

A Study on Effects of Dictogloss on Writing Accuracy in a Korean Middle School

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore whether dictogloss contributes more on writing accuracy of intermediate level students in a middle school. 49 first graders participated in the experiment for twelve weeks. They were divided into two groups. Dictogloss instruction was administered to an experimental group, and traditional writing instruction to a control group. The pre-test and post-test were conducted to both group to examine the effect of dictogloss on writing accuracy. Also, pre- and post-questionnaires were conducted to investigate the extent of the change in interest and confidence about English writing. The results of this study showed that the dictogloss approach made contribution to boosting the writing accuracy of intermediate level students in particular. In addition, it helped increase students' interest and participation in English writing class. Thus, it seems that the dictogloss is useful and effective in middle school writing instruction. Based on the results, pedagogical implications and suggestions were made.

Key words : Dictogloss, Focus on form (FonF)

I. Introduction

The importance of writing in language teaching has been mentioned in theories by many researchers. Writing is one of the powerful strategies to promote discovery, comprehension, and retention of information (Calkins,1994). Recent research has supported the use of writing in language learning by showing that students tend to understand more and remember more by writing (Suzanne & Owen, 2007).

Even though there are several grounds for supporting the importance of writing in language learning, Korean secondary school students have been relatively less aware of its importance. Also, the seventh national curriculum for secondary education intended to focus on communicative competence, listening, and speaking, rather than reading and writing.

Since a new English assessment policy, National English Ability Test (NEAT), was announced, the importance of writing has started to be more emphasized than ever before. However, it is not easy to teach writing successfully especially to intermediate level middle school students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of dictogloss which is form-focused writing approach and to suggest some ideas for writing activity which can be applied in a middle school classroom. It will also help students enjoy the writing class.

II. Conception: Dictogloss

The dictogloss method, also known as grammar dictation, is a task-based procedure designed to draw language learners' awareness to linguistic forms through meaningful negotiation. The basic four stages task in the dictogloss method (Wajnryb, 1990) is as follows:

1. *The Preparation stage*

The teacher prepares the students for the upcoming text's subject matter, by whole-class discussion of the topic and background knowledge.

2. *The Dictation stage*

The teacher reads the text aloud to the students two times at normal spoken speed. At the first dictation, students should listen for the global feeling of the text. During the second reading, they write down valuable content words.

3. *The Reconstruction stage*

Students work in small groups to pool their noted fragments and reconstruct the meaning and form of the original text through negotiation.

4. *The Analysis and correction stage*

As a whole class, teacher and students can discuss and identify the variations in meaning and form between the various reconstructed student version and the original text.

III. Method

1. Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 49 first graders in Bucheon middle school in Iksan who were arranged in an advanced English class. However, their actual English proficiency level is intermediate because of the lack of knowledge about English grammar and its exact usage.

2. Data collection

The data collection took place in two parts. First, to examine the development of writing accuracy, the participants took a pre-test and post-test. They also were asked to answer pre- and post-questionnaires to gain data about the extent of change in their interest and confidence toward English writing.

3. Data analysis

The data were analyzed through SPSS WIN 16.0. T-test was conducted to see the difference of participants' achievement after treatments. Also, independent sample t-test was run to seek statistical significance level of mean difference of interest and confidence between two groups.

4. Procedure

This study was formed on the basis of 12-week course in a regular classroom setting. The class met twice a week for 45 minutes.

IV. Results

1. The effect of Dictogloss on writing accuracy

The result of pre-test and post-test about writing accuracy can be seen in Table 1.

[TABLE 1] The Result of Pre-test and Post-test

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	Control	24	9.47	2.15	-1.05	.308
	Experimental	25	10.52	2.01		
Post-test	Control	24	7.70	3.38	-2.65	.017
	Experimental	25	11.33	2.04		

As in the Table 1, the mean difference between control and experimental group is significant in post-test with significance level of $p < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that dictogloss was effective in writing class.

2. The effect of dictogloss on interest and confidence

Table 2 shows the result of the effect of dictogloss on interest and confidence.

[TABLE 2] Paired Samples T-test of Interest and Confidence

Group	Category		N	Mean	SD	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control	interest	pre	24	12.6	3.14	-1.17	.253
		post	24	13.6	5.33		
	confidence	pre	24	13.0	3.37	-1.91	.069
		post	24	13.9	3.45		
Experimental	interest	pre	25	11.1	2.79	-2.88	.009
		post	25	13.5	3.24		
	confidence	pre	25	11.8	2.61	-1.74	.095
		post	25	13.3	2.61		

According to Table 2, while there is no significant difference of pre-test and post-test in both interest and confidence in control group, experimental group shows a significant mean difference in interest, not in confidence. Therefore, it suggests that dictogloss helps learners have more interest in English writing class.

IV. Conclusions and Implications

This study examines the effects of dictogloss method as a writing activity for the attention to form during collaborative work. The findings suggest that learners could improve their writing accuracy, and their interest in writing class could increase during involvement in the dictogloss task.

The current study is limited in terms of time duration and the small number of participants to generalize the findings. Despite the limitations, the findings offer the pedagogical implications. Teachers need to reorganize the textbook to apply dictogloss more effectively in an actual school setting. In addition, since dictogloss is an integrated activity requiring four skills, it is recommendable to make the most use of dictogloss not only for writing accuracy but also for enhancing other English skills simultaneously. Finally, because it involves active interaction to negotiate for reconstructing, it is necessary for teachers to teach students negotiation skills during discussion.

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