

Running Dictation Technique for Promoting EFL Primary Pupils' Spelling, Pronunciation & Vocabulary Retention

Asst.Prof.Zainab Abbas Jawad, Ph.D
Educational and Psychological Sciences Department,
College of Education for Human Sciences,
University of Diyala, Diyala, Iraq
ahmedengineer730@yahoo.com

Received:16/7/2020

Accepted:23/8/2020



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Abstract

The present study highlights the importance of using running dictation technique in teaching the textbook's songs at the primary schools. Running dictation technique is a classroom activity where the pupils are moving around and working together as groups to handle dictation and raise enjoyment at the same time. This study is an experimental one in which forty eight pupils is taught the textbook's songs by using running dictation technique. The present study aims at finding out the effect of applying this technique on primary pupils' spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention. To achieve this aim, the researcher has used three achievement tests as measurement tools. They are spelling test, pronunciation test and vocabulary worksheet in addition to the daily observation-test formula for two independent samples has been used to apply the data analysis technique. The sample of the study is forty pupils from AL-Aduaa primary school in Diyala Governoate . The results of this study reveal that there is a positive effect of using running dictation technique on the three aforementioned variables. They also reveal that the pupils at the primary level can gain much motivation towards learning songs by using running dictation technique.

Key words: running dictation, spelling, pronunciation, songs

اسلوب الاملاء الراكض في تحسين املاء، وتلفظ واسترجاع المفردات لتلاميذ المرحلة

الابتدائية دارسي اللغة الانكليزية كلغة اجنبية

ا.م.د. زينب عباس جواد

جامعة ديالى / كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

المخلص :

تسلط الدراسة الحالية الضوء على اهمية استعمال اسلوب الاملاء الراكض في تدريس اغاني الكتاب المقرر للمرحلة الابتدائية. ان الاملاء الراكض هو فعالية صفيّة يقوم التلاميذ فيه بالحركة والعمل معاً في مجموعات لاداء الاملاء، ولزيادة المتعة في الوقت نفسه . والدراسة الحالية دراسة تجريبية فقد تم تدريس أغاني الكتاب المنهجي لثمانين واربعين تلميذة بحسب اسلوب الاملاء الراكض . وتهدف الدراسة الحالية الى يتبع اثر استخدام اسلوب الاملاء الراكض في تعزيز او تحسين املاء ،وتلفظ، واسترجاع المفردات عند تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية . ولتحقيق اهداف الدراسة قامت الباحثة ببناء ثلاثة اختباراتٍ تحصيليةٍ :اختبار الاملاء ،اختبار التلفظ واختبار المفردات فضلاً عن الملاحظة اليومية . وتم استخدام t-test للعينات المستقلة لتحليل النتائج .تشير نتائج الدراسة الحالية الى وجود تأثيرٍ ايجابيٍّ لتدريس الاغاني باستعمال اسلوب الاملاء الراكض في تحسين املاء ،وتلفظ واسترجاع المفردات عند تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية .وتكشف الدراسة ايضا بان تلاميذ المرحلة الابتدائية على اكتساب دافعية اكثر لتعلم الاغاني باستخدام اسلوب الاملاء الراكض .

1. Introduction

The English language has four main skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing. students should be exposed to all these mentioned skills to master the English language successfully. They should also convey feeling, thought and information in a written and verbal communication with suitable amount and repertoire of vocabulary. Depending on the researcher's long experience in teaching she has noticed that most Iraqi primary schools' pupils face a difficulty in spelling which is one of the most important and functional components of successful writing. They also have problems in pronunciation i.e. when they try to speak English; they usually have difficulty in pronouncing certain words and phrases. They also suffer from recalling vocabulary which constitutes an essential part of learning the English language. This indicates that the pupils of this particular stage lack the crucial techniques that enable them to retain the vocabulary and the material of their English textbook easily.

It should be noted that the main difficulty of learning and teaching spelling and pronunciation at this stage may be sprung from the fact that English spelling system is irregular or random i.e some letters are written but not pronounced. Despite this fact, the pupils should build a strong basic knowledge of the relation between letters, sounds and meaning to be good communicators in future.

The most popular method of teaching pronunciation and spelling is dictation which involves pupils to listen to dictated material similar to those they might face in the target situation.

Scrivener (2011, P.362) criticizes the traditional application of dictation saying "where you read a text aloud and the learners must write it down accurately- is often quite unpopular with learners. It can feel like an unfair test ".Therefore, the teachers should seek for alternative methods or techniques that can be used in teaching spelling and pronunciation .They can apply students to students dictation instead of the teacher implementing the dictation. These offered techniques of applying dictation are described by Harmer (2010) as they expected to be enjoyable and have an element of competition .Running dictation or wall dictation is one among these alternatives techniques that is suggested by Scrivener (2011) to replace traditional application of dictation. Therefore, this study has been tackled to investigate whether or not the application of running dictation technique in teaching English textbooks songs could be effective on pupils' spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention.

It is worth to mention that the researcher has chosen the textbooks songs which are presented nearly at the end of most units of Pupils Books English for Iraq" 5th Primary by (MacBurnie & Rabies, 2017) in applying running dictation technique because they can be regarded as valuable means for summarizing the main points and information of each unit of their textbook. Songs can also lead to an enhancing and creative academic achievement.

Based on what is mentioned above, this study aims at providing answers to the following questions:

1- Is there an effect of applying running dictation technique on the pupils' spelling?

- 2- Is there an effect of using running dictation technique on the pupils' pronunciation?
- 3- What is the effect of applying running dictation technique on the pupils' retention of vocabulary?

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Importance of Dictation in Language Teaching

Dictation is a global test as it is regarded by Lindsay (2000) and AL- jobury (2014) in that it could be used for testing many of the language features together, such as , punctuation , spelling, listening comprehension , recognition of sound segments, the auditory span and meaning . Percy (2012,p. 149) highlights the importance of dictation saying "It gives an effective ear- training for comprehend the spoken English and for linking the sound with spelling". She adds that the spelling of word and the grammatical structures can be fixed in the students mind by doing dictation.

Al-Rifai & Garma (2012) add that dictation can be considered as a measure of learners general proficiency because it reflects their ability to use all the language system in relation with the worlds knowledge .

Dictation is regarded as an integrative test if the grade is based on the ideas that the students have understood. (Horwitz ,2008). Dictation can also be used in relating sounds and writing by drawing students' attention to the regularities and the irregularities of the English sounds and spelling. (Lindsay, 2000).

Nurdianingih &Rahmwati (2018) assure that dictation activities enhance the conscious learning of structures because the students who perform the dictation exercises are required to dictate the paragraph or the text as much accurately as possible and this result in putting the focus on form.

2.2 Running Dictation

Running dictation is one of the dictation techniques where the focus is put on the pupils themselves in applying dictation. It is expected to be useful in facilitating the problems the primary pupils face in teaching spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention.

In running dictation technique, the pupils work in groups to do dictation of the sentence or the text. In each group, there is the runner who must run to some place outside the classroom where the passage or the text has been written and prepared by the teacher and then he goes to the writer in the same group, who writes what he heard in an accurate form. (Hess, 2001). Running dictation is then an activity for pupils who enjoy moving around and working together in teams or groups. It is an activity that involves practicing of speaking, listening, walking, writing and remembering.

Nurdianingsih & Rahmawati (2018) state that running dictation technique is a very good technique which could be adapted in different ways. It is also easy to prepare, set up and practice. According to Widyanto (2005) running dictation is one among the ways of achieving the learning process well.

As far as the application of running dictation technique in language teaching is concerned, many previous studies have tackled the effect of this technique on different language skills. Widyanto (2005), Asmoro etal (2013) and Zahro (2018)

investigated the effect of implementing running dictation technique on the students listening skills. Purnawati (2017) examined the effect of using running dictation technique on the students speaking skills. Other studies as Zakiyaha & Husniahs (2017) and Nurdianingsih & Rahmawati (2018) tackled the effect of applying this technique on the students writing skills. To make it different, this study is an attempt to provide other information concerning the effect of running dictation technique on primary pupils spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention.

2.3 Applying Dictation in EFL Classroom

Instead of the traditional methods or techniques of the teacher dictating the texts, there are many techniques of putting focus on the students themselves in doing so. Running dictation is one among the other techniques that are presented by Scrivener (2011) as follows:

1. Keywords dictation

In this type of dictation, the teacher can choose an interesting short story and put lines under fifteen to twenty key nouns and verbs. The teacher can dictate these words to his students without telling them the original story - The students then, must make a new short story by using these key words and verbs.

2. Collocation dictation

In this type of dictation the teacher can prepare a list of a suitable number of useful two-word collocations and start reading one word of each collocation. The students must write a collocation of the word being read and not the word itself.

3. The "bad cold" dictation

Scrivener (2011,P.363) clarifies this type of dictation saying " Explain that you are going to do a normal dictation, but if you have to sneeze or cough, they should write any good word that fits the space".

4. The wild dictation

The teacher can dictate a numbered list of words descriptions and the students should write answers to these lists. When the students finish the lists, the teacher dictates a short story that he has prepared.

5. Dictogloss

It is a favorite group-building activity for many teachers. Harmer (2012,P.110) states that dictogloss is "not quite a dictation as the students don't write down every word. The students try to understand what they hear, they can make notes, but they don't write down everything. They then try to reproduce it as accurately as possible". Applying dictogloss technique in language teaching has many merits as Al-Obaydi & Al-Mosawi (2019) assure that there is a positive effect of using this technique on the grammar knowledge, improvement of writing and comprehension of meaning to the EFL College students.

6. Shouted Dictation

It is another alternative application of the traditional dictation which is presented by Harmer (2012, p. 111) as "the students shout a sentence or paragraph to a partner (the

other students are all doing the same): It is noisy, but fun and good for listening practices"

2.4 The Importance of Spelling, Pronunciation and Vocabulary in language Teaching

It has been acknowledged that spelling is one of the most important functional components of successful writing. In addition, teaching students to spell correctly promotes and aids both reading and writing because committing spelling errors can be reflected in confusing writing and comprehension of meaning.

Concerning teaching pronunciation, Lindsay (2000) states that expecting EFL students to speak like native speakers, or to learn perfect pronunciation, is unrealistic thing. Nevertheless, the main important aims of teaching pronunciation is to enable the students to pronounce the English sounds clearly and to understand what they hear and be understood by others when they speak. This implies that building strong foundation knowledge of the relationships between sounds, letters and meaning at the early stages of learning the English language is an essential goal for teaching spelling and pronunciation. Besides that, this knowledge will enable the pupils to be good and active speakers in the foreseeable future.

Vocabulary also plays an important role in language teaching as described by Murcia (2001) as being central to language acquisition. She (ibid) adds that lexical competence is regarded as a central part of the communicative competence. Vocabulary is also not only lists of foreign language words; it has an intimate relation with grammar. (Nunan, 1991).

Therefore, much emphasis should be given to learning and teaching vocabulary as a fundamental aspect of language development. In this respect, Richards & Renandya (2002) assure that vocabulary development deserves to be planned for, controlled and monitored. Moreover, Thornbury (2002) highlights gaining vocabulary learning much concentration at the early stages of learning English language as it will be a prerequisite for later language proficiency.

2.5 The Significance of Songs in EFL Classrooms

It is a very common knowledge that songs are very important and useful mean for creating a great deal of people feeling as they have become part of their habitual lives. There are many affective and cognitive reasons for using songs in the foreign language classrooms. Eken (1996) asserts that positive attitudes towards learning need to be developed for the learners. Therefore; the task of the teacher is to provide positive climate favorable for learning and songs can be considered one of the main methods for providing such learning atmosphere. Schoepp(2011)states that using songs in the classroom can provide atomicity which is the basic cognitive rational for using songs. Eken (1996) mention numerous reasons or benefits of using songs in the language classroom. Firstly, a topic or new vocabulary can be presented by using songs. Songs are also the best resource of stimulating feelings and attitudes. In addition, fun, variety and a relaxed classroom atmosphere can be much attributed to

the use of songs. Creativity and imagination through the foreign language classroom can also be encouraged by using songs.

Relating to the importance of songs, Scrivener (2011, P.354) states that "many course books nowadays include songs that specifically focus on grammatical or functional items; they may have been selected because of their content or specially written and recorded for students of English". He adds that songs can also be used as filler activity for changing the pace or the mood of the lesson. Furthermore, Szpotowicz & Szulc- Kurpaska (2009) mention another merit of using song by asserting that language teacher can discipline disruptive students by making them sing a song as they will be engaged in the same activity and at the same time. Concerning the effect of songs on memory, Lindsay (2000, p. 229) states that "the rhythms of songs also have a powerful effect on one's memory, therefore helping students remember difficult vocabulary and structure". He (ibid) adds that song and music maximize students learning participation and enjoyment .

2.5. Hypotheses

This study is hypothesized that:

- 1- Running dictation technique has a positive effect on primary pupils' spelling.
2. Running dictation technique has a positive impact on primary pupils' pronunciation.
3. Running dictation technique has a positive effect on primary pupils' retention of vocabulary.

3. Method

3.1. The Participants

The population of this study is the pupils of the fifth primary schools in General Directorate of Education in Diyala Governorate.

Two classes of primary schools for girls are chosen to be the sample of this study, one class of 48 pupils is chosen to be the experimental group which is taught the textbook's material with emphasis on teaching songs by using running dictation technique while the second class is the control group which consists of 40 pupils (after excluding the repeaters) is taught the same material by using the traditional method of teaching i -e without using running dictation technique.

3.2The Experiment

It should be noted that the 5th Primary Pupils' Book "English for Iraq"by (MacBurnie & Rabies, 2017) consists of eight units. The researcher has taught the first four units of the textbook for the two groups with emphasis on teaching the textbooks songs and for the three months of the first semester for the academic year 2018-2019.

In applying running dictation technique for the experimental group, the researcher has used the following procedures:

1. Making six copies of each of the textbook's song,
2. Sticking these six copies of the song at the wall outside the classroom.
3. Dividing the pupils into 6 groups, each group consists of 8 pupils.
4. Giving the pupils roles as writers and runners and in each group.

5. The first runner has to run to the wall and read the copy of the song - She has to remember what she has read then comes back and dictates what she has to the writer. The writer's job is to reproduce it accurately with correct spelling and punctuation.
6. The second runner takes turn to apply this activity and the other runners in each group also do it. The same thing is done for the writers in each group. This continues until completing the whole song.
7. When each group has finished, each Pupil in the groups takes the original song, and does the correction between the original song and their writing.
8. The winner group is the one which finishes this activity first.
- 9- For the purpose of raising competition and motivation and among the pupils of the groups, the researcher has given presents for the winner group. It is worth to mention that the main objectives of applying this technique i.e. running dictation on each group is to practice the textbook's songs with correct spelling and punctuation and practice reading with correct pronunciation and to achieve a good range of vocabulary retention.

3.3 Instruments of the Study

To achieve the first aim of this study which is determining the effect of using running dictation technique in teaching the textbooks songs on the pupil's spelling, the researcher has prepared a spelling test for the two groups of the study which consists of two passages being elicited from the internet website "www.myschoohouse.com/co" and some other spelling exercises from their Activity Book by (MacBurnie&Smith , 2017). The two passages were suitable for their level, and they are entitled (the planets) and (whales).

The researcher has read these two texts for the pupils of the two groups and asked them to dictate them correctly on their papers .She has collected their responses papers and corrected them using a suitable scoring scheme which is giving one mark for the correct spelled word, a half-mark for a word with one misspelled letter and zero mark for misspelled word. The total mark of the test is 40.

For the purpose of achieving the second aim of the study which is finding out the effect of using running dictation technique in teaching textbook's songs on the pupils pronunciation , the researcher has designed a pronunciation test by choosing two texts from their textbooks on(P1, and P33) and asked the pupils of the two groups i.e. the experimental group and the control one to read aloud these two texts to check their pronunciation .The researcher adopted Flores's (2013) rubric in assigning marks .This reading aloud scoring scale consists of five criteria and for each score range 1 to 4 is given , so, the highest mark is 20.

To achieve the third aim of the study which is investigating the impact of using running dictation technique in teaching textbook's songs on the pupil's retention of vocabulary, the researcher has designed weekly vocabulary worksheets for the pupils of the two groups. Each vocabulary worksheet consists of four questions that include synonyms, antonyms, word definition and fill in the blank with suitable words from the box, most items of these worksheets have elicited from English for Iraq, 5th

Primary Activity Book by (MacBurnie & Smith, 2017). The Total score of these vocabulary worksheets is 40.

It is worth to mention that the researcher has depended also on her daily observations throughout the lessons of the experiment in addition to the three achievement tests as measurement tools in detecting the effect of using running dictation technique in teaching songs on the pupil's spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention.

4. Results

The following are the main results that related to each question.

4.1.The Results of the first question

To answer the first question of the study t-test for two independent samples has been applied. After using the descriptive statistic by calculating the mean and the standard deviation of the pupils' responses of the two groups on the spelling test, the researcher has compared the value of computed t-test with the value of t – table. The results indicate that the calculated t-value which reads 5.77 is higher than the tabulated one which is 1.98 at 86 degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significance. This result shows that there are differences of statistical significance between the two groups of the study and in favor of the experimental group.

Table 1The Result of the first question

Group	Sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated t-test
Experimental	48	22.55	13.91	86	5.77
Control	40	5.871	13.27		

4.2The Result of the second question

T-test for two independent samples has been used for the purpose of finding answer to the second question of the study. The researcher has calculated the mean; standard deviation of the pupil's responses of the two groups of the study on the pronunciation test. The result indicates that the calculated t-value which reads 4.69 is higher than the tabulated one which is 2.63 at 86 degree of freedom and (0.05) level of significance. The result shows that there are differences of statistical significance and in favor of the experimental group.

Table 2-The Result of the second question.

Group	Sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated t-test
Experimental	48	14.52	10.73	86	4.69
Control	40	3.122	12.04		

4.3The Result of the third question

To provide answer to the third question of the study, t- test for two independent samples has also been used after calculating the mean, standard deviation of the pupil's answers of two groups on the vocabulary worksheets. The result shows that the calculated t-value which reads 3.057 is higher than the tabulated one which is 2.64 at degree of freedom 86 and 0.05 level of significance .This result indicates that there

are differences of statistical significance between the two groups of the study and in favor of the experimental one.

Table 3 -Results of the third question.

Group	Sample	Mean	Standard deviation	Degree of freedom	Calculated t-test
Experimental	48	4.62	5.647	86	3.057
Control	40	1.12	4.98		

5. Discussion of The Results

The findings of this study indicate that applying running dictation technique in teaching textbooks songs has many merits. It has positive effects on the pupils spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention. Running dictation is then a suitable technique for promoting primary pupils spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary retention. So, the three hypotheses of this study have been verified and supported. The results of this study can be attributed to the effectiveness of using running dictation as a technique for enhancing pupils interaction and interdependence to work as one team in the classroom and to promoting pupil's interaction to work as one team in the classroom and to perform cooperatively for achieving the main goals of learning the textbooks songs.

Besides that , applying this technique leads to greater pupils' independence in the learning process by making them being more disciplined, responsible and active as indicated by Nurdianingsih & Rahamwati (2018).

The result of this study also comes in line with Zakiya & Husniah (2017) in assuring the positive effect of applying this technique on spelling in the writing ability.

This technique encourages the pupils to listen carefully to each sound and motivates them to make their pronunciation very clear to their partners because of the required level of details as assured by Widiyanto (2005) and Asmoro et al (2003).

As indicated by Krashen (2003) this technique of dictation can also be useful for EFL classroom management as the pupils learn to work as one team and in spite of their level and stage.

Based on the researcher observation while implementing this technique, it was found that this technique can be suitable for presenting any instructional material and to all levels of students .It is also an effective technique for activating pupils to learn as assured by Purnawati(2017). The pupils at this stage also got enjoyment and fun through the activities and procedures of running dictation technique. They regarded this technique as an activity for those who enjoy working in groups and moving around as stated by House et al (2011).

Concerning the third result of this study which indicates the positive effect of applying this technique on vocabulary retention, it can be regarded as a main contribution of this study from other previous studies tackled this topic in language teaching. This technique proves to be a good method for enhancing the pupils'

vocabulary retaining which constitute a fundamental part of English language learning.

6. Conclusions

Based on the results of the current study, it can be concluded that running dictation technique is an amazing method for applying dictation to the pupils at the elementary level as it provides them with a chance of being always interacted and engaged in the process of learning English language. Running dictation is also an invaluable tool for teaching Songs at this particular stage as the pupils will be encouraged to work cooperatively and being more enjoyable in both doing dictation and learning the textbooks songs. Using running dictation is a good method for practicing the four skills of the English language. It can also raise the pupils' motivation toward learning the English language in general and learning songs in particular. It can also be concluded that applying running dictation technique can be regarded as a type of physical exercise by making the pupils -run in and outside the classroom and this will encourage them to work in a competitive environment.

7. Recommendations

Teachers of the elementary stage are recommended to use running dictation technique in teaching songs and other variety of teaching material and in different contexts. It is up for the teacher to promote their profession of teaching by adapting and seeking for other alternative methods of applying the tradition dictation as using shouting dictation, wild dictation, etc. Much emphasis should be given on teaching songs at this particular stage because they can be regarded as a good tool for presenting the cultural aspects, the grammatical points and the new vocabulary items of the English language.

Teachers are also recommended for relying heavily emphasis on applying new techniques and methods for teaching spelling, pronunciation and vocabulary as they are considered the fundamental aspects of the English language learning.

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