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TEACHING ENGLISH GRAMMAR WITH DICTOGLOSS

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ABSTRACT: This paper investigated the used of dictogloss in teaching English grammar. Dictogloss offers a context-rich method of assessing how much students know about the topic of the text. Two tests were given to the students, a pre-test and a post-test. It was found that the students' score in the posttest (82) was significantly higher than that in the pre-test (59). The writers examined the student' note taking on the linguistic components and grammatical structures by focusing on certain grammar items, accuracy and meaning. Note taking or composition was scored by using a marking system. By using dictogloss the teacher reinforce students' mastery in learning English grammar.
Keywords: Dictogloss, Grammar, Teaching English.

Grammar is a set of rules that explores the forms and structures of sentences that can be used in a language (Gleason and Ratner, 2009 ; Thornbury, 1999). There are two important concepts related to grammar: morphology that studies the formation of words, their structure and relationships between them, and syntax that studies the structure of sentences, relations between sentence units, the internal structure of phrases and relations between them that gives meaning to sentences (Saxton, 2010; Thornbury, 1999). The acquisition of grammar is first of all related to cognitive skills (Krathwohl, 2002 ; Tiene and Ingram, 2001). Lower level cognitive skills (e.g. attentiveness, remembering) are important in language learning as they help to learn and recall language rules. The main problems at that level are related to learning rules wrongly and using the acquired information incorrectly (Uibu and Tropp; Mayer, 2002). Medium level cognitive skills (e.g. comprehension, the use of knowledge in appropriate situations) involve understanding language rules and their application in different situations (Tiene and Ingram, 2001). Students tend to acquire lots of facts easily but they often do not understand what is behind them (Hills, 2004; Mayer, 2002,). Leech (1982) stated that grammar refers to the mechanism according to which language works when it is used to communicate. While

Swan (2005) added that grammar are the rules that show how words are combined, arranged or changed to show certain kinds of meaning.

Teaching English Grammar in non-native countries is not an easy task because of a number of factors causing the lack of motivation and concentration of the learner in acquiring the grammar-based inputs of the English language in the classroom. In learning foreign language, students learn about system that was used by native speakers of that particular language. The systems are "The Language Learner System and the Target Language System". Students often influenced by their mother tongue that it makes them face difficulty in learning the target language, They seem fail to reach the target language competence (Ellis,1998). Many students, especially in the fourth semester of PGRI university students think that grammar is the most difficult part for them in writing. They get difficulties to write sentences in the correct structure. It occurs since the students do not understand well about tenses in English. They are not able to select correct verb based on the tenses they use when write paragraph. Vocabulary is another difficulty that they found so hard to choose in writing. Creating a grammar friendly environment in the language classroom is the first stepping forward for the teachers to help the learners in acquiring the grammar inputs as part of their linguistic development. In this paper the writers used dictogloss to promote students' English grammar mastery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Some Comments about Grammar

Nagaratnam and Al-mekhafi (2012) explain, in EFL/ESL teaching grammar has been viewed in three different ways: grammar as rulers, grammar as form, and grammar as resource. In some cases, grammar instruction has meant learning the rules, in others, practicing the form; and in others understanding how grammar helps to convey the meaning and intention of the message.

Additionally, Haussamen et al. (2003) state that for many learners, learning grammar often means learning the rules of grammar and having intellectual knowledge of grammar. Teachers often believe that this will provide the generative basis on which learners can build their knowledge and will be able to use the language eventually. For them, prescribed rules give a kind of security. There have been numerous definition of grammar by many researchers. According to the term of grammar refers to two kinds of knowledge about language. One is subconscious knowledge, the language ability that children develop at an early age without being taught. As children begin to talk, as they come able to form sentences, their brains are forming

their "grammar circuits" automatically. The other kind of knowledge is the conscious understanding of sentences and texts that can help students improve their reading writing abilities by building on that subconscious knowledge.

Practically, in the teaching of grammar, learners are taught rules of language are commonly known as sentence patterns. Larsen-Freeman (2003) explains, grammar is about form and one way to teach form is about much more than forms, and its teaching is ill served if students are simply given rules.

Nowadays foreign language acquisition research has recently suggested that some conscious attention to grammatical forms is necessary to develop high levels of accuracy in the target language. Larsen-Freeman (2003) asserted that learning about the form of the language is considered as a useful pedagogical technique. Therefore, English language teachers have the responsibility to help learners develop grammatical competency apart from communicative competency and proficiency if the aim of English language program is to be achieved. Being aware of teachers' and learners' difficulties in teaching and learning English grammar for communicative purpose may help the teacher in choosing the right teaching option that would pose fewer difficulties and problems to their learners and therefore, enhance students' learning of English grammar. Haussamen et al. (2003) state that in teaching grammar in school, we are teaching students about grammar, and we are hoping to bring them the added confidence and clarity that go with any knowledge that strengthens skills and deepens understanding.

In particular, De Marco and Wetter (2000) distinguish three kinds of learning and describe the first as naturalistic second language acquisition. In this case, the language is learnt in real communicative situations, and thus learners receive realistic input from several native speakers, as they integrated in a context in which the foreign language is spoken by ordinary person; for this kind of acquisition to take place, the learners' motivation and need to communicate with other people are fundamental. A second kind of learning is instructed acquisition, which takes place at school and often involves a deductive process of acquisition and the systematic analysis of the language; in this case, the input that is offered to the student may not be realistic in some cases and the aim of instruction is mainly to teach rules and avoid errors, while the learners' motivation is usually to get a good mark, rather than to learn the language proficiently.

The Concept of Dictogloss

Thornbury (1999) stated that dictogloss is a form of dictation, but one in which the students hear and reconstruct the whole text, rather than doing so line by line. Dictogloss also involves the students collaboratively reconstructing them text from memory and then comparing it with the original. Dictogloss offers a context-rich method of assessing how much students know about the topic of the text. The dictogloss has been proposed as a procedure that encourages students to reflect on their own output. In a dictogloss the emphasis is on the students' ability to communicate in order to re-convey the meaning of the text, as opposed to re-producing it word for word. The use of dictogloss are that students are encouraged to focus some of their attention on form and that all four language skills –listening (to the teacher reads the text and to group mates discuss the reconstruction), speaking (to note taking while listening to the teacher, the group's reconstruction, and the original text), reading (note taking while listening to the teacher, the group's reconstruction, and the original text), and writing (the reconstruction) –are involved.

Wajnryb (1990) stated that dictogloss is a recent technique in language teaching which takes a little step after the dictation technique (hence part of its name), which consists of asking learners to reconstruct a dictated text and to capture as much as possible of the information content accurately and in an acceptable linguistic form. Wajnryb (1990) also added that with this technique students get more precise understanding of the grammar items than in any other technique and compared to other traditional approaches, this technique uses both the negotiation of meaning and form.

METHODOLOGY

The writers took the fourth semester students at PGRI University Palembang as the sample for the research. There were 37 students in the class, 30 girls and 7 boys. In doing this research, the writers used a collaborative classroom action research study on the application of the dictogloss technique to try to improve the ability of the Fourth semester students at PGRI University Palembang to comprehend grammar in narrative texts. The writers applied the Kemmis and McTaggart model (1988) since it is a simple and efficient model. The writers used an achievement test. The achievement test was obtained and directly related to language courses, the purpose being to establish how successful the individual students, groups of students or the courses themselves are. For dictogloss the target form was *past tense* and *verb -ed*. Moreover, the writer examined the student' note taking on the linguistic components and grammatical structures by focusing on certain grammar items, accuracy and

meaning. Note taking or composition was scored by using a marking system from a well-known examining body in Britain (Heaton, 1975). Scorers may also award marks for what a student or group of students have written.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULTS

The objective of the tests was to investigate the students' writing achievements before and after the implementation of the dictogloss technique. The data was collected from the tests, an observation sheet and a questionnaire. Two tests were given to the students, a pre-test and a post-test. It was found that the students' score in the posttest (82) was significantly higher than that in the pre-test (59). In addition, the use of dictogloss for the teaching-learning of writing was positively responded to by the students. The students agreed that dictogloss helped them and motivated them to comprehend better. Moreover, the results from the analysis of the data from the questionnaires indicated that almost all the students (94%) responded positively to the application of the dictogloss technique for teaching learning grammar.

DISCUSSION

Some studies about dictogloss also conducted by some researchers. Kowal and Swain（1997） used the dictogloss technique with 8th graders of French immersion students and found the evidence of noticing, hypothesis-testing, and metatalk during the use of dictogloss. The students often focused not only on the grammatical aspect that was supposed to be emphasized but also orthographic and semantic issues. Previous studies (Fortune, 2005; García Mayo, 2002; Kowal & Swain, 1994; Malmqvist, 2005; Nabei, 1996; Qin, 2008; Salazar Campillo, 2006; Swain, 1998) have shown a variety of results concerning the effectiveness of dictogloss with regard to focusing on form, noticing interlanguage gaps and acquiring the given forms. This section includes an overview of research in which the dictogloss task was evaluated in light of the metatalk produced and measuring its effectiveness. Within the context of this task, collaboration is thought to generate metatalk, which directs learners' attention towards certain linguistic features through reflection and discussion (Kowal & Swain, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Then exploring the intricacies of meta talk, Swain (1998) carried out a study with 48 students in an 8th grade French immersion class and sought to determine whether students could engage in meta talk following the modeled example they were previously

provided and whether there was a relationship between metatalk and second language learning.

There were two groups in her study, the metatalk group (N= 26; it was exposed to modeled metatalk and explicit rule teaching) and the control group (N= 22; it was not exposed to modeled metatalk and explicit rule teaching). Results indicated that the metatalk group produced 2.5 times more LREs than the control group (metatalk group: 14.8; control group: 5.8), showing that modeling the metatalk increased the produc-tion of LREs. Findings also suggested that students' conscious reflection about language might be a source of language learning. Kowal and Swain (1994) also conducted their study with 19 students enrolled in an 8th grade class. The students were required to take part in four dictogloss tasks that were designed to provide practice in the use of the French present tense. While carrying out the activity, all of the stages were completed: They discussed vocabulary and topic, they heard and reconstructed the text and some texts were chosen by the teacher for the final discussion. Results showed that form was the focus of the students' discussion and that peer feedback was highly important in moving from semantic processing, required for under-standing, to grammatical processing, needed for production.

While Leeser (2004) conducted a study using dictogloss in a Spanish content class. His 42 partici-pants were required to engage in two dictogloss tasks. The first dictogloss maintained a structure fairly similar to the original one proposed by Wajnryb (1990); during the reconstruction, however, the participants were required to say aloud everything that they were writing in order to reflect why they chose certain forms. No details are mentioned about Stage 1 or 4. More significant modifications were introduced during the second dictogloss. First, a review of the topic was presented, and students were also given a handout including Spanish aspectual differences (preterit vs. imperfect) and were allowed to ask questions after going over the handout. They also watched a video showing two participants reconstructing a text and discussing linguistic difficulties that they encountered during this stage. The analysis and correction stage was not completed since the students were dismissed after they finished the recon-struction. Results show that students produced a total of 138 LREs. Of these LREs, 39.86% were lexical and 60.14% were grammatical (and more than a half of them related to subject-verb agreement and tense/aspect choice). Of the linguistic questions that emerged during the reconstruction, 76.81% were solved correctly. As in Fortune (2005), only an analysis of LREs was conducted but no pre- and post-tests were administered.

Finally, with a fairly different interpretation of dictogloss, Qin (2008) at-tempted to account for possible distractions or off-tracking that students could experience during the completion of the activity. Previous research findings Muriel Gallego38(García Mayo, 2002; Nabei, 1996; Swain, 1998; Williams, 1999) showed that students might not attend to the intended forms; thus, it was both important and fruitful to employ mini-techniques in order to raise awareness and to model the reconstruction (Swain, 1998). In Qin's (2008) study, the stages were organized in a different manner: During stage 1, the instructor first introduced the topic and then handed out copies of the text. Students were instructed to read individually and then discuss the meaning with partners.

In addition, the instructor emphasized the targeted form (passive voice) and reminded the participants to pay special attention to it. This modification was introduced in order to prevent students from focusing their attention on a nonintended form. The overall completion of the task, and the opportunities for metatalk, is not circumscribed to facilitate the targeted forms. It provides an arena for ample production of LREs (lexical, discourse, grammatical, etc.) as well as fostering the acquisition of both the targeted form and additional forms and concepts. Qin (2008) conducted the task without including a listening component as the text was not read to the students. Therefore, it should not be considered dictogloss. When engaging in a dictogloss task, the overall completion and the opportunities for metatalk, is not circumscribed to facilitate the targeted forms. It provides an arena for ample production of LREs (lexical, discourse, grammatical, etc.) as well as fostering the acquisition of both the targeted form and additional forms and concepts. Qin (2008) study is reported here, nonetheless, since it suggests the inclusion of modifications to foster awareness-raising and noticing during meta talk. Therefore, the teacher shpuld make the students in a classroom to be more active and creative (Hermansyah, 2017:1).

CONCLUSION

Dictogloss is potentially useful for improving students' written performance, as its practicality and flexibility comprise catalysts for integrating form and meaning (Abbasian & Mohammadi, 2013; Nassaji & Fotos, 2004), accommodating students' interests and learning preferences, providing context for negotiation (Kowal & Swain, 1994), working readily with cooperative tasks (Faghani, Derakhshan & Zangoei, 2015;Jacobs & Small, 2003), and allowing for a more interactive approach to language proficiency (Stewart et al., 2014). Therefore, dictogloss has the potential to integrate communicative notions with

the traditional concerns of grammar instruction (Al-Sibai, 2008;Pica, 1997), to work as a form-focused technique (Jacobs & Small, 2003;Shak, 2006) in which students aim not to reproduce the text word-for-word but rather to best approximate its meaning and style and to allow for the so-called 'meta-talk' or 'language related episodes', occasions in which students discuss or question their language use as they engage in a reconstruction task in L2 (Qin, 2008;Rashtchi & Khosroabadi, 2009).

The dictogloss procedure facilitates the development of the learners' communicative competence. Furthermore, unlike in a typical discussion class where students are presented with a list of topics or discussion questions and communication activities often have a simple question-and-answer format, in a dictogloss class, students' interaction is much more natural. A collaborative reconstruction task gives learners the opportunities to practice and use all modes of language and to become engaged in authentic communication. There is more turn-taking and students are more likely to use confirmation and clarification strategies. The variety of interaction was found to be more productive in terms of language development than the actual linguistic forms used. Point out, people learn languages best not by treating them as an object of study, but by experiencing them as a medium of communication. The reconstruction stage helps students try out their hypotheses and subsequently to identify their strengths and weaknesses. A reconstruction task encourages students to consider the input more closely. Noticing is known to be one of the crucial elements of the language learning process.

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