

A Study of the Effectiveness of Dictogloss on English Grammar and Motivation for Japanese Junior College Students in English Communication Class

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英文法指導におけるディクトグロスの有効性とモチベーションに関する一考察
ー英語コミュニケーションの受講生を対象にー

(Abstract)

The present study is on the effectiveness of using "dictogloss" in teaching a specific grammar and on motivating student learning. The experiment was given to the freshman students in the Pre-education department in the two of the English Communication II classes.

Procedures are: ① The conversation with grammatical item "the comparative, and the superlative" is read twice at a natural speed ② Group activity is to reconstruct the conversation through student group discussion ③ One of the group's discussion is recorded to transcribe and analyze ④ The "Check" consists of nine true-false questions and is given as a post-test to check each student's learning achievement

As the result, dictogloss seems to indicate that it is an effective teaching task for a specific grammar structure and improves student motivation to actively participate in one's own learning through the cooperative group work.

Key words dictogloss, motivation, teaching method

1. INTRODUCTION

The study reported in this paper used the task called Dictogloss to find out how it worked for the specific grammatical structure evaluating the students' effectiveness and for motivation. For the study 'comparative and superlative forms of adjectives' as a specific grammatical structure was chosen and developed dictogloss for teaching the structure.

The reason for the choice of this grammatical structure is that a coined Japanese English slang 'more better (ex.

Anata no atarashii hair style wa more better ne. = Your new hairstyle is more better.) ' which originated from a TV commercial popular years ago seems to be accepted in a daily conversation. Besides the familiarity which the author hoped would inspire student motivation, this grammatical structure is one of the most useful ones for communication in general, and has to be taught in the 8th grade as the first introduction according to the curriculum guide given by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). There are some

reviews on it and a more detailed introduction is given in high schools. Therefore all the research participants have learned this grammatical structure.

A group of 4 junior college women performing the dictogloss task was recorded and analyzed their performance on the error correction task. For the data collection the experiment was conducted in the two English Communication classes that the author is in charge. Therefore, not only were the chosen group's data used as a control but also the data from other students in two classes as a control was collected.

2. Background

2.1. Dictogloss

Dictogloss was created by R. Wajnryb and it appeared in her published article entitled "The Dictogloss Method of Language Teaching: A Text- Based, Communicative Approach to Grammar" which appeared in the July 1988 issue of English Teaching Forum. Wajnryb (1990) proposed as a procedure that encourages students to reflect on their own output. Nunan (1999) is the advocator of the "dictogloss" and defines, Dictogloss is a procedure for teaching grammatical structures in context. The procedure involves the teacher in reading a short passage at normal speed. Learners note down all the words they hear, and then work in small groups, pooling their resources to reconstruct the original text. Dictogloss has been supported as a useful task or technique by many researchers (Kowal & Swain, 1997; Lim & Jacobs, 2001a, b; Llewyn, 1989).

Kowal and Swain (1997) used the dictogloss technique with 8th graders of French immersion students and found the evidence of

noticing, hypothesis-testing, and metatalk during the use of dictogloss. The students often focused not only on the grammatical aspect that was supposed to be emphasized but also orthographic and semantic issues.

2.2. Motivation theories in learning second and foreign languages

Gardner (1985) defines motivation to learn an L2 as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p.10) . "Takagi (2003) defines this definition includes three components: (a) effort made to achieve a goal, (b) desire to learn the language, and (c) satisfaction with the tasks of learning a language " (p48) .

2.3. Motivation studies on Japanese students learning English

Many researches (e.g.,Malcom, 1991; Takanashi, 1991, Koizumi & Kai, 1992; Matsukawa & Tachibana, 1996; Tachibana, Matsukawa, & Zhong,1996) have been conducted on motivation studies, however many of them employed Gardner's approach that was developed in the English as a second language context. Since Japanese English learning environment is the English as a foreign language, Japanese students' motivation study was pointed out to consider the educational setting by Kimura, Nakata, & Okumura (2001). Takagi (2000) conducted a research to investigate the relationship between motivation and grammar learning among high school students. The result of comparing the two groups whose intention were learning for the sake of exams or learning for gaining knowledge of culture and

found out that the latter group had more positive attitudes in grammar learning (Takagi, 2000).

3. Research Questions

One of the reasons for the choice of the dictogloss for the study are that it is a listening task, because in listening learners are focusing on meaning and can 'bypass' grammar. And it also requires cooperative work among the students, because the author believes in using a teacher-centered approach at the beginning but then gradually tasks that give more and more responsibility to the students. This should help learners to move beyond explicit to more implicit knowledge. Lastly, students whose English proficiency levels differ must negotiate with each other to reach correct answers.

The research questions addressed were:

- (1) Is dictogloss effective for teaching English grammatical structure?
- (2) Is dictogloss effective for students' motivation learning English through collaborative activity?

4. Methods

4.1. Participants

One of the groups of four Japanese freshmen women in the junior college majoring in pre-elementary education participated in the study. The dictogloss task was conducted during the regular English Communication II class. This is a very practical course for future kindergarten teachers and nursery school teachers focused on the development of English communication skills along with the introduction of English songs, activities and picture books with teaching techniques. Occassionaly English

structures are brought up when necessary in the class. For the discussion (Task1), the grouping was automatically done simply according to the students seated near to each other. Therefore the proficiency level of each member in the same group was not necessarily the same. The group was chosen at random for the survey. In the chosen group, Student1 and Student2's English proficiency is higher than Student3 and Student4. Although they have had 6 years of English since 7th grade, the average student English proficiency is as a false beginner. They are taking the English Communication II as required for their degree.

The chosen group's discussion was recorded while doing the dictogloss task (see Appendix 1) then transcribed.

4.2. Materials

Lesson 23 on comparative and superlative forms of adjectives (p.22 and 23) from the Impact Grammar by Rod Ellis and Stephen Gaies (1999) was selected as the dictogloss material. The reasons for the choice are as follows.

- 1) It does not have any personalization questions and statements for such comparisons as "Who is the tallest in this class (or in your family)?", because such questions might hurt some very tall girls or very short ones as well. While looking for the material for this study the author has found that quite a few course books even which are said to be using authentic materials have such comparisons as shoe size, clothe size, etc.
- 2) The passage on Quiz Show can attract the students' attention because there are some popular quiz shows on TV. It has

some current information so students will need to listen to the questions very carefully. It seems there is still a tendency for using inappropriate content for the level of the students.

- 3) Each passage is short enough with a target structure so the students' concentration for the dictogloss can be sustained. For the teacher it is easier to keep the students on the engaged in the task.

Not only to focus on the target grammatical form but also to make it simpler to suit the participants English proficiency level, underlined parts of the original sentences below were either eliminated or reformed.

(material)

Quiz Show Host: Today's contestant, from Toronto, is Alison MacTavish. Welcome, Alison, Please say "True" or "False" after each statement I read to you. Remember, if you make three mistakes, the game is over, and you lose. Ready?

Alison: Yes.

Q.S.H.: All right. Question Number 1. The heaviest animal in the world is the elephant.

Alice: True.

Q.S.H.: I'm sorry, that's not correct. Elephants are heavy, but the blue whale is bigger than the elephant. Let's try Question Number 2. Mt. Fuji is the highest volcano in the world.

Alice: Yes, that's true.

Q.S.H.: That's wrong again. Mt. Fuji is high. but several volcanoes are higher than Mt. Fuji. Here's Question Number 3. The largest pyramid in the world is in Egypt.

Alice: True.

Q.S.H.: Oh, I'm sorry. Wrong again. The Great Pyramids of Egypt are large. But the

pyramid of Quetzalcoatl in Mexico is larger. In fact, it's the largest monument in the world.

4.3. Procedure

Description of the complete lesson

- 1) Warm-up (Introduction of a quiz show) : 5 minutes

The teacher acts as the quiz-show hostess and the students act as contestants. Students stand up and are asked some yes-no questions including some comparatives in English. The students who make mistakes have to sit down. This warm-up activity is not only to introduce the passage coming up to the next task and to motivate the students but it is also to give them a chance to recall the comparative forms.

- 2) Task 1 (Dictogloss) : 15 minutes

Have the class listen to a passage between the quiz-show host and the participant of the Quiz Show at normal speed and have them note down all the words they hear. Then they will work in small groups (4 or 5 students in each) and pool their resources to reconstruct the original passage. Each group will choose a secretary to write the results. After time is up, has each secretary write the results on the board.

- 3) Task 2 (Error identification) : 10 minutes

Hand the photocopy of p.22 used for the dictogloss to the students and have them listen to the tape again to fill in the blanks individually. Then go back to the same group and comparing their answers with each other. A member from each group corrects the mistakes on the board if they find any.

Then the teacher gives the answers and checks the students' answers on the board.

- 4) Task 3 (Noticing the gap) : 10 minutes

Hand the photocopy of p.23 of Impact

Grammar points of the CHECK is that it includes two grammatically correct sentences among incorrect ones. Not only does the level of the drill present more complex sentence structure but it also might provide more opportunities for the students to notice the target language structure itself as well as the difference in their own interlanguage.

5) Task 4 (Review) : Given as an assignment

Ask the students to make up 3 quiz questions on amazing facts or world records at home by getting information from such books like Guinness, or encyclopedia, magic books to have a quiz show at the beginning of the next class.

5. Results and Discussion

1. Participants' English proficiency data and the brief description of each participant

Table1 shows that each participant's English proficiency result based on the placement test conducted in April, 2016.

Table 1: Student's Ranking and the Test Scores

	Student's ranking of the 4 classes	Test Scores
Student 1	1/114	90/100
Student 2	33/ 114	72/100
Student 3	67/ 114	49/ 100
Student 4	78/114	41/100

Student 1, who volunteered to be a secretary for the group, is very active and says that she likes English. Her English proficiency is the highest of the four. The Student 2 is another active one in the class and her English proficiency is the 2nd highest among them. The Student 3 is just an average student and doesn't usually raise her hand even though when she knows the

answer. The Student 4 seldom raises her hand to answer and doesn't seem to like English and is very passive.

2. Performance of the task1

The number of utterances during the dictogloss task were 34 times (Student1), 22 times (Student2), 18 times (Student3), and 10 times (Student4), which is in direct proportion to their English proficiency. Student 1 and Student2 lead the group giving the words and phrases that they had taken notes while listening to the tape most of the time.

None of the students mentioned the grammatical terms such as "comparative", "superlative" or "adjective" however, Student2 noticed from the very beginning by saying " 'heaviest,'" we must change "y" to "iest". It is obvious that Student1 and Student3 have noticed that it's the matter of "superlative form" since they both agreed right away rather excitedly. While writing and reconstructing the sentences they listened to, their grammatical knowledge came up. For example, Student1 mentioned the need of "the" before the superlative form by saying "So the heaviest, we need 'the' ...". The rest of the students repeated the sentence starting with 'The heaviest animal in the ...'." answering the request of the Student1 to write it down. The result however had an error which is the omission of 'is', because they didn't go over what Student1 had written by listening to the members' utterances. At this stage, it is worth noting that Student4 joined them and repeated it together for the first time here. It seems that she started recalling the superlative form or if not, at least understanding what's going on since she did not join the previous one for 'heavier' to the

other girls.

In line, even though the task is planned for the comparative and superlative of adjective, through the dialogs, the students worked together correcting other grammatical structures such as plural forms and singular forms (see Appendix1, line 26 to 29, line 36 to 38) using each other's knowledge and the words and phrases taken from the listening to reconstruct the sentences.

3. Performance on the error correction task

The following numbers are the ones that each participant missed in CHECK on page 23 of Impact Grammar:

Student1... 1 error on No. 8

Student2... 2 errors on No.6 and 9

Student3... 3 errors on No.4, 7 and 8

Student4 ...5 errors on No.2, 4, 6, 7 and 9

Errors made by each student:

1) Errors made by Student1: No.8.

No.8. Chicago is not bigger as New York.
(given sentence)

→ Chicago is not as bigger as New York.
(corrected sentence)
(analysis)

Student1 only missed this one. The grammatical structure of "as + Adjective + as" is taught with the "comparative and superlative adjectives" in junior high school. Though the form of "as + Adjective + as" wasn't mentioned in Listening To Notice used for the task, Student1 seemed to have the knowledge of it which confused her. The result shows (see Appendix 2) that Question No. 8 had the lowest rate of correctness; only 14.8% of the students in the class 2 and 31.0% in the class 1.

☆ note

Class 1 ... The students had a brief review on the target structure before the tasks.

Class 2 ... The students had no review or explanation before doing the tasks on the target structure but had it after the tasks. The subject students belong to this class.

2) Errors made by Student2: No.6 and No.9

No.6. I thought the Egyptian pyramids were largest in the world. (given sentence)

→ I thought the Egyptian pyramids are largest in the world. (corrected sentence)

No.9. New York bigger than Chicago. (given sentence)

→ Correct
(analysis)

Student2 missed No. 6 because her attention went to the Sequence of Tense instead of looking for a mistake on superlative. This question is the third hardest that 18.5% of Class 2 and 44.8% of class 1 students had the correct answer. Through the dictogloss task Student2 showed that she had the knowledge of adding 'the' before the superlative, so she should not have missed this one. Her knowledge of Sequence of Tense made her confused. Student3 and Student4 missed the same question but answered differently. Among the students who missed the question both in class 1 and 2, the students whose English proficiency is higher made the same mistake as Student2 did. The question No. 9 is the third lowest correct answer rate: 22.2 % correctness in the class 2 and 34.5% in the class 1. The missing 'the' for the sentence was not noticed by Student2 as well as the most of the students who missed it. During the dictogloss the group omitted 'the' when reconstructing the comparative sentence.

3) Errors made by Student3: No.4, No.7 and

No.8

No.4. The longer snake ever found is over 10 meters long. (given sentence)

→ Correct

No.7. Blue whales are much heavier than elephants. (given sentence)

→ Blue whales are more heavier than elephants. (corrected sentence)

No.8. Chicago is not bigger as New York. (given sentence)

→ Chicago is not as bigger as Chicago. (corrected sentence)

(analysis)

Student3 made no mistakes on the basic comparative and superlative forms (seen in the questions No. 2, 3, 5, 6, and 9) which were dealt with through the dictogloss and the following task to fill in the blanks while listening to the same tape before the correction task. She missed 3 out of 5 questions on the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives in the placement test (see. Appendix 4) given last April. I could tell the dictogloss task and the followed task made her understand the grammatical structure more than before. Student4's mistakes for the question No.4 and 7 seem that the unfamiliar usage of 'ever' and 'much' in such a form which again had not mentioned through the dictogloss task. Especially the coined Japanese English phrase 'more better' which is popular presently might have confused her in the case of the question no. 7. Student3 made the same mistake on the question No. 8 as Student1 did.

4) Errors made by Student4: No.2, No.4, No.6, No.7 and No.9

No.2. The fastest elevator in the world travels over 40 kilometers per hour. (given sentence)

→ The fast elevator in the world travels

over 40 kilometers per hour. (corrected sentence)

No.4. The longer snake ever found is over 10 meters long. (given sentence)

→ The long snake ever found is over 10 meters long. (corrected sentence)

No.6. I thought the Egyptian pyramids were largest in the world. (given sentence)

→ I though the Egyptian pyramids were large in the world. (corrected sentence)

No.7. Blue whales are much heavier than elephants. (given sentence)

→ Blue whales are more heavie than elephants. (corrected sentence)

No.9. New York bigger than Chicago. (given sentence)

→ New York is biger than Chicago. (corrected sentence)

(analysis)

Student4 missed 5 questions out of 9, however, when details are checked, No.9 is missed merely because of the spelling mistake and No.4 and No.7 have unfamiliar forms, therefore the result of her error correction shows her understanding on the structure is better than before.

Student4 made a mistake on the question No. 9, however it is only the spelling mistake. Other examples of such spelling mistakes found in the class 1 and 2 are 'heavie' for heavy and 'largger' for larger. Such errors resulting from overgeneralization are found among the lower English proficiency students through this study. To avoid it, such a basic visual drill as UNDERSTANDING THE GRAMMAR POINT on page 23 before doing the CHECK is necessary.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how dictogloss is

effective for the students learning specific grammatical structure and motivation. The result of task 2, which was given after task1, shows that the errors made by each participant on the multiple choice questions were very few and the following activity of correction with the group made the result perfect. However, the results of their performance on the error correction task using the CHECK on page 23 of Impact Grammar show none of the participants got perfect scores even though some development was found. Since the target structure was not a newly introduced form, it was a little disappointing. However, the result supports one of the general characteristics of the learning process and of language learners give by Larsen-Freeman. That is that learners learn when they are ready to do so, and he acquisition is a gradual process involving the mapping of form, meaning, and use (Larsen-Freeman, 1991). The result of the existence of some other errors besides the target structure through the dictogloss suggests the organic way of learning is the key. Therefore recycling the same grammatical structures using different tasks on both reproductive tasks and creative tasks can move the students' explicit knowledge towards implicit knowledge. Because of the limited time, task 4 was not completed. If the participants were able to complete the task and the post-test, the result could have been much better and the learning could have reached the level of acquisition. Learning has not become acquisition of knowledge. .

The use of the dictogloss task served quite effectively not only for the target structure but also for the participants. This study has suggested the importance of paying attention

to the various personality traits for doing tasks. According to Larsen-Freeman (Freeman, 1991), various personality traits have been thought to facilitate or inhibit SLA. Through the dictogloss task the participants' personalities such as self-esteem (Heyde, 1979), reaction to anxiety (Bailey, 1983; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989), sensitivity to rejection (Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1979), extroversion, tolerance of ambiguity correlated positively which lead the success. For example, the change of the attitude of Student4, who is a very passive and quiet listener in the regular class, during the task was worth mentioning. Once she could join the other girls to repeat the reconstructing sentence together, she became motivated to be more active in learning and to be more responsible for the task at hand. She volunteered by saying, "I'll check it with my electric dictionary." when they were not sure of the spelling and later she even asked questions like "What's blue whale?" and expressed herself saying like "I agree. Mine says, blue something "is", even though her comments and questions were not directly related to the target grammatical structure itself. However, the ordinarily quiet passive student like Student 4's change of the motivation in the dictogloss task suggests to reconsider the way of teaching grammar.

English Communication II that is for Pre-elementary majors is not a directly grammar orientated course, however the result of the study suggests within the context of conversational English, there is a way to integrate specific grammar that is useful for basic English conversation into conversation, an inductive approach to grammar and organic learning.

The author is fully aware that the present study is a case study and therefore it is not free from the limitations or bias with regards to research participants' size and the data collection. To generalize the results of this study, only one group of research participants' result made it difficult. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted involving in a larger number of participants. In addition, the specific dictogloss material used in this study was read, tape-recorded, and transcribed. Thus, the experimental conditions of the recording may have affected the research participants' performance and results.

Note

The students' comments in Class1 and Class2 including the research participants enjoyed dictogloss especially the task require cooperated activity and developed positive feelings toward English grammar.

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12. S2: tr.u.e, so R in "true".
 13. S4: I'll check it with my electric dictionary. ... yeah, it's true.
 14. S1: Got it, so, what's next?
 15. S2: I couldn't get the next one. Sorry, something, something...I heard "sorry" at the beginning.
 16. S1: The host said "I'm sorry or something, so the answer wasn't right.
 17. S2: Then, he gave a correct answer. I got "elephant, large blue something" How about you?
 18. S3: So... "blue whale" .
 19. S1: Ms. Kanazawa, how do you spell, "whale"?
 20. T: w-h-a-l-e. (smiles and walks away)
 21. S1: Thank you.
 22. S4: What's "whale"?
 23. S2: Must be an animal, you see, My grandfather was a Taiyo Whale's fan. Their symbol was a whale.
 24. S1: Oh, it makes sense. So the sentence would be...comparing elephant and blue whale...
 25. S2: yeah, so...blue whale is bigger than ... bigger than? We need "than", don't we? Bigger than elephant.
 26. S3: "elephants", no?
 27. S1: yeah, yeah, we need "s", elephants.
 28. S3: My memo says, elephant... And blue whale "is", ... not "blue whales are", I mean at the beginning, then, it must be elephant.
 29. S4: I agree. Mine says, blue something "is".
 30. S1: Let's go on to the next one.
 31. S3: Mt. Fuji, volcano...
 32. S2: Mt. Fuji is high... And ...something like ...some or several volcano, ...higher than what?
 33. S1: higher than Mt. Fuji, no?

Appendix

1. Transcript (translated from Japanese into English)

1. S1: The first one is about the elephant, right?
2. S2: Yeah... so...heavy...no, no, wait, "heaviest", we must change "y" to iest, huh?
3. S1, 3, 4: Right, right, heaviest.
4. S1: So the heaviest, we need "the" ... So come on, tell me, I'm the secretary...
5. S1,2,3,4: The heaviest animal in the ...
6. S2: in the world... elephant.
7. S3, 4: yeah, yeah, in the world elephant.
8. S1: Ok, in the world elephant. Done! Then, Alice says,
9. S2: True. That's what I heard.
10. S3: Me, too.
11. S1: Is it L or R?

34. S3: yeah, I guess so, anyway, write it down.
35. S1: Ok, so say it again, I'll write... err
36. S2: 3, 4: Mt. Fuji is high. Several volcano are higher than Mt. Fuji.
37. S1: Several volcano are... er... is...which "is" or "are"?
38. S2: My memo says, "are". Several means some, right? No? Then volcanos, plural?
39. S1: Ok, then, volcanos, do we need, "es" or "s" after volcano?
40. S4.: Didn't you hear something like "Everest" ?
41. S1: Everest? No, not Everest.
42. S2: Egypt, maybe. That's number 3 question.
43. S1: Yeah, so number 3. You must tell me ...The...
44. S4: The...the jet pyu...something...
45. S2,3: Pyramid, pyramid in Egypt..
46. S1: Yeah, pyramid, right, who knows the spelling?
47. S3: "is in" isn't it? I heard longest... Sorry, not sure.
48. S2: Not longest, it's about pyramid, you see... my memo says, "large" .
49. S1: The pyramid is in Egypt.
50. S3: Something was in there.
51. S4: Like what?
52. S3: in the world?
53. S4: Something Pyramid at the beginning, like "jet" .
54. S3: yeah, year,...but not jet, I don't think. Wasn't it "gray"? Anyone heard any word before pyramid?
55. S1: I've never heard of a gray pyramid, do you?
56. S2: Sounds strange... 'big'?
57. S1: Right, right, Big pyramid ... err...in ...
58. S2: You need "the" at the beginning,
59. S1: Sorry, year, right, largest so,The largest pyramid , er...I didn't hear " in the world" .
60. S2: I heard it, not sure though.
61. S3: Me, too. Something is in Egypt.
62. S4: That's "pyramid" , isn't it?
63. S1: You must be right, so let's see...
64. S1, 2, 3, 4: The largest pyramid is in Egypt ... in the world...
65. S2: Wait, in the world shouldn't be at the end, er... The largest in the world...no, no... The largest pyramid is in the...no, OK, I know,... The largest pyramid..
66. S1,2,3,4: in the world !! is in Egypt.
67. S1: OK, sounds right. Then what?
68. S2: Alice made a mistake again.
69. S4: Yeah, she missed 3 times.
70. S1: She missed all of them, yeah.
71. S2: So the host gave the right answers.
72. S3: Did you get it?
73. S1: Mine says, "Egypt's pyramid is large but, pyramid in Mexico is the largest in the world.
74. S3: Egypt's pyramid is larger than ... No?
75. S1: We can't say that, you see, because larger than what? No information, see? So "not larger than" , but large is good enough.
76. S3: Ok, I see.
77. S2: "monument" should be in there.
78. S3: I've written that word in my memo, too.
79. S1: Um, where... Ok, here, that's right, it has to be " ...the largest monument in the world" .
80. S2: Done, huh?
81. S1: Yeah.

2. Results of CHECKING (No. 2 ~ 10)

Class 1 (29 students)	Class 2 (27 students)
2. 27/29 (93.1%)	20/27 (74.1%)
3. 23/29 (79.3%)	15/27 (55.6%)
4. 20/29 (69.0%)	13/27 (48.1%)
5. 26/29 (89.7%)	17/27 (63.0%)
6. 13/29 (44.8%)	5/27 (18.5%)
7. 18/29 (62.1%)	19/27 (70.4%)
8. 9/29 (31.0%)	4/27 (14.8%)
9. 10/29 (34.5%)	6/27 (22.2%)
10. 20/29 (69.0%)	16/27 (59.3%)