

The Effects of *English File* Coursebook on Enhancing Listening Comprehension Skills in the IELTS Proficiency Test: The Case of Kurdish EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the intricate realm of language learning, with a specific focus on the challenging domain of listening skills for Kurdish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners. Listening, an essential component of language learning alongside speaking, reading, and writing, poses a significant cognitive challenge for individuals acquiring a second language, particularly English. Using a pre-experimental one-group study design, this study aims to uncover the impact of English course books on the enhancement of listening skills among Kurdish EFL learners. In pursuit of this objective, a group of 24 first-year university students, comprising 14 females and 10 males, engaged in both pre-tests and post-tests to evaluate their listening proficiency, and conducting the survey questionnaire. Employing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis, the research utilized various statistical tests to explore the effects of supplementary materials and the perspectives of learners on the *English File* course book. Furthermore, a Paired Samples T-Test was employed to measure the degree of change between the pre-test and post-test scores. Remarkably, the findings from this analysis suggest that the use of *English File* course books led to improved listening skills among Kurdish EFL learners. These improvements are vital, emphasizing the significance of considering individual learning journey. Notably, gender-based differences in perceptions were explored, and the results revealed a surprising consistency in the perceptions of male and female EFL learners within the Kurdish context. These insights contribute to our understanding of language acquisition and underscore the importance of tailored instructional interventions in enhancing listening skills.

KEYWORDS: Language learning, listening skills, EFL learners, listening for gist, listening for keywords

1. INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most cognitively challenging skills that many EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners face while learning another foreign language. Learners must listen carefully to the utterance to comprehend what is being said.

Since it is difficult to understand the utterances, students must practice listening skills through various daily activities, namely, podcasts, videos, music, and movies. According to Nunan (1998: 101), listening is one of the fundamental language skills alongside speaking, reading, and writing, and considering them are both input skills with reading, thus, it is significantly important in second language acquisition. In addition, during the listening process, there is a cognitive procedure that goes through different stages for instance: decoding, understanding, interpreting, and evaluating (Wah, 2019: 883). Moreover, listening is a crucial skill in language learning because it

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is an input skill through which learners attempt to comprehend the meaning and then it goes to different stages from meanings to narrow listening (Krashen, 1996: 97).

In the context of EFL classrooms, listening skills are particularly significant as they serve as a foundation for other language skills. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012: 3), listening comprehension is a complex process that involves decoding spoken language, understanding meaning, and making inferences. Therefore, fostering effective listening skills is crucial for EFL learners to succeed in various language tasks and real-life communication situations. Research has shown that incorporating listening activities in EFL classrooms can significantly improve students' language proficiency. For instance, Field (2008: 332) found that extensive listening practice positively impacts learners' vocabulary acquisition and grammatical accuracy. Similarly, Vandergrift (2007: 193) emphasized the importance of explicit listening instruction and the use of authentic materials to enhance learners' listening comprehension skills.

In addition to academic research, practical teaching approaches also emphasize the significance of listening skills in EFL classrooms. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) highlights the importance of developing listening skills at different proficiency levels (Europe, 2001). It suggests integrating various listening activities, such as listening to authentic audio materials, engaging in conversations, and participating in group discussions, to enhance learners' listening abilities. Some researchers suggest that learners are required to acquire the learning strategies and tips academically to improve the four English skills. One of the most significant tactics for improving listening skills is an instructional technique that assists learners in overcoming problems, learning difficulties, and obstacles. Moreover, another main purpose is the instructor's motivation to familiarize learners with the listening sub-skills (Wah, 2019: 883). In fact, listening is not a skill born with everyone; learners may be aware of their weaknesses and try to reduce those barriers by using various techniques. Also, teachers should be conscious of different strategies to improve the learner's abilities and skills, as explicit listening may reduce the learner's problems (Gu and Hu, 2018: 1).

Furthermore, there are several strategies for listening skills, for example: listening for details, for specific ideas, listening for gist and many others. In other words, listening consists of three important concepts: the top-

down, the bottom-up, and the interactive process. The top-down is searching for general information in a context, and it is similar to listening for gist. In this stage, listeners attempt to join the sounds to make syllables and words to understand the general information in a context. However, the top-down process is seeking information based on previous knowledge or background information. This may be through guessing, remembering some vocabulary items, concentrating on some specific details, and taking down some notes. On the other hand, the bottom-up process is searching for detailed or specific information in a text. It tries to connect words, sounds, and syllables to create meaning. The final stage in listening skill is interactive processing, a combination of both bottom-up and top-down processes. Learning English as a foreign language may include all three stages of the listening process (Gu and Hu, 2018: 1-2).

Additionally, there are several sub-skills of listening skills based on the learner's purpose. Listening for specific information requires listeners to understand the message through skimming. In this strategy, the learners attempt to seek specific information in a context. Another sub-skill is listening for detailed information where students are challenged to find out the detailed information, such as date, year, and name of places and people. The listening skill also encompasses skimming and scanning tips for comprehending the excerpt (Jin, 2002: 989).

Despite the other two sub-skills, another one is listening for gist which consists of the overall meaning of what is said rather than concentrating on specific items in the audio. In this process, the EFL learners use aural text like news, songs, conversation, and lectures, and it tries to seek the general thematic understanding of a context. Listening for gist is a shallow level of understanding rather than a deep semantic meaning. Besides, listeners do not listen to the whole information that exists in the text, but to the general information that may appear in a context. Listening for gist is the most important sub-skill in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) since many of the L2 texts include listening for general information, especially for the basic language proficiency level (Siegel, 2018: 1).

The present study aims at answering these two questions:

1. Are there gender-based differences in students' perceptions regarding the influence of *English File* coursebook on listening skills?

2. Do instructional interventions impact language proficiency among Kurdish EFL learners?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following literature review section, we look into a comprehensive examination of existing research and scholarly contributions in second language acquisition, with a particular focus on enhancing listening skills among English as Foreign Language learners.

The four English language skills are taught in most EFL and ESL classrooms, therefore, it is worth knowing the difference between them. The receptive skills are listening and reading, whereas the productive skills are speaking and writing (Harmer, 2010, Scrivener, 2010: 259). In the past, the active skills were the productive skills, and the passive skills were the receptive skills. Nowadays, the four skills have a crucial role in terms of learning the English language (Burns and Siegel, 2018).

For beginners, it is crucial to pay attention to listening skills to improve their input skills and to listen as much as possible to various types of audio to make their ears more familiar with different conversations (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). In addition, listening also includes linguistic and non-linguistic competence. Linguistic competence is mostly based on grammatical aspects, while non-linguistic competence is mainly based on psychological and situational aspects (Saricoban, 1999).

Among the proficiency tests such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), listening skills are crucial for success in the exam (British Council, n.d.). The listening section of the IELTS assesses a candidate's ability to understand spoken English in various contexts, such as conversations, monologues, and presentations (IELTS, n.d.). It requires candidates to listen attentively and accurately comprehend the information provided (IELTS, n.d.). Developing strong listening skills involves practising active listening, focusing on key details, and improving one's ability to follow the flow of the conversation (IELTS, n.d.). Additionally, candidates can enhance their listening skills by familiarizing themselves with different accents and speech patterns through regular exposure to English audio materials, such as podcasts, news broadcasts, and movies (British Council, n.d.). By honing their listening skills, candidates can effectively comprehend and respond to the questions in the IELTS listening section, ultimately improving their overall performance in the exam (British Council, n.d.).

As for the English language course book, listening skills play a crucial role in language learning, and the *English*

File series emphasizes the development of these skills (Oxenden et al., 2019). *English File* provides learners with a variety of listening activities that expose them to authentic English language use in different contexts, such as conversations, interviews, and presentations. These activities are designed to improve learners' ability to understand spoken English, recognize key information, and follow the flow of a conversation. By engaging in regular practice with the listening materials provided in *English File*, learners can enhance their listening skills and become more confident in their ability to comprehend and respond to spoken English (Oxenden et al., 2019).

2.1 Significance of Listening

Listening skill was considerably ignored in the past but now, it is as important as the other skills in English language teaching (Mendelsohn, 1994). According to Nunan (1998), listening delivers meaning from verbal and non-verbal actions and it is an active skill in the present day. Therefore, one of its significances is related to communication with others, since comprehension ability is needed to engage in conversations and perform daily talks. Another importance of this skill is that it is the first skill students will master. Listening comes at the first rank in terms of communication skills approximately %40 to 50, and speaking skill comes at the second rank %25 to 30. However, reading comes at the third rank %11 to 16, and the last is writing with nearly %9 (Movva et al., 2022). In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, listening plays a significant role as it is an essential skill for effective communication and language acquisition. In the EFL contexts, where learners may have limited exposure to English outside the classroom, developing strong listening skills becomes even more significant. This section will discuss the significance of listening in EFL classrooms, supported by relevant research.

Firstly, listening comprehension is a fundamental aspect of language learning, as it serves as the foundation for other language skills such as speaking, reading, and writing (Vandergrift, 2007). Research has shown that learners who have good listening skills are more likely to have better overall language proficiency (Field, 2008). By actively engaging in listening activities, students can improve their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and overall understanding of the language. Moreover, listening in the EFL classroom provides learners with exposure to authentic language input, helping them develop their ability to understand different accents, speech rates, and intonation patterns (Goh, 2008). This

exposure to authentic language is crucial for learners to develop their listening comprehension skills and become more confident in real-life communication situations. In addition, listening activities in the EFL classroom promote active engagement and interaction among students. Collaborative listening tasks, such as pair or group discussions, allow learners to practice their listening skills while also developing their speaking and critical thinking abilities (Rost, 2013). These activities encourage learners to actively process and respond to the information they hear, fostering a more dynamic and communicative learning environment. Furthermore, listening in the EFL classroom helps learners develop their metacognitive strategies, such as predicting, summarizing, and inferencing (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). Field (2008) claims that by engaging in pre-listening activities, learners can activate their prior knowledge and set goals for their listening tasks. Post-listening activities, such as reflection and evaluation, enable learners to assess their comprehension and identify areas for improvement. These metacognitive strategies enhance learners' ability to monitor their listening process and become more autonomous language learners.

2.2 Types of Listening

There are several types of listening skills which include selective, interactive, intensive, critical, appreciative, discriminative listening and listening for comprehension. Selective listening involves searching for specific information. Interactive listening focuses on providing different types of feedback to enhance the listener's strategies to contribute collaboratively. Intensive listening demands concentrating on students' language patterns (Mendelsohn, 1994). Listening for comprehension relies on delivering the meaning of the text without interpretation. Critical listening aims to assess and evaluate the message critically to accept or reject the discourse. Appreciative listening is for pleasure and enjoyment. Finally, discriminative listening is the core type of listening, where listeners categorize both visual and auditory denotations (Wah, 2019).

According to Newton (2009), learners should pay attention to the process of top-down and bottom-up listening strategies. Top-down listening and bottom-up listening are two distinct approaches to understanding and processing spoken language. In top-down listening, the listener relies on their prior knowledge, expectations, and context to comprehend the message. This approach involves using higher-level cognitive processes, such as schema activation and prediction, to fill in gaps and

make sense of the incoming information (Field, 1998). For example, when listening to a lecture on a familiar topic, a listener may draw upon their existing knowledge to anticipate the main points and better understand the content.

On the other hand, bottom-up listening focuses on the detailed analysis of individual sounds, words, and grammatical structures to derive meaning from the speech. This approach involves processing the incoming information sequentially and incrementally, without relying heavily on prior knowledge or context (Mendelsohn, 1994). For instance, when listening to a foreign language conversation, a listener may focus on deciphering the individual words and grammatical structures to understand the message, even if they have limited knowledge of the topic being discussed. Nevertheless, the two processes are both essential parts of listening. It is also stated that the top-down process focuses on the previous knowledge that exists whereas the bottom-up attempts to pay precise attention to language patterns such as intonation, stress, sound, and word boundaries (Field, 2008, Schmitt, 2013, Rost, 2013).

2.3 Listening Sub-skills

Various writers such as Oakeshott-Taylor, Carroll, Richard, and Aitken, are unanimous that there are many sub-skills in English language listening skills (Goh and Aryadoust, 2015). Jin (2002) points out some of these sub-skills, for example: listening for specific information, listening for numerical information, listening for details, listening for cause and effect, listening with inference, and listening for the main ideas. However, only three sub-skills are addressed in the current study.

2.3.1. Listening for Specific Information

Listening for specific information is one of the strategies that challenges the learner to search for particular information in a listening section and find the right answer. In this sub-skill, the learner tries to seek single information in a context based on the questions by using a skimming strategy (Lee et al., 2002).

2.3.2 Listening for details

Lee et al. (2002) claimed that listening for details is another type of listening strategy to enhance listening skills. At this level, the learner tries to find out detailed information that is more thorough and has deeper meaning by listening to a group of words and phrases.

2.3.3 Listening for gist

Listening for gist is another kind of listening sub-skill that enables learners to search for the main ideas, not for particular information. In this stage, the learners will scan the text to find out the general ideas in a text (Lee et al., 2002).

2.4 Related Studies

Jin (2002) conducted an experimental study on the effects of teaching listening skills. The experimental group was given an extra listening task compared to the control group. Then t-test was employed for the results of the study where different listening strategies were used, such as: listening for the main ideas, listening for specific information, listening for numerical information, listening with inferences, listening for cause and effect, and listening for details. The results have shown a significant difference between the two groups in the post-test. The post-test showed that the experimental group achieved higher scores than the control.

In another study, Zhang (2012) pointed out the effects of listening tactics on listening skills of 56 EFL learners. The result discovered that there is an effective strategy for students' listening skills. Similarly, Abdulrahman et al. (2018) studied the role of podcasts in listening skills of sixty students in Indonesia. The cluster random sample and Quasi-experimental method were used; in addition, a questionnaire was distributed among the students. The results of One Way ANOVA demonstrated that there is a significant difference between the control and experimental groups. The result showed that podcasts enhanced listening comprehension skills.

A study by Hong (2016) on 26 male and female students from a Malaysian rural secondary school who were 15-16 years old. The chosen participants could not comprehend oral English, and they had very limited experience in English listening opportunities outside the classroom. The researcher aimed to determine the importance of listening comprehension as a communicative requirement in second language learning. A mixed method was used with pre and post-tests. The result showed a significant effect of listening comprehension on the other skills among the participants.

Moreover, according to Movva et al. (2022), pre-, while-, and post-listening skills increase students' listening performance, and those students who gained the listening task performed better than those who did not. The result revealed that the experimental group achieved better result in the pre-, while- and post-test than the controlled group.

Barjesteh and Ghasemini (2023) conducted a study about pre-listening to podcasts and videos to increase listening skills in 63 Iranian students. The result revealed that podcasts and videos increase the learner's listening skills.

In contrast, a study was conducted by Kheirzadeh and Kassaian (2011) regarding enhancing listening skills in dependence and independence cognitive methods of eighty freshmen Iranian English foreign learners. In the study, they concentrated on three sub-skills: listening for specific ideas, making inferences, and listening for main ideas. The result revealed that there are no significant differences between the experimental and the control groups in listening skills.

Another study was conducted by Hidayanti and Umamah (2019) on learning listening strategies in a group of English Education department students at the university. The learners were required to answer 85 questions that were designed on the 14 learning listening strategies according to the student's level to assess the student's learning listening skill. The result showed that the least important learning listening strategy was social development, however, the most significant learning listening strategy was selective attention. The Result also revealed that the students used the other 10 listening strategies at a moderate level. The four strategies for learning listening were self-monitoring, self-negotiation, social developing strategy and resources processing.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research utilized a pre-experimental one-group study design to investigate the effects of *English File* on enhancing the listening skills of Kurdish EFL learners. The study involved participants who underwent both a pre-test and a post-test to assess their listening proficiency. Additionally, to gauge the perceptions of these learners concerning the influence of *English File* course books on their listening skills, a questionnaire was administered and completed by the participants. This approach allowed us to comprehensively examine the influence of English course books on listening skills by tracking the learners' progress from their initial proficiency levels to the outcomes after exposure to course book-based instruction. Furthermore, by gathering the perceptions of the participants, we gained valuable insights into how these course materials were perceived and whether they were deemed effective in enhancing listening skills. This multi-faceted research design provided a more in-depth understanding of the

relationship between course books and listening skills in the context of Kurdish EFL learners, shedding light on both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the investigation.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The present study included 24 first-year university students, comprising 14 females and 10 males. These students were assessed at a pre-intermediate language proficiency level, as determined by the comprehensive placement test administered by the university's Language Center.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for this study spanned a duration of six weeks, during which we precisely gathered information to analyze the effectiveness of the treatment course. In the first week, all participants engaged in a listening pre-test, which served as a baseline measurement of their listening skills. This allowed us to gauge their proficiency levels before the intervention began. Subsequently, the participants embarked on a structured educational journey, attending daily classes at the university for two hours each day. Over the course of these weeks, they looked into the *English File* curriculum, guided by their instructor. The curriculum encompassed comprehensive training in all aspects of the English language, including listening, as well as the other three essential language skills.

Throughout the experimental phase, learners actively contributed to our research by filling out questionnaires that probed their perceptions and experiences, especially in relation to gender disparities. This valuable input helped us gain insights into how different genders may perceive and engage with the course material differently.

As the conclusion of this research endeavor, in the final week, participants participated in a listening post-test. This post-test was designed to capture their progress and the impact of the treatment course on their listening skills. It allowed us to determine the extent to which the course enhanced their listening skills and provided the essential data required to evaluate the efficacy of our study comprehensively. The six-week data collection period was integral in allowing us to gain a holistic understanding of the impact of the treatment course on participants' listening skills and their perceptions in the context of gender disparities.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected for our analysis were processed and

examined using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a powerful tool for statistical analysis. We employed various statistical tests to explore different aspects of our research. First, we conducted a T-Test to ascertain the presence of any significant differences in mean scores between the two groups, particularly with regard to a variable of considerable interest, which, in our case, were the use of supplementary material and perspectives on the course book. This statistical procedure enabled us to uncover whether there were notable distinctions in the variables between the two groups under investigation. Furthermore, we used a Paired Samples T-Test to assess the magnitude of change between the pre-test and post-test measurements. This method allowed us to identify the extent of improvement or alteration in the variables we were monitoring as a result of the intervention or treatment.

In preparation for the main study, a pilot study was conducted, addressing several critical aspects related to our survey questionnaire. This pilot study encompassed the evaluation of the questionnaire's overall effectiveness of the feedback regarding the survey formats, estimation of the time required for participants to complete the survey, scrutiny of the data collection procedures, and a thorough evaluation of the survey's validity and reliability. The pilot study functioned as a preliminary investigation, serving to validate the survey instrument before embarking on the main study. It allowed us to settle any potential issues and ensured the survey's feasibility and effectiveness in capturing the information we needed for our research.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

It is crucial to highlight that we rigorously adhered to ethical standards throughout our study. Before commencing our research, we sought and obtained explicit consent from both the educational institution and the school principal, ensuring that all necessary ethical protocols were meticulously observed at every stage of our research endeavor. This commitment to ethical guidelines underscores the integrity and validity of our study.

3.6 Issues of Reliability and Validity

Regarding the issues of reliability, the researchers conducted Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the items of the survey. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient evaluates the internal uniformity and dependability of a collection of survey items (Adamson & Prion, 2013). The reliability statistics for a set of 10 items

demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.775. According to Vaske et al. (2017) Cronbach's Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, and a value of 0.75 suggests a reasonably good level of reliability for the items. They consider a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.70 as an indicator of good internal consistency, which means that the items in the dataset tend to measure the same underlying construct in a consistent manner. This level of reliability indicates that the items are reliable for measuring the intended construct and that they are correlated with each other in a way that is suitable for research or assessment purposes.

Furthermore, the researchers considered the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test to evaluate the adequacy of the items for factor analysis. Shrestha (2021) states that the

4.1 Results

4.1. a Perception of Gender Disparities among Kurdish EFL Learners

In this study, we utilized a questionnaire to assess the perceptions of Kurdish EFL learners regarding the impact of the English course book, *English File* on enhancing listening skills. To further analyze the data, we employed an independent sample t-test to explore potential gender disparities among the students' perceptions.

Table 1: The perception of the participants of the Use of supplementary resources and course book

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
	Equal variances assumed	0.55	0.468	0.17	22	0.87	0.043	0.259
Use of Supplementary Resources	Equal variances not assumed			0.17	21.2	0.867	0.043	0.252
	Equal variances assumed	0.53	0.473	0.06	22	0.955	0.029	0.498
Perspectives on the course book	Equal variances not assumed			0.06	21.9	0.953	0.029	0.474

In the research study examining gender-based disparities among Kurdish EFL learners in their perceptions of various educational aspects, including the "Use of Supplementary Resources" and "Perspectives on the Course book," an independent samples t-test was conducted to analyze the data. This statistical test aimed to explore whether there were significant differences in perceptions between male and female learners, shedding light on potential gender-based influences on their views.

The initial section of the presented table encapsulates the outcomes of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. This

KMO test is commonly employed in the context of factor analysis to assess the suitability of the dataset. The KMO measures the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis, and in this instance, it returns a value of 0.7. A KMO value of 0.7 is considered quite good, signifying that the dataset is reasonably suitable for factor analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the following sections, we present the results and discussions arising from our investigation into the impact of the *English File* coursebook on the enhancement of listening skills among Kurdish EFL learners, shedding light on the efficacy of the English File coursebook and its implications for language proficiency test outcomes.

particular test evaluates whether the assumption of equal variances can be maintained between the groups under comparison. Notably, for both "Use of Supplementary Resources" and "Perspectives on the Course book," the test results suggest that equal variances can be assumed for both scenarios, with non-significant p-values. This signifies a fundamental similarity in the variances between the male and female groups in their respective perceptions, supporting the appropriateness of proceeding with further analysis.

The subsequent part of the table contains the outcomes of

the t-test for Equality of Means. This section provides the t-value, degrees of freedom, and the significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) for each variable. Importantly, the t-test results reveal that there are no statistically significant differences between the genders in terms of their perceptions regarding "Use of Supplementary Resources"

and "Perspectives on the Course book." The p-values obtained for both scenarios significantly surpass the common significance threshold ($p=0.05$), indicating that gender is not a significant influencing factor in shaping the perceptions of Kurdish EFL learners concerning these two educational aspects.

4.1. b Comparing Pre-Test and Post-Test Results for Kurdish EFL Learners: Paired Sample T-Test

In the following section, we examine the analysis of pre-test and post-test results for Kurdish EFL learners through the application of a Paired Sample T-Test, with the aim of assessing the impact of instructional interventions on language proficiency.

Table 2: Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test Paired Differences: Paired Samples Test Results

Paired Samples Test								
		Paired Differences					t	df
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-20.208	22.625	4.618	-29.762	-10.654	-4.376	23

Table 2 illustrates the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores for Kurdish EFL learners participating in the study investigating the impact of a university course book on their listening skills. The mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is -20.208. This negative value indicates a substantial reduction in listening skill scores from the pre-test to the post-test. The standard deviation of 22.625 implies that there is considerable variability in the individual

differences among the participants. In other words, not all students experienced the exact same improvement or decline in their listening skills. The standard error of the mean (4.618) suggests the average amount by which individual scores deviate from the mean difference. The 95% confidence interval of the difference, ranging from -29.762 to -10.654, indicates the range within which we can be 95% confident that the true difference between pre-test and post-test scores lies.

4.2 Discussion

The results of the independent samples t-test regarding gender-based differences underline the remarkable consistency and uniformity in the perceptions of both male and female EFL learners within the Kurdish context. Regardless of gender, the data suggests that learners share similar perspectives when it comes to the utilization of supplementary resources and their overall outlook on the English course book. The absence of gender-based disparities in these perceptions contributes to a better understanding of the educational environment for Kurdish EFL learners, ultimately informing more equitable and inclusive teaching practices.

This finding is consistent with Owolewa and Oyewole (2017) who discovered no connection between gender and students' listening comprehension. Sobhani (2015) has also reached the same conclusion and has found no

significant differences regarding male and female's perceptions. As opposed to them, much research has proven the presence of relevance between gender and listening skills. According to Lin and Wu (2004) who studied gender performance in foreign language testing, females possess the capacity to do better than males regarding listening comprehension. Moreover, the outcomes indicate that students have a positive attitude towards the use of supplementary materials as it can be seen in the t-test results. This finding is in harmony with Yousofi et al. (2014)'s study which believes that through implementing additional resources, students can improve their listening comprehension.

With regards to the impacts of instructional interventions, the negative mean difference and the significant p-value of .000 suggest that, on average, the

Kurdish EFL learners' listening skills improved after the implementation of the university course book. However, the wide confidence interval indicates that while the overall trend was positive, individual responses varied, with some students experiencing more significant improvements and others showing less progress or even a decline in their listening skills. Course books have been considered as helpful aids in the process of EFL learning. Despite this, according to the findings of (Altay, 2013; Saeed & Bostancı, 2022), a course book's effectiveness is contingent upon its ability to enhance students' foreign language skills. The results of the independent samples t-test of the current study shows an improvement in the listening scores of the students, which indicates the fact that the course book has proven effective. This finding is in contrast with the result of the study conducted by (Hanifa, 2018) who states that several of the teaching resources (global course books) which are available today do not assist learner's improvement and capacity in English language.

Nonetheless, these differences between pre-test and post-test scores underscore the importance of considering individual learning trajectories. In other words, variations were observed in students' marks and not all of them experienced the exact same development. In fact, several students witnessed a decline in their grades which calls for attention to individual differences and the need for further investigation into what factors might be influencing these variations among Kurdish EFL learners. Charalambous (2011) conducted a study regarding the role of course books and has reached a number of conclusions one of which is similar to this present finding. He emphasizes the uniqueness of each student, encourages teachers to take these distinctions into account, and acknowledges the fact that even when one student may benefit greatly from a particular activity, another student may not.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research sought to explore the influence of *English File* coursebooks on the enhancement of listening skills in language proficiency tests for Kurdish EFL learners. Our findings have shed light on two critical aspects of this investigation.

Firstly, when examining the role of gender in the

perception of the impact of university coursebooks on listening skills, it was evident that there were no significant differences among the perceptions of male and female learners. In essence, gender was not a discernible factor in determining the efficacy of course books in improving listening skills. This underscores the idea that educational resources such as coursebooks can benefit learners irrespective of their gender, emphasizing the universality of their usefulness.

Secondly, in response to our second research question, the study revealed that instructional interventions can indeed have a positive effect on the language proficiency of Kurdish EFL learners. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these interventions may not produce uniform results for all individuals. The presence of considerable individual variation emerged as a significant factor, emphasizing the need for tailored and flexible teaching strategies that consider the diverse needs and abilities of students. In the realm of language education, a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable, and educators should be attuned to the unique characteristics and learning styles of their students.

This study has contributed to the understanding of the relationship between course books, gender, and language proficiency among Kurdish EFL learners. While gender was found to be inconsequential in the context of course book effectiveness, the study underscores the importance of personalized and adaptable instructional approaches that account for individual differences. Ultimately, this research provides valuable insights that can inform language education practices and curriculum development, helping to optimize the learning experience for Kurdish EFL learners and potentially benefiting language learners worldwide.

Additionally, the limitations of this study primarily revolve around the relatively small sample size of 24 first-year university students, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. Furthermore, the study's duration of six weeks may not capture long-term effects, and the reliance on self-reported data in the questionnaire may introduce response bias. Finally, the study was conducted within a specific Kurdish EFL context, and the findings may not be universally applicable to diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

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