

The Students' Attitude towards the Using of Dictation Strategy in Improving Students' Listening Skills

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Listening is a fundamental language skill that plays a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. However, many students encounter difficulties in comprehending spoken English due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, and varying speech rates. Dictation has been widely recognized as a learning strategy that integrates listening, memory, and writing skills to enhance listening comprehension. This study aimed to investigate students' attitudes toward the use of the dictation strategy in improving their listening skills. A descriptive survey design was employed involving 80 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Program. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 Likert-scale items and analyzed descriptively using percentage analysis. The findings indicate that students generally have positive attitudes toward the implementation of dictation. Approximately 87.1% of the respondents agreed that dictation effectively improved their listening skills. In addition, students perceived that the strategy enhanced vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, spelling accuracy, and comprehension of different English accents. Despite reporting several challenges, particularly the difficulty of the tasks, most participants acknowledged that the educational benefits outweighed the limitations. These findings suggest that dictation is an effective pedagogical strategy for fostering listening comprehension and can be integrated into English language instruction to promote more active and meaningful learning experiences.

Keywords: Dictation Strategy, Listening Skills, Students' Attitudes, English Language Learning.

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1. Introduction

Listening is one of the fundamental language skills that plays a crucial role in acquiring information and knowledge. Effective listening requires learners to pay close attention in order to understand what speakers are communicating. As stated by Tyagi[1], listening is an essential skill for obtaining information effectively and serves as the foundation for successful communication.

Teaching listening, however, remains a challenging task because many students experience difficulties in understanding spoken English accurately[2][3]. This difficulty is influenced by several factors that require learners to maintain a high level of concentration throughout the listening process. Among the most common challenges are the speed of speech, poor audio quality, unfamiliar pronunciation, and limited vocabulary among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners[4]. These factors frequently hinder students from comprehending spoken messages effectively.

Listening plays a significant role in language acquisition because it provides learners with the primary linguistic input needed to develop other language skills. Students with good listening skills are better able to interpret messages accurately and communicate effectively. Nevertheless, many students still

demonstrate a relatively low level of listening proficiency due to the various obstacles encountered during listening activities. Therefore, identifying appropriate listening strategies is essential for improving students' listening comprehension.

Various teaching strategies have been developed to enhance listening skills, one of which is the dictation technique. Through dictation, students are trained to listen carefully, retain spoken information in their short-term memory, and reproduce it accurately in written form. Since listening comprehension requires learners to recognize words, phrases, and sentence structures simultaneously, dictation encourages students to focus on both meaning and linguistic accuracy while strengthening their listening ability.

Listening itself is a complex cognitive process in which learners must interpret spoken information and construct meaning from auditory input. Rost[5] explains that listening enables individuals to understand the world around them and supports effective communication. Similarly, Goh[6] describes listening as a two-way interactive process involving the reception of auditory symbols through the ears and their subsequent processing in the brain to produce meaningful comprehension.

Listening comprehension is considered one of the most important components of English language learning[7]. Nadig[8] further defines listening comprehension as the process of understanding spoken language, recognizing grammatical structures, and distinguishing language sounds, all of which contribute to successful communication.

One instructional strategy that has received considerable attention in listening instruction is dictation. Nation and Newton[9] define dictation as a technique in which learners receive spoken input, retain it briefly in memory, and then write it down. Although dictation is often regarded as a traditional teaching method, Putri[10] argues that it remains a valuable instructional technique rather than merely an assessment tool. Instead of passively listening to classroom explanations, students actively process spoken language by recognizing phrases, clauses, and sentence structures while simultaneously engaging their short-term memory and writing skills.

Several factors contribute to listening comprehension difficulties among EFL learners. Renandya and Farrell[11] identified speech rate as one of the primary obstacles because learners often struggle to process spoken texts delivered at natural speed. Azmi Bingol et al[12] further reported that lengthy listening texts place a heavy burden on learners' memory, making comprehension more difficult, particularly for lower-proficiency students. Consequently, shorter listening passages are generally more appropriate for beginning learners.

In addition, Azmi Bingol et al[12] emphasized that poor recording quality can negatively affect listening comprehension. Cultural differences may also influence learners' interpretation of spoken messages; therefore, teachers are encouraged to provide sufficient background knowledge before conducting listening activities[13].

Speaker accent is another important factor affecting listening comprehension. Munro and Derwing[14] argued that unfamiliar accents often reduce learners' understanding of spoken English. Likewise, Buck[15] explained that learners who are only familiar with American English frequently experience serious difficulties when listening to speakers with different accents. Bloomfield et al[16] also reported that regional accents significantly influence learners' ability to interpret spoken messages, whereas familiar accents facilitate better comprehension.

Vocabulary knowledge also plays an essential role in listening comprehension. According to Azmi Bingol et al[12], learners with broader vocabulary knowledge are more motivated and better able to understand

spoken texts. Similarly, Graham[17] identified limited vocabulary and weak grammatical knowledge as major factors contributing to listening comprehension problems.

Several previous studies have investigated students' perceptions of using dictation to improve listening comprehension. Khoiriyah[18] found that students experienced fewer difficulties in understanding spoken English through dictation activities. They also developed a better understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and the listener's role during communication. Furthermore, students reported enjoying listening lessons more when dictation techniques were incorporated into classroom activities.

Similarly, Saragih et al[19] found that the implementation of dictation helped students overcome vocabulary limitations and improve their understanding of English listening texts. Based on students' perceptions, dictation played a significant role in enhancing their listening skills.

Despite these positive findings, previous studies have primarily focused on the effectiveness of dictation in improving listening performance, while relatively limited attention has been given to students' attitudes toward the implementation of dictation as a learning strategy, particularly among university students in Indonesian EFL contexts. Understanding students' attitudes is important because positive perceptions may influence learning engagement and the successful implementation of instructional strategies. Therefore, this study aims to investigate students' attitudes toward the use of dictation strategy in improving listening comprehension skills.

2. Literature Review And Problem Statement

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension is recognized as one of the most essential language skills in English language learning because it serves as the primary source of linguistic input for language acquisition. Unlike reading, listening requires learners to process spoken language in real time by identifying sounds, recognizing vocabulary, understanding grammatical structures, and interpreting meaning simultaneously. According to Rost[5], listening is an active cognitive process involving both bottom-up processing, which focuses on recognizing linguistic forms, and top-down processing, which utilizes prior knowledge and contextual understanding to construct meaning. Therefore, successful listening comprehension depends not only on learners' linguistic competence but also on their cognitive processing abilities.

Previous studies have identified several factors affecting listening comprehension among EFL learners. These include unfamiliar vocabulary, rapid speech rate, different accents, poor audio quality, and limited background knowledge[11][12]. Such obstacles often reduce learners' confidence and motivation during listening activities, making it necessary for teachers to implement appropriate instructional strategies that facilitate listening comprehension.

Dictation Strategy in Listening Instruction

Dictation is one of the instructional techniques frequently used in language classrooms to develop listening accuracy and language awareness. Nation and Newton[9] define dictation as a learning activity in which learners receive spoken input, temporarily store it in their short-term memory, and reproduce it in written form. This process simultaneously activates listening, memory, spelling, grammar, and writing skills.

Although dictation is often considered a traditional teaching technique, recent educational perspectives recognize its pedagogical value in promoting active learning. During dictation activities, students are encouraged to focus on pronunciation, sentence patterns, vocabulary recognition, punctuation, and

grammatical structures while listening attentively. Consequently, dictation is not merely a testing technique but also an effective learning strategy that strengthens students' listening competence[10].

Students' Attitude toward Dictation Strategy

Students' attitude plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of any instructional strategy. A positive attitude reflects students' acceptance, interest, motivation, and willingness to participate in learning activities, whereas negative attitudes may reduce learning engagement and achievement. In the context of listening instruction, students who perceive dictation as beneficial are more likely to participate actively and develop better listening skills.

Previous studies have reported generally positive perceptions of dictation among EFL learners. Khoiriyah[18] found that students believed dictation improved their understanding of vocabulary, grammar, and listening comprehension while creating more enjoyable classroom experiences. Similarly, Saragih et al[19] reported that students perceived dictation as an effective strategy for overcoming vocabulary limitations and improving comprehension of English listening texts. These findings indicate that students' attitudes constitute an important factor supporting the successful implementation of dictation in English language learning.

Problem Statement

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of dictation in improving listening comprehension, most research has primarily focused on learning outcomes and classroom implementation. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to examining students' attitudes toward the use of dictation as a learning strategy, particularly among university students in Indonesian EFL contexts. Students' attitudes deserve further investigation because positive perceptions may influence motivation, classroom participation, and the successful adoption of instructional strategies.

Furthermore, differences in learners' educational backgrounds, listening proficiency, and classroom experiences may produce varying attitudes toward dictation. Therefore, understanding how students perceive the implementation of dictation is important for improving listening instruction and designing more effective teaching practices. Based on these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following research question: "What are the students' attitudes toward the use of the dictation strategy in improving listening comprehension skills?"

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to English language teaching by providing empirical evidence regarding students' perceptions of dictation strategy and offering practical recommendations for lecturers in designing more effective listening instruction.

3. Method

This study employed a descriptive survey design with a quantitative approach to investigate students' attitudes toward the use of the dictation strategy in improving listening skills. Descriptive research aims to systematically and accurately describe the characteristics of a particular phenomenon based on factual data[20]. The survey method was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to collect students' perceptions and experiences regarding the implementation of dictation in listening instruction.

The participants of this study consisted of 80 fifth-semester students enrolled in the English Education Program. The participants were selected because they had experienced listening classes in which the dictation strategy was implemented. Their responses were expected to provide relevant information regarding their attitudes toward the use of dictation in improving listening comprehension.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 statements measured on a five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neutral, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was developed to examine three main aspects: (1) students' perceptions of listening and dictation, (2) the relationship between dictation and listening skills, and (3) the implementation of dictation in improving listening comprehension.

In addition to the questionnaire, students' learning documents were used as supporting data. The documentation consisted of students' writing assignments produced during dictation activities. Two compound sentences from each participant were collected to support the interpretation of students' responses regarding their listening experiences.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Responses from the questionnaire were tabulated and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages to describe students' attitudes toward the implementation of the dictation strategy. The supporting documentation was used to strengthen the interpretation of the survey findings and provide a more comprehensive description of students' experiences in learning listening through dictation.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

Based on the students' responses to the questionnaire, the findings reveal students' attitudes toward the implementation of the dictation strategy in improving listening comprehension skills. The responses were classified into three categories, namely: (1) the perceived advantages of dictation, (2) the perceived disadvantages of dictation, and (3) students' suggestions for improving the implementation of dictation in listening classes.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions of the Advantages of Dictation

No	Statement	Number	Percentage
1	Increasing vocabulary mastery	44	71.00%
2	Improving pronunciation skills	41	66.10%
3	Increasing spelling ability	37	59.70%
4	Improving grammar and punctuation	22	35.50%
5	Improving understanding of different accents	50	80.60%
6	Increasing the ability to think quickly in English	41	66.10%
7	Improving listening skills	54	87.10%

As presented in Table 1, the majority of students perceived that the dictation strategy provided various benefits for improving their listening skills. The highest percentage (87.1%) indicated that dictation effectively improved students' overall listening ability. In addition, 80.6% of the respondents believed that dictation enhanced their understanding of different English accents. This finding suggests that repeated exposure to spoken English during dictation activities helps students become more familiar with different pronunciation patterns.

Furthermore, 71% of the students agreed that dictation enriched their vocabulary because they were exposed to new words while listening and writing simultaneously. Approximately 66.1% reported improvements in pronunciation and their ability to think quickly in English. This indicates that dictation encourages learners to process spoken information efficiently while developing pronunciation awareness. Meanwhile, 59.7% of the respondents stated that dictation improved their spelling ability, whereas 35.5% believed that it enhanced their understanding of grammar and punctuation. During dictation activities, students must pay close attention to sentence structures and punctuation marks, enabling them to

comprehend spoken texts more accurately. Overall, the findings demonstrate that students generally perceive dictation as an effective strategy for improving multiple aspects of English listening comprehension.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions of the Disadvantages of Dictation

No	Statement	Number	Percentage
1	Time-consuming	7	11.30%
2	Difficult	50	80.60%
3	Boring	6	9.70%

Table 2 presents students' perceptions regarding the disadvantages of using dictation. The results indicate that the primary challenge experienced by students was the difficulty of the activity, with 80.6% of respondents identifying dictation as difficult. This perception may be influenced by limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, rapid speech, and the need to perform listening, memorizing, and writing simultaneously.

Only 11.3% of the students considered dictation to be time-consuming, while 9.7% perceived it as boring. These findings suggest that although students recognize dictation as a challenging learning activity, relatively few regard it as ineffective or uninteresting. Therefore, the difficulty appears to stem from the complexity of the task rather than students' lack of interest.

Table 3. Students' Suggestions for Improving the Implementation of Dictation

No	Statement	Number	Percentage
1	Using songs as listening materials	20	32.20%
2	Selecting materials based on difficulty level	15	24.10%
3	Improving audio quality	52	83.80%
4	Providing appropriate educational materials	12	19.40%
5	Using different English accents	10	16.10%

Table 3 summarizes students' suggestions for improving the implementation of dictation in listening classes. The most frequently suggested improvement was the use of clear and high-quality audio, supported by 83.8% of the respondents. Students believed that good audio quality would enable them to recognize spoken words more accurately and improve listening comprehension.

Another recommendation was incorporating songs into dictation activities, as suggested by 32.2% of the students. They believed that songs could create a more enjoyable and relaxing learning atmosphere. Approximately 24.1% recommended selecting listening materials based on students' proficiency levels, beginning with easier texts before progressing to more difficult ones. Additionally, several students suggested using educationally relevant materials and exposing learners to various English accents to further develop listening competence. These suggestions indicate that both instructional materials and technical aspects, particularly audio quality, play important roles in maximizing the effectiveness of dictation activities.

Discussion

The findings indicate that students generally have positive attitudes toward the implementation of the dictation strategy in listening classes. Although a large proportion of the respondents (80.6%) perceived dictation as a difficult learning activity, the majority also acknowledged its significant contribution to improving listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, spelling, and understanding of different English accents. This apparent contradiction suggests that students evaluated the strategy not merely based on its level of difficulty but on the educational benefits they experienced during the learning process.

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From the perspective of Working Memory Theory[21], dictation requires learners to perform several cognitive processes simultaneously, including listening to spoken input, retaining information in short-term memory, interpreting meaning, and reproducing the information accurately in written form. These concurrent processes impose a relatively high cognitive load, which may explain why most students considered dictation difficult. However, this intensive cognitive engagement also promotes deeper processing of linguistic information, enabling learners to improve their listening comprehension and language awareness. Consequently, the perceived difficulty reflects the complexity of the cognitive tasks involved rather than the ineffectiveness of the instructional strategy.

The positive attitudes observed in this study can also be interpreted through Expectancy-Value Theory[22], which proposes that learners remain motivated to engage in challenging learning activities when they perceive those activities as valuable and beneficial. Although students recognized that dictation demanded considerable concentration and effort, they also believed that it substantially improved their listening ability. This perception of usefulness appears to outweigh the challenges encountered during the learning process, leading students to maintain favorable attitudes toward the strategy despite its difficulty.

The finding that 87.1% of students believed dictation improved their listening skills is consistent with the studies of Saragih et al[19] and Khoiriyah et al[18], both of which reported that dictation enhances listening comprehension while simultaneously developing vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical awareness. The present findings extend previous research by demonstrating that positive attitudes toward dictation are closely associated with learners' recognition of its cognitive and educational benefits. Rather than viewing dictation solely as a language exercise, students perceived it as an integrated learning strategy that actively engages multiple language skills simultaneously.

Despite these positive perceptions, the results also indicate that students experienced considerable challenges during dictation activities. Consistent with Azmi Bingol et al[12] and Renandya and Farrell [11], difficulties in listening comprehension were associated with unfamiliar vocabulary, different English accents, rapid speech, and poor audio quality. These factors increase the cognitive demands placed on learners, particularly when they must listen, memorize, and write simultaneously. Nevertheless, the relatively low percentages of students who considered dictation boring (9.7%) or time-consuming (11.3%) suggest that the perceived difficulty originated primarily from the complexity of the learning process rather than from a lack of interest or motivation.

Students' suggestions further reinforce this interpretation. The strong preference for high-quality audio recordings (83.8%), appropriately graded listening materials, and varied instructional media indicates that students value learning environments that reduce unnecessary cognitive barriers while maintaining meaningful learning challenges. Improving these instructional elements may optimize the effectiveness of dictation by allowing learners to allocate greater cognitive resources to comprehending spoken language instead of overcoming technical obstacles.

The findings demonstrate that the educational benefits of dictation outweigh its perceived difficulties. When implemented with appropriate instructional design, progressively challenging listening materials, and clear audio resources, dictation serves not only as a listening exercise but also as an integrated pedagogical strategy that promotes deeper cognitive processing, sustained learning motivation, and more effective listening comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the dictation strategy contributes positively to the improvement of students' listening skills and is generally perceived positively by university students.

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The majority of the participants (87.1%) agreed that dictation enhanced their listening comprehension. In addition, students perceived improvements in several supporting language components, including vocabulary mastery (71%), pronunciation (66.1%), spelling accuracy (59.7%), and understanding of different English accents (80.6%). These findings demonstrate that dictation functions as an integrated instructional strategy that supports not only listening comprehension but also broader language development.

Although 80.6% of the respondents considered dictation to be a challenging learning activity, they continued to perceive it as beneficial because the educational advantages outweighed the learning difficulties. The challenge primarily arose from the need to listen, retain information in memory, and reproduce spoken language in written form simultaneously. Therefore, the effectiveness of dictation depends not only on the activity itself but also on how lecturers design and implement the learning process.

From a practical perspective, English lecturers are encouraged to integrate dictation activities into listening instruction on a regular basis, for example once every one or two weeks, as part of progressive listening practice. Listening materials should be carefully selected according to students' proficiency levels, beginning with short and simple texts before gradually introducing longer passages, faster speech rates, and more diverse English accents. In addition, lecturers should use clear, high-quality digital audio resources and may integrate multimedia materials such as podcasts, educational videos, or songs to create more engaging and authentic listening experiences. Providing constructive feedback after each dictation activity is also recommended to help students identify pronunciation, vocabulary, and spelling difficulties while promoting continuous improvement in listening comprehension.

This study was limited to examining students' attitudes toward the implementation of dictation among one group of university students. Future studies are therefore recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, employ mixed-method or experimental research designs, compare dictation with other listening strategies, and investigate the long-term effects of technology-assisted dictation on listening achievement and learner motivation in various EFL learning contexts.

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