



## USING EDUTAINMENT ON DEVELOPING IRAQI EFL 4<sup>TH</sup> PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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**Abstract** .This research aims to investigate the use of edutainment in developing Iraqi EFL preparatory school students' performance in listening comprehension. This study shows edutainment tools impact on improving students' understanding of English listening comprehension. In English language teaching, it is impossible to control students' comprehension and boredom as they are concrete, but using various techniques in different times can eliminate boredom in any way. Thus, students can receive information due to the environment they are surrounded. Combining fun to education can serve students with benefits of improving learners' language skills. Edutainment can be employed for all language learning skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

In this study, the participants were randomly selected and divided into two groups; experiment and control groups. The experiment group consists of (31) students taught in the light of edutainment strategy to develop their performance in listening comprehension whereas the control group consists of (30) students taught listening comprehension by means of the prescribed techniques in the text book 'English for Iraq'. In order to measure the students' understanding, the present study has used Google Classroom (GC) platform as an educational platform to assist students during their learning process of the course. Pre-test, post-test and a checklist are adopted in the study. The sample of the study comprises (61) students, selected from Al-Kindi preparatory school in Iraq. The study shows that the use of edutainment has a positive effect on the students' performance in listening comprehension.

**Keywords:** Edutainment, listening comprehension, computer games, applications, multimedia.

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### INTRODUCTION

Listening is the first major skill of acquiring any language as a basic step (Rost,2009:103). First language acquisition for new born children is based on listening before any other skills such as speaking, reading and writing. Developing listening comprehension skill is an important issue because students receive language input aurally, so it is very important to develop their listening proficiency. According to Hamaguchi (2010:11), listening is an active process which requires hearing and comprehending what is being said. Listening comprehension is a process of understanding the spoken language, which includes recognizing speech sounds, understanding the meaning of words, and understanding the syntax of sentences (Nadig, 2013 as cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Good proficiency in listening means having competence to understand information during listening practices or convey the information in written texts or oral communication. It connects the ability of understanding, communicating and responding to what is listened (Hadijah & Shalawati, 2016:71).

### LITERATURE REVIEW



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## **Theoretical Concept of Edutainment**

### **Definition of Edutainment:**

Edutainment is a combination of two words such as entertainment and education or a mixture of education with entertainment (Colace, et. al., 2006). According to (Aksakala, 2015:1233), edutainment is a mixture of different items such as sounds, computer applications, games, animations, and pictures learners receive to have fun and learn simultaneously.

### **The Concept of Edutainment**

Edutainment was first used at 1970s, in producing educational computer games and visual materials which are essentially based on learning theories. Robert Heyman is the first person who suggests the idea of edutainment. Heyman works at American National Geography Academic Union. He has named the film as 'Education by Entertaining'. David Buckingham who is a mass education expert in England points out that visual materials such as computer applications, animations, games, multimedia, music and films are important in applying edutainment which is a teaching type strategy.

Clearly, as stated earlier that edutainment is a term that refers to education and entertainment, a strategy to apply games and media in a learning process to make learning fun and enjoyable. Edutainment is the process of implementing multimedia message intentionally to attain both entertainment and education, in order to expand knowledge about an issue, come up with convenient attitudes, and change explicit behaviors. Entertainment combined with education seeks to capitalize on the appeal of popular media to show individuals how they can live safe, healthy, and happily (Yvonne Thies-Brandner, 2013:16). In the researcher's point of view, the edutainment program is more likely as one mixed package of applications to apply inside the classroom. These tools include games, multimedia, and any visualized materials that can bring pleasurable sense of happiness in a learning process.

### **Development of Edutainment**

In the literature review, the researcher has adapted a figure formed by Egenfeldt (2005) in the development of video games. According to Egenfeldt (ibid), there are three different generations of video games in connection with the development of learning theories (check figure 1). The first one is concerned with the description of early video games, which presumes that learners respond to various stimuli. Thus, learning is achieved at that point, and their behavior is a reflection to that stimuli and become the center of attention. Many computer games have been neglected in educational perspective as they mostly focus on entertainment and grew cruelty rather than learning. Thus, educational perspective was poor and progressive understanding was unsupported.

The second generation is concerned with the framework of computer games, which is formed on a cognitive approach. In computer games, the participant becomes the center of attention. Learners are not white sheets, but they do have previous experiences, concepts, thoughts, knowledge and various skills. This generation also pays more attention to entertainment materials rather than learning itself. The third generation is concerned with the description of computer edutainment. Edutainment does not concentrate on specifics of entertaining materials and games only, but also it explores a wider process of educational benefit of games. Edutainment stresses the main role of maintaining social contexts that facilitate asking exact questions and moving to exact categories. The teacher became the cornerstone in the classroom in facilitating the material and adapting edutainment experiences towards a learning process.

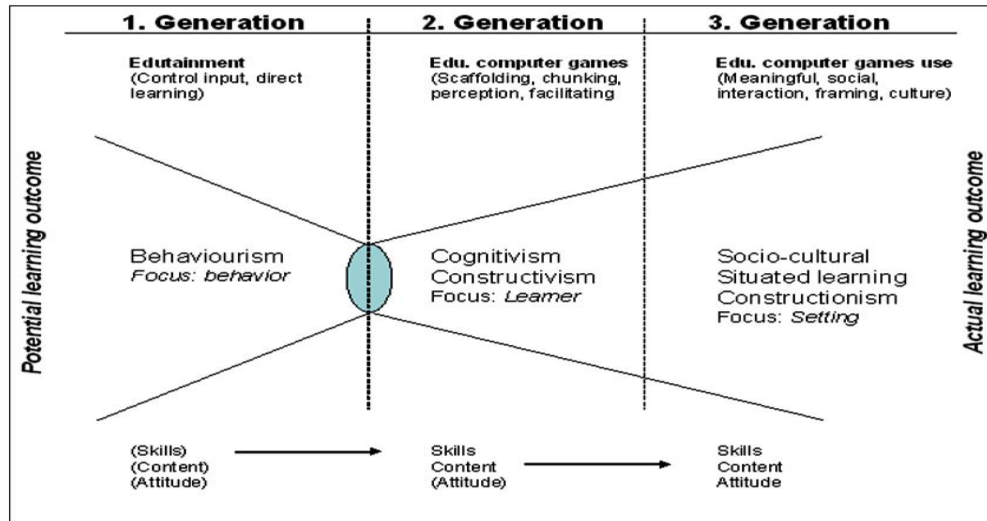


Figure (1) Development of Edutainment

### Characteristics of Edutainment

Ortiz, et al, (2006:317-318) suggest some characteristics in the field of listening comprehension to promote edutainment towards learning:

- 1. Edutainment is fun for young learners and teenagers.** This indicates that educational entertaining games and applications would be caught by a wide range of audience and it is not only applicable for elementary and secondary schools, but in long life learning grades.
- 2. Edutainment is immersive.** It immerses the personality of the learner with the virtual world which can be designed on learning benefits embodied in this recreated world. Thus, edutainment can provide constructivist learning.
- 3. Edutainment stimulates cooperation/competition.** Mostly games are competitive, based on the fact that many characters are included in a single game, that provide interactions. As students play multiplayer in computer edutainment, this involves several players to compete each other simultaneously for the purpose of achieving goals, or they can collaborate in sharing ideas to solve puzzles; therefore, applying edutainment in education can serve as a stem for collaborative learning with no actual need for involving peers.
- 4. Edutainment develops practices of individuals.** In edutainment, learners have various practices. In a game play, for instance, players enjoy playing with peers, but this does not mean that single player games are isolated activities and far from fun, but on the contrary, players learn about styles, tactics and winning strategies with details about games in general sense. Games exceeds their medium and create interacted social series around them. Gamers enjoy discussing game matters after playing and enjoying them. In educational domain, this proposes a prospect for discussion and points of view exchange concerning concepts exploited in educational games, ideally managed by specialized instructor in the field of this category.
- 5. Edutainment is interactive.** Interaction means having people involved with a certain thing to push them to react. In edutainment, learners are exposed to technological visualized environment where competitions, rules and rewards take place with specific outcomes. Abdel



Raheem (2011: 24) states that collaboration, genuineness and exploration (learning by exploring) were originally found to be significant features of edutainment program. One of the basic roles of edutainment is that previous knowledge is highly applicable in edutainment than learning total new materials. Well designed edutainment can also be exploited in advanced levels to facilitate complicated theoretical issues. In fact, edutainment is found to be as brilliant instruments to explain cause and outcome chains. Edutainment is a very significant finding because old traditional methods mostly did not facilitate such issues.

### **Previous Studies**

#### **Abdel Raheem (2011)**

This study aimed at exploring the use of computer edutainment on promoting 2<sup>nd</sup> primary grade learners writing skill. The study tackled 30 primary participants in Bani Hamad primary school, In Minia governorate. These participants were randomly grouped to one group and taught in the light of edutainment strategy. Data were collected and analyzed in the light of quantitative and qualitative tools. A pre and post tests were electronically made, and followed by a pre and post writing tests using pencils on papers, a vocabulary acquisition test, a writing development record, writing scoring rubric, a reflection log, and a self assessment checklist. Findings showed high significant levels of vocabulary were acquired. Both of learners' writing forms and the writing development record indicated that the writing concepts and strategies they were taught, have developed them to write independently. The development of participants' writing as shown by various measures recommends edutainment as an effective mean for promoting learners' writing skill in governmental schools.

#### **Mat Zin, H. & Mohd Zain, N. (2010)**

This study aimed to examine the effect of edutainment in classroom towards learners' achievements. A total of 60 participants were engaged in this study. They have mutual level of knowledge and ability. They have been divided into two groups, control and experiment group. Each group consists of 30 participants. Both of these groups were pretested. Then, edutainment was used in the learning process during the experiment on the experiment group. While the control group was taught using the traditional method without involving edutainment software. The participants of the two groups were given posttest and a set of questionnaire. Data were gathered and analyzed using SPSS12.0. Results and findings indicated that 83%.8 of participants agreed that involving edutainment in study will increase learners' comprehension toward the topic has been taught. Ninetysix percent of participants show their interest in applying edutainment in teaching and learning process, and 94%3 of participants agreed that edutainment was fit to be applied in classrooms as one of top teaching aids.

### **Definition of Listening**

Listening is a part of aural grammar, auditory discrimination, selecting the right information, recalling it, and linking it to the process between sound and the form of meaning. It is a mental ability that helps humans to comprehend the surrounding world and it is one of the most successful parts in human communications. Listening, in general, sense includes listening for feelings, thoughts, and intonations. This requires active engagement, effort, and practice (Ahmadi, 2016: 7).

According to Rost (2009), listening is one of the most important components in the spoken language, it is an active mental ability. It helps us to realize the message of the speaker and it is one of the crucial tools in achieving a successful communication (as cited in Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016:1671). Rost (2011:3) defines listening as " receiving the transfer of images, impressions, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and emotions from the speaker" .



## Definition of Listening Comprehension

There are various definitions of the term "listening comprehension". Listening comprehension is the variations in processes of the spoken language perception. These variations include recognizing speech sounds, understanding the meaning of vocabularies and understanding the syntax of sentences (Ahmadi, 2016:8). According to Hamouda (2013:113-155), listening comprehension is an active process, in which the listener is considered as the corner stone in constructing meaning, perceiving the spoken language through sound recognition, existing knowledge, stress, intonation, structures, and other linguistic and non-linguistic materials (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016:124).

## 3. Statement of the Problem

Some of the essential difficulties students face while listening are: "understanding intonation, hearing sounds, stress, coping with redundancy, understanding colloquial vocabulary, noise, predicting, understanding different accents and fatigue. Even though, many studies have been made concerning teaching listening, many learners are unable to be well effective listeners (Ur, 2007:11-20; Yıldırım .& Yıldırım, 2016: 2101).

Underwood (1989:16) also pinpoints the common obstacles that students encounter while listening such as speed of delivery, not being able to produce repeated words, having a limited amount of vocabularies, deficiency of understanding signals like transitions, insufficiency of contextual knowledge, inability to concentrate, and their curiosity to know every word they hear.

Many empirical studies conducted on listening in the field of foreign and second language learning conclude that language learners face certain difficulties in listening comprehension (Yıldırım. & Yıldırım, 2016:2101) because of the overemphasis on reading, grammar rules and vocabularies. EFL individuals find that listening comprehension is one of the most difficult skills in English. On the other hand, some individuals find some features of listening comprehension much easier and understandable than others (Gilakjani & Ahmadi,2011:977-988).

The problem of this study comes from the perspective of having Iraqi EFL students face difficulties in listening comprehension such as lack of technology involvement towards listening comprehension, poor class conditions, lack of carrying out entertaining activities spreads boredom among students, visual aids shortage, large number of students in small classes which leads to unclear pronunciation and misuse of techniques or that tools are probable causes of this problem. Yıldırım. & Yıldırım (2016: 2103) state that learners have the same beliefs about their listening comprehension problems in English. These problems are mostly common among learners. When the learners were asked to confine these problems, they responded with common answers that there are unclear terms and vocabularies heard for the first time or mispronounced by the teacher, classes are not supported with visuals, study halls and classrooms are not prepared for learning environment, and curriculum pitfalls. Moreover, some teachers may make some mistakes in pronunciations because of the effect of their mother tongue upon the foreign language. Accordingly, mispronunciation of spoken language confuses learners' understanding, which adds more complications to a language learning process.

Developing a receptive skill of Iraqi EFL 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory school students' listening comprehension is not an easy process. It requires a joyful and entertaining environment with the implementation of technology. According to McBride (2009) and Rost (2007), the use of technology contributes in developing listening comprehension by exposing learners to computer applications, multimedia, films, music, and games, which add richness and sensory experience to the learners (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016:1674).



## METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Aims of the Study

The present study aims to :

1. identify the effect of Edutainment on developing Iraqi EFL 4th preparatory school students' listening comprehension.
2. focus on exposing students to visualized materials using technological tools.
3. facilitate learning by combining it to fun. .

### 4.2 Hypnosis of the Study

It's hypothesized that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of significance (0.05) between the mean scores of the experiment group who is taught listening comprehension using Edutainment and that of the control group who is taught listening comprehension using the traditional method recommended by the ministry of education and teacher's guide.

### 4.3 Limitations of the Study

1. The population of the study is limited to the 4th grade preparatory school male students at Babylon Governorate for the academic year 2018-2019. The material is extracted from the prescribed book, "English For Iraq", for fourth preparatory grade.
2. The tools of edutainment are limited to computer games, applications, and multimedia.

### 4.4 Procedures of the Study

The following methods will be taken sequentially in order to achieve the aim of the study:

- Selecting a representative sample from the population of the study and splitting it into two groups experimental and control.
  - Presenting steps to be followed for administering edutainment tests to be submitted to the jury experts.
  - Constructing and validating a pretest to be used as a tool of investigation for measuring students' current performance of the control and experiment groups before conducting the experiment.
  - Conducting an experiment using Google Classroom platform on the experimental and control groups.
  - Applying edutainment on the experiment group to develop students' listening comprehension and teaching the prescribed material following the teacher's textbook guide suggested by the ministry of education to the students of the control group.
  - Administrating post test for both groups and compare the results.
  - Analyzing the data of the test statistically.
  - Presenting the collected results to come up with conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for upcoming studies.
- The steps stated above help the researcher to obtain the appropriate data that can be used in objective analyses that lead to valid inferences for the problem of this study. The population of the group sample was randomly selected and split up to (experiment and control) groups. Both of these groups are submitted to (pre and posttests), the independent variable is only applied to the experiment group. The scores of the two groups on the dependant variable measured by the posttest are compared to see if there is a significant difference exists between the experiment and the control groups.

### 4.5 The sample of the study

This study is subjected to 4<sup>th</sup> preparatory school male students in the academic year 2018-2019 in Babylon province. The study includes a sample of (61) students of Al-Kindi preparatory school for males. The experiment group class (A) consists of (31) students, while



the control group class (B) consists of (30) students. Both of these groups were randomly gathered and selected online on Google Classroom plat form to implement the experiment.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The selected groups were chosen randomly from different backgrounds culturally and socially in which case they are nonequivalent; therefore, the researcher works on controlling variables which have an impact upon the dependant variable such as performance. A T-test formula is used to measure scores of the students in pre and post-tests and to find if there is any significant difference between them or not. The null hypothesis is originated to focus on the results of the tests. The final results show that the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a statistically significant difference at the level of (0.05) as the performance of the experiment group is improved as shown in the table below:

**Table (1)** The Students' Scores in Pretest and Posttest for the Control Group.

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	DF	T-value		Level of significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Pretest	30	19.67	3.487	29	1.766	2.045	0.05
Posttest	30	20.53	4.988				

In table (1), students' scores in the pre and posttests show that the mean score of the pretest is (19.67), while the mean score of the post-test is (20.53). The final results show that the computed T-value is (1.766), and the tabulated is (2.045). This means that there is a little difference between the two tests in the control group.

**Table (2)** The Students' Scores in Pretest and Posttest for the Experiment Group.

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	DF	t-value		Level of significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Pre -test	31	19.71	3.268	30	17.283	2.042	0.05
Post-test	31	25.97	3.582				

In table (2) of the experimental group, the mean score of the pre-test is (19.71) whereas that of the post-test is (25.97). The final results show that the computed T-value is (-17.283) and the tabulated is (2.042). This clearly shows that there is a noticeable significant difference at the level of (0.05) between the pretest and posttest statistics at 30 degrees of freedom. The

scores of the students in the experiment group at the posttest are very much better and noticeable than their previous scores at the pretest.

**Table (3)** The Students' Scores in Post-test for the Experiment and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std.D	DF	t-value		Level of significance
					Computed	Tabulated	
Experiment Group	31	25.97	3.582	59	4.900	2.000	0.05
Control Group	30	20.53	4.988				

The T-test is applied to compare the mean scores of the experiment and control group in the pre and posttests. The mean score of the experiment group is (25.97) whereas the mean score of the control group is (20.53). The calculated t-value is found to be (4.900) at (59) degree of freedom with (0.05) level of significance. This means that edutainment determined and applied by the researcher is more effective and powerful than the traditional strategies concerning listening comprehension.

### CONCLUSION

According to the statistical findings of data, the researcher has concluded that the use of edutainment in preparatory schools is useful for developing learners' listening comprehension of English language. The data also show that edutainment can be exploited to pave the way to improve learners' abilities in different fields of study that support computer games, applications and multimedia. During the given course, students show a highly noticeable acceptance in taking learning material supported by technological tools. Results of the post-test show that students' results jumped higher than the standard test (pre-test) which was administered by the researcher before applying edutainment on the sample. This indicates that edutainment strategy suggested and adopted by the researcher in the experiment has proved to be effective and sufficient for developing learners' listening comprehension.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Learning environment that supports learning needs such as a good qualified teacher, students, computers, games, applications, songs, videos, films, and animations. Relying on the results of the present study, it can be recommended that:

1. Teachers of English language in preparatory schools have to vary their techniques, by choosing the right one in the right time to overcome boredom, for a better understanding,
2. Teachers of English language should combine the material they are teaching to fun (edutainment) because it is more preferable by students, and it improves their language skills,
3. Teachers of English language should keep in touch with learners during course period and after, to cope with students' skills development and pave the way for the next level in learning.
4. Edutainment should be used to develop EFL students receptive and productive skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).
5. Edutainment requires an equipped





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