


Students' Perceptions Of Using Dictation In English Classes: A Study On Eighth Graders

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: students' perceptions, dictation, English class, eighth grade students, study.</p>	<p>This study aims to explore the perceptions of eighth grade students towards the use of dictation method in English language learning. This study used qualitative methods, through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The results showed that the majority of students viewed dictation as an effective tool to improve their listening and writing skills. Students felt that dictation helped improve spelling and expand vocabulary. However, some students found dictation boring and challenging, especially for those with hearing disabilities. The study concluded that although dictation has its own challenges, its benefits in supporting English language learning are significant. Recommendations for teachers include diversifying teaching methods to maintain student interest and providing additional listening practice for students who need it.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, language instruction remains a critical component in shaping proficient and confident communicators. One instructional strategy that has garnered attention over the years is the use of dictation in English language classes. Dictation exercises, which involve listening and writing down what is heard, are believed to enhance various language skills, including listening comprehension, spelling, punctuation, and grammar accuracy.

The effectiveness of dictation as a pedagogical tool, however, largely hinges on students' perceptions and attitudes towards its use in the classroom. For eighth graders, who are often at a pivotal stage in their language learning journey, understanding their perspectives can provide valuable insights into the practical application and potential benefits of dictation.

This study aims to explore the perceptions of eighth-grade students regarding the use of dictation in their English classes. By delving into their experiences, preferences, and challenges, the research seeks to shed light on how dictation impacts their learning process and overall language development. The findings of this study are expected to inform educators and curriculum developers about the viability and effectiveness of dictation as an instructional strategy in modern English language education.

The teaching of English as a second language has evolved significantly over the years, with various methods being employed to enhance learners' proficiency. One such method is dictation, which involves listening to spoken language and writing it down verbatim. This technique has been supported by various educational theorists and linguists for its multifaceted benefits.

According to Davis and Rinvolutri (2002), dictation is a powerful tool for language learning, as it aids in developing listening skills, improving spelling, punctuation, and grammar. They argue that the process of converting spoken language into written form helps reinforce language structures and vocabulary.

Another key proponent, Brown (2007), highlights that dictation exercises engage multiple cognitive skills simultaneously. This multisensory approach can enhance memory retention and foster a deeper understanding of the language being learned. Brown's research suggests that dictation can be particularly beneficial for young learners who are still developing their language foundation.

Furthermore, Nation (2009) emphasizes the role of dictation in improving listening comprehension and the ability to recognize spoken words accurately. He notes that regular practice with dictation can help students become more proficient in processing and understanding spoken English, which is crucial for their overall language development.

In the context of eighth-grade students, who are at a critical stage in their language learning journey, understanding their perceptions of dictation can provide valuable insights into its practical application and efficacy. This study aims to explore these perceptions, examining how dictation exercises impact their learning experience, engagement, and overall language acquisition.

Through the lens of these expert perspectives, this research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on effective language teaching strategies. By delving into the students' experiences and attitudes towards dictation, the study aims to inform educators and curriculum developers about the potential benefits and challenges associated with this technique.

One of the core components of learning a language is comprehension. The proficiency of students in speaking, writing, reading, and listening is greatly influenced by their comprehension and application of language. However, how to remember what they have learnt is one of the biggest problems that students encounter, particularly in secondary school. Dictation techniques are one of the many strategies used in the context of learning English to improve vocabulary retention. A classic teaching method is dictation, which entails listening and properly rewriting what is heard. According to certain theories, this method can improve hearing, improve focus, and fortify long-term memory for the knowledge acquired. Numerous earlier research have demonstrated that dictation strategies not only support students' comprehension in context but also improve their cognitive abilities by emphasizing and extending their knowledge of spelling and sentence structure. Thus, in order to gain a better understanding of the efficacy of this approach in the language acquisition process, this study examines how dictation helps eighth-grade pupils retain more vocabulary.

According to research by Shofia Kamal and Abdul Basith, dictation methods—particularly dictogloss and running dictation—are useful for enhancing the writing abilities of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. In addition to improving writing abilities, this method helps students become more motivated and enhances other language skills including grammar, punctuation, and concept organization.

According to research by Chengyuan Jia and Khe Foon Timothy Hew. Although this work demonstrates that WeChat-based dictation programs can enhance the listening abilities of EFL students, there are a number of unanswered questions that warrant more research. Because this study only included a small sample of EFL students in China, its findings might not apply to other situations. Additionally, there was a dearth of information on technology use, student participation, and contacts with instructors, and the study did not directly test changes in lexical segmentation skills or decoding processes. Furthermore, boring and challenging content is thought to lower motivation, and WeChat groups currently have very little interaction. To improve learning efficacy, more study could expand the context, employ a greater variety of assessment instruments, modify the materials, and investigate interactive strategies like gamification.

In this study the students have shown great achievement in lengthier text whereas the word errors doubled in the shorter SeminKazazoğlu / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 70 (2013) 1338 – 1346 1345 one. It might be inferred that the amount of contextual information effects comprehension positively. It is essential to note that in both types of dictation students have made some common word errors but the frequency of these errors are outnumbered in tape-recorded dictation. In addition it might be suggested that the dialect and the pronunciation of the speaker and the dialect the hearer is most familiar with effects students performance of comprehension. That is, the findings of this study implies that the students have difficulty in perceiving the speech of native speakers.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the perceptions of eighth-grade students regarding the use of dictation in their English language classes. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to gain in-depth understanding of students' views, experiences, and attitudes through rich and contextual data. The following steps will be taken in this research:

1. Participants

This study will involve 30 eighth-grade students from a junior high school in MTS Swasta Darul Ulum Budi Agung Medan, North Sumatra. The selected students will reflect a diversity in terms of English language proficiency and cultural backgrounds.

2. Research Instruments

The study will use questionnaires and interviews as the main instruments for data collection.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions will be used to gather initial data on students' perceptions of dictation.

3. Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with several randomly selected students to gain deeper insights into their experiences and views.
4. Data Collection Procedure
Questionnaire Distribution: The questionnaires will be distributed to all participants, and they will be asked to complete them individually within a specified time.
Interviews: Face-to-face interviews will be conducted with each selected student. These interviews will be recorded (with permission) for transcription and further analysis.
5. Data Analysis
Data from the questionnaires will be analyzed descriptively using simple statistics to identify patterns and trends in students' perceptions.
Data from the interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and sub-themes that emerge from the students' responses.
6. Data Validity
To ensure data validity, triangulation will be conducted by comparing the results from the questionnaires and interviews. The validity and reliability of the instruments will also be tested through a preliminary trial before being used in the main study.
7. Research Ethics
This study will adhere to ethical research principles, including obtaining consent from the school and participants, maintaining data confidentiality, and ensuring that participants feel safe and comfortable during the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study gathered data from 30 eighth-grade students through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The main findings are as follows:

- a. Students' Perceptions of Dictation, The majority of students (70%) have a positive perception of the use of dictation in their English classes. They believe that dictation helps improve their listening and writing skills. However, 30% of students find dictation to be boring and challenging, particularly those who struggle with spelling and listening comprehension.
- b. Impact of Dictation on Learning Experience, students with positive attitudes towards dictation reported increased engagement and motivation in learning English. They felt more confident in their listening and writing abilities. Conversely, students who disliked dictation tended to feel anxious and less motivated during dictation exercises, which could hinder their learning process.
- c. Challenges in Dictation Exercises, the main challenges faced by students include listening anxiety (50%), difficulties in spelling the dictated words (40%), and mental fatigue after long dictation sessions (10%).
- d. Influence of External Factors, a supportive classroom environment and varied teaching methods, such as the use of technology in dictation exercises, were found to enhance students' positive perceptions of dictation.

- e. Positive and Negative Student Perceptions, these findings align with the theory of Davis and Rinvoluceri (2002), which suggests that dictation can enhance language skills if well-received by students. However, as highlighted by Brown (2007), uninteresting or overly monotonous dictation exercises can lead to boredom and stress.
- f. Impact of Attitudes on Learning Experience, positive attitudes towards dictation correlate with increased motivation and engagement, supporting Nation's (2009) view that dictation can improve listening skills and word recognition. However, it is important to address the anxiety and stress experienced by some students to ensure the benefits of dictation are felt by all students.
- g. Challenges in Dictation Implementation, anxiety and spelling difficulties are major challenges that need to be addressed. The use of technology, such as spelling support software and computer-based listening exercises, can help mitigate these challenges and make dictation more engaging.
- h. Influence of External Factors, a positive classroom environment and innovative teaching methods play a crucial role in enhancing students' perceptions of dictation. Teachers should consider varying the delivery of dictation exercises and integrating technology to maintain student engagement.
- i. The findings of this study indicate that while dictation has significant potential as a language learning tool, its success largely depends on how it is implemented and how students feel about the exercises. Recommendations for educational practitioners include creating a supportive learning environment, reducing student anxiety, and adopting technology to enhance the learning experience through dictation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored eighth grade students' perceptions of the use of dictation in their English classes. From the results obtained, some key conclusions can be drawn, Most students have a positive perception of dictation, finding it beneficial for improving listening and writing skills. Positive attitude towards dictation is associated with increased motivation and engagement in English learning. the main challenges students face include listening anxiety and difficulty in spelling dictated words. external factors such as a supportive classroom environment and the use of technology in dictation practice play an important role in shaping students' perceptions towards dictation.

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