلة لتعزيز كفاءة المتعلمين في اختيار وتنسيق الاستراتيجيات

المناسبة لمهارة الاستماع لديهم، والتي يستخدمها الطلاب لفهم ما يقوله المتحدث وتفسير ما يقصده. عندما يتمكن الطلاب من استخدام استراتيجيات التعليم المدمجة، يمكنهم تطوير تعلمهم بشكل عام والفهم السماعي بشكل خاص. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة أثر استراتيجيات التعليم المدمجة على تحصيل طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في الفهم السماعي. عينة الدراسة الحالي هو (٦٥٢) طالبًا تمثل جميع طلاب الصف الخامس الثانوي في مدينة الشرقاط خلال العام الدراسي (٢٠٢٤-٢٠٢٥). تم اختيار مجموعتين (تجريبية ٣٩) (ضابطة ١٩). تكوّن المشاركون من (٥٨) طالبًا في مدرسة ثانوية الريف، ويمثلون ٧٨.٣٧% من العدد الأصلي. تم تعليم المجموعتين نفس المادة التعليمية "أقسام فهم الاستماع" التي تشمل جميع المقاطع الصوتية للوحدات الثلاث (الثانية، الثالثة، والخامسة) المخصصة في (كتاب الطالب ٥ وكتاب النشاط). كلا المجموعتين متساويتان في العمر، والتحصيل العلمي للأباء، ودرجاتهم في الصف السابق. تلقت المجموعة التجريبية استراتيجيات تعليمية صريحة ومجمعة تعتمد على استراتيجيات تعليم الاستماع القائمة على العمليات. و تلقت المجموعة الضابطة التعليم التقليدي للاستماع دون تلقي أي تدريب في استراتيجيات التعليم المدمجة لمدة اثني عشر أسبوعًا ثم تم بناء اختبار بعدي مكون من خمسة أسئلة لتقييم الطلاب في فهم الاستماع على (٥٨) طالبًا للمجموعتين تم تقييمه بناءً على مخططات تقييم محددة مسبقًا. أيضًا، تحسنت مستويات الطلاب في مهارات الاستماع، وذلك بفضل الاستراتيجيات. تنتهي الدراسة بعدد من الاستنتاجات والتوصيات، وتُقدّم اقتراحات لدراسات مستقبلية في ضوء النتائج.

كلمات مفتاحية: استراتيجيات التدريس المدمجة، الفهم السماعي، أثر، دراسي اللغة الانجليزية لغة اجنبية.

يعبر الباحث عن شكره وامتنانه لمكتبة جامعة تكريت لرفد البحث بكل ما هو جديد ومعتمد في الحقل المعرفي الخاص بالبحث.

1. Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, English language plays an important role worldwide given that it is the most commonly used language in commercial, scientific, technological and communication fields. So, developing English language skills is considered as an important factor for keeping the generations connected with the outside world. Thus, students and learners should be able to master reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills (Mubarokah, 2016).

Listening plays a crucial role in everyday communication and education (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). Listening is essential for understanding communicated information. Listeners will pay attention and make an effort to comprehend the information when someone speaks. Listening comprehension is crucial in language learning since it is considered one of the four main abilities in acquiring a new language (Hasonni and Al-Azzawi, 2024). Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) discovered that students encounter substantial challenges in listening comprehension due to universities prioritizing writing, reading, and vocabulary. It demonstrates that hearing is not given precedence in language acquisition. Cited in Bingol et al. (2014). Secondary school students frequently receive explanations from their professors during classroom lectures. They will prioritize listening over other activities including speaking, writing, and reading as instructed by their teacher in the target language.

Many researchers such as Hamouda (2013) indicate that EFL students face many difficulties and problems in listening comprehension because teachers emphasize vocabulary, reading, grammar, and writing skills. They do not consider this skill in their foreign classes, so it is still the most neglected skill of language learning and teaching. These problems are related to the quality of audio CDs and DVDs, accents, unfamiliar vocabularies, listening pace and speed, and cultural differences.

Listening comprehension (henceforth: LC) at Iraqi EFL schools is given little attention and practice, and the lack of time allocated to listening in classrooms makes studying listening skill a pressing need (Krebt & Al-Rifai, 2013) . The current study attempts to investigate the effect of secondary school students' listening combined instruction strategy (henceforth: CIS) in listening comprehension in the light of interpreting strategy: Formulating content sense

of an utterance, formulating a conceptual framework linking utterances, and Interpreting (possible) speaker intentions.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims to Find out the effect of Combined Instruction Strategy on the EFL secondary school students' achievement in listening comprehension.

1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

To achieve the aim, the following hypothesis is suggested:

There is no statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05) between the mean scores of the experimental group taught using CIS and the mean scores of the control group taught using traditional methods in the listening skills test.

1.4 Value of the Study

The value of the current study stems from the importance of CIS as well as the necessity of using them by EFL secondary school students in listening comprehension. Thus, the value of this study could be itemized as follows:

- 1.The study may open a wide gate for future researchers to explore the impact of CIS on various aspects of English language learning, such as new techniques in studying listening comprehension.
- 2.Raise teachers' and students' awareness of the role of CIS in teaching listening comprehension.
- 3.It provides EFL secondary school students with knowledge about CIS in studying listening comprehension.

1.5 Limits of the Study

The current study is limited to:

- 1.The 5th grade students at Al-Rafal secondary school for girls in Al-Sharqat City / Salah Al-din governorate during the academic year 2024-2025.
- 2.The teaching material of the 5th grade preparatory student's book " English for Iraq" listening comprehension / Audios (three units: 2, 3, 5).

2.0 Theoretical Background

2.1 Combined Instruction Strategy

Over the past 25 years, listening comprehension strategy has become one of the most important topics in second language acquisition research. Researchers, such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990), Thompson and Rubin (1996), and Vandergrift (2003), along with many others, have examined a wide variety of issues related to L2 listening strategies. Most discussion has focused on differences between more and less effective listeners, combined instruction strategy, and assessment of listening strategies.

Although the effectiveness of explicit teaching listening strategy on improving learners' listening proficiency has been proven across a range of settings (e.g., Carrier, 2003; Clement, 2007; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Ozeki, 2000; Thompson & Rubin, 1996), most studies have concentrated on examining the outcome of the strategy instruction, based on pre- and post-test designs. Very few studies have addressed L2 listeners' perceptions of listening strategies and strategy instruction. In addition, little empirical research has been done to develop appropriate strategy instruction based on learners' listening needs

Listening plays a key role in communication and has historically proved to be a challenging skill, it has not received adequate attention in second language research (Lynch, 2011). Once considered as an ability which would develop of its own accord naturally, listening is currently conceptualized as the skill whose development calls for more formal teaching and instruction (Goh, 2010). Subscribing to this view of listening, scholars and researchers have employed combined instruction strategy as an effective approach for teaching this skill (Graham, 2017). As a result, in order to make improvements in the listening performance of L2 learners, numerous strategy instruction studies have been carried out (e.g., Graham & Macaro, 2008; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). The significance of combined instruction strategy is pointed out by Brown (2007), who maintains, "Because by definition interaction is unrehearsed, mostly unplanned discourse, students need to have the necessary strategic competence to hold their own in the give and take of meaningful communication" (pp. 258–259). Although of its widespread use, the notion of language learning strategies has been defined differently by various scholars and has been the subject of some debate among numerous scholars in the field (Dörnyei, 2005; Oxford, 2011). Oxford (2011) views language learning strategies as a set of intentional, systematic, and purposeful activities employed

to monitor and direct attempts in order to learn the second language. Among the various proposed definitions, one point of agreement among researchers lies in their conceptualization of language learning strategies as goal-directed and metacognitive constructs, involving learner responsibility and some degree of consciousness to attend to learning tasks (Cohen & Macaro, 2007).

2.2 Definition of listening comprehension

Different authors have defined the term “listening comprehension” (henceforth LC). According to Brown and Yule (1983), LC means that a person understands what he/she has heard. If he/she learns the text through hearing it, he/she will understand it.

Rost (2002) defines LC as an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning. Listeners comprehend the oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress and intonation, and other linguistic or non-linguistic clues. According to Nadig (2013), LC is the various processes of understanding and making sense of spoken language. These involve knowing speech sounds, comprehending the meaning of individual words, and understanding the syntax of sentences. Vandergrift (1999) defines LC as a process in which the listeners try to differentiate and distinguish between the sounds of the spoken text and be able to recognize the grammatical structure of the text. It also involves identifying the vocabulary and understanding the intonation and stress.

Listening is one of the most important skills for language learners. Most of the time, language learners do listening in the classroom or lectures. The challenge for learners is to recognize the words in a stream of acoustic blur or normal conversational speech. This challenge is combined with the awareness of context, culture, discourse, community, and other sociolinguistic variables (Mohammed, 2023).

Mendelsohn (1994) defines LC as the ability to understand the spoken language of native speakers. To sum up, it is widely admitted that LC is not merely the process of unidirectional receiving of audible symbols, but an interactive process (Brown, 2001).

2.3 Components of Listening Comprehension

According to Chastain (1988), LC is divided into four components, and reaching comprehension cannot be done except by reaching these four

components. The first is the ability to differentiate all sounds, intonation patterns and voice qualities in the second language, and to distinguish between them and the same sounds in the native language.

The second is the understanding of the whole message uttered by a speaker. Rivers (1981) said that the understanding of spoken messages depends on comprehension of semantic meaning, moving from what one comprehends in the sound sequence with respect to the knowledge of syntax only when the meaning is not understandable.

The third is the ability to hold that message in one's auditory memory until it can be processed. To develop the learners' auditory memory, teachers should know that they hear as much language as possible. This means that most of the class time should be carried out in the language being taught, and the speed of presentation and difficulty level of the content must be adjusted to the learners. Furthermore, language activities that are comprehensible increase auditory memory; the significant point here is the idea of improvement from the simpler to the more intricate sentences should be slow and continuous. (Chastain, 1988).

The last item is comprehension. As suggested by Ahmadi (2016, p.8), "comprehension is the speech reception at the syntactic, lexical, pragmatic, and discourse levels of listening in language teaching and learning". He handles the situation by stressing the pragmatic and discourse level. Considering the aim of listening activities, the message will be heard decently; the meaning will be obtained by following an auditory memory process and finally it will reach up to discourse level, namely, the input turns into target output successfully.

3.0 Methodology

Research design can be considered as the structure of research. It is the "Glue" that holds all of the elements in a research project together; in short, it is a plan for the proposed research work (Akhtar, 2016). The experimental design of this research is experimental quantitative research. The reason for choosing this research design is to effect the combined strategy instruction used by students at Al-Rafal Secondary School. Aliaga and Gunderson (2002) describe quantitative research methods as the explaining of an issue or phenomenon through gathering data in numerical form and analyzing with the aid of mathematical methods, in particular statistics.

3.1 Plan of the Study

To meet the aim of the study, the steps are followed:

- 1 .Providing a theoretical background about the variables of the study.
- 2 .Selecting a sample of 5th year secondary school students for (girls) and divide it into two groups, the first is the experimental group while the second is the control group.
- 3 .Equalizing the two groups according to certain variables which are their age, parents' academic attainment, their achievement in previous year and their scores in the pre-test and anxiety scale.
- 4 .The experimental group has been taught according to CIS while the control group by the communicative method .
- 5 .Constructing a post-test .
- 6 .Submitting the both groups to the post test.
- 7 .The achievement post-test is conducted to the two groups.
- 8.The results are statistically analyzed and interpreted.
- 9.Drawing conclusions based on the results of the study and giving recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

3.2 Population and Sampling

Population can be defined as an entire group of people or a set of objects, including those not in the study (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). In addition, Shukla (2020) defines Population as a set or group of all the units on which the research findings are to be applied. While Sample According to Ary et al. (2018), a sample is several individuals, objects, or events selected for a study from a population, usually in such a way that they represent the large group from which they are selected. A sample is a group of people, objects, or items that are taken from a large population for measurement. So, to get accurate results, sampling is done (Bhardwaj, 2019).

For the current study, the sample has been randomly selected to represent population characteristics without any bias and to obtain valid and reliable results. The total number of the sample is 58 students, and it has been chosen intentionally and randomly. The intentional choice is represented through

choosing a school and random choice is achieved by selecting a representative number of students from fifth-grade secondary school students in the morning studies, Al-Sharqat City at Al-Rafal Secondary School for (girls) in the academic year 2024- 2025. The current study sample represents 78.37% of the population as indicated in this table. See (3.1).

Table (3.1)The Population and Sample of the Study

	Population	No.	Sample of the Study	Groups	No.
	Al-Wasity, Tariq bin Ziyad, Al-Buwaib, Al-Ma'arib, Ghernatah, Othman bin Affan, Asma'a Al-Amshat, Al-Jirnaf, Amina bint Wahhab	652	Al-Rafal Secondary School	Experimental	39
				Control	19
Total	10	652	1	2	58

3.3 Test Construction

Al Juboury (2014) defines a test as a tool that is best used for gathering information about students' performance and achievement in a given course of study. It is a method or procedure for measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a particular aspect of life. The construction of the test involves planning for the test, preparing the items and instructions, putting them together, and reproducing the test (Brown, 2004). The research instrument in the current study is an achievement test. The test constructed by the researcher. The test depends on the Rost (1990) model of the components of the listening comprehension on both recognition and production levels and it consists of five questions. The test includes both objective and subjective levels, and it consists of five questions. An achievement test has been constructed by considering the contents and behavioral objectives of the instructional material. It consists of five questions, as shown below:

1. Question one: is an explaining responses (inferential) that consists of five items; each item has four scores, for a total of twenty marks, giving according to student's answer where each item includes a special expression at production level.

2. Question two: is classification (critical) that consists of six items; each item has five scores, for a total of thirty scores. Where each item includes a special description giving by students using their own words within subject at production level.

3. Question three: is matching (selective) that consists of five items; each item has two scores for a total of ten marks at recognition level .

4. Question four: is (responsive) that includes (A and B) branches. A is binary choice (true/false) that consists of five items; each item has two scores, whereas branch B is multiple-choice that consists of five items; each item has two scores, for a total of twenty scores at recognition level.

5. Question five: is gap-fillings (inferential) that consists of ten items; each item has two scores at recognition level.

3.4 Face Validity

According to Mousavi (2009: 247), face validity is "the degree to which a test looks right and appears to measure the knowledge or abilities it claims to measure, based on the subjective judgment of the testees who take it, the administrative staff who decide on its use, and other psychometrically simple observers". To ensure the face validity of the test, it has been submitted to a jury of instructors and specialists in English language teaching and Linguistics. The jurors have reviewed the instrument and stated that it is appropriate and valid. Their modifications have been taken into consideration.

3.5 Content Validity

Hardré et al. (2007) define construct validity as the property of a test that the measurement actually measures the constructs they are designed to measure. Weir (2005) illustrates construct validity as a matter of posterior statistical validation of whether a test measured a construct in individuals.

3.6 Reliability of the Test

Reliability is an important characteristic of a good test. A test is said to be reliable if its degree of accuracy stays stable and consistent each time is conducted with the same condition for the same sample of students (Veram and Beard, 1981). Alpha- Cronbach formula is used to measure the reliability of the test. The coefficient for achievement test is found to be 0.80 which indicates

that the test is highly acceptable. To ensure the inter-rater reliability, the scoring committee scored the test. It includes: the researcher.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small feasibility study designed to test various aspects of the methods planned for a larger, more rigorous, or confirmatory investigation (Arain, et al., 2010). The primary purpose of a pilot study is not to answer specific research questions but to prevent researchers from launching a large-scale study without adequate knowledge of the methods proposed; in essence, a pilot study is conducted to prevent the occurrence of a fatal flaw in a study that is costly in time and money (Fraser, et al., 2018). In order to know if there is any difficulty in the items of the test, a random sample consisting of (16) students in the fifth year at Al-Rafal Secondary School for (girls) are involved in the pilot study. The test was administrated on the 2nd of March in the first semester of the academic year 2024-2025. The time required for the student to answer all of the questions ranges between 50 and 55 minutes. See table (3.2).

Table (3.2) Sample of the Pilot Study

Groups	No. of Students
Experimental Group	8
Control Group	8
Total	16

3.8 Item Analysis

According to Cervantes (1989),Examining test items for difficulty and discriminating power is the process of item analysis. Item analysis is a tool that helps the test writer locate test content and assess the difficulty or ease of an item.

The test items are required to be analyzed in order to determine two important features: difficulty level and discrimination power, as follows:

3.8.1 Difficulty Level

Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears complicated or facilitated for a given number of tests. It just reflects the percentage of learners who respond correctly to the object. The most suitable test item will have difficulty varying between 0.15 and 0.85 (Brown, 2010). The items of this test are considered acceptable if they range from 0.31 to 0.70, indicating their suitability.

3.8.2 Discrimination Power

Discrimination Power means " calculating the degree to which a particular item's results correspond with the results of the entire test' (Alderson, 1995). This means that an object is deemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly scored by high-skilled students as well as low-skilled students. Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor testers. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good students and the wrong answers from the bad students. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to 1.0, and no power of discrimination will be nil at all (Brown, 2010,p. 71). The test item DP is found to have a range of 0.30 to 0.75.

4.0 Analysis of Data and Discussion of Result

4.1 Results Related to the Hypothesis

To analyze the data related to the hypothesis of the study specially: There is no statistically significant difference at the significance level of (0.05) between the mean scores of the experimental group taught using the (CIS) strategy and the mean scores of the control group taught using communicative method in the listening skills test, the independent sample test has been used. Therefore, the first aim of the study namely: Finding out the effectiveness of (CIS) on the EFL secondary school students' achievement in listening comprehension, have been achieved. According to the following results in Table (4.1), the mean scores of the experimental group is 56.743 and standard deviation is 17.582. While the mean scores of the control group is 33.000 and the standard deviation is 15.895 . The calculated t-value 4.975 is higher than the Tabulated t-value 2.00 with a degree of freedom 56 at a level of significance (0.05).

Observing the values of T-calculated above, it is found that the calculated T-value 4.975 is much greater than the Tabulated T-value of the field 2.00, and from this it can be concluded that there is statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group, which are taught according to the traditional method and the mean scores of the experimental group, which are taught by using the (CIS) strategy, for the benefit of experimental group. So, the first hypothesis is rejected .

Table (4.1) Mean scores, Standard Deviation, and t-Values of the Two Groups in the Achievement Posttest

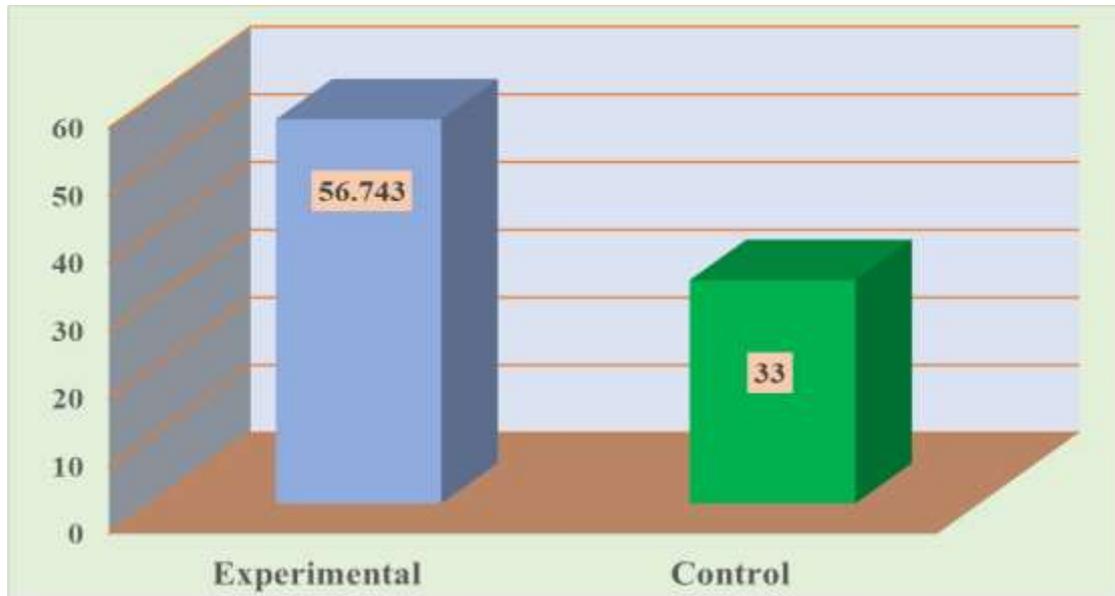
Group	N.	Mean	S.D.	T-Value		DF	Level of Sig.
				Calculated	Tabulated		
Experimental	39	56.743	17.582	4.975	2.00	56	0.05
Control	19	33.000	15.895				

4.2 Discussion of Obtained Results

The findings of the first hypothesis indicate a significant difference in the listening skills test scores between the experimental group taught using the Collaborative Inquiry Strategy (CIS) and the control group taught through traditional methods. The experimental group achieved a mean score of 56.743, while the control group had a mean score of 33.000 as show in figure 1. The calculated t-value of 4.975 exceeded the tabulated t-value of 2.00, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

The substantial difference in mean scores suggests that the CIS strategy is more effective in enhancing EFL secondary school students' listening comprehension skills compared to traditional teaching methods. This aligns with previous research indicating that interactive and student-centered approaches, such as CIS, foster deeper engagement and understanding of language concepts. The results underscore the importance of adopting innovative teaching strategies in language education. The CIS approach encourages collaboration and inquiry, allowing students to actively participate in their learning process.

Figure (1): Mean scores of the Two Groups in the Achievement Posttest



5.1 Conclusions

According to the obtained results of the current study, the following points have been concluded:

1. Two groups of students are chosen randomly and assigned to the experimental and the control groups.
2. Equalizing the students of the experimental group on the one hand, and students of the control group on the other hand, in some variables as age of the students, parents' Educational attainment and students' scores in English language in the previous year.
3. The independent variables are applied to the experimental group only.
4. The two groups are taught the same material from the textbook.
5. The experimental group is taught according to the CIS whereas the control group is taught according to the communicative method.
6. Applying the Posttest to the two involved groups of students.

7. Making use of the appropriate statistical tools in order to analyze the collected data and get the final results.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are put forward in the context of the obtained results and drawn conclusions :

1. More training sessions are needed to train teachers on using CIS .
2. Combined learning requires a typical classroom that should be supplied with single tables and sound system to make more effectively.
3. EFL schools administrators should encourage teachers to communicate on the net with students even after school time to listen an audio of the assigned dialogues .
4. Teachers should focus on cooperative learning in the classroom for its benefits in learning EFL.
5. Ministry of Education should provide sound laboratory in EFL schools and train teachers on using it, to be more benefit for the students.
6. Training the students on listening skills by professional and experienced teachers.

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