

# INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL

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## ABSTRACT

*Listening is the most frequently used language skills which plays a great role in the process of communication. Considering its vital importance, students should be taught to listen effectively and critically. Yet, listening is commonly recognized by EFL learners as the most difficult skill to master in English. Understanding a talk, lecture, or conversation in a foreign language can be challenging for them. The key factors include the speaker talking quickly, background noise, a lack of visual clues, the listener's limited vocabulary, a lack of knowledge of the topic, and an inability to distinguish individual sounds. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for teachers to utilize appropriate strategy that help learners to develop their listening skill. This article intends to elaborate two innovative strategies for teaching listening: Dictogloss and Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT) with its basic concept and procedures of implementation.*

Keywords: listening, listening comprehension, Dictogloss, STAD, PDDT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are four skills which should be mastered by language learners. They are, listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Speaking and writing belong to productive skill category. These skills require the learners to produce something in the form of written or spoken language as the proof of language mastery. Meanwhile, listening and reading skills belong to receptive skill category. These skills are the main ways of receiving the knowledge and information (Juliari, 2018). Listening and reading activities require the learner to accept the information and idea through the language they learnt.

As one of the main way of receiving knowledge and information, listening skill holds an important role in language learning process. Promoting listening comprehension leads to enhanced acquisition of the other language skills and consequently leads to acquisition of the target language. It stands to reason that one cannot correctly provide an output (speak) unless they understand the input (listening comprehension) (Cheung, 2010).

Rost (1991) highlighted the significance of listening in second language learning as follows: (1) listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. Without understanding input at the right level, any learning simply cannot begin; (2) authentic spoken language presents a challenge for the learner to understand language as native speakers actually use it; and (3) Listening exercises provide teachers with a means for drawing learners' attention to new forms (vocabulary, grammar, new interaction patterns) in the language. Therefore, listening is important not only as a receptive skill but also is crucial in the development of spoken language proficiency.

Different experts define the nature of listening in distinctive perspectives. According to Leveridge & Yang (2013), listening is a multifaceted, active process of interpretation where listeners match what is heard with what is already known. Yet, it is not merely hearing but rather a complex process that involves four stages,

such as sensing and attending, understanding and interpreting, remembering and responding (Steinberg, 2007). Thus, listeners play an active role in discriminating between sounds, understanding vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreting intonation and stress, and interpreting the utterance within the socio-cultural context (Vandergrift, 1999).

While listening, the listeners may employ either top-down or bottom-up processing. With top-down processing, they use their prior knowledge and experiences. Bottom-up processing is the opposite, they start by using the information that they have about sounds, word meanings, and discourse markers to assemble their understanding of what is heard one step at a time (Brown, 2006).

In real EFL/ESL classroom practice, listening frequently perceived as the most difficult skill to learn (Sutrisna & Artini, 2020). Students not only struggle to comprehend sounds that do not exist in their native speech, but also to adjust themselves over speech speed i.e. reduced English sounds (lazy speech) or contraction. Even if they hear sounds accurately, a lack of vocabulary including slang or colloquial language often lead them to have interpretation issue.

Therefore, it absolutely necessary for the students to enhance their vocabulary, familiarize themselves with English intonation and rhythm, and most importantly get themselves as much English exposure as possible (Sutrisna, 2021). Furthermore, teachers should provide the students with a great deal of opportunities to engage in an enjoyable and meaningful listening activities as well as use suitable and effective EFL listening strategies in teaching listening.

This paper will focus on the innovative teaching strategies to teach listening skills for secondary level students. There are two innovative teaching strategies that will be presented in this paper, the first strategy is Dictogloss combined with STAD (Student Team Achievement Division) and second strategy is PDDT (Picture Dictation Drawing Technique). The explanation covers the basic concept, procedures, strengths and weaknesses of each strategy.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 Dictogloss**

#### **A. The Basic Concept of Dictogloss**

As a new form of dictation technique, dictogloss is an integrated skills technique for language learning in which focus on grammatical structure and the students work together to create a reconstructed version of a text read to them by their teacher (Jacobs & Small, 2003). This technique was developed by Ruth Wajnryb.

#### **B. Reasons to Implement Dictogloss**

The conventional listening activity, such as standard dictation only facilitate the students to listen and write down exactly like what they listened without involving critical thinking and even without understanding the content thoroughly. Based on that case, with the innovation of Ruth Wajnryb, the new style of conducting dictation was emerged and called dictogloss.

There are some purposes of dictogloss implementation in listening class. Those purposes prove that dictogloss can be used to facilitate the development of students' four language skills (Nguyenthoa, 2013).

The Purpose of Dictogloss:

- To introduce key words and target lexical items at first
- To improve students' take note skill
- To help students to focus on meaning when listening to spoken text

- To develop listening skill and to provide relevant listening practice
- To develop proof reading and editing skills
- To provide a real opportunity for cooperative learning
- To assist weaker learners and learners who require useful support with reading and writing activities

The need to construct integrated learning is derived from the concept of language learning itself. Language learning should involve the development of all skills. This is caused by the fact that communicating using a language is not only the matter of writing or speaking, but also the integration of all skills. By using dictogloss as one of the teaching strategies in listening class, students are encouraged to train their skills not only in listening (listen to the text read by the teacher) but also in speaking (during text reconstruction with group members, talking about the content of the text listened by each of the member), writing (reconstructing the text based on their understanding in the correct grammatical form) and reading.

### **C. Variation and Implementation of Dictogloss in Teaching-Learning Process**

#### **▪ Basic Format of Dictogloss**

There are some variations of dictogloss. However, generally dictogloss strategy follows some basic format (Jacobs & Small, 2003).

1. The class engages in some discussion on the topic of the upcoming text. This topic is one on which students have some background knowledge and, hopefully, interest. The class may also discuss the text type of the text, the purpose, organizational structure, and language features of that text type.
2. The teacher reads the text aloud once at normal speed as students listen but do not write. The text can be selected by teachers from newspapers, textbooks, etc., or teachers can write their own or modify an existing text. The length of the text depends on students' proficiency level.
3. The teacher reads the text again at normal speed and students take notes.
4. Students work in groups of two-four to reconstruct the text in full sentences. This reconstruction seeks to retain the meaning and form of the original text but is not a word-for-word copy of the text read by the teacher. Instead, students are working together to create a cohesive text with correct grammar and other features of the relevant text type, e.g., procedure, or rhetorical framework, e.g., cause and effect, that approximates the meaning of the original.
5. Students, with the teacher's help, identify similarities and differences in terms of meaning and form between their text reconstructions and the original, which is displayed on an overhead projector or shown to students in another way.

#### **▪ Variation of Dictogloss**

There are many modifications/ variations of dictogloss which are derived from the basic format (Jacobs & Small, 2003), some of them are described as follow:

##### **1. Variation A: Dictogloss Negotiation**

In Dictogloss Negotiation, rather than group members discussing what they heard when the teacher has finished reading, students discuss after each section of text has been read. Sections can be one

sentence long or longer, depending on the difficulty of the text relative to students' proficiency level.

**2. Variation B: Student -Controlled Dictation**

In Student -Controlled Dictation, students use the teacher as they would use a tape recorder. In other words, they can ask the teacher to stop, go back, i.e., rewind, and skip ahead, i.e., fast-forward. However, students bear in mind that the aim of dictogloss is the creation of an appropriate reconstruction, not a photocopy.

**3. Variation C: Student-Student Dictation**

Rather than the teacher being the one to read the text, students take turns to read to each other. Student-Student Dictation works best after students have become familiar with the standard dictogloss procedure. This dictogloss variation involves key elements of cooperative learning, in particular equal participation from all group members, individual accountability (each member takes turns controlling the activity) and positive interdependence as group members explore meaning and correctness together.

**4. Variation E: Scrambled Sentence Dictogloss**

Scrambled Sentences is a popular technique for teaching a number of language skills. Scrambled Sentences Dictogloss employs this technique to raise the difficulty level of dictogloss and to focus students' attention on how texts fit together.

**5. Variation F: Elaboration Dictogloss**

In Elaboration Dictogloss, students go beyond what they hear to not just recreate a text but also to improve it. For instance, part of the text read by the teacher might be:

*Today, many students use bicycles.*

Students could simply elaborate by adding a word or two:

*Today, many Japanese college students use bicycles.*

▪ **Combination Procedures of Dictogloss and STAD**

**STAD (Student Team Achievement Division)**

As one of popular techniques in cooperative learning approach, STAD (Student Team Achievement Division) can be combined well with dictogloss strategy. STAD strategy has the characteristics needed in teaching learning process, some of them can be stated as follows (Killen, 1996).

1. STAD helps students to learn to co-operate with one another to achieve common goal
2. STAD learning helps students to verbalize their ideas and compare them with the ideas of other students.
3. STAD provides many opportunities for students to compare answer and judge the appropriateness of those answers.

The key point in STAD is the way teacher choose the member of each group. The member of the group should be heterogeneous, which means it is not only a combination of male and female students but also low and high achieving students. Heterogeneous group members are expected to encourage peer tutoring, provide a variety of perspectives, help students come to know and like others different from themselves, and foster the appreciation of the value of diversity. In dictogloss, the teacher can choose the members of the group heterogeneously during text reconstruction activity.

The combination of Dictogloss and STAD is so interesting for students to integrate all skills in which the students work with heterogonous group members in order to increase the active interaction by listening to the teachers and groups' members. The combination of both, dictogloss and STAD can be seen as follows:

- 1) Students are divided into a heterogonous group consisted of four members with different language proficiency level and gender. The function of this grouping is to encourage cooperation in the group study the material and complete the tasks assigned by the teacher.
- 2) The teacher jumbles the sentences in which the students already have some background knowledge related to the text, make it in random in order to bring a challenge in the classroom. For instance, the teachers jumble the narrative text about Balinese folktale which is focusing on past tense as the grammatical point.
- 3) The class engages in some discussion on the topic about Balinese folktale of the upcoming text.
- 4) The teacher reads the text aloud once at normal speed as students listen but do not write.
- 5) The teacher reads the text again at normal speed and students take notes. Students are emphasized to write the key words of the jumble sentences.
- 6) After listening to the teacher, the students have to recreate what they heard and then put it into a logical order then they need to reconstruct the text in group, so there is an active interaction in the group by listening to each other notes. It emphasizes more on to the correct grammatical point.
- 7) When analyzing students' reconstructions, the class may decide that there is more than one possible correct order. This fits with the overall spirit of dictogloss, that there is no one correct way to achieve a communicative purpose, although there are certain conventions that should be understood and considered.
- 8) Provision of test or quiz (Quizzes). After studying and the group complete the test, quiz is held with the objective of identifying, or the ability to measure student learning of the material has been studied. In this case, the student works individually. This will able to increase their individual responsibility. In addition to individual responsibility, the students also have to realize that effort and their achievement will be very valuable to contribute to the success of the group.
- 9) Students receive a quiz score and an improvement score each week. This is done to give the students a goal that can be achieved if they work hard and showed good results compared with previous results. Manager records the results of the students' performance in the following order: early score, tests score, and score of the group increased.
- 10) Awards group (Team Recognition), award is given to the group to appreciate the efforts that have been made during the study, it can be in the form of certificate.

#### **D. Strengths and Weaknesses of Dictogloss**

##### **▪ Strengths of Dictogloss**

Dictogloss is a dictation activity where the learners listen to a passage given, jot down the key words as many as they can identify and then they reconstruct the text in a small group. The strengths of dictogloss can be formulated, as follows:

- This technique lets student to integrate their knowledge or experience with the clues given by teacher during the dictation (Nunan, 1991).

- This technique makes listener (students) more active in understanding the text given by the teacher.
- Listener will be able to make predictions.
- Listeners will be able to make inferences about things not directly stated in the text.
- Listeners will be able to identify the topic of the text.
- Listener will be able to identify the kinds of text (whether it is a narrative, description, anecdote etc.).
- Listeners will be able to identify various sorts of semantic relationship in the text (Nunan, 1991).
- This technique can be integrated with all skills involve listening, writing, reading and speaking.
- This strategy offers students more chances to be exposed to a foreign language through listening comprehension tasks.
- This strategy provides an opportunity for students to apply their grammar mastery in the reconstruction step, show the students linguistic resource when they take the fragmented notes and possible to use the various language options.
- To encourage students to make corrections about their English comprehension.
- To upgrade and refine the language used by students through comprehensive analysis about the language options used when they make the correction about the reconstructed text (Wajnryb, 1990).
- Dictogloss technique is a technique in teaching listening which is classified communicative. As the result, the students will be more interested in participating in the learning process of listening text (e.g. narrative text) by using dictogloss techniques when it is compared with the conventional study conducted by the teacher.

Dictogloss teaching strategy is an effective strategy to make students more active and make them understand their own strengths and weaknesses in learning English. Through active learner involvement students come to confront their own strengths and weaknesses in English language use.

▪ **Weaknesses of Dictogloss**

There is none techniques which are perfect. If the technique has its advantages, so the disadvantages are also definitely owned. Likewise with dictogloss technique, in the implementation in the field there are some drawbacks. The weaknesses are as follows:

- The lack of the media used, because in this dictogloss technique requires a good and appropriate media. For example: the use of tape recorder can facilitate the teacher in giving the material in the learning process.
- The lack of time available, because in this dictogloss technique requires a longer time.

## **2.2 Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT)**

### **A. The Basic Concept of PDDT**

As one of teaching strategies, dictation has been widely used in language learning classroom especially in EFL. It is commonly used to help the learners to improve their listening skill. Nowadays, however, this kind of technique is considered as the old-fashioned one. Learners are no longer really interested in having their lesson in which they are required to take notes about the words or sentences dictated by their teachers. What they need is a teaching strategy that can bring enjoyable learning.

Talking about enjoyable learning, dictation has been adapted and even modified into a new brand teaching strategy. As cited in leong (2003), it is designed into picture dictation in which all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are involved within enjoyable activities. In her journal, this strategy has been tried and proved to be very successful with various levels of learners starting from beginners, pre-intermediate and intermediate. Learners like picture dictation because it is positive and interesting. Unlike the conventional dictation, the teachers found that learners make very few failures in this kind of dictation. Due to its effectiveness, this kind of technique is adapted by several local researchers. They add a feature of drawing in this technique intentionally to provide learners with fun, enjoyable and interesting activities (Prasuntari, 2009; Desiani, 2006; Okayana, 2008; Sutrisna, 2019). Therefore, this technique later is known as Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT).

Deriving from the same basic concept, Picture Drawing Dictation Technique concerns on choosing and preparing text in clear visual terms so that it can be used for picture dictation, which involves learners in all four skills of listening with attention, fun and interest, speaking with confidence, reading with care and purpose and writing with accuracy (leong, 2003).

#### **B. Reasons to Implement PDDT**

Picture Drawing Dictation Technique is one kind of creative dictations which has proved very successful to be applied by EFL teacher in a large class. It is listening activity where the teacher dictates a text to the students, and the students listen carefully to the story, and then do a drawing. During involved in the activity, students should not aware of being unable in drawing the picture perfectly. The focus of the activity would be on the right of the object placement based on the teacher's instruction.

Unlike conventional dictation, Picture Drawing Dictation Technique requires students to transfer the information to a picture (drawing). Therefore, the students are required to listen closely for every detail dictated by their teachers. The teachers should keep the activity short and simple. They should use or prepare a text appropriate to the level of the students. The text should be written in simple visual terms with a series of steps for students to follow and draw. In summary, this strategy means that the teacher dictates something to the students, they listen carefully, and they draw something on their paper based on teachers' instruction.

There are some reasons in implementing this technique into the classroom. First, it helps students to practice listening. This kind of technique is useful in developing students' listening comprehension, particularly 'directed listening'. Second, it helps students to practice language in context (e.g. prepositions). It is a great way for them to review the use of adjective, preposition and location words such, on, above, below, in front of, beside and many more. Third, all students are involved in an enjoyable listening activity. The students are not only guided to practice listening in an enjoyable way, but also they can express themselves through drawing activity. Last but not least, this technique is effective to enrich students' vocabulary.

#### **C. Procedures of PDDT**

- 1) Choose a simple picture with a few objects that are simple to draw. The picture should be easy to describe and draw (especially for young learners). It is probably best to choose a picture that does not have too many objects in it. If the picture is too complex, it might take students a long time to draw it or they may end up with confusion. To speed the activity up, encourage them to do a very quick drawing. You could

- demonstrate how quickly they could draw by drawing an example of the picture on the board.
- 2) Design the dictation that you will give to the students to draw the picture.
  - 3) At the beginning of the activity, tell your students not to worry about how good their drawing is.
  - 4) The teacher dictates the description of the picture to the students slowly and clearly. In this case, the teacher can repeat the description for several times while the students are drawing the pictures and put colors based on the teacher's dictation. If they still don't understand, use different word. You can also use their home language to help understand. However, you need to remember that you are helping them to listen in English, so try not to use the home language very often.
  - 5) Make sure you give students enough time to finish drawing one object before you move to the next object and it is a good idea to walk around and look at the students' drawings as they are drawing them so that you can see how well they understand your descriptions.
  - 6) Ask the students to show their picture after dictating the description. Tell them to compare their drawing with their friends'. Have them note any differences and realize their mistake during listening to the instructions/descriptions.
  - 7) Choose one picture that mostly resemble to the original picture.
  - 8) Ask the students to write their own writing based on the chosen picture.
  - 9) Once they have finished writing, ask them to explain what they have written in front of the class (Oral Presentation).

▪ **Sample of Instrument**

**Directions:**

1. *Listen to the teacher's dictation carefully, and then draw any pictures and put colors on it based on teacher's dictation!*



The dictations:

**My Bedroom**

My bedroom is large. If you come to my bedroom, you will see many things there. You will see two beds in my bedrooms: one for me and one for my sister. Each bed has two pillows, big and small ones. The bed covers are white. We usually sleep and take a nap there. My bedroom is decorated with two pictures on the wall, over each bed. There is a pink table lamp and a red vase on the table between the beds. There is a crystal lamp in the middle of the ceiling. There is double-door window on the right side of the room, which is completed with white curtains. There is small round white table near it supported with two chairs. On each chair, there is doll (teddy bear): one is red and one is pink. A brown rubbish-bin is near the chair. The make-up's desk is in front of the beds, near the wall. There are two bigger table lamps on it. A mirror



is one the wall over the over the make-up's desk. The color of the wall is pink and the floor is white. My bedroom is colorful and comfortable. My bedroom is my paradise.

- I. *Write your own writing (descriptive paragraph) based on the picture chosen!*
- II. *Tell the result of your own writing in front of the class orally, fluently and accurately.*

### **Sample of student's drawing**



Taken from Prasuntiari (2009)

### **D. Strengths and Weaknesses of Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT)**

#### **▪ Strengths of PDDT**

The strengths of Picture Drawing Dictation Technique for classroom activity especially listening can be described as follows (Conti, 2002).

- It is fun, psychologically powerful and challenging activity that works well with large classes, especially with young learners and teens. Unlike the classic listening activities, it is believed that the combination of listening and drawing activity will avoid them for getting bored.
- This technique can help the students to enrich their vocabulary and language features by listening their teachers' dictation.
- As the students develop their aural comprehension of meaning and also of the relationship among segments of language, they are learning grammar.
- It helps to develop short-term memory. Students practice retaining meaningful phrases or whole sentences before writing them down.
- It helps the teachers to check the students' understanding toward his/her instruction or descriptions.

#### **▪ Weaknesses of PDDT**

In contrast, there also some weaknesses in using Picture Drawing Dictation Technique as follow.

- This kind of technique is not appropriate for students who do not have competence in drawing (Prasuntiari, 2009).
- It is hard for the teachers to provide appropriate texts or passages available for picture dictation and they have difficulty in creating such texts suitable for picture dictation (leong, 2003).

- It may take up a significant amount of time during its implementation in the classroom. Teacher should be concerned about the time allocation so that learning objectives could be achieved (Sutrisna, 2019)

### 3. CONCLUSION

The discussion of this paper concerns on two innovative strategies that can be implemented in teaching listening: Dictogloss and Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT). From the elaboration above, we could figure out that dictogloss serves as useful bridge between bottom-up and top-down understanding. It provides a unique blending of teaching listening comprehension and the assessment of students' listening ability. In a dictogloss task, students need phonemic identification, lexical recognition, syntactic analysis and semantic interpretation. The reconstruction task offers an insight into the students' performance at all stages of speech perception process. Students and teacher can verify and identify the parts of the text and specific words or structure that cause miscomprehension. Furthermore, the nature of reconstruction task forces students to listens carefully to other students' input, providing additional opportunities for listening practice.

Picture Drawing Dictation Technique (PDDT) promotes listening – writing transfer skills, and of course spelling. This strategy not only provide enjoyable listening activities, but also provides students with opportunities to build writing skills as it indirectly enables them to learn sentence composition. In addition, it encourages students to use the target language in communicative & contextual form, if the texts are properly selected.

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