

The Use of Dictogloss Technique in Teaching Grammar Through Writing

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Abstract

This research paper deals with how dictogloss technique and cooperative listening can be combined to promote the development of listening, writing and speaking skills of a second language learners. Data has been collected from students' of the 10th grade, who study in the Pre-university School 'Luciano Motroni' in Prizren. This research, include 80 students from them 33 boys and 47 girls. These students were chosen because they had mixed proficiency in English and they were more compatible with joining in listening, writing, reading and grammar. The methodology I used to conduct this research paper, include the dictogloss technique and means of comparative and analytical methods. The results have shown that the use of dictogloss technique in teaching grammar through writing is an effective and useful way to improve the students' grammar.

Keywords: Dictogloss, cooperative learning, active learning, text reconstruction

Introduction

Not often is thought that by dictogloss technique we only mean to dictate a phrase or sentence and students to write it down. In fact dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction. Actually dictogloss was introduced in 1990 by Ruth Wajnryb as an alternative method to study grammar. It combines dictation, paraphrase and interpretation (Newman, E. 2012, Dare to Dictogloss!) and engages multiple skills (Nabei, T. 1996 Dictogloss). The concept is simple, learners listen to a passage, note down key words and then work together to create a reconstruction version of the text. In a dictogloss task, learners listen, write and speak, relying on their knowledge of semantic, syntactic and discourse systems of the target language to complete the task with the focus remaining on grammatical competence (Vasilijevic, Z. 2010. Dictogloss as an interactive method of teaching listening comprehension to L2 learners). Adaptations of dictogloss, now exists but essentially R. Wajnryb outlines four phases. Preparation or Warm up, in this phase the topic is introduced and key vocabulary is addressed. Dictation or the second phase, the teacher reads a passage at normal speed twice or three times. The first time learners listen, the second time note down anything they catch, if there is a third reading learners expand their notes. In reconstruction or the third phase of dictogloss, learners work together in small groups to reconstruct a version of the text from their shared notes. The reconstruction may focus on the replication or similarity of meaning, depending on the teachers' objective. Analysis and corrections, in this phase, learners analysis and compare their text with the reconstruction of other groups. The class may discuss the differences in the texts, then compare their texts with the original and note or make necessary corrections. (Wajnryb, R. 1990 Grammar dictation). Out of this procedure the learners or the teacher may identify key grammar points or

organizational points for discussion and practice. From my experience I have noticed that by doing dictogloss, students are more concentrated and the group work is more precise. They start developing their awareness of how to be more cohesive and coherent.

Literature review

What is dictogloss? Dictogloss was formulated by Ruth Wajnryb in 1990 to emphasize grammar, it involves students to listening to a short text read at normal speed then reconstructing as well as paraphrasing or interpreting (the gloss-part) the text. (Malay, A. 1990 resource Books for teacher, Grammar Dictation by Ruth Wajnryb, series by Alan Maley). According to Wajnryb, the task focuses not only on learning in a whole class setting (on learner output) but also on learner interaction. In implementing the dictogloss tasks creatively into students needs. In the different stages of dictogloss, learners may be involved in listening, remembering and writing. (Wajnryb, R. 1990 Grammar Dictation). Small, define dictogloss as an activity in which short pieces of language are read out at normal speed to students. (Small, J. (2003) Combining Dictogloss and cooperative Learning to Promote Language Learning. The Reading Matrix). Swain and Lapkin in their extensive research on learning outcomes in French immersion program found that dictogloss, encourages beneficial interaction during collaborative tasks by providing explicit information about grammatical forms before learners carry out the tasks, training learners to notice and repair their language errors, and modeling how learners interact with each other. (Lapkin, S. and Swain, M. (1998), Interaction and second Language Learning: Two adolescents French Immersion Students Working Together. The modern Language Journal). Vasilijevic, has noted that through dictogloss, students are actively involved in the learning process and these are multiple opportunities for peer learning and peer teaching. (Vasilijevic, Z. (2010) Dictogloss as an Interactive Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension to L2 Learners). Dictogloss procedure as Karen has noted facilitates the development of the learners' communicative competence. (Karen, M. S. Dictogloss a Multi Skill Tasks For Accuracy in Writing Through Cooperative Learning). Another advantage of dictagloss method, is that the reconstruction tasks can raise students awareness of rhetorical patterns in the target language (Kaplan, R. B. (1996) Cultural Thought Pattern in intercultural Education. Language Learning). Renshaw values dictogloss as a way of raising a deep awareness of grammar. Whilst integrating all skills. (Renshaw, J. (2002) English Raven Blog).

Methodology - Data collection

The aim of this paper is how dictogloss method and cooperative learning can be combined, to promote the development of listening, writing and speaking skills, of second language learners. The research methods and instruments that have been helpful while conducting this research paper are comparative and descriptive methods also dictogloss technique which is an alternative way of getting students to learn note-taking skills, as they need to listen to a text being read and reconstruct it. This study collected data from 80 students of 10th grade who study in a professional pre-university school "Luciano Motroni". The written text I have decided to use for dictogloss is in past tense and regular verbs. To all my students I explained in the beginning about whole process, especially about note-taking skills as they need to listen to text in order to reconstruct it from memory and then comparing it with original text. These students were chosen because they had mixed proficiency in English and they were more compatible with joining in listening and writing.

Data analyses

Data collection and analysis of this study derived from dictogloss. I have used this technique, because involves students collaboratively reconstructing the text from memory, and then comparing it with original. Both reconstructions phase and comparison phase encourage a strong form –focus good for alerting students at this level to features of language that might ordinarily pass them by. (Thornbury, S. (1999) How to teach grammar through text).

Step 1 - Preparation Phase –Warm up

In this phase I have set the theme by introducing the topic. After chatting about this for a few minutes then I explained to my students that I am going to read them about a boy and his poor family. I told them, 'I want you to listen and as soon as I finish I want you to write down any words, phrases or sentences that you can remember', then I have read the text.

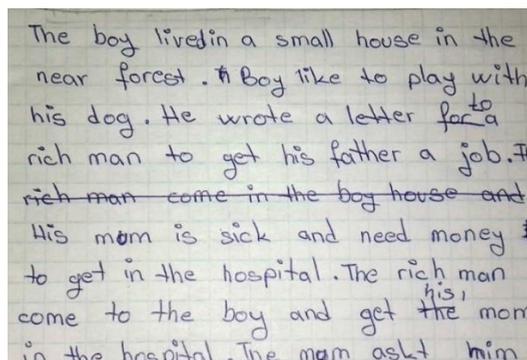
Once upon the time there was a boy who lived in a small house near the forest. He liked playing with his dog. His parents were very poor. He was only five but he could read and write. One day he wrote a letter to the richest man in the nearby town. He asked not for money but for a job for his father and some medicine for his sick mum. The rich man came to the boy's house. He saw the small boy and his family. He talked to them and took the boy's mother to hospital. He also offered the boy's father a job to his factory and gave to the boy many wooden toys. When mum returned from hospital they all had a big party.

Step 2 - Three readings

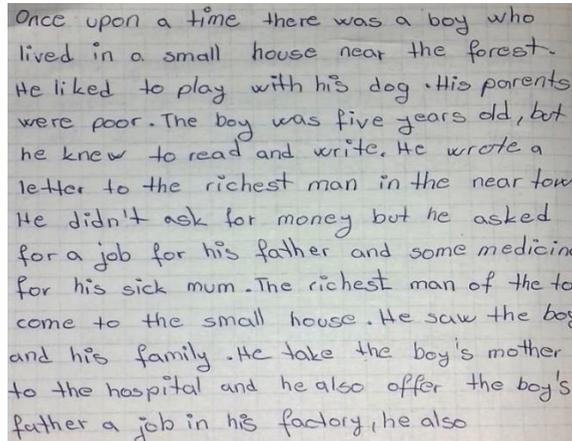
In this stage students listen to the text and take-notes. The text is normally read twice or three times at natural speed. The first time students do not take notes. The second time they note down key words to help them remember the content. The third time is conducted in the same manner as in the second time.

First reading- 'I want from you to put down your pencils, because I am going to read a text three times. This is first time and it is not a dictation so you don't need to write. You will not be able to remember everything so, do not worry. All you have to do is to listen, concentrate and to understand! No writing! At the end of the first reading you will have five minutes to write down what you remember'. After I have finished my first reading, student or groups had five minutes to write words or phrases that they have remembered.

Second reading- For the second time I have asked students to, concentrate, listen, understand and take notes about important information. I have explained them again that they have five minutes to write down what they have remembered because the goal of this stage is to write the same meaning as my passage even their words are different. (appendix 1)



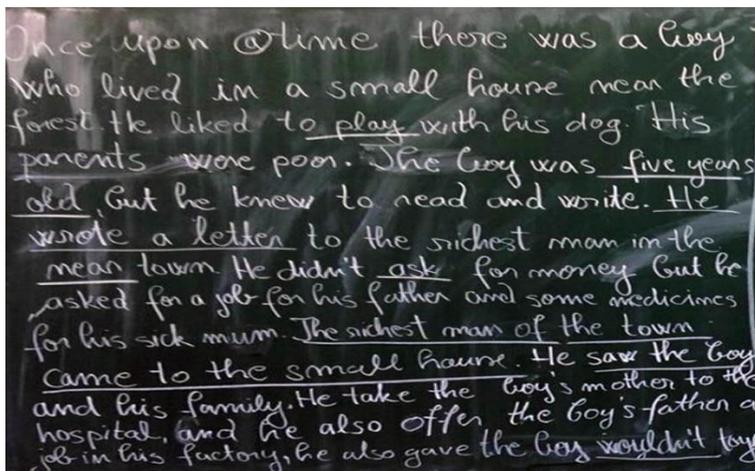
Third reading- After I have read the text for the last time, I asked my students to work within groups and to write a paragraph using all words and sentences they have written and things that they have remembered. They had 20 minutes to think, to talk and write as a group.(appendix2)



Once upon a time there was a boy who lived in a small house near the forest. He liked to play with his dog. His parents were poor. The boy was five years old, but he knew to read and write. He wrote a letter to the richest man in the near town. He didn't ask for money but he asked for a job for his father and some medicine for his sick mum. The richest man of the town come to the small house. He saw the boy and his family. He take the boy's mother to the hospital and he also offer the boy's father a job in his factory, he also

Step 3 - Reconstruction

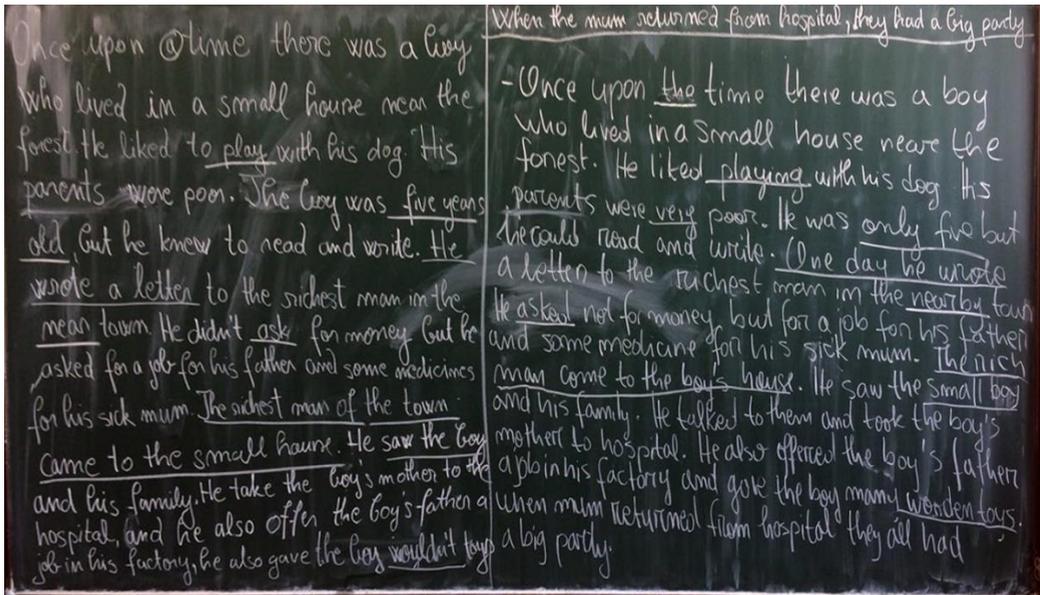
In reconstruction phase I have chosen a student to act as the class 'scribe, and to write their reconstructed version of the text on one half of the board incorporating the suggestions of all students in the class. In this stage I did not intervene at all, unless to answer relatively minor questions about vocabulary and spelling. (appendix 3)



Once upon @time there was a boy who lived in a small house near the forest. He liked to play with his dog. His parents were poor. The boy was five years old, but he knew to read and write. He wrote a letter to the richest man in the near town. He didn't ask for money but he asked for a job for his father and some medicines for his sick mum. The richest man of the town came to the small house. He saw the boy and his family. He take the boy's mother to the hospital, and he also offer the boy's father a job in his factory, he also gave the boy ~~wouldn't~~ ~~say~~

Step 4 –Analysis and correction

During this phase, I have written the original text on the board next to the students' reconstruction version, and I asked them to identify differences between the two texts. They were quick and noticed differences in grammar, word order, word formation, substitution of reach for rich but they were slower to notice the possessive "boy's".(appendix 4)



Results

Based in the findings from the students' writings in the first cycle the results shows that all groups failed to complete the writing of their narrative text. I have found that students' made a lot of errors in grammar in their writing, especially in using the past tense and in verbs ending 'ed'. I notice that students' tend to pick up irregular past forms (went, sent, wrote...) before regular verbs (lived, liked, offered...) On the other hand the students participated well and paid good attention to dictogloss technique. On the second cycle students' result are better and higher than in first cycle. Based on analysis of the narrative text I have found that in this cycle the students had rapid improvement in their grammar especially with the past tense and the verb ending 'ed'. However they still made a lot of mistakes in vocabulary, word order and pronunciation. To sum up, based on the results above, the use of dictogloss technique has been proved to improve grammar and the ability to write narrative texts. Dictogloss, also promoted the students to learn actively and collaboratively. This technique helps integrate skills to promote writing, listening, speaking, reading and grammar. To sum up, while students were working I could notice that by doing dictogloss they were quite serious, active and worked very precise within the grammar.

Conclusions

Through this research paper I wanted to draw attention to the importance of dictogloss technique in teaching grammar through listening and writing. All the data during this research indicated that the use of dictogloss for teaching grammar was successful and through collaborative writing dictogloss can improve students competence in grammar, especially at the second cycle or the second time of using the dictogloss technique. Based on the results above, the use of dictogloss technique has been proved to help improve grammar and the ability to write narrative texts. It also, promoted the students to learn actively and collaboratively. This technique helps integrate skills to promote writing (reconstructing stage), speaking (to group-mates during the reconstructing process) reading and grammar

(note taking in the listening stage and after dictation stage. Moreover, from this research I could notice that by doing dictogloss, students are more concentrated and the groups work more precise, also they start developing their awareness of how to be more cohesive and coherent.

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Appendix – The text I have used for conducting the dictogloss technique.

Once upon the time there was a boy who lived in a small house near the forest. He liked playing with his dog. His parents were very poor. He was only five but he could read and write. One day he wrote a letter to the richest man in the nearby town. He asked not for money but for a job for his father and some medicines for his sick mum. The rich man came to the boy's house. He saw the small boy and his family. He talked to them and took the boy's mother to hospital. He also offered the boy's father a job in his factory and gave the boy many wooden toys. When his mum returned from hospital they all had a party.