

DICTOGLOSS: A COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO ENHANCE LISTENING, SPEAKING, READING AND WRITING

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Abstract

Language is the primary means of communication and therefore it becomes imperative for language users to acquire four major language skills i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW). The present article explores how the dictogloss method supports the development of all four language skills in gaining proficiency in any language. The paper provides an overview of the dictogloss technique and its theoretical foundation. Furthermore, this paper attempts to explain, in detail, the steps involved in conducting a dictogloss activity with illustrative examples. It discusses the potential benefits of this method as well as concerns related to its implementation. This approach fosters cooperative learning and reduces the tendency for rote memorization.

Keywords: Dictogloss, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Cooperative Learning, Rote Memorization

Introduction

In this era of globalization, it is important for students to gain proficiency in the language skills that enable a person to understand and generate spoken language for appropriate and successful interpersonal communication. These four language skills are known as the L-S-R-W or language learning skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Dictogloss is one of many language teaching tools which comes handy in the classroom for a language teacher. If a teacher is aware of the procedure and advantages of this tool, she will not only help students master the four language skills but also improve their social skills by teaching cooperation, tolerance, acceptance, patience and teamwork in the language classroom thus preparing students for global citizenship. This paper outlines the dictogloss approach-based teaching methodology, which fosters collaborative learning in the classroom and bridges the linguistic gaps.

Theoretical Foundation of Dictogloss

Dictogloss is a dictation exercise with the help of which students can practice taking notes on important words while listening to a text passage and then collaborate to reconstruct the text. Ruth Wajnryb (1990) was the first linguist to present this approach to teach grammar. The dictogloss approach can be applied at all levels, and while choosing listening material based on learning obstacles and degree of difficulty, teachers should take the learners' level into consideration. In their dictogloss courses, Thornbury (1999) and Wajnryb (1990) place an emphasis on integrated skills and language elements like words, phrases, and sentences but do not identify the level of learners. There are four main steps in the original dictogloss procedure; Preparation (Warm-up), Dictation, Reconstruction, Analysis and correction.

Cooperative Learning

The groups which are comparatively very small work in close association with each other so that it is a win-a-win situation for both at the end of the activity that is for the individual member and the group as a whole (Teed et al., 2006). In an informal cooperative learning setting, students are made to work in small groups for a stipulated short period of time. They deal with the material and methods to solve a problem; discussions are held within the group and seek help of a teacher who is in the role of facilitator to clear their doubts and write review of the text in terms of their own understanding. Teachers frequently encourage

students to discuss a certain topic in pairs or groups for a few minutes to reach to a consensus (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). The main aim of the cooperative learning technique is to offer activities in small groups so as to give a chance to develop academic and social skills (Gillies, 2016). The main goal of cooperative learning is to highlight the benefits of interdependence while stressing the significance of individual accountability. In cooperative learning, students collaborate with one another while each has a distinct assignment to complete or idea to clarify. Although they can exhibit teamwork, students are still in charge of specific project components that highlight their unique skills (Brad, 2024).

Literature Review

Dictogloss, a collaborative and integrated language learning technique, has gained recognition for its effectiveness in enhancing the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. By merging text reconstruction with cooperative learning, it facilitates active engagement and meaningful language practice. This review synthesizes literature on the effectiveness of dictogloss and its application in language teaching. Dictogloss was developed as an alternative to traditional dictation methods, with an emphasis on meaningful communication and learner autonomy. The technique involves four stages: (1) Preparation, (2) Dictation, (3) Reconstruction, and (4) Analysis and Correction (Wajnryb, 1990). In this process, students listen to a text read aloud, take notes, collaborate to reconstruct the text, and compare their versions with the original. Wajnryb (1990) emphasized that dictogloss encourages active listening and critical thinking, as students must identify key ideas and organize them cohesively. Unlike traditional dictation, it focuses on holistic comprehension rather than verbatim recall. Dictogloss integrates listening and speaking through collaborative reconstruction tasks. Vasiljevic (2010) highlighted that the technique enhances listening comprehension by requiring learners to focus on meaning and linguistic forms. During the reconstruction phase, students discuss and negotiate the text, improving oral communication skills. Studies show that the cooperative aspect fosters interaction and peer learning. Swain (1995) identified that such negotiation promotes hypothesis testing and grammatical accuracy, contributing to second language acquisition (SLA). Dictogloss also strengthens reading and writing skills by requiring learners to analyse the reconstructed text. Kondo-Brown (2001) found that this stage helps learners recognize their linguistic gaps, encouraging them to refine their grammatical and syntactic understanding. Moreover, the reflective nature of the activity supports the development of academic writing skills. According to Ashman & Gillies (2003), the reconstruction and comparison stages enhance awareness of text structure and coherence. The metacognitive dimension of dictogloss is another significant advantage. Shak (2006) noted that the technique helps learners monitor their language use and identify areas for improvement. By engaging in group discussions, learners also develop cognitive strategies such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and synthesizing. Dictogloss has been widely adapted to different educational contexts. Its flexibility allows teachers to tailor the text to specific language levels or thematic content. For example, Ellis (2003) suggested using authentic texts for advanced learners to simulate real-world language use. While dictogloss has proven effective, some challenges do exist. Kim (2008) pointed out that low-proficiency learners may struggle with the initial dictation phase, potentially hindering group collaboration. Teachers must provide appropriate scaffolding, such as pre-teaching vocabulary or allowing repeated listening. Dictogloss is a robust pedagogical tool that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing into a cohesive learning experience. Its emphasis on cooperation and critical thinking aligns with communicative language teaching principles, making it a valuable technique for diverse classroom settings.

Steps of Conducting Dictogloss Activity (An Illustration)

Aim

- to collaboratively take notes and ideas out of the text heard in order to gain proficiency in LSRW language skills.
- to give learners opportunity to comprehend the text in context of an extract, *Discovering Tut: the saga Continues*, taken from *Grade XI, N.C.E.R.T. Book, Hornbill (NCERT, 2024)*.

Steps/Procedure

1. Preparation Stage

In the first step, the teacher gives an overview of the dictogloss approach to be used in the lesson and pre-teach some new terms or vocabulary to get students ready for the next stage that is dictation. Also, in junior classes or young learners should be instructed to write only content words whereas senior classes should write the content as well as function words as they listen to the text (Jose, 2022).

Illustration: -

The teacher divides the class into groups and instructs students that they will listen to the text twice. In the first reading by the teacher, they will only listen to the text and in the second listening, they will make their own notes. Thereafter, they will take best points from each other's notes and assign any one scribe who will draft the final copy or edition of the text. Thereafter, they will read out the text to the whole class. Now teacher introduces some vocabulary words like; heir, speculated, forensic reconstruction, pharaoh, scudded across, casket grey, gilded, murals to the students from the text (mentioned in step two).

2. Dictation Stage

In this stage, the teacher does the model reading for the first time with correct pronunciation and students listen to the teacher carefully to get a general idea about the content and context of the text. At this point, students are only listening to the text and not taking notes. Before the second reading begins, teacher reminds the students to take notes. Here, teacher is being cautious about the text reading as she has to dictate the sentence while keeping its semantic structure intact.

Illustration: - Sample text to be read by the teacher

He was just a teenager...death or misfortune falling upon those who disturbed him - was really true.

Some of the important vocabulary words that students are expected to write from the above-mentioned text are *heir, speculated, tomb, forensic reconstruction, pharaoh, cemetery, scudded across, veiling, casket grey, murals, gilded* etc. It is the responsibility of the students to identify and record the important vocabulary that they are expected to pick out while listening to the text. The teacher should not highlight or pamper them with pre-determined vocabulary list as some of the hints about the context of the text were already given at preparatory stage. However, the key vocabulary picked up by the students for the reconstruction stage should be reviewed by the teacher.

3. Reconstruction Stage

At this stage, students work in groups to compile their notes and ideas in order to rebuild the original text that they had heard. As the group leader, the scribe (assigned by the group members), listens to peers and writes down the edited content. Thereafter, the notes are switched between groups in order to review the coherence, grammar and cohesiveness of the text. Once the students have finished the reconstruction phase, the teacher gives grammar and expressions points mentioned in the text.

Illustration:

Sentence 1. *He was just a teenager when he died. (past tense)*

Sentence 2. *The last heir of a powerful family that had ruled (past perfect tense)*

Sentence 3. *Since the discovery of his tomb in 1922, the modern world has speculated (preposition of time with present perfect tense)*

Sentence 4. *forensic reconstruction (adjectival collocation)*

Sentence 5. *ghostly dust devils (meaning with reference to the text)*

Sentence 6. *Dark-bellied clouds (meaning with reference to the text), scudded across (adjectival collocation) casket grey (adjectival collocation).*

Sentence 7. *CT scanner (medical term)*

Sentence 8. *descended (meaning with reference to the text)*

Sentence 9. *gilded face (meaning with reference to the text)*

Sentence 11. *visitors read from guidebooks in a whisper (meaning with reference to the text).*

Sentence 12. *pharaoh's curse (mythology connect)*

1. **Analysis and Correction Stage**

In the fourth and last step, one representative from each group reads out the edited text in the class one- by-one while the others compare their texts. Then, students talk about their mistakes and correct them. It is possible to match or compare the texts in a variety of methods (such as by manually exchanging drafts) to ensure that mistakes are fixed and hypotheses are verified. Thereafter, students are provided the copy of original text so that they can compare and contrast it with the edited text and provide constructive feedback of their own work. Therefore, from the above illustration, it can be inferred that students are motivated to learn at the preparatory stage which is followed by an improvement in writing and listening skills at the dictation stage, reach at the peak of cooperative and critical thinking skills at the reconstruction stage, and an improvement in reading and speaking skills during analysis and correction when they produce a collaboratively composed text edition as an elocution. Dictogloss, as rightly pointed out by Thornbury (1999) and Wajnryb (1990) place an emphasis on integrated skills.

Benefits of Teaching Language Using Dictogloss

Dictogloss, as a collaborative and interactive teaching method, offers several benefits for language learners. It enhances the four core language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing while promoting cognitive, metacognitive, and social skills. Students actively listen to a spoken text to capture meaning and key ideas, fostering improved listening comprehension (Vasiljevic, 2010). Learners pay close attention to the structure and vocabulary of the text, sharpening their ability to distinguish linguistic elements. The reconstruction phase encourages group discussion, negotiation, and clarification, which improve speaking fluency and accuracy (Swain, 1995). Learners engage in authentic communication, as they must explain, defend, or justify their choices while reconstructing the text. Analysing and comparing their reconstructed text with the original text helps learners recognize grammatical patterns, coherence, and cohesion (Ashman & Gillies, 2003). The reconstruction activity develops paraphrasing, summarizing, and rephrasing skills, which are essential for academic and professional writing. Learners are exposed to and analyse various grammatical structures and vocabulary during text reconstruction (Shak, 2006). Through collaboration, students identify errors and gaps in their linguistic knowledge, promoting deeper understanding. The comparison stage encourages learners to reflect on their linguistic strengths and areas for improvement (Ellis, 2003). Students take an active role in constructing knowledge rather than passively receiving information, increasing their engagement and confidence (Wajnryb, 1990). The group dynamic allows learners to experiment with language in a supportive environment, make mistakes a natural part of learning. Dictogloss can integrate subject-specific content, making it useful in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) contexts. The technique engages auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic learners through listening,

discussion, and written reconstruction (Jacobs & Small, 2003).

Result and Discussions

Assigning students to groups, allowing them to share note-taking drafts, selecting the best material from each draft to create a final draft, choosing a scribe for the final edition, choosing a group representative to give the final presentation, comparing the edited text with the original, and providing feedback to each other while in the group are all components of cooperative learning. Dictogloss is a dynamic and adaptable approach that meets language learners' demands on all levels. Beyond language proficiency, its advantages include developing social and cognitive abilities that equip students for cooperation and communication in the real world.

Recommendations

Language teachers are encouraged to incorporate the dictogloss technique into their classrooms due to its numerous advantages. To assess its effectiveness, teachers can conduct action research by comparing results from pre-tests and post-tests. Additionally, a longitudinal study could further validate the technique's impact over time. Dictogloss stands out as a structured and effective method for teaching English, offering a practical approach to enhancing language proficiency across key skills.

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