

Study on the Application of Dictogloss in Senior High School English Listening Class

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Abstract

As society moves forward, the importance of listening in English has become a social consensus. However, listening in English has been neglected in important exams, with students finding it the most difficult skill to acquire. This study takes dictogloss in senior high school English listening class as the research object. First, dictogloss can activate the prior knowledge of students. Second, it encourages interaction and communication, which can develop students' negotiation and communication skills. What's more, dictogloss requires group work. Moreover, dictogloss gives students the freedom to use and practice their own language. This paper aim to analyze domestic and international research on dictogloss, introduce definitions, theoretical foundations, characteristics, advantages of dictogloss, and summarize some principles for improving the effectiveness of applying dictogloss in high school English classes. To better apply dictogloss, teachers need to select meaningful listening material with moderate difficulty, activate prior schema of students, ensure effective group work, and treat student errors seriously. With this research, high school teachers can apply dictogloss to classroom instruction and improve the effectiveness of listening instruction.

Keywords

Dictogloss; Application; English Listening Teaching.

1. Introduction

All people hold the view that listening is essential for a person. However, in senior high school English listening teaching, there are some problems. Firstly, there is a lack of exposure to language. The most effective way for students to learn a language is to use it in context. Zhuang Xinfeng (2017) mentioned that a good language environment can greatly boost learners' reception speed when learning a language. Secondly, the forms of activities are monotonous. For senior high school students, activities in listening class are often "listen to the recording and fill in the blank", "listen to the recording and tick", or "listen to the recording and answer questions". These activities are mechanical and boring. Thirdly, students are not equipped with listening skills. Compared with knowledge, teaching listening means more teaching skills. However, in most listening class, teachers usually design mechanical practices and draw students' attention to words, phrases and sentences appearing in listening materials. We can see from the whole process, skills are almost neglected. And the ignorance actually results in students' shortness of listening skills. In the long term, overemphasizing knowledge and ignoring skills are not beneficial for students' all-round development. Fourthly, English teaching brings listening away from speaking, reading and writing. Listening teaching lacks depth and has no close connection with other language skills. Since the implementation of the new curriculum reform, cultivating students' language ability has become a key goal in high school English teaching. To some extent, language ability refers to students' skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and they are interrelated with each other (Chen, 2021).

In most English listening classes, teachers usually use traditional listening activities which are mechanical, usually checking answers immediately after listening, which only exercises students' short-term memory and certain listening level. The strategic awareness of senior high school students is usually poor, and the progress brought by traditional listening activities is usually the mechanical memory and perception of words and sentences, so the effect of these activities is limited. However, dictogloss emphasizes discourse rather than separate words and sentences on the basis of listening and writing, attaches importance to the cultivation of students' understanding ability, and increases the possibility of cooperative learning and the significance of listening materials. In this case, dictogloss should be given more attention. Dictogloss has been applied by some teachers in high school listening classroom teaching. With the continuous innovation of educational concepts and viewpoints, the effectiveness of dictogloss has been given more and more attention. Dictogloss is different from traditional dictation, which just verifies the answers directly after words or sentence patterns dictation. First of all, the purpose of the warm-up part of dictogloss is to arouse students' background knowledge of related topics, so that they can use their knowledge to understand listening materials. Secondly, it provides discourse for students' listening training. Thirdly, dictogloss emphasize the understanding of texts' meaning and make listening materials more meaningful. Fourthly, dictogloss provides students with opportunities to communicate with others, so that students can make progress in the interaction. Fifthly, it requires students to construct the meaning of information they hear through cooperation, which is conducive to the improvement of their logical thinking ability. Therefore, the study of dictogloss is really necessary.

Theoretically, the application of dictogloss in senior high school English listening teaching has a great effect on students and classroom teaching. However, in practical teaching, the effect of dictogloss is often not as good as what teachers expect. Therefore, the following questions are worth exploring: What is dictogloss? What are the factors that affect dictogloss? What is the research on dictogloss? What are the functions of dictogloss? How to use dictogloss effectively in senior high school English listening teaching? The purpose of this paper is to study the relevant information about dictogloss and provide feasible suggestions for the application of dictogloss.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Foundation of Dictogloss

The theoretical foundations of dictogloss are Krashen's intelligible input theory and Swain's output theory.

2.1.1. Input Theory

According to Krashen (1981), intelligible input is an essential technique for second language learning, and language input difficulty is slightly higher than the existing level of "I". In order to comprehend the freshly entered linguistic elements, "I + 1" will rely on prior knowledge and experience, as well as contextual judgment. The so-called intelligible input is expressed as "i+1". From Wu Peng (2001), "I" denotes a language learner's current competency level, whereas "1" denotes language knowledge that is superior to their current proficiency level. Students can not acquire comprehensible information if "I + 2" or "I + 0" appears, indicating that the language knowledge is too challenging or easy for them. That is, when designing a dictogloss activity, the teacher must provide the students with the appropriate material and the words or sentences needed to complete the task.

2.1.2. Output Theory

The output theory of Swain (1985) suggests that output not only improves language fluency but also accuracy of language use by noticing her hypothesis testing and conscious reflection as

well as adjusting her learning strategies. For Swain, comprehensible input is necessary, but not the only thing to be considered, as it does not help students to develop their language proficiency across the board. Li Tao (2013) pointed out that output can help learners correct their mistakes by allowing them to test their assumptions about the target language while receiving correct feedback. In colloquialism, students need to express themselves or convince others so they can eventually come to an understanding. The process of communication is clearly a knowledge application and output for students.

2.1.3. Task-based Language Teaching

TBLT was first put forward by educator John Dewey and has a history of almost 40 years. It is a teaching method based on the use of tasks as core units. TBLT fully reflects the idea of student-centered, which takes into account the needs, interests and abilities of students. Guo Yanzhi and Guo Ruizhi (2007) pointed out that language teaching focuses on the use of language, so that students can learn knowledge and skills, complete authentic tasks, and directly train students' language ability. Peter Skehan (1998) summarized five definitions of tasks: first, tasks focus on meaning; second, communication is crucial to a task; thirdly, a task is realistic and authentic; fourthly, complementation is the first needed; fifthly, consequences of a task need to be assessed. In reconstruction of dictogloss, teachers serve students a task that requires them to communicate with others and generate a final product. The whole process of this meaningful task which completely satisfies the characteristics of a good task. Furthermore, there's a correction and analysis stage which can be seen as a type of assessment of the task. Therefore, TBLT is actually a supportive theory of dictogloss.

2.1.4. Collaborating Learning Theory

Collaborating learning theory derives learning theory from Britain in the 1960s and America in the 1970s. According to Sun Lixin (2017), communication and cooperation among students is based on the fact that students have different interests, hobbies and levels of development, as well as different levels of knowledge and understanding of the same thing. Only in this case can instruction appear. The representatives of collaborating learning theory are Robert Slavin, David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson and Spencer Kagan. Group work embodies collaborating learning in classes. Robert Slavin defines group work as a teaching method that requires educators to give feedback according to the overall performance of the group in the process of completing tasks. According to David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson (1989), group work is about students learning and promoting each other in the learning process. At the same time, the use of group work in teaching can maximize the learning impact of students themselves and their peers to achieve common learning goals. In short, group work is a way for educators to arrange students to carry out activities in order to complete a certain teaching task. Group work is an important element of dictogloss. In dictogloss, students need to work with their group members and reconstruct an essay together. The final product is not a personal achievement, but a collective result. In the process of collaboration, students can have a deeper understanding of team spirit and learn from each other.

2.2. Definition of Dictogloss

Some researchers define dictogloss in terms of their features. They all emphasize the importance of text, tasks and students (Gao 1998, Zheng 2009, Bao 2007). Some scholars pointed out that dictogloss is similar to but different from traditional dictation (Shen 2018, Lu 2008). Defining dictogloss from the aspect of its development is also a type (Brown 2001, Claudia 1989). In addition, Riley, P. M. (1972) defined dictogloss by simply expressing the whole process.

In summary, dictogloss are based on traditional dictation methods and incorporate new features. It is a type of teaching activity that values student subjectivity, affirms student understanding, values process over consequence, and emphasizes textual awareness.

2.3. Characteristics of Dictogloss

Kowal & Swain (1994) believed that dictogloss is a text-based, task-based and student-centered teaching method designed to help students learn, master, and deploy target language based on text, while emphasizing the importance of linguistic meaning and form.

2.3.1. Task-based

According to Wajnryb (1988), task-based is the essential feature of dictogloss, which is seen especially in reconstruction stage. In nature, the entire process of dictogloss consists of two tasks. First, in the dictation step, students need to listen to the recording or the teacher's reading and write something down. Then, in the reconstruction part, the task for students is to work in a group and reach an agreement, which is a whole passage. In the reconstruction of dictogloss, it provides students with the opportunity to communicate with group members, thereby increasing their chances of success in the activity. On the one hand, it is a measure to lower the difficulty of the task for students. On the other hand, through this activity, students discuss, convince and negotiate with their peers. In this case, their communication skills can be improved.

2.3.2. Discourse-based

Traditional dictionaries only focus on words or sentences, which tests and develops students' memorization ability. It is insignificant and exhibits a lack of awareness of discourse. On the contrary, dictogloss is based on discourse. This requires students to listen carefully and form a complete composition. In addition, dictogloss is based on the introduction of text concepts, which provide language with the possibility of learning language forms, structures and sentence pattern in context (Gao, 1998).

2.3.3. Student-centered

Hearing and writing down a word, several words or sentences are requirements of others. What students need to do is always just listen, memorize quickly and write down. The whole process is mechanical. Students can complete the task without thinking or understanding it. Yet, dictogloss encourages students to pay attention to meaning. Only when they grasp the entire listening material can they eventually form a passage. Gao Xiaofang (1998) pointed out that students can not only get feedback from teachers, but also get different forms of expression from other groups of students in the process of analysis and correction step. By doing so, their mistakes are corrected and their language input is enriched. At the same time, learners recognize their strengths and weaknesses and their needs through analysis and correction. This method is accepted by teachers without going against the traditional learning methods of learners, which is helpful for students to learn what they desire to learn and greatly stimulates their enthusiasm for learning.

2.4. Advantages of Dictogloss in Senior High School English Listening Class

Compared to traditional listening activities, dictogloss is new and much advocated. Dictogloss has a number of obvious advantages.

First, dictogloss fosters the thinking qualities of students. In his 1980 book, Taylor (1980) argued that dictogloss can monitor the learners' grammatical coherence and enable them to master the usage of linguistic knowledge. Second, dictogloss can develop students' various skills. According to Chen Xuemin (2012), it combines students' ability to listen, speak, read, and write, especially listening and writing, with students' familiar topics and comparatively fixed texts. Third, it can stimulate interest and engagement in the classroom. Dictogloss offers students the opportunity to consider the meaning of discourse, interact with others, and discover their own logical errors. Fourth, dictogloss can provide opportunities for collaboration and authentic communication among students. From a conceptual point of view, dictogloss provides interaction for students. In the reconstruction step, students are divided into groups

and they need to work together. Fifth, it can facilitate teaching assessment. Dictogloss includes many meaningful elements and is equipped with dimensions and aspects to be evaluated. NECS focuses more on formative assessment, and dictogloss can provide it with a lot of material.

3. The Implementation of Dictogloss in Senior High School English Listening Class

3.1. Steps of Implementing Dictogloss

Wajnryb divided dictogloss into four steps: preparation, dictation, reconstruction and analysis and correction (Wajnryb, 1990).

3.1.1. Preparation Step of Dictogloss

In this step, teachers should provoke students' motivation for listening practice. Then, activating students' background knowledge and schema about the listening topics is necessary. To some extent, the application of their prior knowledge greatly influences the learning results. In addition, students need to be provided with certain crucial or difficult words and sentences which reduces the obstacles to practice. For second language learners, the shortage of vocabulary is a common obstacle for their listening comprehension.

3.1.2. Dictation Step of Dictogloss

A teacher personally reads the listening material two or three times at a normal speed. During this process, the students are asked to write down as many sentences as possible as they hear. When reading for the first time, teachers should ask the students to try to grasp the main idea of the passage; for the second and third times, students need to write down what they hear as much as possible. In the dictation step, He Xiangping (2007) pointed out that teachers should encourage students to pay attention to verbs, nouns and other notional words in the passage, rather than functional words, because only notional words can help students recall the content of the passage and construct the meaning of the original text in the next reconstruction step.

3.1.3. Reconstruction Step of Dictogloss

The teacher divides the students into different groups and asks them to work together to make up an essay using the parts they have heard. The learners work in small groups, putting together their notes and rewriting the text to achieve the following goals: (1)writing down the original information of the text as much as possible: (2)making sure that grammar, semantic coherence, and logical in meaning are correct and appropriate (Ge & Li, 2019).

3.1.4. Analysis and Correction Step of Dictogloss

After completing the text, the students started to check their writing against the original text and then compare with their classmates in group activities. This step breaks the deadlock between the students as they began to actively participate and cooperate in order to be victors. This teaching method creates a competitive spirit and makes students lively. At the same time, class engagement is enriched by the exchange of correct answers (Al-Obaydi & Al-Mosawi, 2018).

3.2. Principles of Implementing Dictogloss in Senior High School English Listening Class

As an advocacy activity in the post-listening step, dictogloss can actually have a positive impact on English listening teaching and learning. As a result, many people are more focused on how to apply it effectively in practice. This paper will point out some principles for the application of dictogloss.

3.2.1. Choosing Meaningful Listening Materials with Moderate Difficulty

First, the listening material should be tailored to student's language proficiency and ability. He Xiangping (2007) mentioned that teachers should consider that if articles are too difficult, they will discourage students from learning English, and if articles are too easy, students will be able to master them completely without creating an information gap that will not stimulate students' desire for communication. Second, teachers should pay attention to the meaning of listening materials. The emphasis on meaning suggests that dictogloss are far removed from accuracy-based activities. Dictogloss requires students to understand what the listening material is about, what authors want to express, and what truths or experiences they can draw from the recording.

3.2.2. Activating students' prior schema

When talking about the preparation step, many teachers think of linguistic preparation, which means teaching learners some key or difficult words, phrases or sentences before asking them to listen to the recording. In order to activate students' prior schema, several points should be remembered. (1) Before determining the way to activate students' knowledge, teachers should consider students' present conditions, such as their ability, cognitive level and so on. (2) Usually, the ways are showing pictures, playing videos or discussing. (3) The linking dots should be appropriate.

3.2.3. Ensuring Effective Group Work

The crucial part of dictogloss is the reconstruction. Students express ideas, discuss and form passages in groups. Teachers, according to Zorana Vasiljevic (2010), must pay attention to the composition and dynamics of the working group. What's more, things can be done before dictogloss to ensure effective group work. (1) Give some students specific responsibility. (2) Develop disciplines. The disciplines can be designed by teachers and students. The more recommended way is that teachers and students jointly establish disciplines, which can make them worthy of conviction and compliance.

3.2.4. Treating student's errors seriously

Logical errors arise naturally in dictogloss. In general, students frequently employ incorrect logical connectives. Teachers should pay attention to these errors that cannot be self-corrected and try to help students overcome them. The process of correcting errors is an improvement in students' thinking skills and a great way for them to learn about their frustrations. To correct logic errors, teachers can take full advantage of group work, in which students learn from each other. More importantly, teachers can introduce students to common examples and raise their awareness to avoid making these errors. In addition, teachers should spot errors and correct them on time. Students are more wary of errors when they are repeatedly emphasized, and they occur less and less often over time.

4. Conclusion

As the social environment changes, the attention and difficulty of listening will increase. The improvement of students' listening requires long-term accumulation and effective measures. This study gives a detailed description of the dictogloss in four aspects. For a literature review, readers can consult for definitions and strengths. More importantly, this paper summarizes some principles based on the above studies. In other words, teachers can play the role of dictogloss by providing students with significant and appropriate material, activating their prior knowledge, ensuring effective group work, and taking student errors seriously. While these recommendations are intended to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of dictogloss in teaching practice, it is safe to say that they are inadequate and imperfect. The practical effect of these recommendations still needs to be tested in practice.

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