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The Relationship between Mastering Dictation and University Students' Achievement of Spelling Vocabulary and Writing Text

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Keywords:	Abstract: Dictation has been used in the field of language learning						
-Spelling	for several years. However, most of the language instructors and methodologists regard this method as useless and out-of-date. Indeed dictation is a teaching technique which enables English teachers to focus on the language proficiency of their students. This paper explains						
-Vocabulary							
-Writing	what the teachers should do to help the students enhance enthusiasm and confidence for learning, stimulate learning motivation, reduce or						
Article Info	eliminate their difficulty and take measures to improve their own language skills. This paper aims at investigating the relationship						
Article history:	between mastery of dictation and university students' achievement in spelling which in order to raise students' efficiency in vocabulary and						
-Received 25/1/2019	texts. This paper consists of three sections, the first as an introduction, and the second deals with literature review and the third is the						
-Accepted 2/2/2019	conclusion.						
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العلاقة بين إتقان الإملاء وتحصيل طلبة الجامعة في تهجى المفردات وكتابة النصوص

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المستخلص

استعملت طريقة الأملاء في حقل تعلم اللغة منذ عدة سنوات . يعدُ أغلب اللغويون ومدرسو اللغة هذه الطريقة عديمة الفائدة وانها أصبحت خارج التأريخ . ولكن تناول استراتيجيات التعليم التي تمكن التدريسيين من التركيز على تطوير كفاءة لغة الطالب تمكنهم من تحقيق تعلم اللغة وإتقانها. وبما ان استراتيجية سيطرة الطالب بشكل صحيح على كتابة الأملاء وضبطها على نطق المفردات وكتابة الجمل الإنكليزية بصورة صحيحة وبدون أخطاء لغوية فهي تساعد المتعلم على تعزيز عملية التعلم وتطوير قابلية الطلاب على ذلك وتقليل الأخطاء لذا وجد الباحث أهمية البحث في اظهار العلاقة بين اتقان التلفظ والاملاء لمفردات اللغة الانكليزية . وهذا يقود الطالب على تطوير قابلياته بالتدريج في عملية التعلم والتحصيل في المرحلة الجامعية ومعرفة استراتيجيات التدريس التي تقود الى ذلك . يتألف البحث الحالي من ثلاثة اقسام : القسم الأول هومقدمة البحث ، بينما يتناول القسم الثاني الجوانب ذات العلاقة بوجهات النظر الأدبية ، في حين اشتمل القسم الثالث على الاستنتاجات، واخيرا المراجع التي عززت انجاز هذا البحث .

1.1 Introduction

Dictation is an important technique which has been used in learning/ teaching English language for a long time, but its benefit in language teaching / learning has been questioned by some language teachers. It is thought that dictation can help learners develop all language skills, in grammar, oral communication, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. The present work attempts to investigate the benefits of dictation by explaining the steps and procedures of this strategy used by the teacher then examining students in vocabulary dictation . Galina, (2016:1) mentions that "dictation develops all four skills of English language ". Davis and Rinvolucri, (1988:63) claim that "dictation has been used in language learning for several hundred years, and methodologists have often made pedagogical claims for its value".

Good writing with correct spelling leads to easy learning of English as a foreign language Kaplan (2016-2017:292) adds that, "Generally, good writers write in the same voice, or style in which they speak. This does not mean ,however, that good writers use exactly the same words and structure in both writing and speaking". It just means that their writing doesn't differ radically from their speech.

1.2 Value of the Research

Ruth Montalvan, (1999:1) says that, "Beginning level students can be trained early on to use dictation and it can be continued throughout all their courses. Intermediate or advanced students who have never had dictation exercises in their new language, however, must be trained in much

the same way beginning students are. A great deal depends upon a disciplined approach to this type of activity ". But if used as the focal point of a well-planned lesson, dictation becomes a real learning experience.

Teachers of foreign languages ... specifically teachers of English as a foreign language' have given a great deal of importance to spelling mistakes when they use dictation exercises, although they seldom help the students systematically perceive the basic sound-spelling correspondences in English revealed by their dictation errors.

In the Longman dictionary of Applied Linguistics (2002: 157) 'dictation' is defined as a "technique used in both language teaching and language testing in which a passage is read aloud to students or test takers, with pauses during which they must try to write down what they have heard as accurately as possible ". Whereas , Davis and Rinvolucri (2002: 64) define dictation as "decoding the sounds of English and receding them writing ".

Wilson (2003:335-43) claims that " an excessive focus on meaning, either through extra vocabulary learning or additional listening practice, will not necessarily solve the listening comprehension of many students ". Discovery listening is described as an approach to teaching listening that strikes a balance between attention to form and attention to meaning, and tries to achieve a focus on sound and word recognition by adapting the dictation approach.

Rahimi, (2008:36) has investigated the effect of dictation on the learners' proficiency and, "the results of the study shows that dictation reinforces the language proficiency through the process of learning and, the procedures that employed in these techniques". Olagboyega (2008: 23-27) refers that:

the majority of dyslexic learners have difficulties with auditory processing. they find it difficult to identify, segment and manipulate sounds in words and therefore making a correspondence between letters and sounds is difficult. Furthermore he claims that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners also have difficulty in understanding spoken language as they are slower at perceiving the sounds Within a syllable.

1.3 Aims of the Research

This research aims to investigating the following:

- 1- The role of dictation in teaching/learning English language.
- 2- The relationship between mastery of dictation and university students' achievement in spelling vocabulary and writing English text..

1.4 Limitation of this Research

This research is restricted to investigating the following:

- 1-First year Students in English Department $\,$, College of Education for Women / Tikrit University in the Academic year 2016 / 2017 .
 - 3- English text from INTERCHANGE 3rd edition by Jack C Richard Students Book.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Research

This research hypothesizes the following:

- 1- There are no significant difference between teaching / learning of dictation and writing correctly of vocabulary and English text .
- 2-There are no significant difference between the obtained mean scores of students' achievement of control group and experimental one in writing texts of dictation.

1.6 Procedures of this Research

This research attempts to deal with the following points:

- 1-Collect materials that have relationship between mastery of dictation and university students' achievement in spelling vocabulary and writing texts.
- 2- Investigate whether there is any significant difference between the experimental group on the one hand and the control group on the other hand in their achievement.
- 3-Constructing an achievement test.
- 6- State some conclusions of the research.

1.7 Definition of the Basic Terms

1.7.1 Dictation:

Davis and Rinvolucri(2014:23) define dictation as "to decode the sounds of language and to recode them in writing skill". Oller, (1971:245-59) argues that "dictation activities promote the learner's internalized grammar of expectancy and improves their integrated skills of the languages". To indicate that practically through practising inside the classroom, dictation practice using natural English speech as cues from the early stages is highly recommended.

The Operational Definition:

This paper means to indicate the weak and strong points of ability in learning English through testing university students in vocabulary and text writing of dictation.

1.7.2 Mastery: The researcher defines it as the control of spelling and correct writing and pronunciation in English vocabulary and texts .

1.7.3 Achievement:

Accomplishment or proficiency of performance in a given skill or body of knowledge (Al- Douri , 1977:7).

Literature Review

2.1 Introductory Note:

This section deals with the literature review of dictation, teaching / learning vocabulary through dictation, strategies of teaching dictation method, delivery dictation, tips of writing dictation, the potential problems of dictation, etc...

2.2 Dictation in General

Dictation is a valuable learning device that is used to develop the ability of the learners and stimulate them to be able to pronounce and write English vocabulary in a correct way. Its advantages are numerous. It can help students to diagnose and correct grammatical mistakes, it ensures attentive listening and trains students to distinguish sounds, helps learning punctuation and develops aural comprehension.

Davis and Rinvolucri (1990) as cited in Jeremy (2007:335) say: "the basic idea of dictation has been altered so that it is the students who dictate to each other (rather than the teacher). It has a competitive element, is very active and is often extremely enjoyable". Alkire (2002: 112) considers "orthographic text dictation, in which students transcribe a unified passage. This is a classic dictation exercise which, besides reinforcing the spelling and sound correlations of English, uncovers comprehension and grammatical weaknesses in learners for the teacher to analyse and address in future lessons".

Myint (1998:65) writes, that "Dictation has always been a rather controversial activity in the language classroom. In spite of its limitations, dictation is still in favour as a teaching device at some stages of language teaching. Some language practitioners view dictation negatively, believing that it hardly teaches anything, but it may have some value as a testing device, although there are other testing devices that are more effective. However, dictation gives badly needed practice in listening comprehension.

Davis and M, Rinvolucri (2002:38) claim that:

dictation contains a wealth of new techniques to extend the traditional language-learning activity of dictation. The activities range from the traditional focus on spelling and punctuation problems to exercises that emphasize personal attitudes and opinions of both teachers and students. Dictation provides activities suitable for a wide range of levels and ages, example texts for many activities, opportunities for students to create their own texts, and a variety of suggested correction techniques". Moreover,

it is normally 'turns out that in any average group of European teachers more than half do use dictation either regularly or from time to time in their teaching. (ibid: 65)

The benefit of dictation always come to students, and deserve their teaching/learning of them . The text as well as the vocabulary are the materials that are used to accelerate the process of learning English language . The teacher is the guide who enables his/her students to master, the vocabulary , as the first brick of building a correct sentence in English language . The role of the students emphasis on accuracy, and understanding the meaning of text . The teacher himself concentrating on the communicative aspect of the dictation rather than a grammatical text.

Due to the above , most of English teachers suggest ,that dictation activities inside the classroom can be done in any grade depending on the English text . At the elementary level , the specialists suggest to teachers to use the materials , pictures , cards ,etc., that decrease the preparations every session or lecture .Dictation also can develop the ability of the students all four skills (reading , speaking , listening and writing). The psychologists believe that dictation can serve as an excellent review of the exercises .

There is also an emphasis on accuracy, but expectations here can be increased or decreased depending on the level of the class the main aim is that the students understand and then reconvey the meaning of the passage, concentrating on the communicative aspect of the activity rather than producing a grammatically perfect text.

2.2 The Role of Teaching Vocabulary through Dictation

In general, dictation technique is considered a first step that leads to the mastery of learning English language through the mastery of vocabulary pronunciation, that leads to control in writing English skill too, especially to students of "English as a foreign language", and this activity guides the learners to improve their mastery of vocabulary. Most of English teachers who take into consideration, the importance of mastering English vocabulary through dictation once by learning them by heart with concentrate as meaning. Others order their pupils to learn by heart English vocabulary with their meaning in the native language or by giving the antonyms or synonymy of these vocabulary items.

Brown (2004:132) states "dictation seems to provide a reasonably valid method for integrating listening and writing skills and for tapping into the cohesive element of language implied in short passage". Vocabulary dictation is the process of writing down what the teacher has said to the students. Vocabulary dictation offers a way for a teacher to record a student's thoughts or ideas when the writing demands surpass writing skills, or through the repetition after the teacher to develop their ability and practise them to correct spelling words through handwriting of the vocabulary. Vocabulary dictation also provides a chance for the students to know the sound of words phonetically.

2.3 The Strategies for Dictation Method

Jeremy (2007:336) says, "There are many different ways of doing dictations, and when students have some elements of control, they are especially convincing. For example, it is possible for the teacher to read out a dictation, but have students pretend that they have a control button of the kind that you get with tape recorder, and other materials that deserve the learning of dictation. This means that they can say pause, stop, rewind, etc., to control the teacher's speed and get repetition if they need it".

Qu Tang, (2012: 1472-76) suggests that , teachers may employ dictation with the appropriate strategies that make progress in learning and practising in English language. The researcher attempts to mention Some of these (strategies) as the following;

- (l). Teachers lead and motivate all students, and should demonstrate the difficult words that cannot be explained and spelled through pronunciation. Teachers should dictate the bold words. Teachers should take the perspective of memory of students that associate with ability of the student to remember the words that the students must be written through the dictation exercises. Teachers who are specialists in teaching English consider 20-30 words are appropriate per time especially in intermediate school pupils level.
- (2)To motivate pupils every day , it is necessary to order pupils to learn by heart limited vocabulary in every English lesson . Teachers should test them , and demonstrate the spelling and pronunciation of the dictations' words and score a dictation exercise as a part of daily activity .

2.4 Dictation Strategies in General

2.4.1 Basic Dictation with Phrasing

Keith and Helen, (1999:97) say dictation was a technique associated with traditional, accuracy-focused methodology: the teacher reads a text aloud right through and then with pause, while students wrote down exactly what was said. However, in the late 1980s it re-emerged as a means of promoting necessary accuracy while integrating skills. Ruth Moutalvan,(1999:3-4) argue that the following points are basic procedures of dictation.

- 1- Read the text through once at normal speed.
- 2- Read it again in meaningful phrases. You should be reading each phrase at normal speed without repeating, but pausing between phrases only long enough for the students to write it down.
- 3-Read through again at normal speed so the students can check their papers.
- 4 Lastly, ask students to correct their work by referring to the text.

2.4.2 Some Tips for Helping Frustrated Writer Learn Dictation

Randy, (2014:1) asserts that " as a teacher or parents, you don't need to be expert in dictation to help kids learn how to use it effectively ". Some of these tips for helping frustrated writers to learn dictation are the following:

- 1. Prove that dictation, is faster than writing ,through the handwriting drill. Good teacher should engage students in a brief contest in dictation while the students attempt to legibly copy the same text through handwriting. Some of the English teachers use a stopwatch in the contest among pupils to assess the time that lasted through the dictation period.
- 2. Help students learn to speak clearly and articulately. Dictation tools are still not perfect and work best in a silent room, with words spoken at a nominal rate and volume.
 - 3. Show students how dictation can quickly get their words onto paper.
 - 4. Help students pay attention to sentence structure while dictating.

2.5 The Role of Dictation in Language Teaching

Dictation is considered as a feature of language learning classrooms for hundreds of years ago. It guides the learner to master the correct use of letters and to build correct and functional words of a correct sentence. However, for many teachers these days, the word 'dictation' is synonymous with 'old-fashioned, and 'boring'.

Ruth Montalvan, (1999: 1) asserts that ,"the, students' mistakes in spelling or punctuation were considered unimportant and emphasis was on the content and the students' ability to understand and interpret what they had written down".

Takuchi, Osamu .(1997:1) mentions that , "as a testing method, dictation has been confirmed to be reliable and valid by many researchers. Based on the summary of empirical studies" . Oller (1979:112), for example, considers: "Dictation to be a type of integrative test, a test which requires a learner to use several language skills at the same time".

Heaton (1988:17) says, the integrated skills involved in tests of dictation include auditory discrimination, the auditory memory span, spelling, the recognition of sound segments, a familiarity with the grammatical and lexical patterning of the language, and overall textual comprehension, and claims,that "dictation tests can prove good predictors of global language ability".

Harris and Palmer (1986:3-4) for example, insist that dictation can be a useful pedagogical device but offers little empirical support". Davis and Rinvolucri (1988:60) also mention that "dictation is an effective measure of teaching, and provide us with various methods of dictation.

Yoshida (1984:112), found that statistically significant positive correlations between

dictation and the results of listening tests, and, based on these findings, claims that dictation can be a good teaching device. His findings do indicate that dictation is a good predictor of learners'

listening ability.

2.6 The Function of Dictation in the Teaching of Modern Languages

Annette,(2016:2-3) refers that Dictation can help the learners to develop all four English

language skills in an integrative way. It develops students' comprehension of meaning

Dictation helps learners to develop short-term memory. In other words Ruth, (1999:3) adds that, correcting dictation can lead to oral communication, dictation fosters unconscious thinking in the

new language. Dictation is motivating, during and after the dictation, all the students are active.

Eventually dictation can be prepared for any level . Dictation is employed nowadays in

secondary schools and universities. Dictation helps learners to have correct spelling of the words

that they are heard, and correct writing through dictation drill.

2.8 Some of the Comprehensive Procedures to Test Dictation

Technique 1: How Many Missing Words?

This technique helps students learn to hear and write the function words in a dictated

sentence.

Step One: The teacher writes a dehydrated sentence (a sentence containing only content words)

on the board and asks students to copy them on a sheet of paper.

For example:

Teacher writes letter

Step Two: The teacher then reads the complete sentence aloud and asks the students to write a

caret on their papers in every place they hear a missing word. The teacher should read the

sentence aloud three times. The students write on their papers:

The teacher writes a letter

Step Three: The teacher has one student come up to the board and write the carets in the correct

places. When this is correct, another student is asked to write the complete sentence on the board

below the dehydrated sentence. All the students can then copy the complete sentence on their

papers.

The teacher writes a letter now.

Technique 2: How Many Words?

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This technique help students learn to hear and write all the words (both content and function words) in a dictated sentence.

Step One: The teacher reads a sentence aloud at a normal rate and asks the students how many words they hear. The teacher should read the sentence aloud three times.

Step Two: The students respond nonverbally. They can either hold up their fingers to show the total number of words they hear or hold up a number fan to show the total number of words they heard.

Step Three: The teacher asks one student to write the sentence on the board. The class corrects any mistakes and determines together how many words are in the sentence. <u>Adult Learning</u> Resource Center, 2010 www.thecentervveb.orglalrc

Technique 3: Scrambled Sentences

This tactile technique helps students review sentences that the teacher might read aloud for the writing test.

Step One: On the board, the teacher writes a sentence likely to be read aloud (dictated) at the citizenship test.

Step Two: The teacher gives the students several blank index cards and asks them to copy the sentence on the board onto the cards, one word per card. The teacher circulates to make sure that spelling and capitalization are correct. It is a good practice to put a period on one of the cards .The students then put the cards into a zip lock baggie or envelope.

Step Three: The teacher repeats Steps One and Two until each student has a collection of three to five sentences in bags or envelopes .

Step Four: The teacher reads one of the sentences aloud, and the students locate and assemble the correct sentence. The teacher may need to repeat the sentence several times .

3. Procedures of the Research

3.1 Population and Sample of the research

Population is a group of individuals with at least one common characteristic which distinguishes that group from other individuals Best and Kahn (2006: 13). While Creswell (2012:142) defines population as a group of individuals who have the same characteristics.

A sample is derived from population. According to Brown (2001:72), sample is a subgroup of individuals representing population. Hanlon and Larget (2011:2) state that sample is the specific group of individuals which represent population, so there is available data for individuals.

Concerning the current research, the population consist of (239) students in English Department / College of Education for Women / Tikrit University. Whereas the sample of the research represents all students in first year of English Department , College of Education for Women in the academic year (2016/2017) whose total number is (94) students. The researcher excludes (4) students who have failed in the last year .So the final sample of this research is (90) students . Here, the selected sample in detail represents (31.74)% of its original population.

Table (1)
The Population and the Sample of the Research

Name of College	Population	Sample of Students
College of Education For Women	239	90
Experimental Group		45
Control Group		45
Total	239	90

3.2 Construction of the Achievement Test

In order to achieve the aims of the study ,the paragraph under the title "East Meets West" is used as a test of student's achievement of the dictation test. The test adopted in this research from INTERCHANGE $3^{\rm rd}$ edition (2005) by Jack , C. Richards Students book UK , in $10^{\rm th}$ of June 2017. The technique which is used in this test associates with the previous techniques that are mentioned in this research.

The researcher divides the sample into two groups: the first one as an experimental group which involve 45 students (girls). The researcher writes the paragraph on the board, then he reads it three times The students are listening, while they are looking at the board. Eventually, he reads the paragraph, then he ordered the pupils to listen to him and write what he is reading. He repeats reading the paragraph again but slower than the first.

The control group that involves (45) students too . is ordered to write the paragraph as dictation after reading by the teacher without writing on the board but with the same steps of the technique that are used with the experimental group.

3.3 Scoring Scheme

Olshtain and Cohen (1994:122) say, "In order to attain an objective measurement for students' achievement on the dictation test, a precise scoring scheme has been developed". Kongward, (2007;278) adds that, "the scoring scheme increases the reliability of a test and helps to gain a consistent data about students' performance so that the procedure for scoring answer scripts should be prepared".

The scoring scheme of the present test can be explained as follows:

Testees' responses on the whole words in paragraph test are scored out of 100.i.e., two marks to each correct word, the total number of words of the paragraph is 50. Whereas zero if it is incorrect or ignored by the testees.

3.4 Scoring of Students' Achievement

To achieve the aim of the research which states "The Relationship between Mastery of Dictation and University Students' Achievement in Spelling Vocabulary and Writing Text ". The obtained mean score which is (26.21) compared with their theoretical mean score which is (28.10).

Table (2)

The No number of Students ,the Mean Scores, Standard Deviation, and T- Value of Subjects

No of Students	Mean	Theoretical	SD	T –Value		DF	Level of
	Scores	Mean		Obtained	Tabulated		Sig.
90	39	28.10	17.1	26.21	.02	69	0.05

T- test formula for one independent samples has been employed to compare between the two obtained mean scores. Results indicate that there are significant differences between the two obtained mean scores which is (26.21) and for the benefit of the theoretical mean score which is (28.10). Thus the first hypothesis is rejected.

T- test formula for two independent sample is also used to achieve the second aim of the research namely " The relationship between mastery of dictation and university students' achievement in spelling of vocabulary in writing English text ". After the application of t-test for two independent samples , results indicate that the mean score of students is (39) .The computed t- value (1.36)is less than the tabulated t-value (2.02) at the level of significance (0.05) with the degree of freedom 69, " there is no statistical significant differences among the obtained mean score of students' achievement between control group and experimental one in dictation" . This vividly means that the students' performance on the area of dictation. Thus the second hypothesis is rejected .

3.6 Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the finding of this research.

- 1-Dictation is a very essential technique used in learning / teaching English language in general
- 2-The achievement of the experimental group students is better than the control one.
- 3-The experimental group students are better in spelling of vocabulary and writing the text of the exam than the control one.
- 4-The results of this research lead us to consider that there is a strong relationship between mastery of dictation and university students' achievement in spelling vocabulary and writing text.

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