

EĞİTİM OYUNLARININ VE CİNSİYETİN BEŞ YAŞINDAKİ IRAKLI ÖĞRENCİLER ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın hedefi, eğitsel oyun tekniğinin beş yaş, okul öncesi öğrencilerinin İngilizce kelime öğrenimi üzerindeki tesirini araştırmaktır. Çalışmanın örneklemi ise, 16 erkek ve 16 kız olmak üzere beş yaşında olan toplam 32 özel anaokulu öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. İki farklı gruba ayrıldılar. Her grup için 16 öğrenci vardı (8 erkek ve 8 kadın). Veri toplama aracı, hazırlanan 36 maddelik Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Kelime Performans Kontrol Listesi'den ibarettir. Altı haftalık bir süre içinde iki gruba Tümüyle Fiziksel Tepki metodu ile resimli kartlarla 36 kelime öğretilmiştir. Deneysel grupta eğitsel oyunları kullanılmıştır ve kontrol grubunda ise eğitsel oyunları kullanılmamıştır. Deneyim nihayetinde t-test incelemesi yapılmış ve eğitsel oyunları aracıyla öğrenen deneyde konu olan grubun lehine olarak iki grup arasında İngilizce kelime başarısı açısından tesir büyüklüğü aşırı derecede açık bir ihtilaf bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce kelime öğrenimine bahsedilen deneysel grupta eğitsel oyunları ve kontrol grubunda eğitsel oyunları olmaksızın, cinsiyetin tesiri olup olmadığı konusunda da t-testler aracıyla incelenmiştir. Son olarak, bu iki grup için İngilizce kelime öğreniminde anlamsız bir cinsiyet tesiri bulunmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, kelime öğretimi, eğitsel oyunlar, çok küçük öğrenciler, erken çocukluk eğitimi.*

THE IMPACT OF EDUCATIONAL GAMES AND GENDER ON FIVE YEAR OLD IRAQI EFL LEARNERS

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of educational games as a significant learning technique in teaching English Vocabulary among five-year old Iraqi EFL learners. The sample of the study was 32 preschool children at Wano private kindergarten. They were divided into two different groups; experimental group which were taught by using educational games and control group which were exposed to the traditional methods of vocabulary teaching, 16 students for each group (8 male and 8 female). Checklist was used as Data collection instrument which consisted of 36 items vocabulary. At the beginning of the study they were given a pretest to measure their vocabulary performance. Then, after six weeks of treatment, they were post tested. The outcomes showed a significant difference between experimental group and the control group in terms of posttest achievement in English vocabulary scores. Therefore, the educational games proved to be useful in teaching English vocabulary. Furthermore, the influence of gender on five-years-old Iraqi preschool kids in learning new English vocabulary with educational games in the experimental group and without educational games in the control group was conducted by means of independent sample t-tests. The analyzed data showed no significant gender effect for both groups in learning new English vocabulary.

Keywords: *English as a foreign language, vocabulary teaching, educational games, very young learners, early childhood education, Total Physical response, five-year-old children.*

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching a new language to very young learners can consist of various techniques such as storytelling, videos, finger plays, singing, and educational games (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). Through these techniques, educational games are recommended for every individual who is learning the language. More than that, for very young learners because of the fact that games consist of student-centered context, motivation, little stress, fun, competition, collaboration, inspiration, active and social participation (Jafarian, 2017, Deesri, 2002; Fisher, 2004).

Using educational games as an instrument to improve the process of learning, especially English as a foreign language was examined in several studies such as (Yip & Kwan, 2006; Cheng & Su, 2012; Aslanabadi and Rasouli, 2013; Riahipour and Saba 2012; Efendi, 2013; Alemi, 2010) and the results of these studies shows that using games especially educational games in learning English as foreign language is very useful and it helps the learners to achieve language in an easier way.

The process of learning a language (either first or foreign language) initiates with learning sounds and vocabulary as McGlothlin, (1997) stated. Vocabulary which is the total words of a language (Merriam-Webster, 2016) and there are two types of vocabulary which is Expressive and Receptive. Expressive vocabulary includes those words that a child could use them by uttering or expressing them, while receptive vocabulary is about understanding what is said to the child or in another word, understanding the meanings of words (Brownell, 2000).

Vocabulary is a prerequisite for the foreign language improvement since vocabulary development or learning new words is responsible for the most of the understanding (Bromley, 2007). vocabulary comes first while teaching an additional language to very young students since naming objects gain importance at the beginning. Nevertheless, very young children's comprehensions occur in concrete contexts therefore, teaching vocabulary for them requires visual and concrete representations like picture cards. (Gordon, 2007). Educational games are games that designed to be played in the classroom environment to help learners to learn about specific object or help them in learning a skill as they play. Educational games are individual or group activities that used in the learning process to help very young children to learn new skills.

Educational games has important role in making low stress, relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for learning new words and vocabulary items. Using play activities and language games help student to remember new words and vocabulary more easily (Taheri, 2014, Jafarian, 2017).

Moreover, the influence of the gender on foreign language teaching and learning was investigated in several studies such as (Aslan, 2009; Olszewski-Kubilius & Turner, 2002; Swiatek & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2000; Dursun, 2007) the result of these studies supports the superiority of females in learning foreign language than males. In other words, Females scores were higher and better than males scores in learning target language. In contrast with these studies there is few studies which results with males' superiority (Vahdat and Rasti- Behbahani, 2013; Cross, 1983) the results of these studies revealed that males achieved higher scores than females. In other words, the findings of both studies support the superiority of males in learning foreign language while in the studies of (Burgoyne, Kelly, Whiteley and Spooner, 2009; Grace, 2000) non-significant difference between the two genders found.

The present study aims at finding out the impact of educational games and Gender on five-year-old Iraqi EFL learners. Furthermore, another purpose of the current study is to investigate the influence of gender on five-years-old Iraqi preschool kids in learning new English vocabularies.

This study tried to find out whether or not there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group achievement scores which is taught by educational games and the control group which is taught without educational games in learning English vocabulary for Iraqi EFL preschool learners or not? Also, whether or not there is a statistically significant effect of gender on Iraqi five-years-old EFL vocabulary learners in the experimental group which is taught by educational games and the control group which is taught without educational games in new English vocabulary learning?

METHODOLOGY

The samples of the present study included 32 five-years-old children at Wano private preschool in Kalar district. All of them were five-years-old, including 16 male children and 16 females. Then, the children were divided into two groups equally; first, the experimental group, and the second group as the control group, each group consisted of 16 children (see table 1). The treatment of the current study included educational vocabulary games which fits the intended behavioral objectives of the research. Thus, four different games were implemented with different aims; the games were Hear and Jump by Cratty (1971), Musical Fingers by Drinkwater (2008), Elodie’s Vocabulary Games by Drinkwater (2008) and Vocabulary Hunt by Drinkwater (2008).

TABLE1. The samples of the study

Groups	Samples		Total
	Male	Female	
Exp. Group	8	8	16
Con. Group	8	8	16
Total	16	16	32

Checklist was used as data collection instrument. it was used in agreement with the Total Physical Response (TPR) lessons’ content. Regarding to checklist Burk (2005) argue that checklists are fast and easy way to conduct and it plays as assessment tools in the field of language learning. Thus, a checklist was prepared in different topics such as animals and foods so as to be suitable for the participants level, age and lesson content.

TABLE2. Checklist

Performance Indicators	Performed (1)	Not Performed (0)
The child pointed to the apple.		
The child pointed to the bird		
The child pointed to the butterfly		

PROCEDURE

The students’ parents were informed about their children’s participation in this research and the aims of the study. After that, a schedule was fixed in cooperation with the preschool administrator. (see table, 3). Both groups were given two lectures per a week; each lecture 30 minutes.

TABLE3. Vocabulary items taught to both experimental and control group

Weeks	Days of week	
	Monday	Thursday
1	Cat, Dog, Bird	Banana, apple, cherry
2	Lion, Horse, Bear	Carrot, pear, watermelon
3	Deer, Goat, pig	Potato, strawberry, orange
4	Sheep, Goose, Duck	Tomato, grape, corn

5	Frog, Rat, Butterfly	Egg, honey, kiwi
6	Fish, Camel, Turtle	Milk, yogurt, pizza

Following that, the researcher administered the pretest on Thursday 9th of November 2017 by utilizing Vocabulary Performance Checklist. Thus, every child was tested alone so as to keep the internal validity. Then, three flash cards were shown on the ground and the researcher asked the child in English language ‘point to...’ And he waited for fifteen second until the child responded, if he/she pointed to the right card the researcher marked it as ‘performed’ and he/she was given 1 mark, if he/she pointed to the wrong card the researcher marked as ‘not performed’ and he/she was given 0 mark. If a child did not respond the researcher asked him/her again in native language, if he/she did not perform the task the researcher marked it like not performed and she/he was given 0 mark. (See table 4).

TABLE 4. Vocabulary Performance Checklist procedure

	Situations		
	Performed	Not Performed	No Response
Command in English “Point to the turtle!”	1 point	0 point	The child is asked again in Kurdish
Command in Kurdish except the target vocabulary “Kama ‘Apple’ pishan dadat!”	1 point	0 point	0 point

Then, the researcher collected all the results of the pretest and graded them. Next, the process of giving the treatment started according to the schedule that was prepared. The treatment continued for six weeks. Furthermore, after giving the treatment to the experimental group the researcher post tested both groups.

RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive and independent t-test Results of the First Research Question

The descriptive statistics of the Vocabulary Performance Checklist as pretest show that there are 16 participants in the experimental group (M= 2.63, SD= 3.55) and there are 16 participants in the control group (M= 4.88, SD= 4.17) see Table 5

TABLE5. Descriptive Statistics of both groups in the Pre-test

	Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
prescores	experimental	16	2.63	3.55	.889
	control	16	4.88	4.17	1.044

The independent t-test of Vocabulary Checklist as a pre-test shows that there is not a statistically significant difference between the control group (M= 4.88, SD= 4.17) and experimental group (M= 2.63, SD= 3.55), $t(30) = 1.64$, $p = .111$ (two-tailed) because the significant value of independent T-test 0.111 is greater than 0.05. as a result, in the term of pre-test both groups are equal (see Table 6)

Table6. Independent Samples T-test of both groups in the Pre-test

Independent Sample Test		
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.620	.437	1.640	30	.111	2.250	1.372	-551	5.051
Equal variances not assumed			1.640	29.256	.112	2.250	1.372	-554	5.054

Descriptive and Independent Samples T-test Analysis as a Post-test

The analyzed data of the descriptive statistics as post-test show that there are 16 participants in the experimental group (Mean= 27.82, Std. Deviation= 2.68) and there are 16 participants in the control group (Mean= 19.94, Std. Deviation= 3.31). In other words, there is not any missing data in the posttest. see Table 7

TABLE7. Descriptive Statistics of both groups in the posttest

	Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
postscores	Experimental	16	27.81	2.68	.672
	Control	16	19.94	3.31	.829

The independent t-test as a posttest show that there is a statistically significant difference between the control group (Mean= 19.94, Std. Deviation= 3.31) and experimental group (Mean= 27.82, Std. Deviation= 2.68), $t(30) = 7.37$, $p = .00$ (two-tailed) because the significant value of independent T-test 0.00 is smaller than 0.05. as a result, in the term of post-test the two groups are not equal and there is significant difference between the two groups score achievement (see Table 8)

TABLE 8. Independent Samples T-test of both groups in the post-test

	Independent Sample Test								
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.287	.596	7.379	30	.000	7.875	1.067	5.695	10.055
Equal variances not assumed			7.379	28.379	.000	7.875	1.067	5.691	10.059

In the Table 8 it can be seen that the significant value of independent measure T test is 0,000 and due to the fact that this value is not greater than common alpha 0.05. its conduct that there is *significant difference* between two groups score achievement. Furthermore, the arithmetic score of the experimental group in the post-test is (27.81) while the arithmetic score of the control group in the posttest is (19.94). In the two groups' mean reveal that there is statistical significance difference the participants' achievement scores.

Descriptive and Independent Sample T-test Results of the Second Research Question

In this section, the results of gender effect on EFL vocabulary learning with / without educational games in the experimental and in the control group for Iraqi five-year-old EFL learners were presented.

Descriptive statistics and Independent Measure T-test were used to analyze gender effect on Iraqi EFL preschool student's vocabulary performance scores in the experimental group which received educational games in learning vocabulary.

The descriptive statistics of the experimental group as posttest shows that there are totally 16 participants who are 8 males (M=26.75, ST= 2.31) and 8 females (M=28.88, ST= 2.71) see table 9

TABLE9. Descriptive statistics of the experimental group as posttest regarding gender

Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
postscoresGender Male	8	26.75	2.31	.818
Female	8	28.88	2.71	.972

The independent t-test of Vocabulary Checklist show that the significant value of independent T-test is 0.117. because the analyzed value 0.117 is greater than 0.05. its conduct that there is not a statistically significant difference between males (M= 26.75, SD= 2.31) and females (M= 28.88, SD= 2.77). as a result, in the term of gender effect both groups are equal and there are not significant differences between males and females scores achievement (see Table 10)

TABLE10. The independent t-test of the experimental group regarding gender.

Independent Sample Test									
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences			
F	Sig.	t	df				Lower	Upper	
Equal variances assumed	.196	.665	-1.673	14	.117	-2.125	1.270	-4.850	.600
Equal variances not assumed			-1.673	13.606	.117	-2.125	1.270	-4.857	.607

Descriptive and Independent Sample T-test Results of the Gender Effect in the Control Group.

Descriptive results (see Table 4.7) shows that there are 8 males (M=21.25, SD= 3.24) and 8 females (M= 18.63, SD= 3.02), in total 16 five-year-old Iraqi preschool students in the control group which did not receive educational games in learning vocabulary items.

TABLE 11. Descriptive statistics of the control group as posttest regarding gender

Groups	N	means	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
postscoresGender male	8	21.25	3.24	1.146
female	8	18.63	3.02	1.068

The analyzed data of the independent t-test show that significant value is 0.116. because the analyzed value is greater than common alpha 0.05. its conduct that there is not a statistically significant difference between males (M= 21.25, SD= 3.24) and females (M= 18.63, SD= 3.02). as a result, in the term of gender effect both groups are equal in the term of gender effect (see Table 12).

TABLE 12. The independent t-test of the control group regarding gender.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		Independent Sample Test						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
		t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean differences	Std. Error differences	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.280	.605	1.676	14	.116	2.625	1.0566	-734	5.984	
Equal variances not assumed			1.676	13.932	.116	2.625	1.566	-736	5.986	

CONCLUSION

The analyzed data showed that the two groups are not the same in terms of posttest vocabulary learning achievement score. This conducts that the difference between two means was significant. Thus, it can be said that the results of the study have proven that teaching English vocabulary by using educational games helped the participant of the experimental group to develop their vocabulary learning, and it is an effective technique to teach vocabulary for Iraqi EFL preschool learners. Also, it can be observed that the learners who were taught by educational games got higher scores than the learners in the controlling group in the posttest.

Also, the impact of gender on Iraqi EFL preschool students were investigated in both groups separately. The outcome of the analyzed date of the post test showed that there was not statically significant difference between females and male's score achievement in the experimental group. Also, the outcome of the analyzed date of the post test showed that there was not statically significant difference between females and male's score achievement in the control group. In other words, significant gender effect was not found and both groups were equal and Non-significant of gender was founded in this study.

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