Running Dictation to Develop Students' Listening Comprehension Ability

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Abstract

The aims of this research were to find out whether or not there was a significant improvement on students' listening comprehension achievement after being taught by running dictation method and their perceptions on running dictation. The sample of this research was the second semester students of English Education Study Program at one state university in South Sumatera, Indonesia. The method of this study was experimental study with a one group pretest and posttest design. The data were collected by using listening comprehension prestest and posttest. T-test was used to analyze the data. The results showed that t-value was greater than t-table. It can be concluded that running dictation could improve students' listening comprehension achievement. Some implications are also made for future research.

Keywords
Experimental study, listening comprehension, running dictation

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Introduction

There is an assumption among the public that a person's success in learning English can be seen from his/her ability and skills in speaking. A person who can speak fluently even though his/her pronunciation and grammar is not correct is considered successful in learning english. only a few people think that listening comprehension skill is also a measure of language proficiency that shows language skills. Listening comprehension skill, different from hearing skill, is a skill to understand spoken language. According to Ahuja and Amita (2008), hearing is a conscious activity of receiving sound waves produced by the speaker, while listening is an activity of getting meaning of the heard sound. In other words, listening involves more complex activity than hearing. For instance, someone who hears a baby crying out loud is using his sense of hearing, but when he understands the sound of his baby's crying as a signal of being hungry, it is a form of listening because he has attached a meaning to what has been heard.

A person's ability to understand spoken language is one of the important factors in language learning, because in fact in everyday life the language activity that most people do is listening. Schwartz (1998) suggests that adults use half of their communication activities to listen, while students receive 90% of information on campus and school from listening both from lecturers and from other people. However, listening comprehension is less considered to be a priority in the English teaching and learning process. Richards and Renandya (2002) state that most English teachers disregard the teaching of listening comprehension. They consider listening comprehension as a soft skill that can be obtained outside the school and not to be necessarily taught. Thus, when it comes to listening comprehension, both in real-life communication and the learning process, students may be good at reading, speaking, or writing, but not at listening.

In order to improve the quality of education, almost all colleges require a TOEFL certificate for students who will complete their studies at the S1 (undergraduate), S2 (graduate), and S3 (postgraduate) levels with a certain minimum score in accordance with the policies set by the department and study program. Of the three TOEFL test subjects (Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression and Reading Comprehension), Listening Comprehension test was the most difficult test item for most test participants causing them take several tests to achieve the desired score. This may occur due to the difficulty in learning listening skills experienced by not only English department students but also non-English department students. Various studies conducted by language teaching experts showed that learning listening skills had its own difficulties when compared to learning other language skills. According to Underwood (1990), there are several difficulties experienced by English learners in this skill, namely (1) Listeners cannot control the speaking rate of the person delivering the message and feels the message has disappeared before it is understood. One message is understood as the other message is lost. (2) Listeners do not have the opportunity to ask the speaker to repeat or clarify the message conveyed, for example when listening to the radio or watching TV, so that the message must be

understood as it is. (3) The limited vocabulary of the listeners makes them unable to understand the contents of the text and can even make them bored and frustrated. (4) The listener's failure to recognize and understand the 'signs' sent by the speaker causes them misunderstand the content of the message received (5) Errors in interpreting the message received make listeners interpret the message differently from what was intended. (6) Uninteresting topics, physical exhaustion, and a noisy environment make them unable to concentrate.

Thus, to minimize these difficulties, a teacher has to find appropriate teaching methods in listening class, one of which is running dictation. Kazazoglu (2013) argues," dictation is a productive learning devise for revising language skills. The learners can have immediate feedback on the nature of their linguistic performance. They can compare their output with an original text."(p.1345). Many studies reported the use of dictation in developing English skills, like listening (Kuo, 2010), and writing (Zaskiyah &Husniah, 2017) and English aspects like vocabulary (Tang, 2012). Running dictation is a kind of dictation technique. Case (2013) explains that running dictation offers enjoyable and interactive ways of learning in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skill. Students can work into groups or pairs depending on the number of students in a class. They can collaborate to complete their worksheet. These activities facilitates their collaboration. In other words, running dictation makes students move around and work in a team. Furthermore, Council (2008) adds that running dictation employs a fun way which can motivate students at upper primary and lower secondary level. There has been limited research investigeting the effectiveness of running dictation for teaching listening skill in higher education context. Students' perceptions in tertiary education level on the use of running dictation in listening class have not known yet. Therefore, the research questions were: "Is there a significant improvement on students' listening comprehension achievement after being taught by running dictation method", and "What are their perceptions on running dictation?"

Literature Review

Listening comprehension

Human has been using their ability in listening comprehension since a young age for many purposes: education, business, or to fulfil their social need. Based on the function, listening can be separated into several types: discriminative, comprehension, critical, biased, evaluative, appreciative, sympathetic, empathetic, therapeutic, relationship, false, initial, selective, full and deep listening (Thaker, 2008). Listening comprehension requires the listeners to understand what is spoken by the other parties and be fully engaged in the process of finding out what is the ideas that the speaker tries to imply. This is another level of listening that must be mastered by students of English as a second language.

Extensive collection of vocabulary and good understanding in language structure or grammar is needed to fully understand what other English speakers say so that it can be said that with good listening skills it will also be easier to master other skills.Thaker (2008) underlines that listening comprehension or can be considered as content listening, and full

listening requires listeners to have a good foundation in grammar and syntax. Knowledge in grammar and syntax helps the students to construct the pattern of how the words and phrases are arranged in the sentence. Howat and Dakin (1974) also state that the purpose of listening comprehension is to identify and understand what other people are trying to imply and is related to the dialect, pressure, language structure, choice of words and their meanings.

In addition, listening comprehension can deepen students' understanding and abilities in learning English because if students are able to advance their skill in listening comprehension, they can support other skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. Brown (2001) state that there are two elements of listening, which are macro and micro-skills. Macro skills are considered as a group of skills to comprehend what other people say in general meaning while micro-skills are considered as a group of skills that are used by listeners to identified and analyze the spoken discourse thoroughly. Micro and Macro skills have an essential role in investigating the students' difficulties in listening comprehension because they provide a categorization that can help to identify the criteria of an excellent listening performance. The micro skills include (1) discriminate among the distinctive sounds of English, (2) retain chunks of the language of different lengths in short term memory, (3) recognizes English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structures, intonation concourse, and their roles in signalling information, (4) recognize reduced forms of words, (5) distinguish word boundaries, recognizes a core of words, and interpret word order patterns and their significance, (6) process speech at a different rate of delivery, (7) process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections, and other performance variables, (8) recognizeze grammatical word classes (nouns, verb etc.) systems (e.g., tense, agreement, and, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms, (9) detect sentence constituents and distinguish between major and minor constituents, (10) recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms, (11) recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.

For the macro skill, it consists of (1) recognize the communicative functions of utterance according to situations, participants, goals, (2) infer situations, participants, goals using real-word knowledge, (3) from events, ideas, and so on, describes, predict outcomes, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as the main idea, supporting the idea, new information, given information generalization, and exemplification, (4) distinguish between literal and implied meanings, (5) use facial, kinetic, body language, and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings, (6) develop and use a battery of listening strategies, such as detecting keywords, guessing the meaning of words from context, appealing for help, and signalling comprehension or lack thereof.

Running dictation

Running dictation could be one of interesting strategy to improve students' listening skill. Running dictation is a fun strategy that is possibly adapted in a number of ways with its

relative ease in preparation. Running dictation is the teaching and learning strategy in which the students work in group to dictate the sentences, there is a runner and the writer in each group (Hess, 2001). Running dictation is a multi-skill activity involving listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is fairly easy to prepare and practice.

Running dictation is a type of dictation in which in its implementation students must be responsible for the part of the story that is obtained or received. Dictation is given using recorded stories from native English speakers. This activity is carried out in groups where when the first person gets the story section from the lecturer, they immediately turn to the second person and retell the story section. This is done onwards until the last group member. This activity is carried out continuously with fragments of different paragraphs until the story is finished. After the entire paragraph has been dictated, each group rewrites the story. The written story can then be displayed / posted on the board for comparison with other groups. As for more specifically, the teaching procedures are as follows:

1. Students form groups of 5-6 people and each member of each group is numbered.
2. The lecturer calls one of the numbers (can start with the member number 1 etc. to make it easier), directs the student outside the classroom and dictates a short paragraph.
3. Students listen and remember the paragraphs read by the lecturer and dictate back to all members of the group in chain.
4. Each group member memorizes the contents of the paragraph and the fastest group immediately raises their hand and says "bingo".
5. The lecturer appoints a member of the group to tell the paragraph.
6. The group that is the fastest and can tell the paragraph correctly gets points.
7. The teacher does the same activity until all paragraphs are conveyed and all group members have a turn.
8. Each group writes down each paragraph on origami paper and arranges them in the correct order to form a story.
9. Each group displays their work in the classroom.

Methodology

Research design, respondents, and locale of the study

This research was a quasi-experimental study applying the pre-test-post-test non-equivalent group design. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) state that this research methodology is one of the most commonly used methods in educational research. In this quasi-experimental research of pre-test and post-test nonequivalent group design single research question was addressed which was to find the effectiveness of Running Dictation in improving students' listening comprehension achievement. This research method was selected for this study because of the following factors: (a) administrative constraints which do not allow the researcher to have random selection; (b) it is unrealistic to conduct the study in true experimental design because of limitation of space and time allowed for this research; c) quasi-experimental design can show what actually happens in real life

surroundins without any disruption in the present educational systems;   (d) the results of quasi-experimental design   is still compelling and particularly prominent in evaluation research studies as argued by Bryman (2001); and (e) the use of intact classes in quasi-experimental designs could reduce the presence   of Hawthorne effect that can frequently arise   when subjects are randomly selected and assigned to conditions for cooperative lesson periods (Chong, 2003). The pre-test and post-test nonequivalent group design can indicate that subjects are not randomly selected and assigned to conditions (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Haslam & McGarty, 2003). Therefore, quasi-experimental study was chosen to answer the research questions with the following procedures:

- Administering a pretest to measure the students' listening comprehension.
- Giving treatment to the subjects by teaching listening comprehension applying Running Dictation
- Administering a posttest after the treatment measuring the students listening comprehension achievement.
- Comparing the pretest and posttest scores to find the score differences.

The   population of this study was the 19 students belonged to   Class II B of the second semester students who were taking the Intermediate Listening course at English Education Study Program, Language and Arts Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. The sample of this study was chosen by using purposive sampling techniques. The sample was chosen based on the class distributions on the academic year 2019/2020. There were two classes. Class II A and II B. The Class II B was chosen since the average pre-test score was under the the average pre-test score of the Class II A.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected by using listening test. The test was adopted from a ready-made TOEFL-like test listening material. The listening section measures test takers' ability to understand spoken English in an academic setting.   The listening test consists of 50 questions which were divided into three parts. The first part of the listening test required the students to listen to audios in the form of short conversations which consist of 30 questions, long conversations in the second part consist of 8 questions, and monologues in the third part consist of 12 questions. Each listening passage was associated with a set of questions intended to assess test-takers' ability to understand main ideas or important details, recognize a speaker's attitude or function, understand the organization of the information presented, understand relationships between the ideas presented, and make inferences or connections among pieces of information. Besides, a questionnaire was also used to discover students' perceptions on the use of running dictation. The questionnaire was validated by a senior lecturer.

Regarding the procedure of data collection, the first steps is organizing the teaching procedures. Running Dictation procedure was adapted from various resources so that it

could be used to teach listening comprehension. The procedure was then given to a senior lecturer for expert judgment. A lesson plan was designed after the procedure was validated. Before the group received treatment, the students were given a readymade TOEFL Prediction pre-test. The group was given post-test after fifteen meetings at the end of the semester. The students were also given a questionnaire after the post-test to find out their perceptions towards learning listening comprehension through Running Dictation.

This study used a quantitative data analysis by using SPSS. The quantitative data of this study was the numerical data and they are formulated by using statistical method. Descriptive statistics, percentages, normality test, and paired sample t-test was used to analyze the data. T-tes was used to analyzed the data. Gay (1992) states that t-test is used to determine whether two means are significantly different at a selected probability level. The method was used to find the significant differences between pre-test and post-test in listening comprehension

Ethical considerations

Prior to this research, the reseacrh participants were informed about what the research was intended to and how it was carried out. Then, full consent were obtained from the participants. The protection of the privacy of research participants were also ensured by using anonymity of individuals and organisation participating in this research. Furthermore, adequate level of confidentiality of the research data were also ensured.

Findings

Effectiveness of running dictation to improve students' listening comprehension ability

In this study, 19 students who took Intermediate Listeing Course participated and were given a listening pretest, treatment with running dictation, and posttest. The results of their scores from both tests are displayed on Table 1.

Table 1. *Distribution of pre-test and post-test scores*

No	Score Interval	Category	Pre Test		Post Test	
			No	%	No	%
1	86-100	Excellent	0	0 %	9	47 %
2	71 - 85	Very Good	3	16 %	10	53 %
3	56 - 70	Good	10	53 %	0	0 %
4	40 - 55	Sufficient	6	31 %	0	0 %
5	<40	Poor	0	0%	0	0 %
Total			19	100%	19	100%

From Table 1, it can be seen that before students were taught by using Running Dictation method, there were only 3 students (16%) who had very good listening comprehension ability and 10 students (53%) who had good listening comprehension ability. It is also known that 6 other students (31%) had sufficient listening comprehension ability. In other words, students in this class has already had good listening skill, but they still need improvement. After students were taught by using Running Dictation, it can be seen that there was difference on their scores. Their listening scores on posttest improved as 10 students (53%) and 9 students (47%) belong to very good and excellent category of listening comprehension ability respectively. In addtition to this percentage, descriptive statistics was also employed. The results are presented on Table 2.

Tabel 2. *Paired samples statistics*

		Mean	**N**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**
Pair 1	Pretest	60.68	19	8.782	2.015
	Posttest	85.26	19	5.216	1.197

From the result of the descriptive statistics above, it is known that the pretest mean score was 60.68, while the posttest mean score was 85.26. Because the posttest mean score was greater than the pretest mean score, it can be concluded that descriptively there was a difference of mean scores between pretest and posttest score. Then, to know whether or not there was significant difference, inferential statistics using paired sample t-test was carried out. However, as this test belongs to parametric statistic, a prerequisite analysis was necessary, namely normality test by using Saphiro –Wilk. The result can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. *Tests of normality*

	Test	**Kolmogorov-Smirnov**[a]			**Shapiro-Wilk**		
		Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
Listening	Pretest	,215	19	,021	,937	19	,231
Score	Posttest	,159	19	,200[*]	,934	19	,202

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

From the result of normality test above by using Shapiro-Wilk, it can be seen that the Sig. scores of pretest and postest were 0.231 and 0.202 which were greater than 0.05. Based on this result, it can be concluded that the students' listening scores on pretest and posttes were normally distributed.
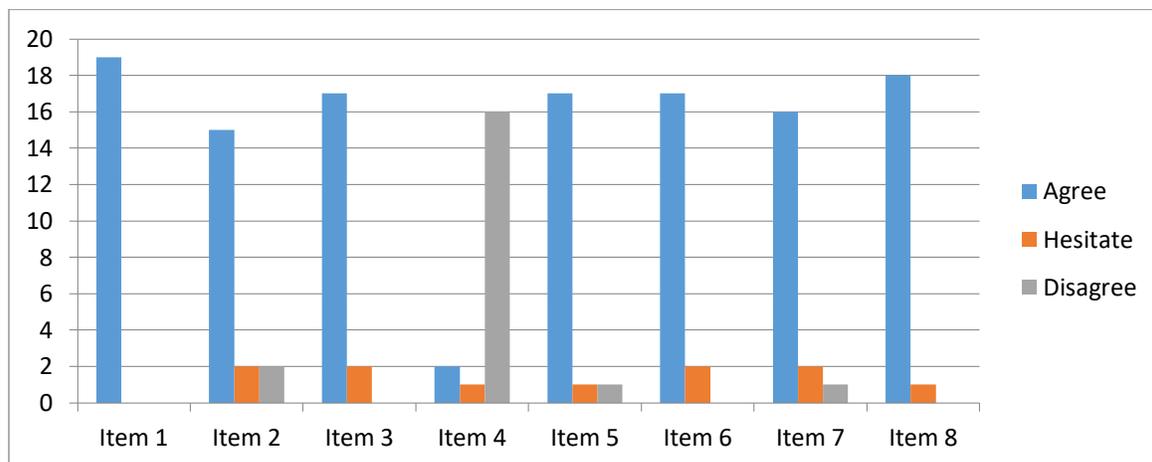
Table 4. *Paired samples test*

		Paired Differences				
		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Upper	t	df		Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-21.744	-18.216	18		.000

The result of paired sample t-test above shows that the Sig.(2-tailed)   score was 0.000 which was lower than 0.05 (Sig. 0.000 < 0.05). Furthermore,   the t score was -18.216 with df 18 which was greater that t-table 2.101 (t count -18.216 > t table 2.101). Based on these analysis results, Ho was rejected and H1 was accepted.   In other words, there was a significant difference on the students' listening scores between pretest and posttest after the students were taught by using running dictation.

Students' perceptions on running dictation

Eventhough the result showed that there was statistically significant improvement on the students' listening comprehension scores, dicovering their perceptions on the use of running dictation was necessary to find out its strengths and weaknesses. Their pereptions on running dictation based on a questionnaire given after the treatment are displayed in the following figure.

Figure 1. *The results of students' perception on running dictation*

The results of the questionnaire distributed to students showed that all students (100%) in this study stated that they had difficulty listening in English. Listening in a foreign language is generally the most challenging activity compared to activities in other language skills. Statement number 3 showed that 78.95% of students in this study stated that learning to listen was more fun when done together, 10.53% was doubtful and 10.53% was not fun at all. Statement number 2 was strengthened by statement number 3. 84.2% stated that learning to listen was not fun and no students stated that it was fun if done alone. Furthermore, statement number 4 showed that 84.21% of students stated that learning to listen through Running Dictation was not boring and 10.53% stated that it was boring. Furthermore, it was found that 89.47% of students stated that learning to listen through Running Dictation was fun and 5.26% stated that it was not fun. 89.47% of students also stated that Running Dictation improved their listening ability, 10.53% were doubtful and no students (0%) stated that it improved their listening ability. Statement number 7 showed that 84.21% stated that they were motivated to improve their listening ability through Running Dictation, 10.53% stated that they were not. Finally, statement number 8 showed that 94.74% stated that their listening ability was better now and no students (0%) stated that it was not better now.

Discussion

From the result, it is known that students' listening comprehension ability was improved after being taught by using running dictation. This significant result was because of the dictation. Nation and Newton (2009) explains that dictations facilitate language learning by enabling students to focus on the language form of phrase and clause level constructions, and by creating feedback on the accuracy of their perception. Attempts to measure what memory of phrases remains after dictation have not been found, so it is considered that dictation serves primarily as a consciousness raising activity. The consciousness raising comes from the subsequent feedback about the errors and gaps in perception. Furthermore, the improvement on students' listening comprehension ability was due to learning activities carried out by using running dictation as it gave freedom to students to collaborate independently. Nurdianingsih and Rahmawati (2018) reported in their study that with the implementation of running dictation, students could work together with their group. They were also more confident and actively enganged in doing the group and individual tasks during the instruction. In other words, running dictation facilitates collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning is a situation where there are two or more people learning or trying to learn something together (Dillenbourg, 1999). Furthermore, Chiu (2008) asserts that unlike learning alone, people who are involved in collaborative learning make use of each other's resources and skills (asking each other's information, evaluating each other's ideas, monitoring each other's work, etc.). More specifically, collaborative learning is based on a model in which knowledge can be created in a population where members actively interact by sharing experiences and taking on (different) asymmetric roles. In other words, collaborative learning refers to the environment and activity methodology of students doing

general tasks where each individual depends and is responsible for each other (Mitnik, et al, 2009).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of running dictation in improving listening skills was also supported by the results of a perception questionnaire. Running Dictation is a fun learning activity for students. Collaborative learning has also provided fun learning for students. Case (2013) stated that running dictation was a fun activity in learning to listen, speak, read, and write. In other words, students obtained two fun activities, collaborative learning and running dictation. DePorter and Hernacki (2013) state that fun learning is a strategy used to create an effective learning environment, apply curriculum, deliver material, and facilitate the learning process that improves student learning achievement. As stated by Djamarah (2010), fun learning is learning that is designed in such a way as to provide an atmosphere full of joy, fun and most importantly not boring. In other words, fun learning is a pattern of good relationships between teachers and students in the learning process. Furthermore, Nurdianingsih and Rahmawati (2018) also reported that running dictation was effective as this techniques offered enjoyment in learning as students were like playing a game while learning.

Conclusions

From the results of this study, there are several conclusions that that can be drawn. First, the listening ability of the 2nd semester students of the English Education Study Program, FKIP Sriwijaya University improved significantly after taking in the Intermediate Listening course in which they were taught by using Running Dictation. The results of a questionnaire that measured students' perceptions of using Running Dictation in learning listening in the Intermediate Listening course also showed that the majority of students liked this strategy and reported that their listening ability improved after learning using Running Dictation. However, this study has some limitations such as it has small number of participants as the sample so that the generalizability of the research results is limited, and there was no control group to validate to what extent the effectiveness of running dictation influences students' listening comprehension ability compared to students in control group who are not taught by using running dictation. Thus future studies are recommended to use running dictation with bigger sample, control group, or other English skills/aspects.

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