

Audio-Instructional Strategy as A Panacea to Listening Challenges Among Primary Pupils in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT: *Listening is one of the language skills that poses challenges to learners most especially second language learners. The study finds out how audio-instructional strategy can be used to help learners: to discriminate English sounds, to improve listening comprehension and spelling abilities of learners. A sample of three hundred and twenty (320) are purposely selected across all public and private primary schools in urban and rural areas of Ikere Local Government of Ekiti State. There are two groups: experimental and control groups that are given pretest and posttest through an instrument tagged. “Effective Audio- Instructional Strategy Test” (EAIST). Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected are analyzed through t-test inferential statistics and the study finds out that those samples that are treated with audio-instructional strategy perform better than those not so treated in their abilities to discriminate English sounds, respond correctly listening comprehension questions and write correct spellings. The study recommends the use of audio- instructional strategy to ameliorate pupils’ listening challenges.*

KEYWORDS: listening, comprehension, discriminating sounds, spelling and instructional strategy

INTRODUCTION

Each community possesses its unique language, serving as a crucial element of their identity, diligently safeguarded for future generations. Language is crucial as it serves as the principal mode of communication between persons. Language is the means by which interactions, both personal and interpersonal, are maintained. Listening is a linguistic skill that involves receiving information via the sense of hearing. It is an informal talent that is easily acquired by individuals without any auditory impairments. Every individual possesses it inherently, as it is an innate quality that is not acquired via formal instruction, but it may be enhanced through structured academic training. It

possesses characteristics that pertain to both hearing and mental processes. Active listening plays a crucial role in daily tasks as it facilitates the transmission of verbal instructions and directions between individuals. Conflicts are settled by engaging in amicable listening to ascertain which side has caused offence to the other. Possessing a receptive demeanour is essential in order to be an effective arbiter in any situation. In order to maintain harmony within a household, it is essential for parents, children, and siblings to actively engage in listening to one another. In a classroom setting, for instructors to not exert effort without achieving results, it is necessary for all parties involved - teachers, students, and parents - to possess a positive and attentive attitude towards listening. Essentially, this implies that listening plays a crucial role in teaching and learning scenarios.

As previously mentioned, this process encompasses both auditory and cognitive functions. The auditory component entails accurately perceiving sounds through the ears and subsequently processing them by assigning meaning depending on the listener's existing knowledge. Prior knowledge is essential in the act of listening, since it enables the listener to effectively digest and comprehend the speaker's intended message. This necessitates the utilisation of his existing knowledge in order to respond effectively to the information being conveyed.

According to Blewelt (2011), listening is the act of understanding and comprehending spoken words. Ozbay (2013) describes hearing as the conscious perception of sounds based on personal preferences. Brown (1994) asserts that the significance of listening in language acquisition cannot be overstated. Rost (2000) argues that listening is the most commonly employed language skill, supporting this viewpoint.

According to Ozbay (2005), listening involves the processes of receiving a communication, perceiving the message, and comprehending its meaning. Listening entails more than simply seeing the other side without active engagement. It involves exerting effort to receive and comprehend signals with the aim of achieving complete communication (Omololu, 1984, Umangan 2007).

Purdy (2018) defines listening as the act of hearing, interpreting, and responding to both spoken and nonverbal stimuli. Nevertheless, while listening is crucial for human life, Unoh (1974) argues that it has not been given the same level of importance as other abilities such as speaking, reading, and writing, which both learners and instructors prioritise and focus on. Gbenedio (1996) further notes that learners' listening skills are insufficient for achieving comprehension, which in turn has negatively impacted their academic performance in English language and other courses. Chastain (1971) supports this notion, as he regards listening comprehension as a neglected ability.

The English language in Nigeria has achieved a prestigious position surpassing other main Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. Teaching this subject is now required in elementary, secondary, and higher educational institutions. It has evolved as the primary medium of communication for educational guidance across all levels of academia. An observation has been

made that elementary school kids face difficulties in their listening comprehension, which has a negative impact on their other language abilities. The students appear to lack comprehension due to challenges in perceiving sounds and words accurately in the classroom, difficulties in recalling basic learning material, inability to write words correctly or take notes from lessons, and the loss of some or all of the taught material.

The purpose of the study is to examine how instructional strategy can be used to ameliorate listening challenges among primary school pupils in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The study intends to look into how challenges posed by listening skills can be solved using audio-instructional strategy to aid the listening comprehension levels of pupils. The purpose is also to discover a better strategy of teaching the correct perception and pronunciation of English sounds, how spelling challenges can be resolved and how listening. Comprehension can be made easier among pupils in primary school.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio- instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to discriminate sounds.
2. There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to write correct answers to listening comprehension.
3. There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to write correct spellings of words.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Each community attempts to maintain its existence through the use of its language. Human society is characterised by the transmission of values, conventions, historical facts, and knowledge through the medium of language. Language has a crucial role in maintaining a peaceful society, but it also serves as a means to restore order in a chaotic society.

A notable distinction between humans and other animals lies in the fact that humans possess a remarkable degree of psychological and sociological adaptability. The capacity for cognitive adaptability can manifest in several manners. Animals are bound by a rather inflexible framework of behavioural patterns, instincts, and responses to stimuli, while humans possess the freedom to choose their own behavioural patterns, responses to stimuli, and exhibit intellect. A concise and precise method to express this idea is to state that only humans have the ability to exert influence over their surroundings and other creatures via the use of language.

Sapir (1921) describes language as a distinctly human and non-instinctive system of symbols that are intentionally created. Language skills often encompass the abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The four language skills may be categorised into two groups: primary skills,

which include listening and speaking, and secondary skills, which are reading and writing. Furthermore, it should be noted that hearing and reading are classified as receptive skills, including both informal and formal contexts. On the other hand, speaking and writing are categorised as productive skills, applicable in both informal and formal settings. It is noteworthy that one ability is a precursor to another. Prior to delivering a speech, the speaker must have engaged in the act of actively listening. Proficiency in one language facilitates the acquisition of other language abilities.

Listening entails the use of both auditory and cognitive faculties. The term "auditory" refers to the process by which spoken words are converted into sound waves that are detected by the ears and then transmitted to the brain for interpretation. This interpretation is dependent on the listener's existing knowledge and understanding. Listening is a process that involves a minimum of two persons, known as participants or interlocutors, who possess a common set of language codes. Prior to the occurrence of listening, this state has significance. There exists a fundamental distinction between hearing and listening. Listening involves providing feedback in the form of a response, action, or emotion that aligns with the speaker's message. However, not everything that is heard can be effectively replied to.

According to Arevalo (2010), listening is considered a talent that requires creativity. On the other hand, Hamounda (2013) describes listening as a mental process that is intricate and includes perception, attention, and cognition. Gboneim (2013) asserts that hearing is a dynamic talent that necessitates the handling of several tasks, including distinguishing between distinct sounds and interpreting stress and intonation. Establishing a connection between listening and learning has significant importance. For an average student to attain academic success, it is crucial to possess the skills of efficient listening and reading. Hamounda (2013) substantiates this claim by drawing a parallel between the acquisition of knowledge and the reception of sufficient input. Listening is crucial, but it cannot be accomplished without achieving concentration.

Oyinloye (1996) categorises the process of listening into four distinct stages: hearing, listening, auditing, and cognizing. Tyagi (2013) outlines the components of the listening process as follows: auditory perception, comprehension, retention, assessment, and reaction. According to Alonso (2012), several forms of listening exist in everyday life, including face-to-face conversations, watching television or listening to the radio, receiving announcements, and participating in meetings or lectures.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was quasi-experimental design that has two groups: experimental and control groups. Both were given pretest after which the experimental group is exposed to treatment for a period of time on basic concepts in English language that assist listening skill. Such concepts include: dictation, listening comprehension passages, minimal pairs, synonyms and antonyms. The control group continues with its conventional teaching after both groups are given post- test to ascertain the impact of the treatment.

The design is represented below:

X₁. O. X₂

X₃. -. X₄

X₁ pretest experimental group

O treatment on audio instructional strategy

X₂ post-test experimental group

X₃ pretest control group

_ no treatment for control group

X₄ post-test control group

The population of the study were primary school pupils, male and female in urban and rural areas of the study area. It involves both private and public primary schools in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. Ikere Local Government is one of the sixteen local government in Ekiti State with one Local Community Development Area (LCDA). The sample size was three hundred and twenty (320) drawn from different socio- economic background. The purposive sampling technique is used to draw the samples and they are later randomly divided into experimental and control groups. They are primary five pupils in primary schools.

The research instrument was a test package tagged 'Effective Audio- Instructional Strategy Test' of forty items in consonance with the termly scheme of work. This covers topics in English language that are taped with different test items on concepts that are taught to the experimental group: dictation, listening comprehension passages, minimal pairs, synonyms, antonyms and homophones. The procedure of treatment is that the experimental group is exposed to the teaching of the highlighted concepts in English language while the control group is busy with its conventional method of teaching after which post- test is conducted.

The instrument was validated by experts in English language in ensuring the right pronunciation of words and sentences into tapes for accurate perception by samples. Items were also selected in the right proportion considering the duration of the test. Corrections are done as pointed out.

The instrument was administered on sixty (60) respondents who do not participate in the study. A test- retest reliability is used at an interval of a month while the data collected are analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 is obtained at the significant level of 0.05.

Data obtained were analyzed using t- test inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio- instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to discriminate sounds.

Table 1: T-test analysis for difference between the learners instructed with audio- instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to discriminate sounds

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{table}	Decision
Post- test control	160	9.11	11.99	318	10.17	1.96	Rejected
Post- test experimental group	160	24.46	14.86				

From the above table, it shows the post -test control mean of 9.11 and standard deviation of 11.99 while the post -test experimental group mean is 24.46 and standard deviation of 14.86 the t-calculated is 10.17 which is greater than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance which nullifies the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so treated.

Research Question 2: There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to write correct answers to listening comprehension.

Table 2: T-test analysis for difference between the pupils instructed with audio-instructional strategy in listening comprehension abilities and those not so treated

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t_{cal}	t_{table}	Decision
Post- test control	160	11.80	11.95	318	10.94	1.96	Rejected
Post- test experimental group	160	28.74	16.54				

The above table shows the post -test control mean of 11.80 and standard deviation of 11.95 while the post -test experimental group mean is 28.74 and standard deviation of 16.54. The t- calculated is 10.94 while the table value is 1.96. This rejects the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the pupils instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so treated in their spelling abilities.

Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the learners instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so in their abilities to write correct spellings of words

Table 3: T-test analysis for difference between pupils instructed with audio-instructional strategy in spelling abilities and those not so treated

Group	N	X	SD	df	t _{cal}	t _{table}	Decision
Post- test control	160	10.38	12.79	318	10.23	1.96	Rejected
Post- test experimental group	160	27.07	16.22				

Table 3 shows the post -test control mean of 10.38 and standard deviation of 12.79 while the post - test experimental mean is 27.07 and standard deviation of 16.22. This rejects the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the pupils instructed with audio-instructional strategy and those not so treated.

DISCUSSION

The majority of Nigerian learners see English as their second language, and they face the difficulties of interference. Nigerian learners encounter problems in pronouncing specific English consonants that are absent in their native language, resulting in a linguistic barrier during communication. In the Nigerian environment, learners face difficulties in acquiring the prosody or suprasegmental aspects of the English language, particularly when interference occurs, especially at the phonological level. Fafunwa and Soyinka (1989) observe that difficulties develop when pronouncing English words with the tonal patterns of Nigerian languages, rather than the typical English accent on certain syllables.

Dairo (1998) highlights the disparities and anomalies that can occasionally arise between the orthography and phonetics of words. Put simply, mispronouncing English words frequently results in confusion and misinterpretation of the speaker's intended message. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the majority of Nigerian languages lack dental fricative sounds, resulting in the substitution of their original phonetic elements. Therefore, it is crucial to assist learners in accurately pronouncing sounds, a task that the method has successfully addressed. The method incorporates accurate pronunciation of words through dictation and minimal pairings.

Listening is an innate receptive talent that requires individuals to listen with complete focus and awareness in order to fully grasp and understand its meaning. The comprehension of spoken language is influenced by several factors, including the ability to extract meaning from what is

being said, relying on the listeners' prior knowledge, and evaluating the significance and accuracy of the words within the listeners' cognitive framework.

According to Al Jarf (2010), spelling in the English language is a significant difficulty for many second language learners. Furthermore, Bowen (2011) substantiates the claim that spelling necessitates authors to possess many language competencies, including phonological, morphological, visual memory skills, semantic linkages, and a sufficient understanding of spelling rules. Accurate spelling instruction is crucial, particularly during the early stages of education. This research incorporates the practice of dictating words and phrases in the audio-instructional technique to help students accurately comprehend auditory information and understand how phonemes may be transcribed in written form. According to Warda (2005), spellings have an impact on students' written abilities, however Adoniu (2016) argues that teaching spellings helps improve reading and writing skills. Therefore, it is crucial for students to get appropriate support through audio-instructional strategies.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, the study concludes that listening skill can be improved among pupils if teachers can employ different teaching strategies most especially the audio-instructional strategy which can help pupils to remediate their challenges in listening comprehension, spelling and right sound pronunciation in English language. This will make teaching of listening more interesting and participatory among pupils.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings of the study, the study recommends that:

1. Pupils should be assisted in listening skill as it poses challenges to them
2. Audio instructional strategy might serve as an instructional intervention to resolve listening challenges
3. Constant practice and drilling should be encouraged to assist learners in writing correct spellings of words.
4. Teachers should be motivated such that they can delve voluntarily into strategies that can solve listening challenges.

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