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## The Effect of Deliberate Practice Strategy on Iraqi EFL Pupils' Performance at Recognition Level

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### Abstract

There are many demotivating factors that affect learning a foreign language. The available literature indicates that researchers in the Iraqi context are more interested in investigating the motivation factors than the demotivation ones. Thus, limited research has been conducted to examine the demotivation factors and their resources in Iraq for EFL learners. Therefore, this study attempts to shed light on these factors among EFL learners and the way to reduce through by using language awareness-enhancing strategies (LAES). The study particularly aims to examine the effect of using LAES on reducing or eliminating the demotivating sources. For this reason, a quantitative quasi-experimental study was designed. A 5-week course was implemented on 100 purposefully selected participants from the department of English, College of Arts, University of Anbar. The course provided the EFL learners with strategies related to enhancing their awareness for

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better foreign language (FL) learning, specifically, learning English. A questionnaire was conducted on the students and statistical analysis was implemented. The results show that these LAES had little or no influence on the learners in terms of reducing these demotivating factors. Therefore, it is suggested that LAES intervention could be integrated with other pedagogical approaches to be more effective in its applicability.

**Keywords:** demotivation factors, language awareness enhancing strategies, Iraqi EFL learners, EFL classrooms, university students

## اثر استراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة على اداء طالبات المرحلة الاعدادية متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية العراقيين بوصفها لغة اجنبية في مستوى الادراك

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### المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير استراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة على أداء الطالبات في مستوى الادراك في مهارتي الاستماع والقراءة في وصف اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى: (1) الكشف عن تأثير استراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة على أداء التلاميذ الدارسين للغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيين، (2) الكشف عن تأثير استراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة على أداء طلبة المرحلة الاعدادية العراقيين متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة أجنبية عند مستوى الادراك في الاختبارات القبلية والبعدية لتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة، تمت صياغة عدد من الفرضيات من قبل الباحثة: (1) لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية التي تدرس باستراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة، ومتوسط درجات المجموعة الضابطة التي تدرس بالطريقة التقليدية في الاختبار البعدي. (2) لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات الطلبة للمجموعة التجريبية التي تدرس باستراتيجيات الممارسة المتعمدة في الاختبار القبلي والبعدي لمستوى الادراك. وقد تم تكييف تصميم

البحث الكمي. ولتحقيق أهداف هذه الدراسة والتحقق من صحة فرضياتها، تم اختيار عينة عشوائية من ستين تلميذاً من الصف الرابع الإعدادي العلمي خلال الفصل الدراسي الأول من العام الدراسي 2024-2025. ثلاثون تلميذاً للمجموعة التجريبية التي دُرست باستخدام استراتيجية الممارسة المتعمدة، وثلاثون تلميذاً للمجموعة الضابطة التي دُرست بالطريقة التقليدية. تم تحليل محتوى المواد التعليمية، ثم تم بناء اختبارين قبلي وبعدي للأداء. ثم تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً و ظهرت النتائج التالية: 1 ) توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات المجموعة التجريبية ومتوسط درجات المجموعة الضابطة في الاختبار القبلي والبعدي. 2 ) توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في متوسط درجات تحصيل الطلبة للمجموعة التجريبية في مستوى الإدراك في الاختبار البعدي. وجدت الباحثة أن استراتيجية الممارسة المتعمدة المقترحة يمكن أن تكون أسلوباً تعليمياً فعالاً لتحسين أداء التلاميذ في المرحلة الإعدادية الدارسين للغة الإنجليزية العراقيين كلغة أجنبية. بالاعتماد على نتائج الدراسة، قدمت مجموعة من التوصيات كما تم تقديم بعض الاقتراحات لمزيد من البحوث المستقبلية.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** استراتيجية الممارسة المتعمدة، استقصاء، دأرسي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية، مستوى الإدراك، الاداء، الفرضيات، دلالة.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language can be difficult for pupils to learn; hence, English teachers try to find new methods or strategies to teach and practice the related skills and how to develop them. Learning to speak any new language is a difficult task, but not impossible. For example, the ability to speak appropriately with proper fluency can be achieved when many language oral skills find their way for practice and learning in an EFL classroom (Richard, 2006). The English language needs qualified teachers who have the abilities and information that are to be gained through a theoretical study and practical application in real teaching. So teachers must carry out effective teaching techniques to help pupils understand and master English (Moyer, 2001).

Additionally, traditional teaching methods often emphasize passive learning, with teachers rushing to finish the course material or textbook for standardized testing due to time constraints that don't accommodate individual learning needs, regardless of whether pupils' language skills have improved or not. Consequently, educators have developed various strategies to improve pupils' performance and promote active learning. One of

these strategies is the “Deliberate Practice Strategy,” which focuses on goal-oriented practice, mastery, and deeper understanding of language skills for better outcomes rather than just memorization (Ericsson, 2002).

Due to a lack of practice, pupils frequently find it difficult to read and spell written materials in the English language because they are not practicing the language enough, which hinders their ability to use it effectively (Staal, 2000). A pupil’s listening ability is one of the challenges that many EFL pupils face; therefore, it is affected by several factors, including limited exposure to listening activities and practice listening to pupils like audio, tape recorders, etc. (Hadijah, 2018). Therefore, we must implement new strategies, programs, and techniques throughout practical lessons, exposing them to diverse contexts that boost their learning.

This study aims at :

1. Finding out the effect of deliberate practice strategy on EFL Iraqi pupils’ performance .
2. Finding out the effect of deliberate practice strategy on EFL Iraqi pupils’ performance at recognition level .

The study's hypotheses are :

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores on the post-performance exam, who is taught using deliberate practice strategy, and the control group's mean scores, who is taught using a traditional method.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores, who is taught through deliberate practice strategy, and the control group who is taught traditional method in the pre- and post-performance test at the recognition level,

## **1.4 Limits of the Study**

The current study is limited to :

1. Iraqi EFL Fourth scientific branch preparatory pupils at Al-Shaimaa Preparatory School for Girls, in Al-Dour city, Salah-Aldeen Governorate, during the first semester of the academic year 2024/2025.
2. Unit one, Unit two, and Unit three, in “English for Iraq” text book.
3. The model of Ericsson et al. (1993).

The study can be beneficial to :

1. EFL teachers at schools or universities, because it will provide them with a chance to change their traditional methods and techniques for teaching English and also assist them

in effectively presenting the instructional material by explaining the steps that must be followed and how to apply them in the teaching process.

2. EFL pupils aim to enhance and master their performance in listening and reading skills by enhancing their motivation, engagement, and interaction through the implementation of the DP strategy.

3. Curriculum designers and educators will assist them in creating new tasks, exercises, and activities to incorporate into their curriculum. And also, it has educational value since it will be helpful to pupils and will provide additional information about the use of deliberate practice as an interactive strategy in teaching the four language skills.

4. Researchers who are looking forward to investigate methods to improve pupils' performance, and give up the traditional methods of teaching that depend entirely on teachers, also known as "teacher- centered teaching".

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 The Concept of Deliberate Practice Strategy**

Anders Ericsson, a psychology professor at Florida State University, is the first to develop the notion of deliberate practice strategy (DPS). He and his colleagues look for effective training exercises and activities that help pupils get better; and thus, they can reach expert levels of performance in a variety of areas. Repetitive cognitive and motor skill performance, a structured feedback system to enable correction, and more practice chances until a satisfactory or expert level is reached should all be part of DPS (Edwards, Chamunyonga, & Clarke , 2018).

Ericsson (2000) defines the term DPS as “ practice activities which are designed by the teacher that the pupils can engage in between lessons with the teacher” (p.368). He also, states that these activities are very important for enhancing performance, and that starting and continuing practice take a lot of personal work. Furthermore, DPS exercises are carried out on a regular basis, and the quantity of practice is closely correlated with the performance level. Deliberate practice (DP), according to experts, is a special kind of practice that is methodical and intentional, demands concentrated attention, and is carried out with the express purpose of enhancing performance.

### **2.2 Essential Components of a Deliberate Practice Strategy**

#### **1. Motivation**

Motivation is a critical factor in the effectiveness of DPS. Motivated pupils are more likely to engage in practice regularly, which is essential for improvement. High motivation helps them overcome obstacles and discouragement when progress is slow. When pupils find joy in the practice itself, their intrinsic motivation increases. Motivation

leads the setting of specific goals that provide direction for practice (Ericsson et al., 1993).

## **2. Concentration**

Concentration plays a crucial role in DPS, which is a highly structured activity which aimed at improving performance in a specific domain. It allows pupils to focus on specific skills or techniques that they are trying to improve. This focused attention helps in identifying weaknesses and making necessary adjustments. High levels of concentration lead to more effective practice sessions. When pupils are fully engaged, they are more likely to absorb feedback and make meaningful changes (Macnamara, Moreau, & Hambrick, 2016).

## **3. Teacher**

Teacher plays a vital role in facilitating deliberate practice, helping pupils develop skills through structured and focused effort. He/ She helps pupils set specific, achievable goals that guide their practice, and provide a roadmap for skill development, then break down complex tasks into manageable components. Teachers create practice activities that are aligned with pupils' needs and skill level. They incorporate diverse teaching methods to engage in different learning styles, and keep practice interesting (Hattie, 2009).

## **4. Tasks**

The role of tasks in DP is essential for effective skill development. Tasks should target particular skills of performance. This specificity helps practitioners focus on areas that need improvement rather than engaging in rote practice. Effective tasks often involve repetition of specific skills, but they should also incorporate variations to prevent being slow and encourage adaptability in practice (Ericsson, 2006).

## **5. Immediate Feedback**

Immediate feedback is the cornerstone of DP, significantly enhancing the learning process, and skill acquisition. It allows practitioners to identify and correct mistakes in real-time. This is essential for refining techniques and preventing the reinforcement of incorrect habits. Positive feedback reinforces correct actions, and helps to solidify effective techniques. Receiving immediate feedback can boost motivation. Immediate feedback increases self-awareness, allowing practitioners to better understand their strengths and weaknesses. This awareness is vital for setting realistic goals and identifying areas for further practice (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

## **6. Repeated Performance**

Repeated performance is a fundamental component of DP, playing a crucial role in skill acquisition and mastery. It helps pupils to practice specific skills multiple times, that

lead to refinements in technique and fulfillment. Through repetition, pupils can boost confidence. Therefore, one can perform a skill accurately, reliably reduce anxiety, and improve performance under pressure. Repeated performance creates a cycle of practice and feedback. Each repetition can incorporate feedback from previous attempts, which lead to continuous improvement (Ericsson, 2006).

### **2.3 The Role of Teacher in Deliberate Practice Strategy**

The following roles of teacher in DPS are as follows :

1. The teacher plays a crucial and difficult role in this strategy, emphasizing the proper instructional elements, creating a positive learning environment, and providing insightful feedback (Farndon, 2021).
2. Breaking down the new strategy into small chunks that can be practiced separately to help teachers become more accessible. Instructors could get practice by posing one-on-one questions in a series of more difficult ones (Farndon, 2021).
- 3- Teacher in DPS is a facilitator who provides insight into how the gap between teacher actions and pupils outcomes can be narrowed, and gives a clear understanding of what practices are effective in the language learning that teachers can anticipate the barriers pupils will face and encourage them to engage in high-quality practices which are more likely to lead to high performance (Wiseman, 2021)
- 4- A teacher in DPS plays a comparable role to a coach during a sporting event. At the beginning of each session, the teacher gives pupils a task that is both doable and difficult, offers opportunity for practice, gives feedback, allows for repetition, and emphasizes the value of motivation and focus (Altuwairesh, 2021).
- 5- A teacher who understands what constitutes DPS in foreign language classroom has the ability to analyze the effectiveness of pupils' actions, and also, the effectiveness of her/his own planning, teaching, and managing according to the practice that s/he is able to encourage in pupils. In turn, a teacher should discipline, praise, and respond to pupil's questions (Wiseman, 2021).

### **2.4 The Role of Student in Deliberate Practice Strategy**

Pupils are at the center when it comes to the importance of being involved in DPS. This active participation has been deemed crucial for implementing deliberate pedagogical practices. Incorporating the principles of deliberate practice into their teaching methods not only has the potential to inspire in pupils about their self-improvement, but it also has a strong plan for pupil empowerment. This means that pupils are not just educated by someone else; they thereby seize the responsibility for their own growth, obtain methods that may help them to change their minds, take control of their situation, and practice in such a way that they enlarge their possibilities for improvement ( Ericsson, 2020).

### **2.5 The Concept of Performance**

Wettstein (2002) states that performance can be interpreted as the level of stakeholder satisfaction. In addition, performance refers to the active participation and clarification of

proficiency in real ways in the classroom, by emphasizing the application of knowledge rather than just memorization. Therefore, the idea of performance in language teaching is focusing on what pupils can do with their knowledge and skills, that leading to a change from a knowledge-based to an application-based method in education (Brown, 2006).

## **2.6 Performance Improvement Through Deliberate Practice Strategy**

DPS is based on the idea that expert performance is gained over time and that to improve performance, pupils need to be able to find the right training tasks that they can master in a way that makes sense to them. DPS is the learning process that involves determining which sub-skills need the most work and practicing them. However, DP is a kind of training that increases pupils' overall proficiency in a learning area by allowing them to practice specific skills while being aware that they are freely doing a component sub-skill. In order to be effective, DP needs to be focused on a particular learning goal, provide multiple opportunities for practice and feedback (often five to ten), and provide enough time for reflection and debriefing of the content that has been taught (Ericsson, 2004).

According to Herring (2015), practice is essential for improving interpreting proficiency, but it doesn't always provide the desired results or happen as rapidly as we would like. Actually, studies have indicated that although time spent on a task is crucial, practice quality is typically a more reliable indicator of performance gain than quantity. While Ericsson (2000) states that pupils who are more likely to improve their skills when they are given defined assignments, receive feedback, and have plenty of opportunities for repetition, and are motivated to do so.

## **2.7 The Relationship between Deliberate Practice Strategy and Pupils' Performance at recognition Levels in listening and reading Skills**

**In listening skill;** like, drawing conclusions which are demonstrated by asking pupils to draw conclusions while listening to audio stories, or by asking them to understand what is said through looking beyond the literal meaning of a series of brief statements (10–25 words) and asking them to draw conclusions from what is stated. Asking pupils to pinpoint an audio story's core topic helps them identify it. Asking questions about the definitions of terms as they appear in the audio extract helps listeners understand vocabulary. Content summarization involves asking pupils to write a brief paragraph (10–20 words) summarizing the information in a brief audio tale extract. They can do this alone or in pairs (Rost, 2024).

**In reading skill;** teachers are aware that mastering specific skills is not enough to achieve reading competency, so pupils need guidance and practice to develop and refine their reading and writing skills. Therefore, with the right support, they can train their minds and grow their self-confidence to become strong, capable readers and writers. Teacher points to the importance of ensuring that pupils should engage in regular reading practice with connected text. Thus, when pupils consistently spend substantial amounts of time reading texts at their appropriate level, they can apply and integrate skills learned



while strengthening vocabulary, increasing fluency, and comprehension (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Experimental Design**

Research design is the structure of the research. It is a planned process that helps to come up with hypotheses, test them, and get useful information about how dependent and independent variables are related (Best and Khan, 2006). The researcher uses a descriptive quantitative method to conduct this study. Aliaga, and Gunderson (2002) define quantitative research methods as the explaining of an issue or phenomenon by gathering data in numerical form and analyzing with the aid of mathematical methods in particular statistics.

#### **3.2 Population and Sample**

According to Richards and Schmitt (2010), a population is any set of items, pupils, etc., that can share some common and observable characteristics from which a sample can be taken. The population of the current study consists of EFL Iraqi preparatory pupils of the fourth scientific branch from preparatory schools for girls in Al-Dour city. The total number of the fourth year pupils' population is (86) distributed in three preparatory schools for girls, as shown below in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*The Population of the Study*

| <b>NO.</b>   | <b>Preparatory Schools</b>                              | <b>Pupils' Number</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1</b>     | <b>Al-Dour Preparatory School for Girls</b>             | <b>34</b>             |
| <b>2</b>     | <b>Al-Sirraj Al-Muneer Preparatory School for Girls</b> | <b>30</b>             |
| <b>3</b>     | <b>Al-Sharqia Preparatory School for Girls</b>          | <b>22</b>             |
| <b>Total</b> |                                                         | <b>86</b>             |

While, Gay et al. (2010) define sample as the process of selecting a set of pupils for a study from a population that they represent the larger group from which they are selected. The sample of the current study consists of (60) pupils, have been randomly selected by the researcher from fourth year (scientific branch) at Al-Shaimaa Preparatory School for Girls in Al-Dour city in Salah Al-Deen Government at the academic year 2024-2025. Pupils are distributed into two sections (A,B ). Section (A) of (30) pupils have been

randomly chosen to be an experimental group (EG), and section (B) of (30) pupils have been randomly selected to be a control group (CG), as shown below in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*The Sample of the Study*

| Group        | Section | Number | Pilot study |
|--------------|---------|--------|-------------|
| Experimental | A       | 30     | 8           |
| Control      | B       | 30     | 8           |
| Total        |         | 60     | 16          |

### 3.3 Construction of the Post-Test

To measure the level of success of the experiment, the instrument includes preparing a performance post-test. Linn (2008) defines test as a method which is used to determine the pupils' performance in order to complete specific tasks or show mastery of a skill or knowledge of content. While Brown & Abeywickrama (2010) state that tests are used to measure unit, the material that is covered in the curriculum, and the development of the pupils during a classroom lesson in a specific time. The test consists of four questions. Q1 is a recognition question to measure pupils' ability to understand listening text. Q2 is a recognition question which deals with a reading comprehension question where pupils are asked to answer according to their understanding of the passage. Q3 is a recognition question consisting of five items where pupils are asked to do as required to measure pupils' ability in applying grammatical rules and functions. Q4 is a recognition question which consists of five items where the pupils are asked to choose the correct alternative to measure pupils' knowledge of vocabulary.

### 3.4 Validity of the Post Test

Validity is the most important and complex criterion of an effective test to assess the research results that is used by researchers as it is concerned with the truth of the test. Gronlund (1998) explains that validity is the extent of appropriate, meaningful, and useful inferences that are made from assessment results for the purpose of assessment. Brown (2010) defines validity as the degree to which the test really measures what it is supposed or intended to measure. There are two essential types of validity: face validity and construct validity.

#### 3.4.1 Face Validity

Richards and Schmitt (2010) explain that face validity is the extent to which a test measures the knowledge or skills that it claims to examine, and its accuracy depends on

an observer's subjective assessment. As a result, to accomplish the face validity of the test and find out whether its items are appropriate for assessing the pupils' performance, the test is exposed to a jury member of specialists in the field of methodology and linguistics who have 100% agreement on the questions of the test and are acceptable for pupils.

### **3.4.2 Construct Validity**

Construct validity can be defined as the property of a test measurement that actually measures the constructs they are designed to measure (Hardré, et al. 2007). It can be achieved empirically through finding out the correlation among items on the test (Salkind & Rasmussen, 2010).

### **3.5 Reliability of the Post-Test**

Reliability is one of the characteristics of a good test. A test would be reliable if its degree of accuracy stays stable and consistent each time it is conducted under the same conditions and for the same sample of pupils (Veram & Beard, 1981).

According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the reliability of the test can be calculated by using Cronbach's Alpha formula, which is a formula used to measure the internal accuracy statistically. It tests how closely a group of items are associated with each other. Cronbach's coefficient value varies from (0) to (1). The following table shows the level of internal consistency of Cronbach's Alpha.

**Table 3**

*Level of Internal Consistency by Using Cronbach's Alpha Formula*

| <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b> | <b>Internal Consistency</b>          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>&gt; 0.90</b>        | <b>Very highly reliable</b>          |
| <b>0.80–0.90</b>        | <b>Highly reliable</b>               |
| <b>0.70–0.79</b>        | <b>Reliable</b>                      |
| <b>0.60–0.69</b>        | <b>Marginally/Minimally reliable</b> |
| <b>&lt; 0.60</b>        | <b>Unacceptably low reliability</b>  |

The obtained result after the application of Cronbach's Alpha formula is (0.87) which is considered acceptable.

### **3.6 The Pilot Study**

Pilot testing is the process of conducting a test for a small group of examinees to assess the suitability and effectiveness of the instrument used in the study, ascertain how long it takes to answer each question, how hard the questions are, and evaluate the level

of difficulty and discrimination power of the test before the final conducting of the instrument (Richards & Schmitt, 2010).

The pilot study is not only to answer a specific research question, but to indicate if there are any shortcomings or defects that need to be modified before administer the test items in their final form, and also to prevent a researcher from starting a study without enough knowledge of the method offered to avoid making mistakes in a study (Polit & Beck, 2017). Thus, the purpose of the pilot study can be as follows:

1. To find out the clarity of the test instructions.
2. To estimate the exact time required for pupils to answer the questions of the test.
3. Ensure the reliability of the test by using Cronbach's Alpha and test-retest formulas.
4. To analyze the items of the test to detect their level of difficulty, and discrimination power according to the pupils' answers.

As a result, conducting a pilot study is strongly advised for the current study. For this aim, in this study, the researcher has administered a test on 16 pupils, who are chosen randomly from the fourth scientific class at Al-Shaimaa Preparatory School for Girls on the 20th of November, 2024. On the 18th of December, 2024, the researcher applies the test-retest procedure. The chosen sample is subjected to a post- performance test. The researcher then collects and corrects the papers herself. The results suggest that the time required to answer questions items is between 50 and 60 minutes. The instructions of the test are clear and practical to follow and to be achieved.

### **3.7 Analysis of Items**

The following two crucial features are ascertained by analyzing the test items: discrimination power and difficulty level:

#### **3.7.1 Difficulty Level**

The difficulty level (DL) is specified as the proportion of the pupils who replied correctly to each item (Backhoff, Larrzolo, and Rosas, 2000). Item difficulty refers to the extent to which an item appears to be 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 item difficulty varying between (0.15) and (0.85) (Brown, 2010). It is found that the current test items' DL ranges from **(0.31)** to **(0.84)**.

#### **3.7.2 Discrimination Power**

According to Alderson et. al. (1995, p. 80), discrimination power (DP) is defined as "calculating the degree to a particular item's results of the entire test". This means that an object is deemed to have weak power of discrimination if it is correctly scored by high-

skilled pupils as well as low-skilled pupils. Item discrimination refers to the degree to which an object makes a difference between good and poor test-takers. An object has good power of discrimination if it collects the right answers from the good pupils and the wrong answers from the bad pupils. It is worth noting that the high power of discrimination will be close to (1.0), and no power of discrimination will be close to 0 (Brown, 2010). The obtained results indicate that the test items' DP ranges from **(0.28)** to **(0.81)**.

### **3.8 Final Administration of Post- Test**

The performance post-test is administered to both groups, EG and CG, after obtaining its validity and reliability and confirming the administration of the pilot study. The researcher gives the test-takers the test papers, and they must carefully read the instructions and finish their responses on the test sheets within the allotted time. Later on, the test papers are collected in order to be scored by the researcher herself.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **4.1 Presentation or the Results**

The following statistical analysis is performed on the pupils' answers to the test items:

#### **4.1.1 Results Related to the first Hypothesis**

To analyze the data related to the first hypothesis, namely: *There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group who is taught by deliberate practice strategy, and the mean scores of the control group who is taught by traditional method in post-performance test*, the independent sample test has been used. Therefore, the first aim of the study namely: *Finding out the effect of deliberate practice strategy on EFL Iraqi pupils' performance*, will be achieved.

According to the following results in Table 4, the mean score of the experimental group is (79.033) and standard deviation is (13.842). While the mean score of the control group is (67.500) and the standard deviation is (15.350). The calculated t-value (3.056) is higher than the tabulated t-value (2.00) with a degree of freedom (58) at a level of significance (0.05).

Observing the values of T-calculated above, it is found that the calculated T-value (3.056) is much greater than the tabulated T-value of the field (2.00), and from this it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group, who is taught according to the traditional method, and the mean scores of the experimental group, who is taught by using deliberate practice strategy, for the benefit of experimental group. So, the first hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 4**

*Means, Standard Deviation, and T-Values of the Two Groups at the Performance Post-test*

| Group | N. | Mean   | S.D.   | T-Value    |           | DF | Level of significance |
|-------|----|--------|--------|------------|-----------|----|-----------------------|
|       |    |        |        | Calculated | Tabulated |    |                       |
| EG    | 30 | 79.033 | 13.842 | 3.056      | 2.00      | 58 | 0.05                  |
| CG    | 30 | 67.500 | 15.350 |            |           |    |                       |

#### 4.1.2 Results Related to the Second Hypothesis

To analyze the data related to the second hypothesis namely: *There is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group who is taught by deliberate practice strategy in pre and post- performance tests at recognition level*, the paired samples T-test statistics have been used. Consequently, the related aim of the study namely: *Finding out the effect of deliberate practice strategy on EFL Iraqi pupils' performance at recognition level*, will be achieved

According to the following results in Table 5, the mean score of the experimental group in the pretest recognition level is (41.466) and standard deviation is (7.682). While the mean score of the experimental group in the post-test is (46.833) and the standard deviation is (7.538). The calculated t-value (7.373) is higher than the tabulated t-value (1.69) with a degree of freedom (29) at a level of significance (0.05). It can be inferred that there is a significant difference between experimental group's performance at recognition level in the pre and post-performance tests. So, the second hypothesis is rejected and the related aim is achieved.

**Table 5**

*Means Scores, Standard Deviation, and T-Values of the Two Pupil' Performance at Recognition Level in Pre and Post Tests*

| Type of Test | No. of EG | Mean   | S.D.  | T-Value    |           | DF | Level of significance |
|--------------|-----------|--------|-------|------------|-----------|----|-----------------------|
|              |           |        |       | Calculated | Tabulated |    |                       |
| Pre          | 30        | 41.466 | 7.682 | 7.373      | 1.69      | 29 | 0.05                  |
| Post         | 30        | 46.833 | 7.538 |            |           |    |                       |

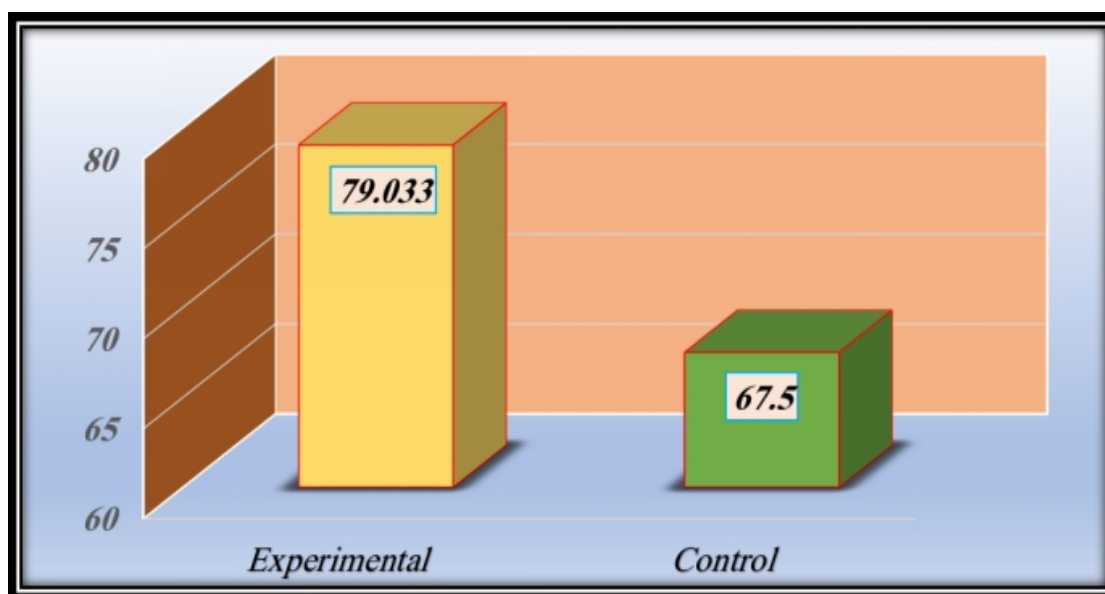
#### 4.2 Discussion of the Obtained Results

The findings from the independent sample t-test of the first hypothesis provide compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of DPS in enhancing the performance of EFL Iraqi pupils. The mean score of the experimental group (79.033) significantly surpasses that of the control group (67.500) as shown in Figure 4, indicating that pupils exposed to DPS have achieved better outcomes in their post-performance test.

The calculated t-value of (3.056) exceeds the critical t-value of (2.00). This result not only indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups but also confirms that the observed difference is unlikely to have occurred due to chance. The rejection of the first hypothesis suggests that deliberate practice is effective in promoting better learning outcomes compared to traditional teaching method.

**Figure 1**

*Mean Scores of the Two Groups at the Post Performance Test*

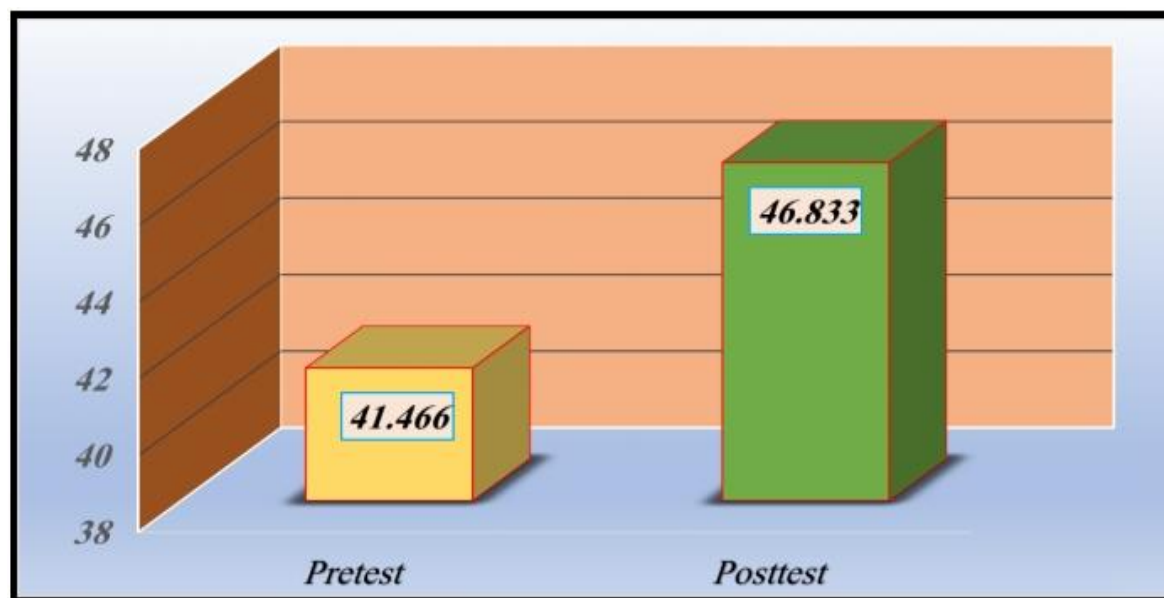


The findings from the paired samples T-test of the second hypothesis provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of DPS at the recognition level of EFL Iraqi pupils. The experimental group has showed a significant improvement in their mean scores from the pretest (41.466) to the post-test (46.833), as shown in Figure 2, indicating that the deliberate practice strategy positively impacted their recognition performance.

The calculated t-value of (7.373) far exceeds the tabulated t-value of (1.69). This substantial difference suggests that the improvement in scores is not due to random chance, but rather a result of DPS implemented during this study. The rejection of the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no significant difference between pre and posttest scores, reinforces the conclusion that this instructional strategy effectively enhances recognition level.

**Figure 2**

*Mean Scores of the Experimental Group in Pre and Post- Performance Tests at the Recognition Level*



The obtained results of the current study show that the performance of the experimental group who has been taught by using DPS is better than that of control group who has been taught by using conventional method. It is concluded that DPS has an effect on the performance of the pupils in four skills at recognition levels in listening and reading skills, and can be attributed to the role of DPS in providing pupils with opportunities to participate actively in class activities and tasks, improving pupils' confidence in their learning ability through motivation, and strengthening classroom relationships through working in groups or pairs which allows pupils to express their feelings, emotions, and thoughts. DPS enhances pupils' thinking by practicing, understanding, and memorizing exercises.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The current study's findings allow for the formation of the following conclusions:

1. Pupils in the current study's experimental group responded positively to DPS, demonstrating a high level of motivation, interest, and interaction.
2. According to pupils' performance in the post-test, the use of DPS help them to expand their abilities at production level through creating new ideas, developing thoughts, and cognitive engagement.



3. DPS is beneficial, appropriate, and effective in improving English language skills of EFL preparatory school pupils, and developing their performance at recognition level in listening and reading skills.
4. Training and practice activities that assist students in overcoming potential challenges might improve their skills in the classroom. Giving students greater encouragement and feedback encourages them to engage and contribute to class discussions.
5. DPS demands more practice, exercises, and activities in the classroom to enhance pupils to share information, participate, and can answer the questions that are related to recognition level freely.
6. Teachers and pupils should be focused on the cooperative activities, brainstorming, and problem-solving in the classroom including both; student-to-student, and student-to-teacher interactions for its advantages in EFL learning.

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## **Appendix**

### **Pupils' Performance Posttest**

#### **Q1/ Listening Comprehension (20M)**

##### **Listen to the following text :**

At my school, we study a lot of subjects. My favorite subjects are history and geography. In history, we learn about life in the past. It is very interesting. In geography, we learn about the countries and the capitals of the world. We also learn about the weather, oceans, mountains and other topics related to the planet. In our English lessons we learn how to speak, write and understand English. I like this subject because I want to be a pilot when I am older and pilots need to speak English. Maths is a very difficult subject for me. I am not very good at calculating numbers. My teacher's math is really good, but I still don't like the subject. P.E. is a really fun subject. We play different sports, like basketball, football, and hockey. We even have a swimming pool in the school, but it is quite small.

##### **Now answer the following questions as required :**

1. His favorite subjects are history and geography. (T/ F)
2. Do they play sports ? (Yes/ No)
3. The narrator wants to be a teacher. (T/ F)
4. English is the difficult subject for him. (T/ F)
5. Is there a swimming pool in the school ? (Yes/ No)

#### **Q2/ Reading comprehension**

##### **Read this text carefully: (20M)**

A man was travelling abroad in a small red car. One day, he left the car to go shopping. When he came back, the car's roof was badly damaged. Some boys told him that an elephant had damaged it. The man did not believe them, but they took him to a

circus which was near there. The owner of the elephant said 'I'm very sorry! My elephant has a big round red chair. And he thought that your car was his chair, and he sat on it!' then he gave the man a letter, telling him that he was sorry and he would pay for all the damages. When the man got back to his country, the customs officers would not believe his story and said "You sold your new car there, and bought this old one!" Then he showed them the letter from the circus man, and they believed him.

**Now answer or complete the following questions:**

1. Why did the man leave his car?
2. The car's roof was badly damaged. (True/ False)
3. Did the officers believe him when he showed them the letter?
4. Where did the boys take him?
5. The man was travelling in a ----- . (Complete)

**Grammar and Function**

**Q3/ Do as required. (10M)**

1. She goes shopping every Thursday. (make a question)
2. John was walking in the street when a boy (stop) him. (Correct the verb)
3. I couldn't get on the plane because I (forget) my passport. (past perfect)
4. (you /see) a tiger ? ( make a question with 'ever')
5. are/ Could/ you/ classes/ me/ tell/ how/ the/ large/ ? (Re-order)

**Vocabulary**

**Q4/ Choose the suitable answer: (10M)**

1. The official language of India is (Urdu/ Hindi/ Greek).
2. Don't play this game again. It is (fun/ easy/ dangerous).
3. (Border/ Origin/ Glacier) means the separation between two countries.
4. Children need good ( education/ food/ both of them).
5. He takes (a care/ an exam/ a report) to be tested on what he has learned.