USING DICTOGLOSS TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE FOR SOPHOMORE ENGLISH MAJORS AT UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION - THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY

Vu Dinh Bac[*], Dang Khanh Linh, Nguyen Thi Kim Chi, Ngo Thi Thanh Hien
TNU - University of Education

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study investigates the effectiveness of the Dictogloss technique in enhancing grammatical competence for sophomore English majors at Thai Nguyen University of Education. The research aims to address the pressing need for innovative and effective methods to improve language learners' grammar proficiency. By employing the Dictogloss technique, which emphasizes collaborative learning and language restructuring, the study explores its impact on students' awareness, attention, and grammatical analysis. The study involves a class divided into two groups: the experimental group (treated with the Dictogloss technique) and the control group (using a method other than Dictogloss). Data collected from questionnaires, tests, and interviews will undergo rigorous analysis to provide a comprehensive overview of the Dictogloss technique's effects on grammatical competence and students' learning experiences. The findings of this research are expected to be beneficial in the application and enhancement of grammar proficiency for students at Thai Nguyen University of Education.

SỬ DỤNG KỸ THUẬT DICTOGLOSS ĐỂ PHÁT TRIỂN NĂNG LỰC NGỮ PHÁP CHO SINH VIÊN NĂM 2 CHUYÊN NGÀNH TIẾNG ANH TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC SƯ PHẠM - ĐẠI HỌC THÁI NGUYÊN

Vũ Đình Bắc[*], Đặng Khánh Linh, Nguyễn Thị Kim Chi, Ngô Thị Thanh Hiền
Trường Đại học Sư phạm - ĐH Thái Nguyên

THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO	TÓM TẮT
	Nghiên cứu này khảo sát hiệu quả của kỹ thuật Dictogloss trong việc nâng cao năng lực ngữ pháp cho sinh viên năm thứ hai chuyên ngành Tiếng Anh tại Trường Đại học Sư phạm – Đại học Thái Nguyên. Nghiên cứu nhằm mục đích giải quyết nhu cầu cấp thiết về các phương pháp đổi mới và hiệu quả để nâng cao trình độ ngữ pháp của người học ngôn ngữ. Bằng cách sử dụng kỹ thuật Dictogloss, trong đó nhấn mạnh đến việc học tập hợp tác và tái cấu trúc ngôn ngữ, nghiên cứu khám phá tác động của nó đối với nhận thức, sự chú ý và phân tích ngữ pháp của học sinh. Nghiên cứu bao gồm một lớp được chia thành hai nhóm: nhóm thử nghiệm (được xử lý bằng kỹ thuật Dictogloss) và nhóm đối chứng (sử dụng một kỹ thuật khác ngoài Dictogloss). Dữ liệu được thu thập từ bảng câu hỏi, bài kiểm tra và phỏng vấn sẽ được phân tích nghiêm ngặt để cung cấp cái nhìn tổng quan toàn diện về tác động của kỹ thuật Dictogloss đối với năng lực ngữ pháp và trải nghiệm học tập của học sinh. Kết quả nghiên cứu này được kỳ vọng sẽ mang lại lợi ích trong việc ứng dụng và nâng cao năng lực ngữ pháp cho sinh viên Trường Đại học Sư phạm – Đại học Thái Nguyên.

---

[*] Corresponding author. *Email: bacvd@tnue.edu.vn*

1. Introduction

Teaching English in general requires solid knowledge of the language, teaching methods and the ability to interact with learners. Thousands of English students in Vietnam are still looking for an effective way to learn English. While many of them work daily to get better at grammar, they often struggle to recall and use the rules when speaking English. This research introduces the Dictogloss technique and also motivates us to conduct a Dictogloss study on English language teaching for sophomore students at Thai Nguyen University of Education.

Grammar plays a crucial role in English teaching and learning, forming the fundamental structure of communication. It is essential for learners as it offers insights into arranging words and sentences to convey meaning. The ultimate goal of teaching English is to enable fluency in both speaking and writing, emphasizing language communication skills and knowledge mastery. Grammar awareness serves as a key element in lesson planning and curriculum design, providing a foundational knowledge base for learners to build upon, facilitating the progression to advanced vocabulary and grammar structures. Grammar has long been the foundation of English Language Teaching (ELT) curricula at all levels, including at the university level. In discrepancy, the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s led to a tendency not to emphasize certain grammars in the classroom, although grammar was widely regarded as a means of communicating fluently in a language. Unfortunately, without grammar, it is difficult to teach English learners the ability to speak English [1]. The Dictogloss technique has its origins in the broader field of language teaching and second language acquisition. Attention hypothesis (Schmidt, 1990) [2]: The concept of "attention" in language learning, proposed by Michael H. Long and later expanded by Stephen Krashen, suggests that learners need to pay attention consciously aware of certain features of language before they can acquire and absorb it.

The study on using the Dictogloss technique for developing grammar competence in sophomore English majors aims to assess its effectiveness in enhancing specific grammatical knowledge relevant to academic studies. It explores how Dictogloss promotes attention to grammatical structure and analyzes students' collaborative restructuring of texts. The research compares Dictogloss with traditional grammar teaching methods, evaluating learning outcomes and application for English majors. The study tests the long-term retention of grammatical knowledge acquired through Dictogloss and examines its transferability to new contexts. Exploring motivation and engagement, it assesses whether Dictogloss enhances students' interest in learning grammar. Through the use of the Dictogloss technique, English learners will find effective ways to develop their grammar skills. By engaging in this technique, students can actively practice grammatical structures, sentence formation, and word order, leading to a better understanding and application of grammar rules. Moreover, Dictogloss promotes active learning by requiring students to listen attentively, analyze the text, and collaboratively reconstruct it. This hands-on approach encourages student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

1.1. Grammatical competence

Grammatical competence is the ability of learners to acquire knowledge of a language's grammar with confidence and apply this knowledge with ease to communicate in a given context. It includes the ability to gain knowledge of new words, forms, syntax, semantics, etc., and is operated as part of communicative competence. There is no denying the role of grammar, through which communication becomes clear and understandable. No one can claim to have attained grammatical capability in their mama lingo unless they've learned it duly and know all the rules.

1.2. Background on Dictogloss

Digtogloss was created by Wajnryb in 1990 [3] to focus on grammar. It is a teaching technique that involves the reconstruction of a text by learners based on a dictated version

provided by the teacher. The students listen to a short passage read at a normal level and then reconstruct and reinterpret the text. According to Wajnryb (1990), the main task is not only learning in the environment but also interacting with the student. When implementing the Dictogloss technique, it is easy for teachers to adapt the stages of the Dictogloss task in a creative, logical way to suit the needs of the students. Wajnryb (1990) stated that: "Dictogloss is a technique in language instruction that takes a small step after dictation that forces students to reconstruct a spelled text, capturing as much as possible". The content of the information is absolutely correct and exists in an acceptable form of language.

Small (2003) defines [4]: "Dictogloss as an operation in which short passages of language are read at medium speed". Similarly, Cross (2002) defines [5]: "Dictogloss as grammatical dictation or can be thought of as a method of communication based on the teaching task". Swain and Lapkin (1998) [6] how that Dictogloss is effective in helping students acquire knowledge of language by making them aware of the form and function of language.

1.3. The advantages and disadvantages of using Dictogloss

Vasiljevic (2010) pointed [7] out that Dictogloss has the followed advantages:

Firstly, the Dictogloss technique is an effective method of combining individual and group activities. Students listen and record individually and then put the text back together.

Secondly, as noted by Karen (2012) Dictogloss facilitates improving communication capacity for learners.

Thirdly, the reconstruction phase helps students test hypotheses and identifies strengths and weaknesses. Mackenzie (2011) states that the Dictogloss process uses the principles of language comprehension through two domains: efficiency and cognition. Positive group interactions and interdependence can have an impact on students' motivation towards working together to achieve something in common.

Finally, Dictogloss offers a dynamic and varied instructional approach, breaking away from traditional teaching methods and providing a refreshing change for learners. Dictogloss also can incorporate authentic texts that reflect cultural nuances, helping learners gain insights into language use within specific cultural contexts.

Besides that, Dictogloss will not be considered effective for low-level learners. Issues introduced into the lesson or provided by the teacher may not match the needs or interests of the students because teachers often pay attention to the form, not the subject.

Plus, Small (2003) argued that superior learners may prevent others from fully participating, especially during periods when they tend to dominate opportunities for reconstruction completion. tasks rather than sharing them with other learners.

Vasiljevic (2010) suggests that learners unfamiliar with this teaching-learning method may want to write down each dictation word. Teachers need to give students more training to get them used to Dictogloss because it takes more time to plan and apply dictionary technique.

2. Methodology

The study applies Krashen's input hypothesis and Schmidt's attention hypothesis to demonstrate the effectiveness of Dictogloss in improving grammatical competence. The research sample consisted of 30 second - year students (English class K57B), who were divided into two groups: an experimental group comprising 15 students utilizing Dictogloss and a control group consisting of 15 students who did not employ Dictogloss. To assess the student's current grammar level, a comprehensive grammar level test will be administered. This test aims to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, providing a basis for assessing progress throughout the study. During weeks 2 to 7 of the semester, the Dictogloss technique was systematically integrated. In week 8, students underwent a paper-based test reflecting the structure of the formative assessment. This post-implementation assessment aimed to quantify student progress

after consistent application of the Dictogloss technique. The researcher meticulously designed a comprehensive questionnaire including 05 closed questions and 05 open questions. Once completed, the questionnaire link was disseminated to the student group, with clear instructions to ensure a high response rate. To better understand the student experience, approximately 05 participants were selected for in-depth interviews. These interviews delved into each individual's feelings, attitudes, and perceptions about the Dictogloss technique. The data collected from questionnaires, tests, and interviews were subjected to rigorous analysis, offering a comprehensive overview of the impact of the Dictogloss technique on students' grammatical competence and their learning experience. A comparative analysis was conducted between the experimental group (using Dictogloss) and the control group (not using Dictogloss) to identify any significant differences in grammar proficiency. Students' scores after taking the test showed how effective the Dictogloss technique was in improving grammar ability. By combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, this research aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the Dictogloss technique in developing grammatical competence among sophomore English majors.

3. Findings and discussions

As shown in table 1 and figure 1 for the control group, the results of the pre-test indicate relatively low scores. Scores of 5-6-7 constitute a significant portion, while excellent scores of 8-9-10 are only achieved by 3 students. Overall, the grammatical competence of language majors is relatively low. Furthermore, the average score of the pre-test is 6.68, higher than that of the experimental group by 0.24 points. After 6 weeks of grammar structure review, there is a difference observed in the experimental group, the average score of the post-test is higher than that of the control group by 0.95 points. On the other hand, the control group shows no significant improvement, with a slight increase of 0.08 points from 6.68 in the pre-test to the post-test.

Table 1. *The result of students' score in two tests (pre-test and post test) in the control group*

No	Pre-test score	Post-test score
1	6	6.3
2	7.3	7
3	6.6	6.3
4	6	7
5	6.6	6.3
6	8	7.6
7	8.6	9
8	Absent	8
9	7.3	7.3
10	7.3	7
11	8	8
12	5.3	6
13	4	5.3
14	6	6.3
15	5.3	5.3
Total	103.3	94.7
Average	6.68	6.76

As shown in table 2 and figure 1 for the experimental group, the lowest score in the pre-test was 4, while the lowest score in the post-test was 5.3. In the second test, the average score of the post-test is 7.71, higher than the pre-test by 1.27. This indicates a gradual improvement in students' grammatical proficiency. Throughout the process, students demonstrated significant progress from the beginning to the end of the cycle. They gradually mastered grammar rules based on context. The Dictogloss technique has proven to be highly effective in enhancing

students' grammatical competence. Scores at the weak and average levels tended to decrease, while scores at the good and excellent levels increased significantly.

Table 2. *The result of students' score in two tests (pre-test and post test) in the experimental group*

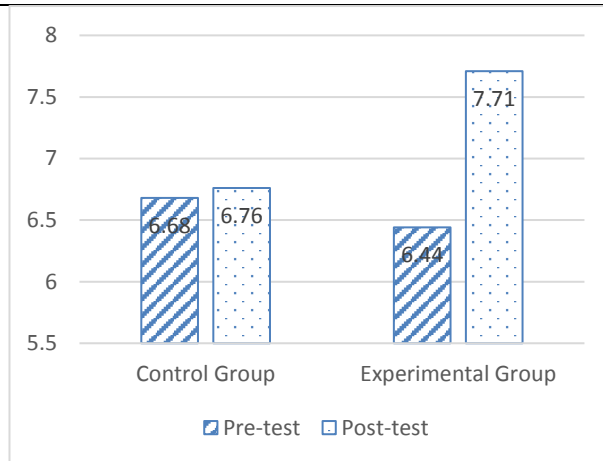| No	Pre-test score	Post-test score
1	7.3	*Absent*
2	5.3	7
3	8	9
4	6.4	8.3
5	4.7	6.3
6	6	8
7	8.6	9.3
8	4	5.3
9	6.6	7.6
10	4	6
11	7.3	8
12	7.3	8.3
13	7.3	8.3
14	7.3	9
15	6.6	7.6
Total	96.7	108
Average	6.44	7.71

Figure 1. *The result of students' score in 2 tests*

Table 3. *Evaluation table of improvement in English ability in general and grammar in particular when applying the Digtogloss method for the experimental group according to the Likert scale*

Statements: The Digtogloss method helps me:	Levels of agreement: Unit: Students				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. Improve my grammatical competence as a sophomore English major	0	1	3	9	2
2. Using correct grammatical structures in English	0	0	2	8	5
3. Enhance my ability to accurately apply grammar rules in my writing skills.	0	1	4	7	3
4. Know how to write correct sentences	0	2	5	6	2
5. Develop my listening skills	0	0	2	6	7
6. Avoid common grammar mistakes	0	1	2	4	8
7. Become more interested in learning English	0	2	3	5	5
8. Remember long words and sentences faster	0	1	2	4	8
9. Have a deeper understanding of difficult grammar structure	1	0	4	8	2
10.Learn more new words	0	0	1	5	9

1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree

Most students agree or strongly agree that the Dictogloss technique helps them improve their grammar skills (questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9). Some students are neutral or disagree that the Dictogloss technique helps them improve their listening skills (question 5). Most students agree or strongly agree that the Dictogloss technique helps them learn English more effectively (questions 7, 8, 10). Based on the analysis results, it can be seen that the Dictogloss technique is effective in improving students' grammar and English proficiency.

4. Conclusion

The use of the Dictogloss technique in developing grammatical competence among sophomore English majors at Thai Nguyen University of Education has proven to be a valuable and effective pedagogical approach. Throughout the research process, Dictogloss activities have demonstrated significant benefits in enhancing students' understanding and application of grammatical structures. The study findings indicate that students who underwent grammar courses using Dictogloss showed notable progress in their grammatical proficiency. Despite some remaining challenges, integrating Dictogloss into grammar lessons has made the learning process less stressful and more engaging, thereby motivating students to actively engage in grammar learning. In conclusion, the findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the Dictogloss technique in improving grammatical competence among sophomore English majors.

REFERENCES

[1] T. Nabei, *Grammar Dictation (Dictogloss)*, The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching, 1-7, 2018.

[2] G. I. P. Wacana, "Student's Grammatical Ability with Dictogloss Method," *Sintuwu Maroso Journal of English Teaching,* vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 17-20, 2022.

[3] S. H. Daulay, U. Dewi, and R. Pulungan, "Using Digtogloss Dictation Method to Improve Students' Skills in Writing Narrative Text," *AL-ISHLAH: Journal Pendidikan,* vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 1703-1710, 2022.

[4] M. S. O. Mayhoub, E. A. E. Ali, and H. M. Mohamed, "Using Dictogloss strategy for developing secondary stage students' English grammar competence and motivation towards learning English language," *BSU-Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum,* vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 134-152, 2023.

[5] D. A. M. Almarwani, "The Role of Dictogloss Technique in the Development of Writing Skills among Secondary Stage Students," *Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing (AJSP)*, vol. 2, pp. 14-22, 2022.

[6] T. M. H. Ngo and D. H. Le, "Effects of Dictogloss on Non-English Majored Undergraduates' listening Comprehension," *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies,* vol. 36, no. 3, 2020, doi: 10.25073/2525-2445/vnufs.4557.

[7] Z. Vasiljevic, "Dictogloss as an Interactive Method of Teaching Listening Comprehension to L2 Learners," *English language teaching,* vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 41-52, 2010.