

# The Effectiveness of Dictation-Based Supplementary Materials for Improving English Orthography Skill in Junior High School EFL Learners

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of dictation-based supplementary materials in improving the English orthographic skills, specifically listening and rewriting, of seventh-grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Telaga Biru, Indonesia. Utilizing the ADDIE instructional design framework, materials were tailored to meet the unique needs of EFL learners with limited English exposure. A mixed-methods approach was employed: a pre-test and post-test measured quantitative improvements in students' orthographic performance, while questionnaires provided qualitative insight into students' engagement and perceptions. The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' ability to accurately transcribe spoken English into written form after using the developed materials, highlighting dictation as an effective strategy for foundational literacy development. These results underscore the pedagogical value of integrating dictation strategies in EFL classrooms facing foundational literacy challenges.

**Keywords:** dictation, orthographic skills, EFL, listening and rewriting, ADDIE, supplementary materials

## INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of English language teaching, the acquisition of orthographic skills, particularly in listening and rewriting, remains a considerable challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially in regions with limited English exposure. Orthography, which encompasses the rules of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization [1], plays a critical role in language literacy and academic success [2]. However, the gap between spoken English and its written form presents major barriers to EFL learners, particularly those with limited exposure.

In Indonesia, the introduction of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in 2022 marked a pedagogical shift toward more flexible [3] and competency-based learning. This curriculum encourages contextual and student-centered learning approaches, allowing educators to tailor instruction based on students' backgrounds and needs. Despite this flexibility, many students, particularly at the junior secondary level, still struggle with fundamental English language skills. At SMP Negeri 1 Telaga Biru, a public school in Gorontalo, Indonesia, seventh-grade students have shown low proficiency in English orthographic skills due to minimal prior exposure to English, absence of foundational learning in primary school, and

lack of language practice outside the classroom.

One pedagogical approach with potential to address this challenge is dictation, a technique that integrates listening and writing by requiring students to transcribe spoken language accurately [4]. Moreover, dictation exercise is “relatively easy to construct and carry out” [5], and research has demonstrated that dictation helps bridge the gap between auditory input and orthographic output [6], reinforcing both recognition and production of correct spelling. Moreover, dictation supports memory retention and active listening [7], essential components in the language learning process.

To this end, this study aims to develop dictation-based supplementary materials tailored to the needs of seventh-grade EFL learners and to evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing English orthographic skills. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to assess the current level of students’ listening and rewriting proficiency in English orthography and to determine the effectiveness of the developed supplementary materials in improving these skills.

Although limited, previous research have supported the effectiveness of dictation-based instruction in improving students’ writing and spelling. Andini & Hrp [8] found that students in a vocational school in Indonesia showed significant improvements in writing accuracy after being taught with dictation methods. Similarly, Zakiyah & Husniah [9] reported that running dictation improved students’ motivation and spelling accuracy in writing short texts. Sipra’s [10] qualitative study on Urdu-speaking learners of English highlighted the confusion caused by inconsistent English orthography, emphasizing the need for explicit instruction. However, unlike these previous studies, which mainly focused on older or more advanced learners, the present study targets younger, beginner-level EFL students in a public junior high school in Indonesia. Moreover, the current study

integrates the ADDIE instructional design model to develop materials specifically based on student needs and local curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*), providing a more structured and adaptive approach to support English orthographic development.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Orthography in English Language Learning**

Orthography refers to the standardized conventions for writing a language, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. For English, a language known for its deep orthography, the inconsistency between graphemes (letters) and phonemes (sounds) poses significant challenges for learners, especially those in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts. English is considered a non-phonetic language in which spelling often does not clearly indicate pronunciation [10]. As a result, learners may experience confusion and develop inaccurate spelling habits if not exposed to structured orthographic instruction.

Mastery of English orthography is essential in building foundational literacy skills, particularly for students at the early stages of formal education. Orthographic knowledge enables learners to decode written language, recognize patterns, and improve their writing fluency. It also supports reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition [2]. For EFL students, particularly in Indonesia where English exposure is minimal outside the classroom, targeted support in orthographic development becomes crucial.

### **Dictation as a Learning Strategy**

Dictation is a pedagogical technique that involves listening to spoken language and transcribing it accurately. This strategy integrates listening comprehension and writing accuracy, providing learners with the opportunity to internalize both pronunciation and spelling simultaneously. According to Brown and Barnard [11], dictation exercises enhance students’ long-

term memory by reinforcing auditory patterns through writing. Deyes [12] also emphasized that dictation demands learners to make orthographic representations of what they hear, which helps bridge the gap between listening and writing.

Several studies have affirmed the benefits of dictation for EFL learners. Chai [6] and Montalvan [7] noted that dictation supports the development of all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and promotes grammatical awareness and careful listening. Additionally, Kiany and Shiramiri [13] proposed dictation as a classroom strategy that improves both spelling and comprehension when used with clear guidance and repeated listening.

## **MATERIALS & METHODS**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative research design with a one-group pre-test and post-test approach to evaluate the effectiveness of dictation-based supplementary materials in improving students' English orthographic skills. The focus was to measure changes in students' performance in listening and rewriting tasks after the use of the developed materials. To complement the test results, a validated student perception questionnaire was administered to explore learners' experiences with the materials. The study was conducted in a natural classroom setting without a control group, which categorizes the design as quasi-experimental

### **Research Site and Participants**

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Telaga Biru, a public junior high school in Gorontalo, Indonesia. The participants consisted of 21 seventh-grade students from class VII-1. The class was selected through simple random sampling, considering the homogeneity of students' background characteristics, such as age, minimal prior exposure to English, and limited English use outside school environment.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

To determine the effectiveness of the developed dictation-based supplementary materials, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, including pre-test and post-test assessments and a validated student perception questionnaire. Students completed a pre-test before the intervention to assess their baseline orthographic skills. A post-test of comparable difficulty was administered afterward to measure progress. Both tests evaluated spelling, punctuation, and sentence transcription accuracy. After that, a structured questionnaire was distributed post-intervention to assess students' views on the learning material's clarity, usefulness, and motivational value. The instrument was validated by expert judgment and used a 4-point Likert scale. Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, expressed in percentage form, to support the interpretation of learning outcomes.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the pre-test, post-test, and student perception questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical and frequency-based methods. Students' scores were analyzed for mean, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, and gain scores to determine performance improvements. Moreover, students' responses were tabulated as percentages to capture the proportion of agreement with key statements. This analysis highlighted students' attitudes toward the material's effectiveness and learning support. To assess students' need, the researcher applied theory as referenced in Sugiyono [14]:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Note:

$\bar{x}$  : The average value of the survey response

$\sum x$  : The number of students choose each item

*n* : The total of the students as the participants

The calculation results are presented in percentages which highlight the proportion of each item according to the indicators of students' responses. Additionally, to interpret the data from expert validation, the researcher uses descriptive analysis as outlined by Sugiyono<sup>[14]</sup>:

**Table 1. Data Conversion Table**

Result of Questionnaire		
Category	Percentage	Qualification
4	86%-100%	Very Good
3	76%-85%	Good
2	56%-75%	Fair
1	<55%	Poor

**Table 2. Summary of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores (n = 21)**

Statistic	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Gain
Mean	44.95	65.81	20.86
Minimum	4	44	0
Maximum	98	98	40
Standard Deviation	26.48	15.33	11.59

The average pre-test score was 44.95, indicating low baseline performance in English orthographic skills among students. After the intervention, the average score increased to 65.81. The average gain score was 20.86 points, indicating a consistent and meaningful improvement in students' ability to listen and transcribe English words with correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The standard deviation decreased from 26.48 in the pre-test to 15.33 in the post-test, suggesting a more uniform improvement across the class. The magnitude of the improvement was particularly notable among students with lower initial scores. Students who initially scored below 30 achieved gains ranging from 34 to 40 points. This suggests that the materials were particularly beneficial for learners who struggled with basic spelling, punctuation, and transcription skills. Even students with moderate to high pre-test scores showed improvement or maintained their performance. This pattern supports the conclusion that the materials was highly effective not only in improving average

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 21 seventh-grade students participated in the evaluation phase. The results show that the dictation-based supplementary materials had a positive impact on students' English orthographic skills. The comparison between pre-test and post-test scores indicates significant improvement in students' performance. To evaluate the effectiveness of the developed dictation-based supplementary materials, students' pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results are summarized in the following table:

performance but also in reducing performance gaps among students. Learners who initially struggled benefited the most, with some improving by up to 40 points, while higher-level students were able to maintain or slightly enhance their performance.

The observed increase in students' post-test scores with an average improvement of 23.3 points demonstrates that listening and rewriting activities embedded in the developed materials effectively strengthened students' ability to spell, punctuate, and capitalize correctly. This supports the argument of Brown and Barnard<sup>[11]</sup> and Deyes<sup>[12]</sup>, who emphasized that dictation exercises promote auditory processing and accurate written reproduction, essential for building orthographic accuracy.

To triangulate the test-based findings, students' responses to a validated perception questionnaire were analyzed. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items using a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree – SA, Agree – A, Disagree – D, Strongly Disagree

– SD), covering aspects of content relevance, language clarity, activity design, and visual layout. The following table

summarizes selected high- and low-rated items.

**Table 3. Selected Results from Student Perception Questionnaire (n = 21)**

Aspect	Item (Paraphrased)	Mean	Category
Content	The materials help me learn to write in English	3.57	Very Good
Presentation	The module is neatly and systematically arranged	3.71	Very Good
Graphics	The page layout makes studying comfortable	3.71	Very Good
Language	The language used is easy to understand	3.43	Good

Students' responses to the perception questionnaire indicated a strongly positive reception of the dictation-based materials. The mean scores for most indicators ranged from 3.43 to 3.76 (on a 4-point Likert scale), with an overall rating of "Very Good" in almost all categories. The items with the highest average scores were related to visual clarity and structural layout ( $M = 3.71$ ), followed closely by perceptions of content usefulness in improving writing skills ( $M = 3.57$ ). While language clarity received a slightly lower rating ( $M = 3.43$ ), it was still categorized as "Good," confirming the materials' accessibility. These aspects are crucial in maintaining student engagement and promoting cognitive accessibility, especially in early-stage EFL learners.

These results reinforce the finding that the developed materials were not only pedagogically effective but also learner-friendly and well-received. The positive student responses support the idea that well-structured, student-centered, and visually appealing materials enhance motivation and focus, which directly influence learning effectiveness. Students reported that the materials were easy to follow, enjoyable, and helped them better understand how to write in English. The fact that the materials was validated by experts prior to implementation adds further reliability to these outcomes, ensuring that content and design met pedagogical standards.

## CONCLUSION

Collectively, the findings indicate a strong positive impact of the developed materials on students' orthographic skills. The

improvement was not merely technical but also psychological, evident in increased confidence, engagement, and willingness to participate in language activities.

While these results are promising, it should be acknowledged that the absence of a control group limits the extent to which improvements can be attributed solely to the materials. However, the substantial gain scores, uniform trends across varying student levels, and highly favorable student feedback provide strong empirical support for the positive instructional impact of the developed materials. Future studies should consider employing a control group and a larger sample size to further validate the findings.

Overall, the dictation-based materials proved to be an effective, accessible, and pedagogically sound resource for developing foundational English orthographic skills in an EFL classroom context. Its success suggests that similar approaches that are grounded in student needs and informed by expert validation can be highly beneficial in other under-resourced or beginner-level learning environments. Future research should extend this study by implementing the developed materials across larger, more diverse settings, and by assessing long-term retention effects to ensure sustained orthographic skill development.

## Declaration by Authors

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