

THE COMPARATIVE EFFECT OF DICTO- GLOSS AND PARTIAL- DICTATION ON EFL LEARNERS' LISTENING COMPREHENSION

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ABSTRACT

The present study focused on dicto-gloss and partial dictation as potential listening activities to promote L2 listening comprehension and aimed at comparing the effects of dicto-gloss and partial dictation on L2 listening comprehension. The participants of the study included 60 English as a foreign language (EFL) learners at the elementary level studying at Kish Language institute in Tehran within the age range of 18 to 25. Dicto-gloss was operationalized through the 4 stages of preparation, dictation and note taking, reconstruction of text based on notes and finally analyzing and correction. Partial dictation was operationalized through getting students complete a text with blanks based on the listening recording. By adopting a pretest and posttest design the effects of dicto-gloss and partial dictation on listening comprehension were examined and the effects of the two types of treatments on listening comprehension were compared using independent samples t-test. The results of statistical analysis rejected the null hypothesis of the study and indicated that dicto-gloss was a more effective technique than partial dictation in enhancing the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Based on the findings of the present study, language teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the benefits of dicto-gloss for teaching L2 listening. Teacher trainers may also intend to prepare language teachers for using dicto-gloss in their language classrooms.

KEYWORDS: L2 listening, listening comprehension, dicto-gloss, partial dictation

INTRODUCTION

As discussed by some researchers (e.g., Dunkel, 1991; Hargie, 2010; Rost, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007; Verederber & Sellnow, 2011), in the context of language learning and teaching, listening is viewed as one of the essential language skills learners should master since it provide them with the ability to get access to the necessary input based on the objectives of language learning. As a matter of fact, listening is on one of the pivotal tools L2 learners can use to promote their general knowledge as well as linguistic knowledge. In a same vein, Nunan (2003)

asserts that learning would be aborted if the learner fail to understand the input at the right level. The investigations carried out on listening comprehension (Delmonte, 2008; Farshid&Farshid, 2010; Kiany & Shiramiry, 2002; Ndiforchu, 2011) reveal that dictation can play a part in enhancing this skill. Literature shows different dictation techniques some of which are as follows: standard or full dictation, dicto- comp, partial dictation, and dicto-gloss (Nation & Newton, 2009).Consequently, this study seeks to examine the potential impact of two different techniques of dictation, namely, Dicto-gloss and partial dictation on learners' listening comprehension performance.

Richards, Platt, and platt (1992) define dictation as a technique implemented in language teaching and testing in which a text is being read loudly with pauses and learners must write whatever they hear. The reason for administering dictation in classes is to practice listening with the whole class in a short amount of time and force students to listen carefully (Davis, 1995). In the ensuing years and with the emergence of the Audio-Lingual method, dictation was marginalized. The same was true for other techniques related to the grammar translation and direct methods. Today, with the popularity of a more integrative approach to foreign language instruction and learning, dictation has come to regain its former popularity. Lightfoot (2006) believes that dictation in its simplest form involves reading some text aloud followed by the listener's writing down what is being said. Yoshida (1981), reported a positive correlations among dictation and test results. He claims that dictation can be considered as a good teaching strategy. He reported that dictation indicates listening ability of learners and there are two main types of dictation.

In dictogloss, the learners must attract the main idea of a statement or a part. Dictogloss contains various techniques. In the sentence-level dictogloss, learners hear the sentences only one time and they expected to write down the words they remember and reconstruct the sentences accurately. When this process is done for the first time, the second reading would be allowed by teachers and learners would notify that they have to pay enough attention in the first reading as well as the rest. This practice is suitable for low intermediate or high beginner levels. Students can work in pairs or groups of three or four while reconstructing the sentences. Sometimes teachers ask learners to write their statements on the board in order to have a discussion over it. Dictogloss uses dictation activity which has an interactive nature and produces a reconstructed version of the text at the end and it was introduced by Wajnryb (1990) as a method of teaching grammar which is alternative. Preparation, dictation, reconstruction and analysis and correction are the four elementary steps of the original dictogloss (Vasiljevic, 2010).Teachers can employ dictogloss to establish a collaborative atmosphere in the L2 classroom (Nassaji & fotos, 2011). Rhuth Wajnryb (1990) put forth the concept of dictogloss for the first time .Dictogloss is a classroom procedure used for the instruction of grammar (kid, 1992). Dictogloss creates a context where learners' grammatical competence is expanded, thanks to the productive use of grammar. The current study does not put emphasis on the grammatical point but on the listening. According to wajnryb (as cited by Nassaji, 2000) the learners become involved in the process of decision making and hypothesis procedures thereby they improve their perception of the language they used.

Partial Dictation

In this type of dictation, chunks, words or phrases of language have been removed and students must listen and fill the blanks. Partial dictation expects the students to fill the blanks so it does not require too much attention while writing, the correction of spelling is possible and pair work is encouraged during this process. It possess structures which students would be able to recognize them but they cannot produce the same structures. Partial dictation is another branch of dictation technique which was developed by Johansson in Sweden .It is a combination of dictation and cloze procedure. It is like standard diction in which every aspect, except that the students are provided with the written material as well as reading procedure; while in the given passage some words are deleted (Oller, 1979).

In a study Rahimi (2008) sought to examine the impact of dictation on the improvement of language proficiency. The results revealed improvement in both experimental and control group on the whole of proficiency test. The experimental group showed enhancements in listening comprehension, reading, vocabulary and grammar while the control group showed enhancement only in vocabulary part of the test. Chun (2010) conducted a case study of long-term dictation tasks using rapid speech and investigated the impact of dictation of rapid speech on listening skill enhancement and the impact of dictation on students speaking and listening ability. Fifty TESL students participated in this study and they practiced listening within dictation two times a week through twelve weeks. They gained significant strategies dealing with TOEFL and dictation scores by practice. Three questionnaire were filled by the students which revealed the way dictation improved speaking and listening skills.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following question was raised:

Q: Is there any significant difference between the effect of dicto-gloss and partial dictation on EFL learners' listening comprehension performance?

Based on the above research question, the following null hypothesis was stated:

H0: There is no significant difference between the effect of dicto -gloss and partial dictation on EFL learners' listening comprehension performance.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The initial participants of the current study were 90 EFL learners at the elementary level studying at Kish Language institute in Tehran. These participants were selected non-randomly due to availability and manageability reasons. All the participants were female learners and within the age range of 18 to 25. To homogenize and select the participants, the researcher piloted a KET test on 30 elementary students. The researcher rated the speaking section of the test along with her colleague who was the supervisor and teacher with more than 10 years of experience. Then the researcher gave the piloted KET test to the 90 elementary students and based on Standard deviation and means of the scores selected only those participants whose scores lay within the

range of +/-one standard deviation from the mean. This led to the selection of 60 homogenized learners in terms of overall language proficiency. After selecting the 60 homogenous students, they were equally divided into two experimental groups consisting of 30 learners each.

Instrumentation

The following instruments and materials were used in the present study:

Key English Test (KET)

KET was used as an instrument to choose a homogenized sample of students in terms of language proficiency. KET is a Cambridge English test for elementary level which is divided into 3 sections a description of which follows.

Reading and Writing

The first part of this test was reading and writing which had to be answered in 1 hour 10 minutes. This section had 6 parts including 40 questions for reading and 3 parts for writing. This section accounted for 50 % of the total marks for the test. Reading and writing for this test had different types of questions and texts in each part. In the first part of reading there were 5 questions with 8 notices from (A-H) which students had to read and mark the correct letter on their answer sheet. Part 2 of this section had 5 questions which students had to choose the best word (A, B, C) for each space. For part 3 students had to complete the five conversations for questions 11-15 (A, B, C) and for questions 16-20 they had to complete the conversation and mark the correct letter A-H and part four was a reading test with multiple choice questions that covered questions 21 to 27. Questions 28 to 35 was a cloze test and the last part of the reading questions 36 to 40 checked their knowledge regarding the words and the first letter was already there. 1 mark was considered for each question. To check the writing ability students had to read two informal letters and complete the letters according to their knowledge and for questions 51 - 55 they read the notes and filled the information. As for the last part they had to read one note from the new pen friend and write a note in response.

Listening

This section had 5 parts in which students had to listen to each question twice. Students had to answer the questions in 30 minutes which included 8 minutes to write their answers on the answer sheet. This part had 25 questions and one mark was considered for each question. In the first part, there were 5 multiple choice questions and students listened and chose the correct picture. In part 2 there were 5 questions which students listened and chose the answer among 8 items. For part 3 there were 5 questions which they had to listen and choose the correct answer and for part four and five questions 16-25, students had to listen and complete the questions. 1 mark was considered for each question.

Speaking Rating Scale

Two examiners checked the speaking. One of the examiners was the interlocutor and the other one was the rater. This part consisted of 2 sections. At first the interlocutor asked some primary questions related to the name and family and education background and some questions related to the present and previous experiences of learning English. For part 2, each student was given one

card and there were some key words and the other card had the answers. The interlocutor gave the examinees the instructions and they had to follow the instructions and answer each other's questions. One of the examiners was supposed to rate the performance of the examinees and the other one rated the test according to the following criteria: Grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. They considered 20 marks for this section.

Listening Post Test

A listening post test of another version of KET was given to learners. This test was administered at the end of the course.

Course book

The course book which was used in this research is called New Headway Elementary 4th edition by Liz and John Soars and Amanda Maris. There are 12 units in the book. This book was for four terms. Three units were taught in each term during 19 sessions which each session lasted 90 minutes. This book had a work book a CD Rom and a video software for each lesson which focused on the four skills and sub skills and an MP3 as well. Each unit had 8 pages and consisted of speaking, reading, writing and listening. Units 10-12 were taught to the learners during this research study.

Procedure

Initially, 90 elementary EFL learners were selected randomly and given AKET the results of which were used to choose a homogenized sample of 60 learners whose scores fell within the range of +/-one standard deviation from the mean. The researcher then divided the participants into two experimental groups with 30 participants in each. To assure that, the participants on both groups were not significantly different in terms of listening comprehension performance prior to the main study, the listening comprehension scores on KET used for homogeneity purposes were analyzed using an independent samples t-test. She allocated 9 out of the 19 sessions of the course to the treatment in each experimental group. To do so, dicto-gloss and partial dictation, as the treatment were practiced every other session in each class with the teacher introducing the tasks to the participants in each group in the first session.

In this study 10 texts were used. In the dicto-gloss group the teacher went through four stages in the classroom: preparation to give the learners information about the topic of the text and presentation of some of the vocabulary items used in the targeted text. Dictation, when the learner heard the text and took fragmentary notes for the reconstruction. As for the next phase, the learners reconstructed the text on the basis of the fragments recorded in stage 2 and the last stage was analyzing and correction, when learners analyzed and corrected their texts. For the preparation stage, the teacher prepared learners by exploiting warm up for the subject matter and made them receptive to the listening in the text stage and choose the interesting topic and involve them in the discussion by asking questions and engage them.

The researcher pre- taught any unknown or difficult vocabularies related to the text and wrote on the board and made sure that the learners knew what they were supposed to do. The next step was cleaning the board before actual listening. In this way the listening part of task was challenging

enough. The second stage which was dictation, learners listened to the recording of the text three times without any pauses. The first time, they just listened and got a general feeling of the text, for the second and the third time, they took down notes. At the conclusion of the dictation learners went through the third stage reconstruction, the learners were put into groups of three and asked to reconstruct the text in about 10 minutes. Learners produced their own written version of the text from their shared resources. The purpose of reconstruction was retaining the meaning and form of the original text but it was not a word-for-word copy of the text they listened to. Instead students worked in groups to create a cohesive text with correct grammar. In the final stage, the learners spent about 10 minutes analyzing and correcting their texts, they compared the reconstructions of other learners and the original text and made any necessary corrections.

As for the partial group, the structure was explained to the students and they were made aware of the topic of the passage or conversation to activate their background knowledge. Then they listened to the whole passage or conversation without any pauses. Second, the text was duplicated with blanks for the words or structures that were important and the students were provided with an incomplete written text. The audio was replayed and the students wrote down in the deleted parts what they had heard. In the third stage, they listened again to the whole passage or conversation to check what they had written. After the dictation they checked their writing against the audio script. Some times after checking their dictation participants listened to the audio again while looking at their dictation and they were asked to pay special attention to their mistakes and corrected their errors.

Having finished the treatment, the researcher gave the participants in both groups the listening posttest from another version of KET the scores of which were used to investigate the research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the results of data analyses carried out to investigate the null hypothesis of the study are reported.

Participants' Listening comprehension at the beginning of experiment

To establish the homogeneity of participants in terms of listening comprehension, the listening comprehension scores of the two groups were compared using independent samples t test. Table 1 shows the results of independent samples t-test between the two groups of the study in terms of listening comprehension.

Table 1: Results of test of Normality, Homogeneity of Variances and Independent Samples Test for Listening Scores

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means					
	Statistic	df	Sig.	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Dicto-gloss	.148	30	.094	Equal variances assumed	.002	.966	-941	58	.351
Partial dictation	.134	30	.181	Equal variances not assumed			-941	57.996	.351

In Table 1 the significant levels of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for dicto-gloss and partial groups were greater than the confidence level of 0.05 and accordingly data were normally distributed. Another consideration was the homogeneity of variances which was checked through consulting the Levene's test of equality of variances. According to Levene's test result the two groups of the study had equal variances ($F=0.002$, $P=0.96$). Thus, t value was found 0.94 with significant value of 0.35 which means that the two groups are not significantly different in terms of listening comprehension.

Answering the Research Question

After the participants of the study received the treatment, they took a listening posttest to observe the effect of treatment on their listening comprehension scores. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the two groups of the study in listening posttest.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the two Groups of the Study in Listening Posttest

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Listening Post	Dicto-gloss	30	19.8667	3.37060	.61538
	Partial dictation	30	18.1333	3.09319	.56474

Based on the descriptive statistics, dicto-gloss group had a mean score of 19.86 ($SD=3.37$) and partial group had a mean score of 18.13 ($SD=3.09$). There was some difference between the two mean score but it could not be considered statistically significant. To determine the significant of the difference independent samples t-test was run on the posttest scores between the two groups. Table 3 shows the results of independent samples t-test.

Table 3: Results of Test of Normality, Homogeneity of Variances and Independent Samples Test for Listening posttest Scores

Groups	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality			Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and t-test for Equality of Means					
	Statistic	df	Sig.	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Dicto-gloss	.132	30	.194	Equal variances assumed	.088	.768	2.075	58	.042
Partial dictation	.110	30	.200*	Equal variances not assumed			2.075	57.577	.042

In Table 3 the significant levels of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for dicto-gloss and partial groups were greater than the confidence level of 0.05 and accordingly data were normally distributed.

Homogeneity of variances was also checked through consulting the Levene's test of equality of variances. According to Levene's test result the two groups of the study had equal variances ($F=0.08$, $P=0.78$). Thus, t value was found 2.07 with significant value of 0.04 which means that the two groups are significantly different in terms of listening comprehension. Therefore the null hypothesis of the study was rejected and it was concluded there are significant difference between the effect of dicto-gloss and partial dictation on listening comprehension of EFL learners.

The present study was an attempt to understand how listening comprehension can be enhanced. To this end the effect of two kinds of listening instruction, namely, dicto-gloss and partial dictation were measured and compared. Before starting the experimentation it was made sure that two groups of the study were homogenized in terms of language proficiency and listening comprehension to get free from any threats due to possible differences between the groups in terms of language and listening comprehension. After the treatment, the group that received dicto-gloss procedure scored higher than the group receiving partial dictation ($M=19.86 > M=18.13$). The result of independent samples t test also indicated that the mean difference between the two groups was significant ($T=2.07$, $P=0.04$). Thus, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected and significant difference was found between dicto-gloss and partial dictation in terms of their effect on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The present finding supports the previous findings regarding the effectiveness of dictation method (Afsharrad and Sadeghi Benis, 2014; Faghani, 2015; Savignon, 1982).

Moreover, the finding of the present study is in line with the study by Vasiljevic (2010). Vasiljevic (2010) showed that dicto-gloss provides language decoding and encoding which improves students' communication and listening skills. He argued that dicto-gloss enables learners to produce a correct and appropriate text and to focus on their choices. He further clarified that this procedure improves learners' self-confidence and encourages learners to focus on the process of language acquisition and how to achieve it more effectively.

The finding of the study regarding the better effect of dicto-gloss on listening comprehension can theoretically be justified too. As stated before, in the dicto-gloss, students need to take notes and pay close attention to important information in the listening and then need to collaborate with peers to reconstruct the heard story. Therefore, in the note taking stage, students' attention is stimulated which is important in learning. According to noticing hypothesis, input does not turn into intake for language learning unless it is noticed, or in other words, learner get an awareness and consciousness of what he is going to learn (Schmidt, 1990, 2001).

According to Katz and Blyth (2007), dictogloss is a "a consciousness-raising activity with a meta linguistic aim can be used to provide meta talk that concentrated on different targeted items within the text (grammatical, pragmatic, rhetorical, etc.)" (p. 45). As Katz and Blyth maintain dictogloss is a well-established dictation-based activity which aim is developing conscious listening skills in addition to awareness of phrase and sentence structures. According to Kiddey and Waring (2001) dictogloss helps teacher to see or assesses some of the learners' skills or understanding.

Moreover, the collaboration taking place between the peers is also conducive in helping students to better learn. Teachers can employ dictogloss to establish a collaborative atmosphere in the L2 classroom (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). It should be remembered that there is a strong theoretical background for collaboration and peer interaction in education. According to Lingley (2005), though collaboration individuals are made ready to function beyond linguistic comfort zone and further extend their zone of proximal development (ZPD). In the view of Vygotsky, (1978), Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is defined as the gap between the current developmental level as measured by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as measured through problem solving with the help from adult dynamic assessment or in collaboration with the peers who are more capable. According to the conclusion reached by Halliday and Hasan (1989), learning as a social process puts emphasis on the interaction and the context in the process of learning. Consequently, the findings of this study can possibly be attributed to the fact that the interaction among different students may have possibly resulted in better performance. As mentioned by Lingley (2005), the Halliday's "social-semiotic perspective" incorporates Vygotsky's "sociocultural theory" based on which peer feedback can be placed. According to Vygotsky (cited in O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010), the presence and involvement of a more knowledgeable peer can support the learning process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to examine any significant difference between the effect of dicto-gloss and partial dictation on EFL learners' listening comprehension performance. The results of independent samples t-test indicated that dicto-gloss proved more effective than partial dictation in terms of the participants' listening comprehension performance. Certain implications for language teaching and classrooms can be suggested based on what was found in the current study. First of all, language teachers are encouraged to take advantage of the benefits of dicto-gloss for teaching L2 listening. Second, teacher trainers need to prepare the language teachers for using dicto-gloss in their language classrooms. Language teaching courses can also update their language skill syllabuses based on more local preferences grounded in research. The use of more research based teaching also requires some decisions made by policy makers and accordingly they are also encouraged to pay more attention to the results of local research in the area of L2 skills.

This study like most empirical studies was not free from limitations. During conducting this study the researcher encountered two limitations. First of all, due to the regulation of the language school, the researcher did not have any access to male participants; therefore, the findings of this research may not be generalized to male students. The other limitation was the matter of age of learners, since the researcher had only access to adults. Thus, the findings of this study may not be generalized to teenagers.

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