

**Enhancing Vocabulary and Listening
Comprehension: An Analysis of Commercials
as a Language Teaching-Learning Tool**

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تعزير المفردات والفهم السماعي: تحليل للاعلانات

التجارية كأداة لتعليم وتعلم اللغة الانكليزية

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Teachers in English classes confront a variety of challenges when it comes to teaching vocabulary items and determining how to increase students' listening comprehension. The purposes of this research are to: establish whether Iraqi students of English as a second language benefit from viewing television ads; and find a way that is more realistically beneficial for making vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension simpler. The inquiry was carried out in a manner that may be considered quasi-experimental. This investigation included the participation of 46 trainees currently enrolled in intermediate-level programmes. The researcher performed a paired t-test in R on the collected data to see if the proposed method yielded significantly different outcomes. In order to learn more about whether or not there were disparities in learning and comprehension between the sexes of the participants, a two-sample t-test was conducted. It was found that the advertisement as a learning tool had a good impact on the learners' vocabulary acquisition as well as their ability to increase their listening comprehension, regardless of whether the learners were male or female. **Keywords:** Learning vocabulary; Listening comprehension; Advertisement as a Learning Tool; English language

المخلص

يواجه معلموا اللغة الإنجليزية مجموعة متنوعة من التحديات عند تدريس المفردات وتحديد كيفية زيادة فهم الاستماع لدى الطلاب. الغرض من هذا البحث هو: تحديد ما إذا كان الطلاب العراقيون الذين يتحدثون الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية يستفيدون من مشاهدة الإعلانات التلفزيونية، وإيجاد طريقة أكثر فائدة من الناحية الواقعية لجعل اكتساب المفردات وفهم الاستماع أكثر بساطة. تم إجراء التحقيق بطريقة يمكن اعتبارها شبه تجريبية. تضمن هذا التحقيق مشاركة ٤٦ متدرِّبًا مسجلين حاليًا في برامج المستوى المتوسط. أجرى الباحث اختبار t مقترن في R على البيانات التي تم جمعها لمعرفة ما إذا كانت الطريقة المقترحة أسفرت عن نتائج مختلفة بشكل كبير. من أجل معرفة المزيد حول ما إذا كانت هناك تفاوتات في التعلم والفهم بين الجنسين من المشاركين، تم إجراء اختبار t من عينتين. وجد أن الإعلان كأداة تعليمية كان له تأثير جيد على اكتساب المتعلمين لمفرداتهم بالإضافة إلى قدرتهم على زيادة فهمهم السمعي، بغض النظر عما إذا كان المتعلمون من الذكور أو الإناث. الكلمات المفتاحية: تعلم المفردات. الاستماع والفهم، الإعلان كأداة تعليمية، اللغة الإنجليزية

Introduction

The majority of people in today's society are of the opinion that having an adequate understanding of the spoken and written contexts of usage of a word, patterns of association with other terms that have a similar meaning and collocation partners, as well as syntactic, pragmatic, and discourse patterns, are all necessary components of having an adequate understanding of that word. It involves knowledge of a term that is active and productive in addition to receptive information. The application of such understandings has obvious ramifications for vocabulary instruction. When learning a language, developing one's vocabulary is of the utmost significance. The greater the number of words a person knows, the better one is capable of comprehending what he/she hears and reads, and consequently, the more creatively he or she will be able to write. The process of expanding one's vocabulary may appear simple at first, but it's actually one of the most challenging steps in mastering a new language. This is something to keep in mind whenever teaching a new language, but it is especially crucial when working with ESL students. These students do not have enough opportunities to practise the use of a foreign language, and as a result, they have significant difficulties acquiring and employing new terms (Yongqi, 2003). Throughout the world, listening is widely considered as a necessary ability for the process of acquiring a language (Goh, 2000; Mendelsohn, 2008). Greater vocabulary competency is required for listening comprehension in order to successfully decode material that is very complicated. Research studies that have been carried out in this field highlight the requirement for a word recognition system that is both quicker and more efficient, as opposed to merely analysing textual input (Matthews & Cheng, 2015), and these research can be utilised to support this assertion. The current investigation was driven by the dearth of previous experimental investigations that attempted to identify the impact of language knowledge in listening comprehension.

Relevant Literature Review

One of the most essential aspects of life is learning and teaching vocabulary. It is undeniably true that words have and will continue to have an impact on people's lives (Pikulski & Templeton, 2004). It has also been established that there is a substantial association between the individual's ability to retain English language and their level of success. A form of imperfection is when a person has doubts about their diction. Indeed, having appropriate word knowledge is essential for understanding what someone is saying or for

comprehending what is being read. Having acceptable word knowledge is essential for understanding what someone is saying or for comprehending what is being read (Shoebottom, 2013). As a result, it can be said that vocabulary knowledge is critical. According to Wilkins (1972), "Without grammar only a little amount can be expressed, but without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." as stated in Schmitt, 2012, p. 3). It has recently been brought to attention by Zahedi & Abdi (2012) that having a large vocabulary is quite beneficial. Unfortunately, language learners who were unsuccessful in improving their word knowledge were unable to grasp texts of different types at advanced levels of comprehension. Instilling a love and appreciation for a language is an essential component in teaching a foreign language; in addition to passing on knowledge of its grammar, this step is essential. In order to properly convey meaning to the audience, it is vital to not only grasp how to efficiently use words and phrases, but also to do so in an engaging manner. As a consequence of this, being able to acquire the skill of extending one's vocabulary is one of the important components of the process of learning a language (Thornbury, 2000). Vocabulary for basic communication is one of the earliest linguistic skills a child acquires in his or her native language. As stated by Thornbury (2000), "Language arises initially as words, both historically and in terms of the manner in which each of us learns our first and any subsequent language." When a learner's vocabulary expands, their ability to communicate fluently in a second language also expands in exact proportion to the size of that learner's vocabulary expansion. In the words of Folse (2008), a "basic level of vocabulary enables learners to express certain concepts to a certain extent, but improved communication may be done only when learners have gained more vocabulary." Words are inextricably linked to one another throughout a language and cannot stand alone. It is more accurate to say that words are interconnected as parts of an extensive network of relationships. In this network, it is necessary to have knowledge of various levels of the same word in order to have proper comprehension while listening to or reading anything, as well as to correctly express one's thoughts when writing them down. Richards (1994) argues that there are several factors beyond simple meaning that contribute to a complete understanding of lexical items, including register, case connections, underlying forms, word association, and semantic structure. It will be impossible for infants to communicate effectively in a language if they are not exposed to a suitable amount of vocabulary while they are young. Since the beginning of recorded history, people have understood the importance of language. In addition to focusing on learning proper grammar and pronunciation, Kin and Rodman (1974) argue that learners should also prioritise learning a language's vocabulary, as it contains the most fundamental semantic building blocks. Students should be taught the common words and phrases, which are terms that are useful for ordinary discussions, in order to enable them to explain their basic concepts and communicate effectively in English. It will be possible to employ the newly learned language as soon as humanly possible once these terms have been grasped (Rupley and Nichols 1999).

Significance of advertisements in English Language Learning

Despite the fact that academicians have recommended the use of television advertisements as a language-learning resource, the effectiveness of employing television advertisements as a language-learning resource in an English as a Foreign Language classroom has never been shown (Erkaya, 2005). The majority of studies that have looked at the effectiveness and impact of television ads have included classroom research and examinations of instructors' individual abilities (Davis, 1997; Goldthorpe, 1993; Katchen, 1993). There are many advantages for teachers of English to use television advertisements in the classroom. For example, the length of time allotted for television ads is perfect for people who are learning a language. (Davis, 1997; Erkaya, 2005). TV ads, in contrast to other materials such as television episodes or movies, are not so lengthy that learners get bored while watching them. Furthermore, since they do not endure for a lengthy period of time, they are quickly picked. Another significant advantage of television ads is that they include real material (Smith & Rawley, 1997). They have been designed to be delivered in a conversational style. Not only that, but TV ads are produced in many different English-speaking nations, allowing students to learn about a variety of various dialects of the language from local speakers from the same culture.

Researches on Significance of Vocabulary in Listening

Because listening comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are not intrinsically related, prior researches have established a strong connection between the two (Ehsanzadeh, 2012; Qian 2002). According to Lynch & Mendelsohn (2002), hearing is not simply the auditory equivalent of reading; rather, it is much more than that. This provides a clear launching pad, giving researchers a powerful push towards determining the connection between vocabulary and listening comprehension. This is significant because it establishes a clear launching place. The predictive role of prior information was investigated by Teng (2014) with regard

to auditory understanding. According to the findings of the study, there is a connection between the amount of words said and auditory understanding.

Questions under Investigation

This study intends to fulfil one of its core goals, which is to obtain a better understanding of how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students acquire vocabulary and enhance their listening comprehension. One of the important methods that this study intends to reach this goal is by having participants watch Iraqi television commercials. In addition, there was an effort made to assess whether or not playing television ads in the classroom was an efficient way to improve students' ability to understand spoken language and increase their vocabulary. After carefully examining the information that was provided in the section of the report that concentrated on the study of the pertinent literature, it is reasonable to come to the conclusion that more study is needed in the area of boosting vocabulary acquisition and auditory comprehension in EFL classrooms. This is especially true in Iran, where English is considered a second language.

1. Do commercials influence learners' vocabulary acquisition?
2. Do commercials influence the improvement of learners' listening comprehension skills?
3. Do vocabulary and listening comprehension skills differ based on gender?

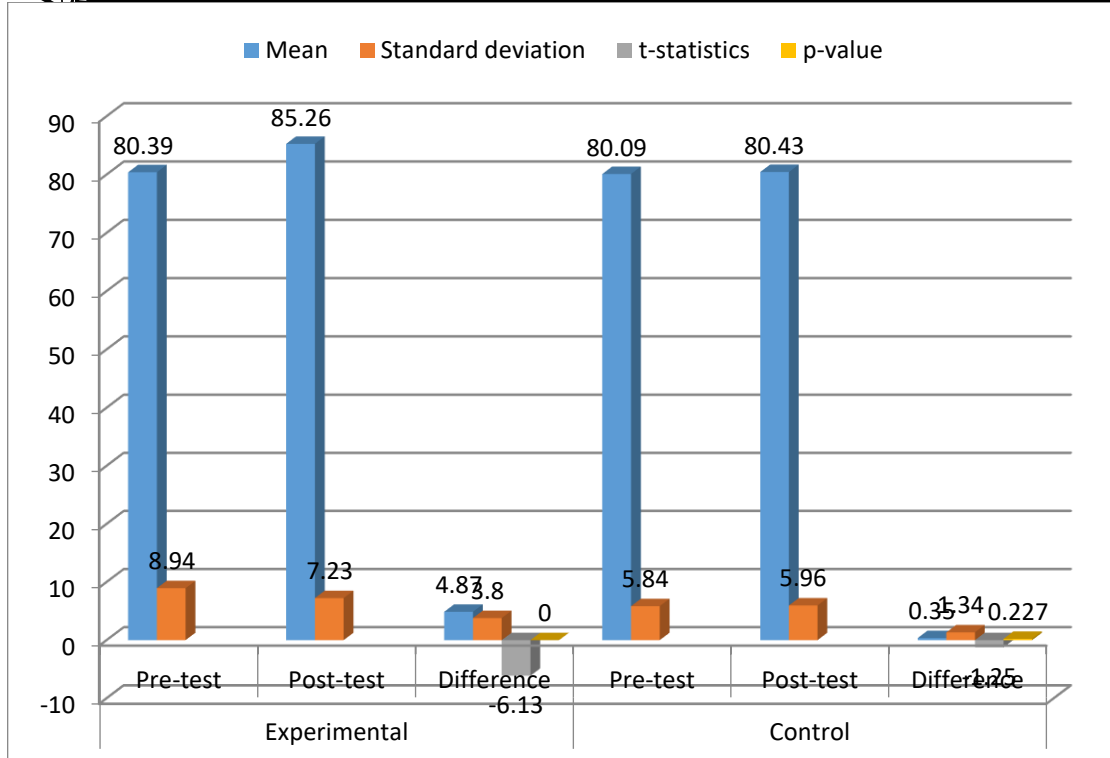
Methodology

Although there is no randomization in this study, the research design is consistent with a quasi-experimental technique. Cook and Campbell (1979) define quasi-experimental research as a study that is similar to experimental research but is not identical to experimental research in all respects. Participants are neither randomly assigned to conditions, nor is the order in which conditions are carried out randomised (Cook & Campbell, 1979). This study had a total of 46 participants, consisting of English language learners from two different groups (27 females and 19 males). There were two different groups of people involved, denoted by the letters A and B. In the group that underwent the experiment, there were a total of 14 females and 9 males, whereas the group that served as the control had 13 females and 10 males. The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy of the treatment, and more specifically the efficacy of TV commercials as an independent variable, by comparing the outcomes of two groups after 15 sessions with and without treatment (chosen TV commercials), helped people learn new words and understand what they heard. This was performed by contrasting the results obtained by the two groups following 15 sessions of treatment and non-treatment (chosen commercials shown on television), respectively. The inquiry was carried out with the use of a design known as a randomised controlled trial (dependent variables). There were 46 language learners in all, 27 of whom were female and 19 of them were male. They were mostly teenagers, ranging in age from 16 to 20, and the most of them were female. Students were chosen from four classes, two of which were female and two of which were male. Each course at this school is comprised of 15 sessions, including three hours of classroom instruction every week. The course included the introduction of new themes, vocabulary, and functions, as well as the development of listening skills. An extensive range of social resources is utilised to stimulate vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension in order to develop additional communication skills. Participants' first language is either Braj bhasha, which is their native tongue, or Hindi, which is their second language and the official language of education in Iraq, depending on their background. In order to verify that students' competence levels remained similar throughout the curriculum, a proficiency test was given before the commencement of class. Based on the results of the assessment, they were either at or over the level of proficiency required for intermediate status. First and foremost, this study employs a proficiency test to guarantee that all participants are working at approximately the same level. On the examination, each of the following four skills was evaluated: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Before the beginning of the class, a pre-test was administered to both the experimental group and the control group to check that they were comparable. Following the programme, both groups completed a post-test to assess whether or not the outcomes were statistically significant. The goal of the final exam was to measure the extent to which the ads had boosted the test-takers' vocabulary as well as their comprehension of spoken language. To educate vocabulary, aid students in understanding and strengthening their listening comprehension, and improve listening comprehension, the experimental group was given access to relevant English television advertising catered to their proficiency level. Since most of the activities need students to be engaged and curious, the first stage was designed to recognise their interest and stimulate their motivation, as is the case with most of them. Attempts were made to do this by creating a conversation setting via the use of open-ended questions in order to better grasp the message they were attempting to convey. As an alternative, moral consideration

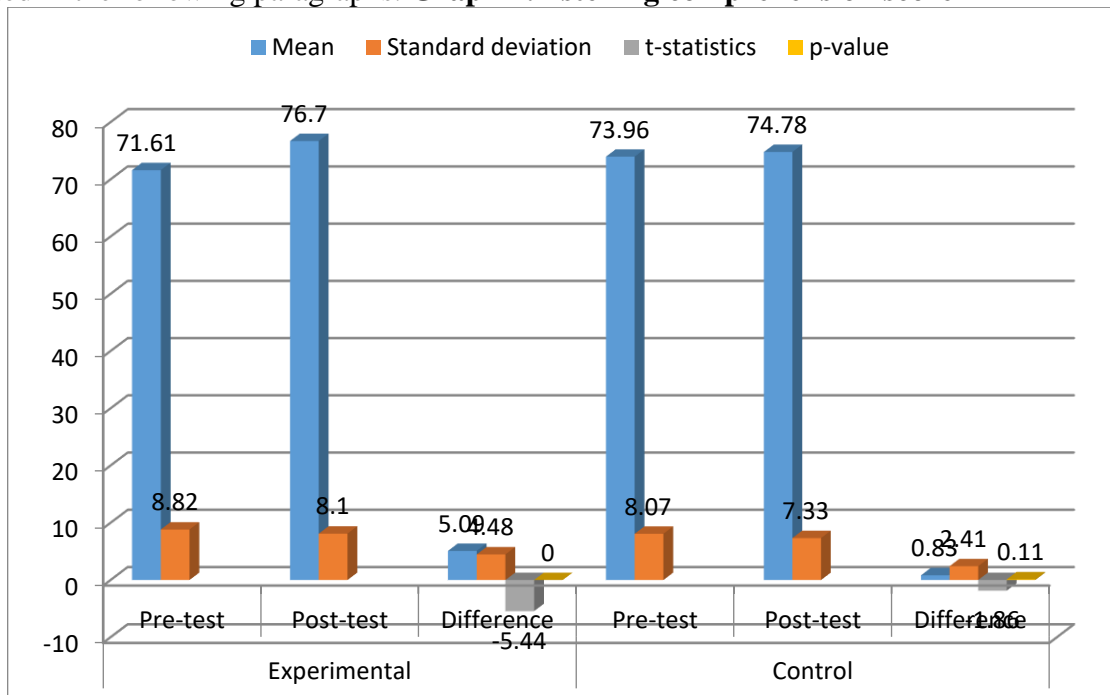
concerning might be raised to begin the dialogue. In addition to the activities involving prediction, the teacher may wish to disseminate a questionnaire or handout to the class during this brainstorming activity. The teacher wrote a few questions on a handout or the board before switching to visual mode to start the ad. These questions addressed to the tagline and slogan of the advertisement, in addition to the name of the product that was being marketed, the overall purpose of the commercial, any additional features, as well as the advertiser's justification for employing those features, as well as any new slang or language that was used in the advertisement, as well as what those terms were. Three components constituted the test: viewing commercials in visual mode only, watching commercials in audio and visual modes to ensure comprehension, and post-watching assignments to gauge comprehension level and vocabulary growth. The complete reliance of the visual mode on visuals was necessary in order to accomplish the primary objective of the visual mode, which was to draw the attention of the students to a specific facet of the advertisement that was particularly important, such as the content or the language. The instructor was supposed to play the television commercial numerous times until he is satisfied that the learners grasp the situation and the message of the commercial. While they were watching the commercial, the instructor should inquire about any clarifications. Furthermore, the instructor might choose to show the commercial just in visual mode at first to enable learners to get a better sense of what it is about with less information. In order for the students to get the most out of the watching phase, they should do it with an objective in mind. The specific actions varied depending on which commercial was being utilised, just as they did during the previewing stage. During the viewing phase, students took notes on what they remembered from the commercials they viewed and listened to. The instructor instructed the learners to jot down any new words or phrases they came across on a piece of paper and to attempt to figure out what they meant by viewing the whole commercial while watching them on television. Students were provided a text that contained the whole of the commercial paragraphs in order to assist them in understanding the content on their own. The goal of the post-viewing phase was to motivate students to evaluate their learning, put their auditory comprehension skills to the test, and integrate what they had learned. They had the chance to ask questions about several topics, including vocabulary, pronunciation, sentence patterns, and cultural considerations. During the post-viewing phase, students were given the responsibility to the check and learn the dialogues, to check the listening comprehension, to assign new vocabulary, and to practise the new words in small groups. The experimental group was taught the selected words by listening to and viewing television commercials, whereas the control group received conventional pronunciation instruction. When the vocabulary items were presented in English, they were also presented in the students' official educational language as well as in their second language for the students in the control group. Also, they could continue using their English-Arabic dictionaries in the same way they always had, which was to do so without receiving any instruction in particular. They were also authorised to request that the instructor interpret certain terms when the situation called for it. Towards the end, a post-test was conducted for each group, and the obtained data was analysed using R programming.

Data Analysis and the Findings

As part of our research into the effect of commercial exposure on vocabulary growth, we used paired t-tests to determine whether or not students' vocabulary scores changed significantly before and after the activities. During the same time period, the experimental group and the control group were both subjected to this method. Graph 1 displays the results of the examinations taken for both categories combined together. The experimental group's post-test mean values are substantially greater than those of the control group, which are approximately 80.5. The values of the experimental group are approximately 85. The pre-test mean values for both groups are virtually identical, which is approximately 80. This test, which compares the mean of the difference between these two scores to zero as a starting point, was utilised so that the significance of this advancement could be determined through its application. The assumption underlying the null hypothesis was that the two tests were identical to one another. **Graph 1: vocabulary scores**



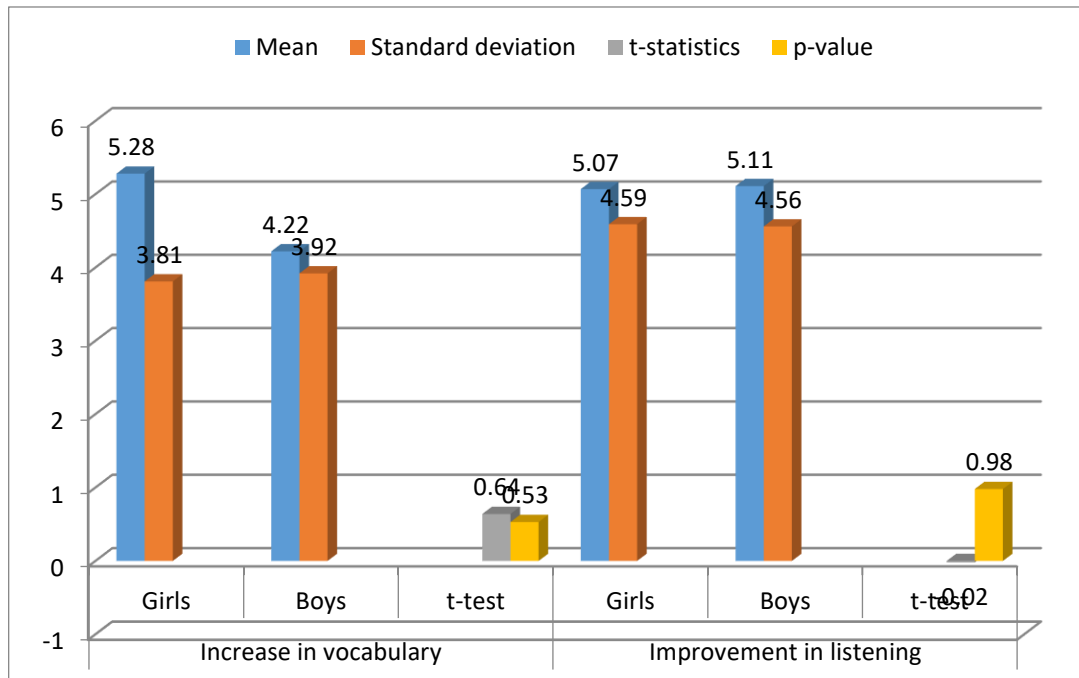
In response to the investigation conducted to see the impact of commercials on listening comprehension, it was decided to use the same strategy to examine the influence of commercials on learners' listening comprehension skills. The paired t-test was carried out once more in order to determine whether or not there was a discernible difference in the scores of the students who were a part of the experimental group regarding their listening comprehension. It was exactly the same as when it was used to determine whether or not there was a change in their vocabulary scores. Graph 2 shows the results for the listening skill, which are presented in the following paragraphs. **Graph 2: listening comprehension score**



However, the post-test scores for the experimental group were about 77, which was higher than 75. The pre-test scores for the control group were around 74, which was lower than the pre-test scores for the experimental group, which were around 72. The hypotheses tested in Graph 2 stem from the discussion above and assume that the difference in mean listening scores between the two tests is zero. Graph 2 displays the results of testing based on this hypothesis. This notion serves as the basis for the examinations. This would imply that the learners' exposure to advertising had no impact on their capacity to grasp what they were exposed to. This would be consistent with the fact that the learners were able to comprehend

what they were hearing regardless of whether or not they were exposed to commercials. Given the information that has been presented up to this point, it is quite clear that neither the experimental group nor the control group can subscribe to the null hypothesis. In the first case, the mean of the differences is greater than 5 points, whereas in the second case, it is less than 1 point. Both cases have a larger value than the other. Because of this, the null hypothesis can no longer be accepted. In conclusion, the capacity of those in the experimental group to comprehend what they were hearing improved, whilst the ability of those in the control group stayed essentially the same. Boys and girls develop their auditory and language abilities at different rates. The third hypothesis, which investigates whether or not there is a significant difference in how boys and girls can enhance their vocabulary and aural comprehension, was subjected to a variant of the t-test known as the two-sample version. This test was used to determine whether or not the third hypothesis was valid.

Graph 3: vocabulary and listening comprehension in terms of gender difference



According to the graph that can be found above, in spite of the fact that the mean increase in vocabulary scores for girls is greater (5.28), on average, than it is for boys (4.22), A p-value of 0.53 implies that the two groups are not statistically different. In a similar vein, the fact that the p-value for this particular statistic is more than 0.05 suggests that there is not a significant difference in the methods in which boys and girls improve their scores when it comes to listening comprehension. As a result of incorporating commercials into the EFL classroom, the students' scores on listening comprehension and vocabulary acquisition improved. On the other hand, when it came to the learners' growth in vocabulary and listening comprehension, Boys and girls had similar vocabulary and listening comprehension gains.

Discussion

This is due to the fact that they would come to the realisation that having subject-matter expertise is not the single most significant factor in acquiring a second language. Tuzi & colleagues (2012) conducted an analysis to determine how much of an impact these commercials had on ESL and EFL learning. They made the discovery that the commercials have inherent properties that make them beneficial for language acquisition. One of these qualities is their quick duration, which ranges from 30 to 50 seconds. Moreover, they said that commercials were generated in various English-speaking nations, resulting in the possibility of having access to a range of English dialects. They came to the conclusion that employing commercials helped learners greatly increase their language acquisition. In addition, Davis (1997) and Lee (1994) discovered that commercial-exposed children performed significantly better on attentiveness tests than commercial-exposed children. In addition to this, they asserted that students had a higher level of interest in learning a foreign language. They are referring to the contextual clues provided by commercials that assist learners in understanding their linguistic meaning. According to Ozdemir (2007), it is preferable for educators to use the original goal and cultural features of advertising to teach critical thinking and culture rather than the other way around. Aspects of commercials' role in the teaching and learning process were

also highlighted by Fox (2002). All of the researches that have been undertaken on the impacts of commercials on language acquisition have shown that they significantly influence vocabulary development, listening comprehension, and a variety of other abilities. The study aimed to determine whether or not the commercials may help students improve their vocabulary acquisition and listening comprehension. The statistical analysis found that students' overall performance greatly increased as a result of their exposure to advertising, particularly in terms of their ability to acquire new vocabulary and to comprehend what they heard. However, no significant distinction was observed in the results between boys and girls in relation to the specified improvement in both of the abilities studied.

Conclusion

The findings of the study have been taken into consideration by a diverse range of stakeholders, including educators, textbook authors, course syllabus designers, and teachers of English to English Languages (EFL). As a helpful teaching technique in EFL classes, EFL teachers may suggest to their pupils that they watch ads. This will make it possible for students to efficiently acquire English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Students would realise that it's not enough to simply comprehend the information in a foreign language; they also need to learn how to correctly interpret it and respond appropriately. This is due to the fact that they would come to the realisation that having subject-matter expertise is not the single most significant factor in acquiring a second language. Instead of relying entirely on textbooks, teachers can help students become more independent by learning how to demonstrate how to improve a variety of language areas. This will allow teachers to lessen their reliance on textbooks. And so, the researcher proposes that viewing commercials may be useful to learners' pronunciation, speaking ability, and accent development, and that additional study should be carried out on this.

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