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المجازفة وارتباطها بمهارات الاستماع والتحدث لدى طلبة الجامعه دارسي اللغه الانجليزية كلغة اجنبيه

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الملخص

المخاطرة هي واحدة من أهم العمليات المشـاركة في عملية تعلم اللغة التي يمكن أن تؤثر على التحصـيل الأكاديمي والدافع لدى الطلاب، خاصة من حيث مهارات التحدث والاستماع .في هذه الدراسة، يتم التحقيق في كيفية ارتباط المخاطرة بمهارات التحدث والاسـتماع بين طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق .الأهداف الرئيسـية هي تحديد مسـتوى المخاطرة لعينة مكونة من 184 طالبًا في السـنة الرابعة وفحص العلاقة مع مهارات الاسـتماع والتحدث في جامعة بغداد (كليات التربية للبنات)، (كلية التربية/ابن رشـد)، وجامعة العراقية/كلية التربية للبنات .(تم جمع البيانات باسـتخدام مقياس المخاطرة من تأليف كليفورد (1991) والمطور من قبل كوركمانز (2002)، والدرجات النهائية من العام الدراسـي السـابق (2023-2024) لمادة الاسـتماع والتحدث .تشير النتائج إلى وجود علاقة بين هذه المتغيرات .يمتلك الطلاب مستوى جيدًا من مهارات الاستماع والتحدث بالإضافة إلى مستوى معتدل من المخاطرة .تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى دراسات مستقبلية .يجب على الطلاب أن يفهموا أن تعلم المخاطرة هو بالضـبط ما يجب أن يُعتبر مهمًا عند تعلم لغة .على سـبيل المثال، يمكنهم أيضًـا أن يتعلموا وضـع أهداف لأنفسهم، مثل التحدث أكثر في الصف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المجازفة، الاستماع، التحدث، الارتباط

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Risk- Taking and Its Correlation with Listening and Speaking Skills in EFL University Students

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Abstract

Risk-taking is one of the most important processes involved in the language learning process that can affect students' academic achievement and motivation, especially in terms of speaking and listening skills. In this study, it is investigated how risk-taking correlates to speaking and listening skills amongst Iraqi EFL students. The major aims are to identify the risk-taking level for a sample of 184 fourth-year students and to examine the correlation with listening and speaking skills in the University of Baghdad (Colleges of Education for women), (College of Education/Ibn_Rushd), and Al-Iraqi University/College of Education for women). The data was collected by using the risk-taking scale by Clifford (1991) and developed by Korkmaz (2002), and the final scores from the previous academic year (2023-2024) for the listening and speaking subject. The findings indicate a positive correlation between these variables. Students have a good level of listening and speaking skills as well as a moderate level of risk-taking. This study highlights the need for future studies. Students should understand that learning to take risks is exactly what should be considered to be important when learning a language. For instance, they can also be conditioned to set goals for themselves, such as to speak more in class.

Keywords: Risk-taking, listening, speaking, correlation

1. Introduction

Students are taking risks in an academic setting when they put themselves in uncomfortable situations to take on difficult tasks, such as giving presentations or debating. However, a lot of students are reluctant to take chances because they worry about what their instructors or classmates would think of them (Dweck, 2006). Students' anxiety about making mistakes or being misinterpreted may be clearly seen during speaking and listening exercises. Promoting risk-taking is necessary to improve communication and critical thinking abilities. Students are more likely to participate in meaningful educational activities that foster deeper learning when they take risks (Dewaele, 2012). Risk-taking is particularly crucial in language learning environments because it enables students to practice speaking without worrying about making a mistake, which eventually improves competence. Furthermore, encouraging risk-taking in a safe setting may improve peer relationships and group project in speaking and listening can be impacted by a number of issues, such as nervousness, a lack of practice opportunities, and inadequate feedback. Anxiety during oral presentations or conversations is a common complaint among college students, and it can have a detrimental effect on their performance (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Additionally, chances for one-on-one speaking practice and helpful instructor feedback may be restricted by big class numbers. Proficiency in speaking and listening is necessary for academic achievement in any topic. According to Goh (2000), students who perform well in these areas are more involved in group projects and comprehend the course material better. As a result, enhancing speaking and listening skills helps kids succeed academically and gets them ready for difficulties in the workplace.

Speaking may be a challenge for EFL learners for a variety of reasons. The primary causes are learners' lack of practice and their ignorance of the connections between language abilities, particularly speaking and listening. For instance, while speaking English in a place like Iraq, Iraqi students encounter difficulties immediately after leaving the environment where the target language has been spoken. This is a result of their lack of focus on the listening skill-related tasks (Ziane, 2011).Hearing, according to Tyagi (2013), is the perception of sound waves; you must first hear in order to hear, but you do not have to listen in order to hear; understanding entails comprehending the meaning of the symbols we have seen and heard; remembering entails not only receiving and clarifying a message but also adding it to the brain's store; evaluating requires the active listener to weigh evidence or separate fact from opinion; and responding requires the receiver to finish the process by providing verbal or nonverbal feedback.

The problems and challenges that the present study addresses relate to the productive skill of speaking, which is one of the hardest for students to master since it necessitates that they use the language most of the time, spontaneously, without having enough time to construct the right and appropriate utterances (Pan, 2010). Receiving feedback from the teacher as a reliable and authentic source is crucial for completing this challenging productive activity, and further research is required to determine the likely issue and how it affects the students' academic buoyancy. Ur (1996) also outlines four factors that make speaking challenging for students learning a second or foreign language. The first is inhibition. Speaking requires real-time audience exposure, in contrast to writing, reading, and listening. When speaking in a foreign language, students are usually restricted because they are afraid of making mistakes, losing face, receiving criticism, or the attention that speaking draws. Activities and scenarios that allow students to interact with one another in a natural and meaningful way should be offered in

foreign language classrooms (Al-Salihi, 2006). Since the world is quickly becoming a global village, it is crucial that Iraqi learner how to connect verbally with people throughout the world. English has emerged as the modern world's lingua franca, and communication may now take place both verbally and in writing. English is becoming more and more necessary in Iraqi public and private educational institutions, much like in the majority of English-speaking nations. Fluent English speakers have a higher chance of landing well-paying positions in both public and commercial companies, which value English proficiency. Anyone who works or wants to be involved in new events, innovations, and developments must learn how to speak English properly in order to stay up to date with the latest trends in economic, social, technological, and educational spheres (Naser and Hamzah, 2018).

This study aims to:

1. Identifying the EFL university students' risk-taking level.
2. Identifying the EFL university students' listening and speaking skills level.
3. Finding out the correlation between risk-taking and listening and speaking skills.

The study is limited to the following:

1. EFL students in the fourth stage in the Department of English.
2. University of Baghdad (College of Education for Women, College of Education for Humanities-Ibn-Rushed) and AL-Iraqia university college of Education for women for the Academic year 2024-2025.
3. The risk -taking scale by Clifford (1991) and developed by Korkmaz (2002).
4. Students' final scores for the previous academic year 2023-2024 in Listening and Speaking skills, textbook entitled: "IELTS Advantage Speaking and Listening Skills" by (Jonathan Marks).

Value of The Study

This study is hoped to be of value to:

1. EFL learners to raise their awareness in the study and taking risk may be correlated with their listening and speaking skills.
2. English language teachers to highlight the role of these constructs in supporting learners to achieve their task goals in general and in learning English in particular.
3. Educators and researchers who may benefit from the findings of this study in approaching investigation of the variables involved in this study from different perspectives.
4. Curriculum designers who may reconsider the course components to include learning opportunities and activities that may promote students' level of the variables covered in this study.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Academic Risk Taking

Many times, students' options are limited by mandatory obligations, such attending specific classes for their degree program and doing homework set by their teachers.

Students do have some choices, though, such selecting a mandatory class instructor or whether to raise their hand when a question is asked in class. Both external and personal elements, such as the task's significance and chance of success, influence students' decisions to take a chance on activities and behaviors (Figner & Weber, 2011). Choosing to tackle a task when the results are uncertain and failure is a possibility is known as academic risk-taking, because risk-takers often have access to learning opportunities that other students do not, the concept of taking academic risks is essential. The motivational factors that contribute to academic risk-taking must be thoroughly understood by educators, education researchers, and professionals working in student academic support in order to create environments that are advantageous for creating ideal challenges and interventions that help students realize more of their potential (Figner & Weber, 2011). Siong (2017) claims that there is a link between academic success and ART behavior. According to Deveci and Aydin (2018), learner that engage in more ART behaviors also have higher levels of imagination and a larger aptitude for critical and creative reasoning Students' ART level is linked to their academic achievement and is supported by their participation in new classes or activities, their choice of challenging assignments or tasks, their attempts at new solutions, their willingness to share ideas regardless of their correctness, and their sincere questions of teachers.

According to Korkmaz (2002), students' willingness to stick with their studies in the face of difficulties is known as academic risk-taking behavior. Furthermore, Tan et al. (2016) found that students who are willing to take academic risks are more likely to choose more difficult assignments. Taking a gamble in an academic setting also carries the risk of making a mistake, getting bad grades, etc.

Accordingly, Skaar (2009) characterized academic risk taking as a student's propensity for academically unconventional choices, which have negative consequences specific to the learning environment. For example, students who choose to voice their thoughts run the risk of conflict with their peers or of others disregarding or making fun of them (Beghetto, 2009). Choosing a difficult and unusual academic task increases the likelihood that someone may make mistakes or get a worse mark. Therefore, it may be argued that this situation reflects taking more risks in the classroom.

2.1.2The Constructive Failure Theory

Constructive failure theory (Clifford, 1984) aims to identify task-related factors that influence an individual's response to failure. Diagnostic theory, attribution theory, self-motivation theories (Clifford et al., 1988), and other theories of intrinsic motivation (Clifford & Chou 1991), including self-efficacy theory and cognitive evaluation theory, were the main sources of the theory's fundamental ideas.

Projects driven by internal or subjective factors, such as a desire to demonstrate one's abilities or a particular interest, result in more positive reactions to failure than assignments attributed to third parties or external influences like rewards and threats, according to the constructive failure hypothesis (Clifford et al. 1988).

The constructive failure hypothesis, first proposed by Clifford (1984 & 1988), maintained that failure might be a positive experience if viewed as an opportunity for personal development. Clifford believed that in order for students to be ready to take chances in their studies, they must be able to view failure in a positive light. Based on her analysis of risk-taking literature outside of academic contexts, she investigated how academic risk-taking might be activated to build abilities by choosing more difficult problems when simpler ones are available (Barber, 2020).

The constructive failure theory (Clifford, 1984) states that moderate risk-taking is positively connected with constructive responses to failure. This hypothesis states that failure in moderately difficult tasks will lead to relatively positive responses (e.g., correcting errors, changing one's method of problem-solving, or seeking help). People with a high tolerance for failure are expected to be more willing to take on risks or difficulties (House, 2002).

Moderate risk-taking, or choosing projects with a 50% likelihood of success, produces favorable learning and effort outcomes, according to Clifford (1991). Therefore, it is essential to transform learning activities into hazardous assignments and establish learning environments that motivate students to take more chances (Figueira et al., 2016). Moderate risk-takers are defined as those who (a) have optimal motivation, (b) have a tendency to set ever-higher goals after success, (c) have a moderate tolerance for failure, and (d) have a tendency to constructively respond to the consequences of failure. In light of this, a high degree of tolerance for errors or failures may indicate success and a readiness to take chances in the classroom (Clifford 1987).

Failure theory (Clifford, 1984) states that the ideal level of challenge promotes constructive responses to errors and setbacks. Failure is defined as performance that falls short of the intended level (House, 2002). Additionally, the theory predicts that moderate risk-taking or a preference for optimally challenging tasks will be accompanied by typically positive or constructive responses to failure (e.g., understanding reasons for failure, altering one's strategy for seeking therapy).

To engage in difficult tasks as freely and persistently as feasible, the person must be able to accept failure or making mistakes. Tolerance for failure and making mistakes is likely to have an impact on an individual's level of risk-taking and response to failure. Evidence supporting this prediction came from college students who were asked to estimate the behavior and impact of a student who was struggling academically under different risk levels (Clifford, 1988).

By attributing a strategy to failure, Clifford (1984) showed that expectations for future success are on par with or higher than those of individuals who have simply succeeded. Clifford added credence to this argument by pointing out that adopting an orientation can have a significant positive impact on pupils. tactical. According to her research, a strategy's characteristics are likely to require a reexamination of the task, an appraisal of the employed approach, a search for a new strategy, a recurring attempt to

confront a problem, and a comparison and evaluation of two or more ways. Task engagement and self-directed performance evaluation also enhanced the growth of abilities, metacognition, and task-related knowledge (House, 2002).

To clarify the idea of academic risk, the researcher used the theory of constructive failure (Clifford, 1984), which essentially stems from the theorist (Clifford), who introduced the idea in a thorough and expansive way.

2.2ListeningSkill

Studying and comprehending listening is a difficult task. It suggests that describing listening in a clear and succinct manner is challenging (Hichem 2013). It is one of the two language skills utilized when speaking verbally and one of the four primary skills employed in language instruction, according to Andrade (2006). Additionally, "speech recognition," "speech perception," "speech understanding," and "spoken language understanding" are all related to hearing as a pedagogical term.

Buck (2001) asserts that listening is an active process of meaning construction in which the listener automatically and in real-time attends to and processes pertinent visual and auditory input based on the purpose of the listening in order to understand what is explicitly stated and derive all necessary conclusions from the message. The operational definition of listening employed in the research for this thesis is based on Buck's 2001 idea.

According to Tyagi (2013), hearing is the perception of sound waves; hearing does not require listening, but hearing requires hearing. Understanding means knowing what the symbols we've seen and heard mean; Responding needs the recipient to complete the process by giving verbal or nonverbal input; remembering involves not only receiving and clarifying a message but also adding it to the brain's store; and evaluating calls for the active listener to balance the evidence or distinguish fact from opinion.

According to Nowrouzi, Tam, Zareian, and Nimehchisalem (2015), EFL listening skills are considered a difficult language competence, particularly in a foreign language situation when opportunities for authentic practice are limited. Teaching listening skills to students can be difficult for teachers, and learning itself can be difficult for students. For instance, even students who are good at reading and speaking may find it difficult to listen when presented with a tape of a quick discussion (Ghaderpanahi, 2012).

In face-to-face encounters, listening necessitates complex interpretive processes. A vast web of situational circumstances interacts to determine conversational meanings. Relevant examples of processing demand include the reciprocity of interlocutors' perspectives, the etcetera principle (filling in the blanks of what one hears with language and world knowledge), and the mix of retroactive and future meanings. This complex processing causes a great deal of stress while speaking a foreign or second language. Theoretical models that attempt to capture the complexity of the listening process cannot account for the multitude of cognitive and external environmental factors that influence

receipt, interpretation, and response generation. In short, reducing a complex behavior, such as listening to, to a single concept has proven difficult (Dunkel, 1986).

Furthermore, listening is a continuous activity that is essential to absorbing knowledge in day-to-day living (Nushi & Orouji, 2020). Hearing is a complex mechanism that allows people to comprehend spoken language, claims Rost (2013). It is not only an essential part of effective communication, but it also helps people understand the outside world (Rost 2013). The term "listening," according to Rost (2009), is one that we use frequently without really considering what it means. On the other hand, listening is an active and crucial mental skill. It is also a vital component of learning how to communicate effectively and one of the most significant tools for comprehending the world around us. As one source of information, listening skills are essential for learning foreign languages, particularly English, which is a fundamental aspect of language acquisition. The evolution of human society depends on language. It is a vital means of communication between people, communities, and countries. These days, more and more people are studying English as a second or foreign language with the primary goal of becoming proficient in it and being able to communicate with others (Al-Bayati& Al-Bakri,2024)

According to Anderson, Anderson, and Lynch (1988), understanding is not only reliant on what speakers say; listeners also play a critical role in the listening process by applying their prior knowledge to what they hear in order to understand what speakers mean. Nonetheless, a variety of factors can affect listeners, some of which they may not be able to control. For example, background noise can affect listening comprehension (Sahlen et al., 2020).

2.3 The Nature of Speaking Skill

Speaking is an oral communication method by definition. Chaney and Burk define speaking as "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts". Speaking, according to Burns and Joyce (1997), is an interactive process of meaning construction that involves the creation, receiving, and processing of information. According to Burns and Joyce (1997), oral communication's meaning and formats depend on the participants, the setting, and the speaking objectives. English language is a well-known worldwide language. Many international activities are carried out in English in the entire world such as: business, culture, social events, and more and more national and international schools in non-English – speaking countries include this language as a basic subject in their curriculum (Abdul-Majeed, 2020)

The four skills that are frequently used to teach and assess language are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These skills can be divided into two categories: receptive and productive. Speaking is a useful skill, but it can be challenging to teach. Sakale (2012) asserts that speaking is a latent skill that has long been disregarded in EFL classrooms. Brown and Yule also emphasize that "for most of its history, language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of written language"

Communication is a part of both institutional existence and personal life. Learning to communicate is similar to learning to ride a bike or play an instrument, claim Stryker and Leaver (1997). However, it is well recognized that the best method to learn these abilities is to use them, not just study them or practice them through drills and exercises. Contextualization is widely acknowledged as the most successful method of language acquisition. A technique for teaching second or foreign languages that focuses education on information or content rather than forms, functions, scenarios, or talents is known as "content-based instruction" (CBI). CBI gives learners access to pertinent target language content (Stoller, 2004; Nunan, 1999).

Since students are given significant "tasks," the current study assumes that "communication" in the classroom is the "exclusive" method of producing excellent EFL speakers. If this assumption is not established, a number of problems could occur. However, speaking is still a challenge for many English language learners today. This complex skill, which encompasses vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency, is also difficult for English language learners in higher education (Iman, 2017; Nakhalah, 2016). Despite having taken English classes at each educational level, most of them are unable to apply what they have learned. Speaking is a more difficult ability than the others, according to Chou (2018), and it makes English language learners anxious when they utilize it. This is essentially due to the fact that since basic education, students have had few opportunities to practice speaking English in the classroom.

This is corroborated by Nakhalah (2016), who notes that pupils only have a set amount of time in class to learn English. Furthermore, it is often known that English language learners will find it difficult to master speaking skills if they do not obtain a greater vocabulary and grammatical structure (Rao, 2019).

2.4 Related Studies

The previous related studies on the same variables were discussed in this section. A study by SBH & Susanti's (2021) aims to assess the connection between students' self-directed learning in a virtual English community and their speaking skills. Twenty students who joined the speaking community at a Surabaya university made up the study's sample size. SPSS 26.0 for Windows was used to analyze the instrument data, which included a speech rubric and a questionnaire. The results of the study showed that the students' use of self-directed learning was moderate. Self-management had the highest mean score (M=3.79), followed by self-monitoring (M=3.34) and self-motivation (M=3.64). The pupils had strong speaking abilities in all speech domains. Vocabulary was the most proficient speaking skill, followed by grammar and correctness, pronunciation, and fluency and coherence. Correlation study revealed a strong relationship between the students' speaking abilities and their usage of self-directed learning (r=0.669). Therefore, it might be claimed that using self-directed learning helps pupils improve their speaking abilities.

Atalay and Ekinci Çelikpazu conducted another study in 2022.The primary aim of this study is to look into the relationship between middle school students' academic risk-taking activities and writing anxiety. The study's sample consists of 493 middle school students from a Turkish city. The "Writing Anxiety Scale" developed by Deniz and Demir (2019) and the "Academic Risk-Taking Scale" developed by Clifford (1991), which Korkmaz (2002) translated into Turkish, served as the basis for the study's instrument. The results of the study showed a relatively significant inverse association between middle school students writing anxiety and their propensity for academic risk-taking.

One more from Snae et al. (2023) Determining the degree of correlation, the role of listening in pronunciation, and the connection between students' performance on listening and pronunciation tests are the objectives of this study. Twenty-five first-semester students were chosen by the author to be representative participants in the study. The study's tools include a hearing test that requires distinguishing between vowels and consonants and a pronouncing test that entails reading out the entire text used in the listening test. The results are classified as weakly connected. Consequently, neither variable has a significant impact.

The results of the current study showed that there is no correlation between the risk-taking and listening and speaking skills, as it showed that students had a high level in listening and speaking skills while their level of risk-taking was moderate. The study by Atalay and Ekinci Çelikpazu(2022) The results of the study showed a relatively significant inverse association between middle school students writing anxiety and their propensity for academic risk-taking. Additionally, the research by SBH & Susanti's (2021) correlation study revealed a strong relationship between the students' speaking abilities and their usage of self-directed learning (r=0.669). And the study by Snae et al. (2023) The results are classified as weakly connected. Consequently, neither variable has a significant impact.

3. The Analytical Part

3.1 Methodology of the Study

A correlational design is the kind of study design used in this investigation. When a study uses two or more measurements from each case in the sample to ascertain the degree of correlation between two or more variables, it is called a correlational study (Sander, 2010). "Correlation, association, or co-variation between two or more non-manipulated variables, including the independent (also called predictor variable) and the dependent variable, which are also used to make predictions through regression analysis" (Rovai and coworkers, 2014).

It was established that any group of people who share one or more characteristics with the subject of the study constitutes the population (Al-Salihi,2020)

According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), the population is the total set of people the researcher wants to examine and draw conclusions from. The target group from which the study's sample is taken is known as the population. Students studying in English language Departments at Baghdad University's College of

Education for Women and Al Iraqia University College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities during the 2024–2025 academic year make up the study's population. There are 558 students in the entire population. (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

The Population of The Study

year	College of Education for Women in University of Baghdad	College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities in University of Baghdad	College of Education for Women in Al-Iraqia University	Total
4th	168	187	203	558

A sample is a subset of people chosen for research from a broader population. The process of choosing the group from which the researcher will gather data is known as sampling (Mills & Gay, 2019). The sample of the study is (184) male and female students selected purposively (39) students from / University of Baghdad, and (85) students from Al-Iraqia University and (60) students from College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities / University of Baghdad. All students from forth stage and they study English as a foreign language in the department of English (See Table 3.2). The rationale behind including 4th year students is that they are more advanced, knowledgeable, and are expected to employ the variety of language skills learned throughout their studies in their performance see table
3.2.

Table 3.2

The Sample of The Study

Year	College of Education for Women in University of Baghdad	College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities in University of Baghdad	College of Education for Women in Al-Iraqia University	Total
4th	39	60	85	184

3.2 Instrument

3.2.1 Academic Risk -Taking Scale and listening and speaking skills

This scale was developed by Clifford (1991) to measure students' courage and preparedness to deal with difficult situations and learning obstacles. It was translated into Turkish by Korkmaz

(2002). A Likert-type response scale with five possible answers (strongly disagree, strongly disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree) was used to evaluate the 36 items in Clifford's (1991) version. Participants may receive a score as low as 36 or as high as 180. Four elements were identified by Korkmaz (2002): the propensity to feel bad about failing, the propensity to like challenging assignments, the propensity to bounce back from failure, and the propensity to avoid doing any homework.

3.2.2 listening and speaking skills

Listening and Speaking of the sample is collected from the three colleges' of education /English departments /student final scores in listening and speaking course/ third level from the subject name is listening and speaking and entitle "IELS advantage speaking and listening skills" by(Jonathan Marks) for the academic year 2023-2024 .

3.3.3 Psychometric Properties of Instruments

One of the most crucial procedures before beginning the study is to evaluate the measure that will be used. This includes analyzing the psychometric properties of the instruments. Psychometric characteristics statistics are the results of applying validity and reliability (Calalano, 2016).

3.3.4 Test Validity

Validity is the extent to which inferences drawn from an assessment's results are appropriate, meaningful, and beneficial in relation to the assessment's objective (Brown,2004). It is possible to look at many types of validity, such as face, content, construct, and others. Face validity and construct validity are topics covered in the current study.

3.3.5 Face Validity

Face validity is the extent to which a test seems to measure what it is supposed to measure. An instrument is considered valid when it measures what it is intended to measure with accuracy. Validity is the extent to which an instrument effectively achieves the initial goal for which it was created (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.3.6 Construct Validity

The other type of validity that is covered in this study is construct validity. "The degree to which an instrument truly measures whatever theoretical construct it is intended to" is what it signifies. Construct validity can be experimentally established by looking at the connections between scale items (Salkind & Rasmussen, 2010). The process of item analysis, which includes item discrimination, item difficulty, the correlation between the item score and the component to which it is related, and the internal correlation matrices, thus achieves construct validity for all the instruments.

3.3.7 Pilot Administration

Identifying the discrimination power (DP) and difficulty level (DL) of the scale's items, ensuring that the instructions are clear, checking the amount of time required to complete the scales, and estimating the reliability of the scales are the objectives of the pilot study (Al-Salihi, 2013). Thirty students who were not part of the study's actual sample were given the risk-taking scales. They are chosen at random from the English department's section "A".

3.4 Statistical Analysis of Risk-taking Scale

The statistical analysis of the academic risk -taking scale scores, represented by (184) participants (males and females). Consequently, the items on the risk-taking scale are statistically analyzed to determine their items -total correlation, Domain total correlation, and discriminatory power. The significance values for the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnova tests are less than 0.05, as indicated in Table 3.3

Table 3.3 ***Item-Total Correlation of Academic Risk-Taking Scale***

Items	R-Value	Items	R-Value	Items	R-Value	Items	R-Value
f2	0.063	f 12	0.384	f20	0.143	s1	0.106
f4	0.080	f13	0.231	f24	0.307	s19	0.071
f7	0.302	f16	0.174	f31	0.144	s8	0.239
f9	0.002	f18	0.127	f34	0.010	s21	0.201
f14	0.428	S35	0.376	t23	0.287	t33	0.038
s17	0.300	t3	0.533	t25	0.414	t36	0.076
s28	.0459	t6	0.163	t26	0.301	fo10	0.285
s30	0.468	t11	0.423	t27	0.332	fo5	0.041

s32	0.235	t15	0.365	t29	0.535	fo22	0.462

The correlation between the domain and the scores is valid after deleting the non-significant items from the scale, Therefor the correlation is strong and the scale can be considered significant see table (3.4)

Table 3.4 Domain-Total Correlation of Academic Risk-Taking Scale

Domain	R-Value
first	0.613
second	0.819
third	0.489
fourth	0.426

Discrimination Power the method used for estimating item discrimination is the extreme groups method, that is, the two groups from the extremes (the upper and lower 27%) are compared. After calculating the mean score and the standard deviation of the two groups, t-test for two independent samples is used to find out the significance of the variance between the two groups. The computed t-value of all items is higher than the critical one (1.97) at a degree of freedom (98) and level of significance (0.05) which shows that all the items are statistically significant, as illustrated in the table (3.5).

Table 3.5 Mean, standard deviation, T-value, and Significance level to determine the item discrimination Power of Each Item

Item	*Higher (50)*		*Lower (50)*		*T-value*	*Sig. 0.05*
	Mean	St. deviation	Mean	St. deviation		
f2	3.5000	1.40335	3.4000	1.27775	0.373	Not Sig
f4	3.2400	1.37855	2.8600	1.22907	1.455	Not Sig
f7	3.7400	1.42585	2.8600	1.41436	3.098	Sig.
f9	3.2200	1.52917	3.3000	1.41782	-.271	Not Sig
f12	3.9000	1.24949	2.5400	1.21571	5.516	Sig.
f13	3.5800	1.37158	2.7800	1.37455	2.913	Sig.
f16	3.2800	1.48516	2.8800	1.28793	1.439	Sig.
f18	3.4000	1.35526	3.1400	1.26184	0.993	Not Sig.
f20	3.2400	1.33340	2.8000	1.29363	1.675	Not Sig
f24	3.6200	1.19335	2.6800	1.40611	3.604	Sig.
f31	3.5000	1.55511	3.1400	1.32496	1.246	Not Sig
f34	2.5200	1.34377	2.6400	1.27391	-.458	Not Sig

s1	2.8000	1.42857	2.4800	1.28158	1.179	Not Sig
s19	2.9000	1.40335	3.0000	1.21218	-.381	Not Sig
s8	3.7000	1.18235	3.0800	1.30681	2.488	Sig
s21	3.0600	1.50387	2.4200	1.17959	2.368	Sig
s14	3.9800	1.02000	2.8600	1.19540	5.040	Sig
s17	3.5000	1.35902	2.4000	1.27775	4.170	Sig
s28	4.1200	.91785	2.9000	1.03510	4.170	Sig
s30	4.2400	.91607	2.7800	1.28238	6.551	Sig
s32	3.8200	1.11922	3.0600	1.42012	2.972	Sig
s35	3.9000	1.12938	2.8600	1.19540	4.472	Sig
t3	4.0800	1.00691	2.4200	1.14446	7.700	Sig
t6	3.8400	1.28349	3.3800	1.24360	1.99	Sig
t11	4.1200	1.15423	2.9600	1.12413	5.091	Sig
t15	3.8800	1.23949	2.6800	1.18563	4.947	Sig
t23	3.7200	1.19591	2.7400	1.20898	4.075	Sig
t25	3.8600	1.24556	3.8600	1.24556	5.399	Sig
t26	3.9800	1.09712	3.1400	1.12504	3.780	Sig
t27	4.1600	1.14927	3.1000	1.21638	4.479	Sig
t29	4.1800	.98333	2.5400	1.23239	7.355	Sig
t33	2.3000	1.35902	2.6400	1.19112	-1.330	Not Sig
t36	2.5200	1.24933	2.1800	1.08214	1.455	Not Sig
fo10	3.0600	1.46259	2.2200	1.20017	3.139	Sig
fo5	2.5600	1.23156	2.4400	1.14571	0.504	Not Sig

fo22	3.9600	1.10583	2.3000	1.24949	7.035	Sig

The scale is reliable, according to Alpha-Cronbach, at 0.75 after deleting the items that were not significant.

3.5 Statistical Analysis of Listening and Speaking skills

The statistical analysis of the academic performance in listening and speaking is represented by (184) participants (males and females) student final scores in listening and speaking course/ third level from the subject name is listening and speaking and title of the book "IELS advantage speaking and listening skills" the author of this book(Jonathan Marks) for the academic year 2023-2024

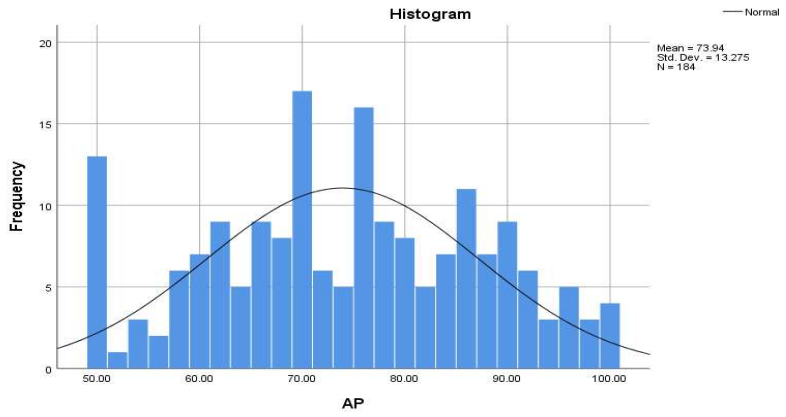
The natural distribution will be determined by testing normality, in addition, results have shown that the academic performance in listening and speaking scores values are harmonious and the scores and frequencies are approximating the normal distribution curve. See table (3.6) and figure (3.1)

Table 3.6 The Tests of Normality of Academic performance

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
AP	.058	184	0.200	.975	184	.002

Figure 3.1

The Distribution of the Academic performance



3.6 Scoring Scheme

The same scheme is followed with the risk-taking scale since it consists of 36 Each item is given scores ranging from (1-5) depending on participants' responses, the higher score that might be given is (180) and the lower score (36) see table (3.5). As for the listening and speaking skills the researcher used the final score from subject listing and speaking for the academic year 2023-2024 that study this subject in three colleges [College of Education for Women in University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities in University of Baghdad and College of Education for Women in Al-Iraqia University].

3.7 Final Application

The instruments in this study are applied on students in English department the risk- taking scale are administered to the sample of the study through the researcher went to [College of Education for Women in University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn-Rushd for Humanities in University of Baghdad and College of Education for Women in Al-Iraqia University] on the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th of October 2024.the researcher distributed the tools on paper to the students. The students took about 15 to 20 minutes to answer the given tools. In addition to the task facilitation books that the researcher used in order to be able to enter the departments and apply the tools on the students. And allow to work to accomplish the requirements of the master's thesis. As for the scores for the Listening and Speaking, the researchers wrote a handwritten request and submitted it to the heads of the departments of the three colleges to provide them with the final scores for the Listening and Speaking subject for the academic year 2023-2024. The departments provided them with the required scores in order to complete the requirement of the study.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Results Related to the First Aim

As for the first aim “Identifying the EFL university students’ risk-taking level” the statistics yield that the mean score is (72.6141) with a standard deviation of (11.90622) while the theoretical mean is (66). In order to identify the significance of the variance between the mean score and the theoretical mean, a t- test for one independent sample is used, which shows that the computed t-value, which is (13.917), is higher than the critical one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (183). The results indicate a statistically significant difference in favor of the mean score. Accordingly, the sample has a moderate level of risk-taking. See table (4.1)

Table4.1

The Mean Score, Standard Deviation, and T-Value of Academic Risk-Taking

Variable	Sample Size	M	S. D	Theoretical Mean	t- Value		Significance (0.05)
					Computed	Critical	significant

risk-taking	184	72.6141	11.90622	66	13.917	1.96	

4.1.2 Results Related to the second Aim

For the second aim "Identifying the EFL university students' listening and speaking skills level" the calculated results show that the mean score is (73.9402) with a standard deviation of (13.27522). In order to identify the significance of the variance between the mean score and the theoretical mean which is (50), t-test for one independent sample is used. It reveals that the computed t-value (24.462) is higher than the critical one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (183). Accordingly, it is statistically significant and the sample has a good level of listening and speaking. See table (4.2)

Table4.2

The Mean Score, Standard Deviation, and T-Value of Academic Performance

Variable	Sample Size	M	S. D	Theoretical Mean	t- Value		Significance (0.05)
					Computed	Critical	significant
Listening and speaking skills	184	73.9402	13.27522	50	24.462	1.96	

4.1.3 Results Related to the Third Aim

As for the final aims " Finding out the correlation between risk-taking and listening and speaking skills", also, a null hypothesis has been posed as " there is no statistically significant correlation between risk-taking and listening and speaking ". Pearson correlation coefficient is employed to assess the correlation between the two mentioned variables. On the basis of the results, it is shown that the r- value is (0.652) and that the computed t- value (4.168) is higher than the critical one (1.96) at a level of significance (0.05) and degree of freedom (184). This indicates that there is a positive correlation between risk- taking and listening and speaking skills. See table (4.3).

Table 4.3

The Correlation Between Risk-Taking and Listening and Speaking skills

Sample Size	r- Valu	t- Value		Significance (0.05)
		Computed	Critical	significant
184	0.652	4.168	1.96	

5. Conclusions

On the basis of the results obtained, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The research reported that risk-taking for EFL students was associated with listening and speaking performance. This indicates that students who are more willing to take risks in their learning may be achieving better results in these skills.
2. The overall of students in listening and speaking was found to be affected by both their levels of engagement and their propensity for risk-taking.

6. Recommendations of the Study

In light of the study results, the following recommendations are suggested:

A-For Language Teachers

1.Incorporate Risk-Taking Activities: In order to overcome the negative relationship between risk-taking and performance, learning activities should be planned with the aim that allow students to take risks in a risk-free environment. This may involve role-playing, debates and discussions in which making a mistake is considered an element of the learning process.

2. **Provide Meaningful Feedback:** Systematic, positive feedback can assist students in learning about their level of progress and the corresponding gaps to be filled, which, in turn, leads to greater participation in a given activity.

B-For Students

1.Embrace Risk-Taking: It is recommended that students develop a mindset in which risk taking is considered an important element of language learning. They are able for instance to set personal targets to speak more often during class, whatever the number of potential mistakes.

2.Practice Listening Strategies: Students should learn some kind of listening strategy to promote listening comprehension. For example, summarizing what they hear or making predictions about the content can increase their engagement while listening.

3.Shift Focus from Exams to Proficiency: Instead of language acquisition being seen as preparation for academic tests, learners should be aiming to enhance their general language skills in leisure and work through regular practice and input of the language on a real social basis.

C-For Syllabus and Instructional Designers

1.Integrate Listening and Speaking Skills: The syllabus should focus more on the interrelation of listening and speaking skill than listening and speaking skill per se. This might consist of tasks that integrate both at the same time.

2.Include Risk-Taking Elements: Course materials should include as well activities that encourage risk-taking in the students, for example, collaborative or group projects or presentations that prompt experimentation with how language is used.

3.Professional Development for Teachers: Offer teachers' training workshops on practical measures to improve student engagement, and address anxieties around speaking and listening tasks.

7. Suggestions for Further Studies

In the light of the findings of the study, further studies need to be undertaken as follows:

1. Examine Cultural Influences on Risk-Taking
Investigating how cultural factors impact students' willingness to take academic risks could yield important findings. This study could compare different cultural backgrounds to understand how cultural perceptions of risk-taking affect academic performance in EFL settings.

2. Longitudinal Studies on Engagement Patterns
Longitudinal studies could be used to monitor changes in academic participation and risk-taking behaviors through time. This methodology has the potential to answer the question of whether improvements in these dimensions occur in, and therefore translate to, better academic listening and speaking achievement.

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