

DICTOGLOSS-BASED ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT: *Listening is of vital importance in a foreign language learning, while it is difficult and needs training and concentration strategies. Following the scheme of dictogloss, the researcher accomplished the present study for developing EFL learners' listening comprehension. Control/experimental research design was followed along with a sample of sixty EFL students studying at King Marriott Higher Institute of Tourism, Alexandria, Egypt. Tackling results with one-way ANOVA and paired-samples t-test, dictogloss treatment proved to be effective in developing listening comprehension among EFL learners.*

KEYWORDS: dictogloss, listening skills, listening comprehension, listening strategies

INTRODUCTION

Listening is an essential skill to develop learning English as a foreign language. It is defined as the process of decoding aural input. Different disciplines refer to it as listening comprehension, because it transforms an auditory stimulus into a mental reconstruction (Poelmans, 2003). Listening is also highlighted as a vital receptive mean to gather information and its importance lies on the fact that it is used more than any other language skill. Listening is one of the most important sources of input that a human brain has (Widiasmara 2012). Listening reflects much of the input and information that learners get in language learning (Richards, 2008).

Brown and Yule (1983) present listening as a laborious process that implies not only the listener, but the speaker, the content of the message, and any visual aid coming along with the message. Byrnes (1984) considers that listening comprehension is a “highly complex problem-solving activity”, an idea that is explained as listener's understanding may be determined by the interest on the subject of the message transmitted by the speaker. Under this conception, the listener may be more tuned in with subjects of interest, and put away what is not relevant. Brown & Yule (1983) also state that not only the speed of the message transmitted brings difficulties for the listener to understand, but also the complex vocabulary that the speaker may use could potentially be unknown for the receptor. Read (2000) states that unknown words are perceived by listeners as merely chain of sounds, and Cook (1996) affirms that listening problems may be caused not by lack of language, but by lack of memory or knowledge of vocabulary.

Language learners have significant problems in listening comprehension due to the fact that universities pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). Listening is not important parts of many language course books or syllabus and most teachers do not attach importance to listening while preparing their lesson plan (Bingol, Celik, Yildiz and Mart, 2014). Abedin, Majlish and Akter (2009) add listening skill is not assessed like the other language skills, it remains unattended throughout the academic work. Thus, poor listening skills of the learners continues with the same carelessness even at the different levels.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the study lies in the difficulties EFL learners face to comprehend listening extracts. The main cause of this problem may be their inability to follow a comprehensive procedure to get main ideas, details and reconstructing the meaning of the listening script. The present study is an attempt to solve this problem through dictogloss-based listening activities. Therefore, the present research sought to find an answer to the following main question: How far can dictogloss-based listening activities develop EFL learners' listening comprehension?

Rationale of the study

- a. EFL learners have significant problems in listening comprehension.
- b. Universities pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary rather than thinking skills (Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011 and Bingol, Celik, Yildiz and Mart, 2014).
- c. Dictogloss embodies sound principles of language teaching which include: learner autonomy, cooperation among learners, curricular integration, focus on meaning, diversity, thinking skills, alternative assessment, and teachers as co-learners (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001).

LITERATURE REVIEW**Current trends in teaching and researching listening skill**

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) attempted to review some of the factors that influence students' English listening comprehension skill and the strategies for improving their listening comprehension. Al-Alwan, Asassfeh and Al-Shboul (2013) study examined metacognitive listening strategy awareness and the relationship between metacognitive strategy with listening comprehension on a sample consisted of 386 tenth-grade EFL learners. The results showed that students' awareness of metacognitive listening strategies is moderate. Maftoon and Alamdari (2016) study showed that metacognitive strategy instruction led to a considerable variance in overall listening performance and metacognitive awareness among EFL learners.

Hamouda's (2013) study investigated the listening problems first year English major students at Qassim University encounter. The results of the study showed that the major listening comprehension problems are; anxiety, speed of speech, accent, pronunciation, insufficient vocabulary, different accent of speakers, bad quality of recording and lack of concentration. Bingol, Celik, Yildiz and Mart (2014) state that listening barriers are based on message, delivery, audience and environment. Concentrating on listening anxiety, Kimura's (2016) study classified it into social evaluation threat (self-focused) and task-focused which is related to aural input process.

Vasiljevic (2010) combined the dictogloss method and cooperative learning for enhancing speaking and listening skills of second language learners. Myartawan (2012) research showed that the interactive and cooperative power of dictogloss as a technique for teaching listening was able to improve the students' listening ability to understand breaking news texts. Yeganeh (2015) study proved that dictogloss is more effective than oral dialogue journal technique on the acquisition of request speech among EFL learners.

Dictogloss Procedure

Ruth Wajnryb (1995) developed a new way for dictation, known as dictogloss. Dictogloss has been defined by Wajnryb (1995) as a task-based activity where learners reconstruct the meaning of a given

listening sample in a collaborative process. According to Wajnryb learners who regularly engage in dictogloss lessons will gradually see a refinement in their global aural comprehension and note-taking skills. When dictogloss is implemented conscientiously, it entails the essential principles of language teaching which include: learner autonomy, diversity, learners cooperation, curricular integration, focus on meaning, thinking skills, teachers as co-learners and alternative assessment. These principles flow from an overall shift that has occurred in language education (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001).

Vasiljevic (2010), suggests that the dictogloss model offers not only several potential advantages over other models of teaching listening comprehension, but also a unique blending of teaching listening comprehension and the assessment of students' listening ability. Jacobs and Small (2003) consider dictogloss to be an innovative language teaching technique that embodies the recent paradigm in education, that is more suitable for cooperative learning, that can benefit from its use of global issues, and that lend itself to a multitude of variations developed by creative language teachers. According to Wajnryb (1995) There are four stages in dictogloss procedure:

- 1- Preparation; learners are prepared for some of the vocabulary and figure out the topic of the text.
- 2- Dictation; learners hear twice at first they don't take notes, the second time they take fragmentary notes.
- 3- Reconstruction, learners work in groups to reconstruct the text on the basis of the fragments recorded in stage 2.
- 4- Analysis and correction; learners analyze and correct their texts. The main purpose of the analysis and correction stage is to identify the problems students had with text comprehension.

METHOD

The method of the study is described in this section. Subjects and location is described in the first subsection. Second and third subsections describe instruments and standardization. Fourth subsection is for procedure of data collection. Subsection five presents data analysis method and hypotheses.

Participants and location

Sixty EFL learners participated in conducting the present study. The learners were divided into experimental and control groups (30 for each group). All the participants were first year students studying at the King, Marriott Higher Institute for Tourism and Hospitality, Alexandria, Egypt.

Instrument

A listening comprehension test was developed by the researcher, specifically for the purpose of this study. The test is composed of three main questions; (1) is True/false conversation questions, (2) is writing what you hear, and (3) is conversation information questions. The listening passages were purposefully selected from the British council learn English teens and Interactions one Listening and Speaking (appendix I) with the aim of avoiding the interference of participants' prior exposure to them. Listening extracts were read by a native speakers of English language and was used as a source of input for the participants on the test. For correcting the second part of the test, the researcher conducted a listening comprehension rubric (appendix II). Participants' answers were corrected against five point scale; 1-very poor, 2- poor, 3- adequate, 4-good and 5-excellent.

Test validity & Reliability

Test validity was ensured by presenting it to a panel of EFL specialists who had expertise in teaching English EFL learners. Jurors were asked to indicate the comprehensiveness of the test to the target

listening comprehension skills, appropriateness for students' linguistic and general background knowledge, and clarity of instructions. The test reliability was established by computing Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is 0.85 suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

Procedure of data collection

The experiment took place during the first semester of the academic year 2016/2017 and took two month duration. Students were approached in English Laboratory. They were informed about the purpose of the study and requestes. The experimental group studied the first five chapters of "Interactions one listening and speaking" through dictogloss procedure, while the control group followed the regular method. Both the experimental and the control group sat for pre/post listening comprehension test.

Data analysis & Hypotheses

Data from the pre / post application of listening comprehension test were fed into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to test the following hypotheses:

- 1- There is no difference in pretest between the experimental group and the control group, whereas there is a significant difference in the posttest.
- 2- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group students in pre-post listening comprehension test, in favor of the posttest.
- 3- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in pre-post listening comprehension test, in favor of the posttest.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Hypothesis one

There is no difference in pretest between the experimental group and the control group, whereas there is a significant difference in the posttest. The results of the statistics generated by one-way ANOVA analysis in Table 1 show that there is no difference in pretest between the experimental group and the control group ($P = .976$), whereas a significant difference is seen in the post test ($P = .002$), indicating that the dictogloss treatment to the experimental group students seems to have caused some change.

Table 1 one-way ANOVA analysis

(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
control pre	experimental pre	.40000	.97335	.976	-2.1372-	2.9372
	control post	-2.33333-	.97335	.083	-4.8705-	.2039
	experimental post	-5.96667*	.97335	.000	-8.5039-	-3.4295-
E pre	control pre	-.40000-	.97335	.976	-2.9372-	2.1372
	control post	-2.73333*	.97335	.029	-5.2705-	-.1961-
	experimental post	-6.36667*	.97335	.000	-8.9039-	-3.8295-
control post	control pre	2.33333	.97335	.083	-.2039-	4.8705
	experimental pre	2.73333*	.97335	.029	.1961	5.2705
	experimental post	-3.63333*	.97335	.002	-6.1705-	-1.0961-
E post	control pre	5.96667*	.97335	.000	3.4295	8.5039
	experimental pre	6.36667*	.97335	.000	3.8295	8.9039
	control post	3.63333*	.97335	.002	1.0961	6.1705

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Hypothesis two

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group students in pre-post listening comprehension test, in favor of the posttest.

Paired-samples t-test was used to verify the validity of this hypothesis. Table (2) shows the significance of difference between the mean scores of the control group students in pre-post listening comprehension test.

Table 2 Significance of difference between the mean scores of the control group students in pre-post listening comprehension test

Testing	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Pre-testing	12.16	2.12	29	6.02	0.001
Post-testing	14.5				

Close inspection of the data presented in table (2) reveals that "t" value is (6.02) and significant at 0.001, and "df" equals 29 which means that there is a statistically significance difference between the mean scores of outlining in pre-post testing in favor of post testing.

Hypothesis three

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in pre-post listening comprehension test, in favor of the posttest.

Paired-samples t-test was used to verify the validity of this hypothesis. Table (3) shows the significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in pre-post listening comprehension test.

Table 3 Significance of difference between the mean scores of the experimental group students in pre-post listening comprehension test

Testing	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Pre-testing	11.76	1.93	29	17.99	0.001
Post-testing	18.13				

Table (3) shows that "t" value is (17.99) and is significant at 0.001, and "df" equals 29 which means that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of writing skills in pre-post testing in favor of post testing.

DISCUSSION

From the data collected and the subsequent statistical analysis of the data, it would seem that dictogloss-based activities have a significant effect in the listening areas investigated in this study. It appears to have greatly improved the experimental subjects' listening comprehension performance.

Both experimental and control group subjects have the same entry level. Pre mean scores of experimental and control groups were 11.76 and 12.16. These pre mean scores are low since the total listening comprehension grade is 30. The subjects' answers to the second part of the listening comprehension test were very poor, i.e. some students wrote words that haven't been mentioned in the listening extracts and some of them left the whole part without the answer.

To compare the pre-post mean scores of both control and experimental groups one-way ANOVA analysis was used. Close inspection of the data presented in table (1) proved that there is a statistical difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental participants in listening comprehension testing in favor of post testing ($P = .002$).

Furthermore paired-samples t-test were used with both control and experimental groups. The value of "T" for the control group is (6.02) and significant at 0.001 while for the experimental group it is 17.99 and is significant at 0.001. Previous results proved that both groups have significant enhancement in listening comprehension, while the great enhancement is in favor of the experimental one. Thus, dictogloss-based activities have maximized listening comprehension to a remarkable level.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

Dictogloss- based treatment and results of the present study offer useful tips in teaching listening skills: 1) Presenting key words in listening extracts before listening helps to concentrate while listening. 2) Activation of prior knowledge and information is an essential demand for correct understanding. 3) The learners are instructed to grasp the gist of the text, but not allowed to take any notes. The second time that the reading is told, students must take notes to identify and write the key words related to the text. 4) Reconstruction is considered as the most important step of listening tasks. During this stage, participants demonstrated comprehension throughout the use of the key words that they previously took. 5) During the analysis and correction stage, participants could compare and contrast the relevant information among their reconstructions of the text with the original listening text. 6) Dictogloss combines both focus on meaning and focus on form such as grammar and spelling.

CONCLUSION

Listening comprehension is considered theoretically a dynamic process in which individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning and associate what they hear with prior knowledge. Application of creative approach to teaching and learning skills of listening might be helpful. Dictogloss procedure is effective in teaching listening to EFL learners. Dictogloss embodies the different principles of language teaching that include: cooperation among learners, learner autonomy, curricular integration, focus on meaning, alternative assessment, diversity, thinking skills and teachers as co-learners.

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Appendix I

Listening Comprehension Test

Name:

Grade: /30

I- Listen to the conversation in a restaurant and write T if a statement is true and F if it is false.*

5 pts

1. The customers order cold drinks.
2. Both customers order the Thai chicken for their main course.
3. Both customers order a dessert.
4. The two customers order the same starter.
5. There are two customers eating together.

II- Listen to the speakers describing their favorite things and write down what you hear. 20

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* Adapted from: www.british council.org/learnenglishteens.

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III- Bruce is visiting Jack. They are talking about television. Listen for the answers to these questions.* 5 pts

1- What do Jack and Bruce think about watching TV? Do they agree or disagree?

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2- Why does Bruce prefer to get the news from the Internet or the newspaper?

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3- What is Jack's habit when watching TV?

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* Adapted from: Tanka, J. and Most, P. (2009). Interactions 1 Listening and Speaking. England: McGraw-Hill Education.

Appendix II
Listening Comprehension Rubric

Very poor /1	Poor /2	Adequate /3	Good /4	Excellent /5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - very poor knowledge of vocabulary - unable to understand language - unable to identify sequencing - answers are left or unrelated to oral extracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - poor knowledge of vocabulary - rarely understands language - poor sequencing - small amount of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some knowledge of vocabulary items - moderate understanding of language - adequate sequencing - content is mostly accurate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adequate knowledge of vocabulary - adequate understanding of language - sequencing with minor mistakes - content is accurate with minor mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - excellent knowledge of vocabulary - fully understands overall language - no mistakes in sequencing - accurate content with no mistakes