



Regular Article

Using Dictogloss Strategy for Developing Secondary Stage Students' English Grammar Competence and Motivation Towards Learning English Language

Mostafa Sayed Oraby Mayhoub

A senior Teacher of EFL, Ph.D Student

Depart. of curriculum, Faculty of Education, Beni-Suef University, (Beni-Suef -Egypt)

Email address: mostafamayhoub99@gmail.com

Dr. Eid Abd- Elwahed Ali

Depart. of Curriculum & Mythology, Faculty of Education &, Minia University, (Minia -Egypt)

Email address: outstandingeid@yahoo.com

Dr. Heba Moustafa Mohamed

Depart. of curriculum & Mythology, Faculty of Education, Beni-Suef University, (Beni-Suef -Egypt)

Email address: hebamustafa990@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of dictogloss strategy on developing secondary stage students' grammar competence and motivation. To answer the questions of the study the researcher adopted the quasi- experimental design. The participants were 60 pupils of the first year secondary drawn randomly, from Al-Helmy secondary school Ihnasia educational directorate, Beni- Suef Governorate. They were randomly assigned to two groups, a control and experimental groups. Instruments of the study consisted of a grammar pre post-test and a motivation scale. The treatment group was taught through dictogloss strategy

and the non-treatment was taught through the regular method. The findings revealed that dictogloss strategy had an effect on developing first year secondary school students' grammar learning and motivation. The study has also suggested that further researches should be conducted on the effect of the suggested strategy on learning English in general and grammar in particular.

Key words: Dictogloss strategy- Grammar competence- Motivation

Introduction

English language is now the most prominent language and is used in almost all the countries either as a native, second or foreign language. English has an association with modern technology, science, medicine, trade and globalization, the need of teaching and learning English has become indispensable all over the world. Moreover, English has its high status among other subjects including the first language, Arabic.

Teaching English as a foreign language for students at secondary stage should be different from teaching the first language (Arabic) as the skills of English (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) cannot be mastered without having adequate knowledge of the important basics of the English language areas or systems which are (pronunciation – vocabulary – grammar - functions). Since it is necessary to learn a considerable amount of vocabulary with a strong focus on correct pronunciation, learning grammar gains its dominance in language teaching and learning as even when the learner has mastered a large amount of vocabulary, Learners need to learn the way of connecting these words to produce meaningful sentences to be able to interact with others and take part in an English conversation efficiently.

Essentially, learning grammar helps to achieve competency in the four skills. Doff (2000, p.4) stresses that by mastering grammar, students can express themselves using phrases and longer utterances. Long and Richards (2014 p.26)

state that grammar cannot be overlooked as it plays a vital role in mastering the four language skills as well as vocabulary to get involved in communicative tasks. As long as a learner does not master grammar, students will encounter many difficulties in understanding and responding to utterances, as well as grasping the meaning of any piece of writing precisely because grammar words have certain meanings and functions that convey the intention of a speaker or a writer directly and quickly. Writing to others whatever its purpose is requires also a great deal of using correct grammatical sense to clarify the intention.

In the case of grammar teaching, the deductive and inductive ways are two core approaches. These approaches have been used for a long time to teach English grammar. Grammar is deductively taught when the grammar rules and examples are given to the students who learn them by heart, and then apply them to other examples (Widodo, 2006). The inductive approach entails proceeding from the general to specific. That is, examples are introduced first and then the students are guided to induce the rules from those examples. Studies in different academic areas and no single available theory has yet captured its total complexity (Dörnyei, 2001). Gardner (2006) also confirmed that “motivation is a very complex phenomenon with many facets...thus it is not possible to give a simple definition.” This is because the expression of motivation has been investigated differently by different perspectives. On the behavioral perspective, motivation is “quite simply the anticipation of reward. Whereas the cognitive perspective views the term of motivation as being more related to the student’s decisions ,and the choices students make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect. As for the constructivists in their definition of motivation, placing further emphasis is on the social context as well as the individual’s decisions. Regardless of the differences in all the definitions of motivation given by the three different perspectives, the concept “needs” is emphasized, that is, “the fulfillment of needs is rewarding, requires choices, and in many cases must be interpreted in a social context” (Brown, 2000).

Dictogloss is a strategy which should involve students and teachers and that can be useful in the learning process. Like many teaching techniques that go completely out of fashion for a time, dictogloss is making a coming back. This shows that Dictogloss is an integrated strategy for language teaching and learning in which students work together to create a new product based on a text read by the teacher. The teacher and students had some defined role in the class which are (Wang, 2011: p1)

Review of literature

Historically, approaches to grammar teaching have undergone many changes due to a number of theoretical and empirical developments in the fields (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011). Apart from *traditional approaches*, currently, the rise of Communicative focus on form, which refers to grammar instruction that takes place in communicative contexts, has been widely advocated by a great number of scholars. Many authors have developed frameworks for grammar teaching that emphasize the incorporation of a focus on grammar into meaningful communication to help learners improve learners' grammatical competence.

Grammatical competence is developed on the basis of Chomsky's introduction of the term "competence" which "refers to knowledge of grammar and of other aspects of language" (Chomsky, 1965) and notions of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Campbell and Wales, 1970). According to Canale and Swain (1980), grammatical competence is associated with the mastery of the linguistic codes which enables the speakers to use necessary knowledge and skills to understand and express the literal meaning of utterances. It is aimed at acquiring knowledge of, and ability to use, forms of expression that are grammatically correct and accurate (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010; Gao, 2001). Larsen-Freeman (2001) claimed that teachers needed pay attention to the three dimensions of grammar including form (structure), meaning (semantics) and use (pragmatics). Teaching grammar rules and/or having student memorize verb conjugations would

not help students acquire grammatical competence. Hence, a number of researchers insisted on the inclusion of focus on form in grammar pedagogy which refers to the learners' attention on particular linguistic forms in the context of meaningful communication. It is "an instructional option that calls for an integration of grammar and communication in second language teaching" (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011, p.1).

Motivation

According to Martin (2003), motivation is learners' energy and drives to study, a stimulant for achieving a specific target. It is the efforts which learners make for learning a language because of "their need or desire to learn it". It is closely associated with "arousal, attention, anxiety, and feedback of reinforcement".

Ryan categorised motivation into two types. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to the inner eagerness and interest to do and participate in a particular activity as they find these activities enjoyable. On the other hand, *extrinsic motivation* comes from outside of the performers. Extrinsically motivated students study for the sake of outside influences such as getting teacher and peer praise, acquiring a good grade or some other type of reinforcement that a teacher or peer might offer. According to **Brown, H. D. (2007)**, there are three major sources of motivation in learning including: (1) the learner's natural interest: intrinsic satisfaction, (2) the teacher institution employment: extrinsic reward, and (3) success in the task: combining satisfaction and reward.

Johansson (2010) showed that learners easily lose their motivation in traditional grammar classes. This approach was considered as a deductive and linear presentation of these rules and learners were exposed to too much mother tongue and rules, there was little chance for them to practice the target language. Hence, this kind of instruction failed to satisfy the communicative needs of language learners (Nassaji and Fotos, 2011).

Dictogloss

Dictation has made its long history in language teaching and obtained a number of pedagogical claims for its value from methodologists. Due to some criticisms, several variations of dictation were made to make dictation more

interesting and learner-centered. One of them is Dictogloss, also called Grammar dictation. It is “a task-based procedure designed to help language-learning students towards a better understanding of how grammar works on a text basis.” (Wajnryb, 1990, p.6). Its procedure involves four steps.

Step 1 – Preparation – This step informs students of the aim of the task. It equips learners with subject matter and vocabulary and makes them more “receptive” to listening in the next stage.

Step 2 – Dictation - The text should be dictated at normal speed twice or three times. In the first time of listening, students just listen to the general idea of the text. The second time, they take notes of the key words from which sentences and text will be constructed.

Step 3 – Reconstruction – Students are involved in reconstructing the text as accurately as possible by working in small groups.

Step 4 - Correction - With the teacher’s help, learners are required to analyze the similarities and differences with the original version, and then correct their texts.

Statement of the problem

Based on literature review, it is emphasized that the first year secondary stage students need to develop the grammar competence in English and motivation via a new and an interesting strategy in teaching grammar.

Objectives

This study seeks hard to achieve the following purposes:-

- 1- Identifying how can dicto gloss strategy develop grammar competence.
- 2- Identifying how can dictogloss strategy develop motivation towards learning English.

Hypothesis

This study seeks to test the validity of the following hypotheses:

- 1- There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the treatment group and the non- treatment group in the pre-post- test of grammar in favour of the treatment group.

- 1- There is a statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the treatment group and the non- treatment group in the motivation scale in favour of the treatment group.

Methodology

The current study adopted the quasi-experimental design where 60 pupils of the first grade secondary stage from AL-Helmy secondary school, Beni-Suef Governorate were randomly selected. They were assigned to two groups, a treatment group (N=30) and a non-treatment group (N= 30). The treatment group received dictogloss strategy in teaching English grammar, while the non-treatment group received the regular method of teaching writing. Both groups received English grammar pre-posttest as well as the motivation pre-post scale. Treatment took place during the first semester of the school year 2020/2021 for eight weeks.

Participants

60 pupils of the first grade secondary stage from AL-Helmy secondary school, Beni-Suef Governorate were randomly selected. They were assigned to two groups, a treatment group (N=30) and a non-treatment group (N= 30).

Instruments

For the purpose of the study, the following instruments and materials were designed and used by the researcher:

- 1- A grammar skills checklist
- 2- A teachers' guide for the dictogloss strategy
- 3- A grammar skills pre post test
- 4 -A motivation scale

Significances of the Study

This study seems to be important for: -

Investigating the extent of the usefulness of this strategy for teachers to increase motivation in the classrooms and make better teaching through exposing the learners to more active and efficient lessons in an attempt to develop their grammar learning and in an attempt to add a new strategy to the field of ELT,

which could help to increase secondary school learners' achievement in English grammar competence in particular.

Benefiting supervisors and specialists to organize training sessions and workshops to introduce dictogloss to in-service teachers to enhance their teaching with a variety of cooperative strategies to improve learning.

1. Encouraging researchers to investigate the effectiveness of dictogloss strategy with different language skills.

Conducting other studies of dictogloss strategy on different variables to examine motivation, attitudes of students, and learning retention.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study group in the pre post grammar skills test in favor of the post test.
2. There is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the study group in the pre post motivation test in favor of the post scale.

Definition of Terms

Dicto gloss strategy:

-1

Jacobs and Small (2003) claim that dictogloss is a multi-skill task for accuracy. It encourages learners to accentuate some attention on form while all the four language skills – listening (to both the instructor readings and group members discussion throughout the text reconstruction), speaking (group members' exchange of information during the text reconstruction), reading (shared note taking, and reviewing the group's final reconstruction) and writing (the text reconstruction) – are integrated.

The operational definition

“An alternative strategy in teaching grammar effectively that helps learners to understand rules contextually and enhance their competence of grammar by using their key words that they had been noted through the dictation stage by the teacher to recreate a text with the focus on the target grammar aspects in their new versions.”

2-Grammar competence

(Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2010) defined grammatical competence as the ability to recognize and produce grammatical structures of a language and to use them effectively in communication.

The operational definition

" The ability to use grammar rules well in meaningful sentences."

3-Motivation

Ryan & Deci (2000) categorised motivation into two types. *Intrinsic motivation* refers to the inner eagerness and interest to do and participate in a particular activity as they find these activities enjoyable. On the other hand, *extrinsic motivation* comes from outside of the performers. Extrinsically motivated students study for the sake of outside influences such as getting teacher and peer praise, acquiring a good grade or some other type of reinforcement that a teacher or peer might offer.

The operational definition

“Learners’ energy and desire to study, a stimulant for achieving a specific target”

A. The Pre-post EFL grammar skills Test on the Target Lessons:

1- The General Aim of the Test

The general aim of the test was to measure the actual level of the treatment group before and after the treatment. As a pre-test, it aimed to determine the level of the group before the study, while as a post-test, it aimed at identifying any possible progress and difference which occurred in the achievement of the group on the consideration that the treatment group members were taught using the dictogloss Strategy.

2- Constructing the Pre/Post EFL reading Test

To construct the test, the researcher referred to the directives of the Ministry of Education particularly grammar of secondary stage and reviewed literature and related studies regarding grammar learning. Grammar test consisted of 20 multiple choice questions, Short answer questions (4) points. True/ false questions (4) questions. Re arrangement questions (2) points

3- Validity of the Pre-post EFL Grammar Test.

For estimating the validity of the test, it was submitted to a panel of jurors (N=5), three faculty members in TEFL and two senior supervisors of ELT. There were some recommendations as follows:

1. They recommended modifying the questions; in order to fit the age group of the first-year secondary stage students.
2. Some of the jury recommended reducing the number of multiple-choice questions.
3. Furthermore, one of the jury members recommended choosing the questions items according to the questions types.

The validity of the test was established according to the following criteria:

- 1- The test items reflect the objectives.
- 2- The questions suit first year secondary school students' level.
- 3- There is coherence between the test items and the table of specifications.
- 4- The layout is acceptable.
- 5- The time assigned is enough to answer all questions.

4- Reliability of the pre-post EFL grammar test

Moreover, prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted, with a group of 30 students from Al Helmi- secondary school were excluded from the sample, to check the reliability of the pre-test and post-tests. In order to prove that the test is reliable, the internal consistency of the test was calculated via Cronbach's Alpha and was 0.87, which indicates that the questions were highly reliable. The correlation coefficients ranged between the score of each question and the total score of the scale from 0.46 to 0.79 which they are all high and function at 0.05.

Test Specifications Table

The Aim of the Test Specification Table:

The researcher designed this table to determine the type of questions and the items which he wanted to measure.

1- Constructing the Test Specification Table:

To construct the table, the researcher determined the types of questions which he would use in the reading test. He determined the skills of the lessons which he tried to measure. He constructed four types of questions as follow:

Types of questions:

- 1- Choose the correct answer (20) points.
- 2- Short answer questions (4) points.
- 3- True/ false questions (4) questions
- 4- Re arrangement questions (2) points

2- Validity of the Test Specification Table:

For estimating the validity of the scale, it was submitted to a panel of jurors (N=5), three faculty members in TEFL and two senior supervisors of ELT. The researcher completed the final form of the table after the jurors' recommendations.

B. The pre-post motivation scale

1- The Aim of the Pre-post motivation scale:

In its pre- administration, it aimed at ensuring the equivalence of both the treatment and non- treatment groups on motivation scale in their entry level. Post testing aimed at measuring 1st year secondary students' progress on motivation towards learning English due to dictogloss strategy.

2- Constructing the Pre/ post motivation scale

To construct the test, the researcher referred to the directives of the Ministry of Education particularly the grammar skills of the secondary stage and reviewed literature and related studies regarding motivation. The motivation scale test consisted of 20 questions.

Results and Discussions

1- Results of the First Hypothesis:

To validate The first hypothesis t-test for the treatment group was used to measure the differences between the mean scores of the experimental group in the grammar skills test.

Table (2): T-test results that show the differences between mean scores of the study group in the pre-post grammar skills test:

| Group | N. | Mean | SD | T-test | Sig. Level | Effect size |
|-----------|----|-------|-------|--------|------------|-------------|
| Stu. Pre | 30 | 26.70 | 3238 | 4.173 | 0.05 | 0.231 |
| Stu. Post | 30 | 30.90 | 4.182 | | | |

Table 2 proves that there was a significant difference between the results of the treatment group in the grammar test and the non-treatment group in the post grammar test as the t value was 4.173, which is statistically significant at 0.05. Therefore, the first study question is answered, concluding that there is a significant difference in learning grammar between learners taught with dictogloss strategy and the same learners before taught with that strategy in favour of the learners taught with dictogloss strategy. Moreover, in order to make sure that the results obtained from the t-tests are reliable and to measure the effect of dictogloss strategy on developing pupils' grammar skills, the effect size of this strategy on students' grammar skills was calculated according to the following Formula suggested by (Dunlap, 1994). $d = \frac{2t}{\sqrt{d.f}}$ Where **d** = the calculated effect size, **t** = the estimated t value and $\sqrt{d.f}$ = the square root of degrees of freedom. The referential framework for identifying the effect size of t-values is as follow:-

Table (3): The referential framework for identifying the effect size of T-values:

| Effect Size (d-value) | Degree |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| From 0.2 till less than 0.5 | Small |
| From 0.5 till less than 0.8 | Medium |
| 0.8 or more | Large |

As shown in table (3), the calculated effect size value of the instructional strategy on developing students' grammar skills was (0.231). Therefore, it can be inferred that the dictogloss strategy had a large effect on the treatment 1 group students' grammar skills g on the post- test as compared to that of the pre- test.

2- Results of the second hypothesis:

To validate the first hypothesis (p.8) t-test for the experimental group to measure if there was a difference between the main score of the experimental group in the pre post EFL reading proficiency test.

Table (4): Shows results concerning the second hypothesis which addressed the differences between the mean scores of the study group of the pre-post pre post EFL reading proficiency test

| Group | N. | Mean | SD | T-test | Sig level | Effect size |
|----------|----|-------|-------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| Stu. Pre | 30 | ١٨.٦٠ | ٣.087 | ٤.282 | 0.05 | 0.٢٨4 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|----|-------|-------|--|--|--|
| Stu. Post | 30 | 2٢.٥3 | ٢.411 | | | |
|------------------|----|-------|-------|--|--|--|

Table (4) presents t- test results of the pupils' EFL reading proficiency test.

The above table shows that the estimated t-value (٤.282) was statistically significant at (0.05) level. Thus, it can be safely said that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-post EFL grammar competence test. In addition, the effect size value (0.٢^٤) shown in the above table reveals that teaching by using dicto gloss strategy had a large effect on the study group pupils' motivation on the post-test as compared to the pre scale. So, the second hypothesis was confirmed.

Conclusions

The results related to both hypotheses of the study showed that using dicto gloss strategy in teaching grammar had a positive effect on developing grammar competence. The study group in the grammar skills test and the motivation scale outperformed the same group in the pre grammar skills test and the pre motivation scale in the whole score. As shown in the tables above that the mean score of the pupils in the post EFL grammar test and in the post grammar is better than the mean score of the same pupils in the pre EFL grammar test and the pre motivation scale test. The t-value was statistically significant at (0.05) level in both the post test and the post scale. This means that the teacher used an effective strategy "dicto gloss strategy which developed the students' ability in grammar and increased their motivation during learning. This strategy may help teacher during teaching not only grammar but also any other English language skills.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the current study, the following recommendations were offered:

The Ministry of Education is recommended to:

1. Consider various and different strategies and methods that have proved successful in promoting learning of particular areas and skills of English language. In the current study, dictogloss strategy proved its usefulness in developing students' achievement in learning English grammar.

2. Include this strategy beside modern trends and traditional methods in English teaching methods as an alternative and successful way and easily prepared and implemented by teachers.

A) Recommendations to the supervisors:

Supervisors are recommended to:

1. Organize training sessions and workshops to introduce dictogloss to in-service teachers to benefit from it in enhancing their teaching with a variety of cooperative techniques that improve learning, eliminate boredom and increase students' motivation.
2. Ask teachers to use different methods and new trends of active and cooperative learning in teaching English language such as dictogloss and other modern strategies that proved to have positive effects on students' performance.
3. Encourage teachers to emphasize on learner- centered classroom regarding its importance in promoting and retaining learning.

B) Recommendation to English language teachers:

English language teachers are recommended to:

1. Follow the current trends and research in teaching English to recognize solutions to the teaching problems and its implementations.
2. Think about the principles of dictogloss and its use in teaching English for their importance in achieving the teaching intended goals and outcomes.
3. Have an idea of dictogloss variations to take individual differences, subject matter, students' abilities, and teaching-learning context into consideration.

4. Take care of planning and time organization in applying dictogloss as it has four standard stages which need adequate time.

Suggestions for Further Studies

In light of the present study results, more studies can be suggested in the area of using role playing strategy in teaching English as a foreign language:

1. Investigating the effectiveness of dictogloss strategy with different languages skills and systems, age groups, and subject matters.
2. Conducting other studies of dictogloss strategy on different variables to examine motivation, attitudes of students, and learning retention.
3. Examining the effect of dictogloss strategy on developing other skills such as listening, speaking, and reading as well as vocabulary.
4. A study to investigate the effect of using dictogloss strategy on teaching other English language skills such as creative writing and critical reading.
5. A study to investigate the effect of using dictogloss strategy on developing students' motivation and self-esteem can be conducted.
6. A study to investigate the effect of using dictogloss strategy on students with special needs can be conducted.
7. " A study to investigate the effect of using dictogloss strategy on developing students"

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