Effects of Audio- Lingual and Total Physical Response Instructional Methods on Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English

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Abstract

The low performance annually recorded in the English language examinations, particularly at the secondary school level has been linked to ineffective teaching methods usually employed by language teachers to teach oral English. Besides, the failure rate consistently observed in oral English examinations was as a result of inadequate strategies adopted to teach this aspect of the English language. Hence, this study examined the effects of the Audio-Lingual and Total Physical Response Instructional Methods on Secondary School Students Academic Achievement in Oral English, with a view to determining which of the methods is best suited to teach Oral English at the secondary school level. A pretest- posttest, control group quasi experimental design was adopted for the study. Twenty-four Senior Secondary Schools were randomly selected from the senior secondary public schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. In all, a population of one hundred and twenty (120) participants was selected for the study. The instrument that used was Achievement Test in Oral English. Hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 Alpha levels. The data obtained were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance and Multiple Classification Analysis.The results showed that participants that were exposed to the Audio-Lingual Instructional Methodsperformed brilliantly well than those exposed to Total Physical ResponseInstructional Method and the Conventional Teaching Method in Oral English.It is concluded that the Audio-Lingual Instructional Methods has the potentials of becoming a veritable innovative method of teaching oral English in our schools, particularly at the secondary schools that is the thrust of this experimentation.It is recommended that language teachers should adopt the Audio-Lingual Instructional Methods in teaching oral English in our secondary schools. Additionally, in-service training, conferences, lectures, workshops and seminars be organized regularly for language teachers in order to assist them learn more of current, up-to-date and innovative approaches, methods and techniques of teaching and learning oral English in our schools, and of which can positively obliterate the incessant failure rate that is annually recorded in English Language examinations at the secondary school educational level.

Introduction

The problem of students' poor performance and low achievement in secondary school subjects have been a major source of concern and interest in the Nigerian educational sector, and the need for intervention has been acknowledged by all the stakeholders. Recent trend in students' performance in English language examinations have lent more credence to the reality of continued decline in students' performance. Among the factors

identified are poor study habit, anxiety, poor self-concept, poor motivation and poor teaching methodology. It is worrisome to note that a high percentage of students completing secondary school education can hardly or better still pronounce English words satisfactorily. Pronunciation fallacies are easily observable in their spoken mode of communication As rightly observed in the Chief Examiner's report(Nigeria) of 2007, that 'tests on oral English, lexis and structure and essay writing are three main aspects of language learning that have continually posed problem to students in English language examinations, and which have resulted in the perennial poor performance in the subject,' Jibowo (2007) also corroborates the above observation by reiterating that 'phonological, grammatical and lexical aspects' are peculiar problematic areas for English language learners.

Different approaches have evolved as a result of different conceptions of the nature of language and how it can be taught and learnt. Notable among them are: Classical, Structural, Functional-notional, and the Situational approaches. These approaches are hinged on various methods that include: Grammar translation, Direct method, Silent-Way, Suggestopedia and Community Language learning methods, just to mention a few.There are a lot of strategies a classroom teacher can employed to teach the supra-segmental features of English.Some methods and techniques had been adopted in the past to teach oral English but of which little or no achievements were recorded. Some of the methods include: using recording as a model. A teacher that has a fluent command of English can serve as a model to teach the oral aspect of English, particularly its prosodic features. However, a teacher whose pronunciation is faulty can use recorded materials to teach some aspects of supra-segmental features of English to students. The teacher plays the difficult words on the tape recorder and then monitors the activities of the students. However, this teaching aid has been seen as ineffective as lacking the flexibility of a live teacher. Other strategies include: using mirrors, hand signals and flashcards.

The inability of some language teachers at marshalling their teaching properly in language classes accounted for low comprehension of the acquisition of necessary rudiments of language development, particularly the phonological aspect of the language, which invariably affects the communicative abilities of some of the learners (Mabekoje, 2009). It was recently that attention was given to developing communication skills because it was assumed that proper language use is measured by proper manipulation of the various skills and techniques of language skills. Research has also shown that proper language use entails proper and effective demonstration of the knowledge of the four language skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Actually, the acquisition of the basic language skills of the target language is paramount, for they play crucial role in human learning and communicative abilities. The question now arises: how can a language teacher help learners learn or acquire these basic language skills, particularly oral language skills and strategies? The answer to this problem is not far-fetched, language teachers should strive to improve their teaching skills through the acquisition of innovative methods and techniques of teaching English Language through regular training and re-training of teachers funded by government.

Linguists have demonstrated the primacy of speech over other language skills. This is further authenticated by the realization that in real life oral communication is more frequently used than written communication. It appears

however, that the importance of oral communication is not adequately reflected in the way teachers of English teach the various aspects of the language in the classroom especially in the second language situation. Many teachers tend to favour the teaching of structure, grammar, reading and writing at the expense of the skills of listening and speaking. In few cases teachers manage to teach the segmental features. Many students of English as a second language and even their teachers cannot communicate orally with intelligibility and comprehensibility. Teachers lack adequate proficiency in the language and as such produce students whose oral communication is defective. There is the need to provide teachers and pre-service teachers' opportunity to improve their knowledge of English language especially the oral skills component.

Language proficiency demands that the users of the language should be sufficiently competent in the four basic skills of the language. It has been observed that learners of English as a second language find the speaking skills (oracy skills) more difficult than other language skills. English is taught in schools by mostly non-native speakers who are not very competent in the language especially the oral aspect. As a result, most teachers tend to shy away from teaching oral communication. This vicious cycle needs to be broken if learners of English as a second language, especially in developing countries, will be able to cope with the ever increasing demand of English as a national and international language.To be able to speak and listen in a second language situation, it is clear that language learners need something other than just phonemic correctness. What seems important is the ability to comprehend and produce in a near-native-like fashion aspects of pronunciation such as stress, intonation, rhythm and pacing, and to use gestures and body language appropriately; in other words, to have both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence(Arowosegbe, 2005). In many cases, however, pronunciation teaching still focuses on discrete phonemic awareness and production.

In the light of the above submission, it is germane and important to arrive at a reliable instructional method that could be employed by language teachers to make teaching and learning of oral English facile. Hence, this study contrasted the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and the Total Physical Response (TPR) with the Conventional Traditional Method of teaching oral English, with a view of determining which one is most effective in teaching oral English in our secondary schools. The two methods, thus, the Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) and the Total Physical Response (TPR), were so chosen because there have never been empirical experiments on the two methods, particularly the ways they were contrasted in this study. Moreover, the two methods are student-centred instructional strategies, and finally the two methods are scientific in nature because the two methods involve the manipulations of kinesthetic sensory organs of the learners.

Expected Behavioural Objectives of Learners of the Supra-segmental features of English

Relative competence in the prosodic features of English is the dependent variable in the study. As such, it is necessary to enumerate the various expectations from the learners of the supra-segmental features of English. Learners should be to demonstrate the following specific skills and strategies that are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Learners should be to recognize the roles of stress, rhythm and intonation in conveying meaning in English. Also,

they should be able to produce natural English stress patterns, using loudness, length and vowel quality to differentiate between stressed and unstressed words and syllables. Moreover, learners should be to use pauses, stress and linking of words to produce natural English rhythmic structures;use appropriate intonation to convey meaning;produce and comprehend reduced forms of words and phrases, and understand speech containing pauses, corrections and other performance variables.

Sequel to the above, learners should be to use facial expressions, body language and other non-verbal cues to help decipher a speaker's intended meaning. They should also be able to use non-verbal cues, including facial expressions and body language, to enhance their own ability to convey meaning. Furthermore, they should be able monitor their own oral production and use strategies like pause fillers, stalling devices, self-correction and backtracking to enhance the clarity of the message.

Finally, learners should be to use listening strategies like guessing at meanings and appealing for help;use strategies for beginning, sustaining and ending a conversation; handle with confidence speech acts like complaining, requesting and apologizing, anduse politeness strategies that are appropriate for the situation.

Understanding the Audio-lingual Teaching Method

This teaching technique was initially called the Army Method, and was the first to be based on linguistic theory and behavioral psychology. Based on Skinner's Behaviorism theory, it assumed that a human being can be trained using a system of reinforcement. Correct behaviour receives positive feedback, while errors receive negative feedback. This approach to learning is similar to the Direct Method, in that the lesson takes place entirely in the target language. Emphasis is on the acquisition of patterns in common everyday dialogue.

The Audio-lingual Method was widely used in the 1950s and 1960s, and the emphasis was not on the understanding of words, but rather on the acquisition of structures and patterns in common everyday dialogue. These patterns are elicited, repeated and tested until the responses given by the student in the foreign language are automatic**.** The Audio-lingual Method is still in use today, though normally as a part of individual lessons rather than as the foundation of the course. These types of lessons can be popular as they are relatively simple, from the teacher's point of view, and the learner always knows what to expect. Some of the most famous supporters of this method were Giorgio Shenker, who promoted guided self learning with the Shenker method in Italy, and Robin Callan, who created the Callan method. This extensive memorization, repetition and over-learning of patterns were the key to the method's success, as students could often see immediate results, but it was also its weakness.

Features of Audio Lingua Method

There are basic features of the Audio Lingua Method. The features are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Usually, the unit of instruction to be presented to learners of English is presented in dialogue form. There is also dependence of mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over learning.Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time, and the structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills. Thus, drills are used to teach structural patterns.

Moreover, there is also little or no grammatical explanation; grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than

deductive explanation.Grammatical explanations are kept to a minimum. Also, vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context and this is taught in context.

Furthermore, there is much use of tapes, language laboratories and visual aids. Great importance is attached to pronunciation.Focus is on pronunciation and set phrases are memorised with a focus on intonation.

There is also a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content. Also, very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted.There is great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances. Successful responses are instantly reinforced.

Instructional Processes of Audio-Lingual Method

In order to understand fully the dynamics of the Audio-Lingual Method, teachers and learners as well need to know the following instructional processes of the Audio-Lingual Method. The instructional processes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

There should bedialogue memorization. Thus, students memorize an opening dialogue using mimicry and applied role-playing. Also, there is backward build-up or expansion drill. Thus, teacher breaks a line into several parts, students repeat each part starting at the end of the sentence and expanding backwards through the sentences and adding each part in sequence.

Furthermore, there must be repetition drill while students repeat teacher's model as quickly and accurately as possible. This is supported by chain drill while students ask and answer each other one-by-one in a circular chain around the classroom. The next line of action is the introduction.

Moreover, a lot of instructional drills apart from the above mentioned ones are introduce at this stage. Single -slot substitution drill where teacher states a line from the dialogue, then use a word or a phrase as a cue that students, when repeating the line, must substitute into the sentence in the correct place. Also, transformation drill if further introduced. This involve teacher providing a sentence that must be turned into something else, for example a question to be turned into a statement, an active sentence to be turned into a negative statement.

The use of minimal pairs is also an instructional process. This entails using contrastive analysis; teacher selects a pair of words that sound identical except for a single sound that typically poses difficulty for the learners. Students are made to pronounce and differentiate the two words. The teacher can also support this by using the complete- the- dialogue strategywhere selected words are erased from a line in the dialogue in which students must find and insert. Finally, the teacher can adopt the question-and-answer drill to evaluate the learning process. Students will be made to answer or ask questions very quickly.

Understanding the Total Physical Response (TPR) Method

Originally developed by James Asher, an American professor of psychology, in the 1960s, Total Physical Response (TPR) is based on the theory that the memory is enhanced through association with physical movement. It is also closely associated with theories of mother tongue language acquisition in very young children, where they respond physically to parental commands, such as 'pick it up' and 'put it down'. TPR as an approach to teaching a second language is based, first and foremost, on listening and this is linked to physical actions which are designed to reinforce comprehension of particular basic items. It is a language method that combines

information and skills through the use of the kinesthetic sensory system. This combination of skills allows the student to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. As a result, this success leads to a high degree of motivation.

A typical TPR activity might contain instructions such as 'walk to the door', and 'open the door'. The students are required to carry out the instructions by physically performing the activities. Given a supportive classroom environment, there is little doubt that such activities can be both motivating and fun, and it is also likely that with even a fairly limited amount of repetition basic instructions such as these could be assimilated by the learners, even if they were unable to reproduce them accurately themselves.

Features of Total Physical Response

The features are explained in the following paragraphs.

The teacher directs and students "act" in response.Listening and physical response skills are emphasized over oral production, and interrogatives are also heavily used, whenever possible.

Also, humour is injected into the lessons to make them more enjoyable for learners.Students are not required to speak until they feel naturally ready or confident enough to do so.Grammar and vocabulary are emphasized over other language areas. Spoken language is emphasized over written language.

Instructional Processes involved in Total Physical Response Method

In order to understand fully the dynamics of the Total Physical Response Method, teachers and learners as well need to know the following instructional processes of the Total Physical Response Method. The instructional processes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Learning is enhanced byusing commands to direct behavior. The use of commands requiring physical actions from the students in response is the major teaching technique.

There is also role reversal, thus, students direct the teacher and fellow learners. Furthermore, teacher can use action sequence. Thus, teacher gives interconnected directions which create a sequence of actions. As student progress in proficiency, more and more commands are added to the action sequence. Most everyday activities can be broken down into a sequence of actions

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a pretest-posttest control group quasi experimental design.

Variables in the Study

(a)The independent variables in the study are:

i. Audio-Lingual Method
ii. Total Physical Response Method
iii. Conventional Method

(b) The dependent variable in the study is:

i. Academic Achievement

Sample and Sampling Technique

All senior secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun state, Nigeria, formed the target population for the study. For the purpose of fair representativeness, the schools involved in this study were selected using the stratified random sampling on the basis of the urban and rural dichotomy. Twenty-four Senior Secondary Schools were randomly selected from the senior secondary public schools. In all, a sample of one hundred and twenty (120) participants was selected for the study.

Research Instrument

A measuring instrument achievement test was designed for the study. The Achievement Test in English Prosodic Features was designed for both pre-

treatment and post-treatment assessments. The test contained 50 items, intended to establish students' knowledge of oral English.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The research instrument that was used for the study was given to experts for face, content and constructs validity of each item. Also, appropriate statistical means were used to determine its reliability co-efficient. The process of the item analysis of the achievement test involved discrimination and difficulty indices.

The test was administered to a sample of 60 students that were in SS1 of a school using test-retest procedure, adopting Cronbach Alpha technique. After two weeks of the first test, the questionnaire was re-administered to the same group of SS1 students. The scores of the two separate tests were correlated using Pearson's moment correlation coefficient and a correlation of 0.73 was obtained. Also, a reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained for the achievement test.

Research Procedure

The study was implemented over a period of eight weeks. The pretest specifically designed for the purpose of the study was first administered. Each experimental group was structured to reflect the nature and dynamics of the language method. Teachers' roles and students' activities were clearly stated. Each of the groups addressed the same instructional objectives based on the same chosen topics and exercises.

Method of Data Collection

At the eight week, the teacher administered the posttest for both experimental and control groups. The posttest was a domain-referenced test that covered the learning outcome and competencies tagged for the period of investigation. During the administration of the instruments, students were seated to conform to normal test administration. The test item for each of the participants was collected for appropriate analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The instrument for the collection of data was administered to students during the first and last sessions of their eight-week long regular weekly meetings. The data collected frompretest and posttest were analysed with the use of descriptive and inferential statistics.

The data obtained were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance and Multiple Classification Analysis.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of achievement scores of subjects

Group	**Mean**	**Standard Error**	**95% Confidence Interval**	**95% Confidence Interval**
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Audio-Lingual	36.611	.542	31.778	34.777
Total Response	31.443	.541	28.452	30.317
Conventional	25.732	.540	24-673	26.123

Results revealed that subjects exposed to Audio-Lingual method of teaching and learning has a mean score of 36.611 and a standard error of .542. However, for subject under Total Physical Response of learning, the mean score of 31.443 and the standard error of .541 were recorded. The control group has a mean score of 25.732 and a standard deviation of .540 was recorded. To determine if a significant difference exists in the mean scores of treatment, the analysis of covariance was undertaken in the next table.

Table 2: Univariate Analysis of Covariance for effect of Audio-Lingual, Total Physical Response and Conventional groups on subject academic achievement

	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	significance
Contrast	901.000	2	496.500	5.552	.000
Error	5727.874	261	22.641		

Data analysis in the above table revealed that a univariate f-ratio 5.552 that was found to be significant beyond the predicted .05 level. The null hypothesis of no significant main effect of Audio-Lingual, Total Physical Method and control group on subjects' level of academic achievement in oral Englishcould not be supported. Pairwise comparisons of the mean scores of the academic achievement among the groups were carried out to determine the score and direction of the difference. The results are as presented in the table below:

Table 3: Pairwise comparison of the differences in achievement scores of subjects in Audio-Lingual, Total Physical Response and Conventional groups

Group	**Group**	**Mean Difference**	**Standard Error**	**Significance**	**95% Confidence interval for difference**	**95% Confidence interval for difference**
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Audio-Lingual	Total Physical	3.143	.770	.000	1.625	4.661
	Control	4.900	.768	.000	3.388	6.412
Total Physical	Audio-Lingual	-3.143	.770	.000	-4.661	-1.625
	Control	1.757	.763	.022	.255	3.260
Control	Total Physical	-4.900	.768	.000	-6.412	-3.388
	Audio-Lingual	-1.757	.763	.022	-3.260	-255

The findings in the above table revealed that a significant difference existed in the academic achievement between subjects exposed to Audio-Lingual method and those of Total Physical Response method. Also, significant differences existed in the level of academic achievement between subjects exposed to Total Physical Response method and those in the control group. Again, significant differences exist in the level of academic achievement between subjects exposed to Audio-Lingual method and those in the control

group.Implications of the findings are that whereas Audio-Lingual and Total Physical Response methods could best be as effective in each case, Audio-Lingual method has significant gains in improving subjects' academic achievement in oral English over and above the effects of Total Physical Response method of teaching and learning.

Summary of Findings

Based on the results of this study, the following summary is made:

i. The participants exposed to the Audio-Lingual Method performed well than those exposed to the Total Physical Response Method and the Conventional Teaching Method.
ii. Also, the participants exposed to the Total Physical Response Method performed well than those exposed to the Conventional Teaching Method.

Discussion of Results

Many findings have confirmed the effectiveness of theAudio-Lingual Method over other language methods such as the Direct Method, Silent-way Method, and Grammar-Translation Method (William, 1990).

Apart from the above some scholars have identified some potential weaknesses inherent in the Total Physical Response Method approach, which could have been largely responsible for the outcome of the findings in the study. These are discussed below:

First, from a purely practical point of view, it is highly unlikely that even the most skilled and inventive teacher using the TPR method could sustain a lesson stage involving commands and physical responses for more than a few minutes before the activity became repetitious for the learners, although the use of situational role-play could provide a range of contexts for practising a wider range of lexis(Adebayo, 1995,Ellis, 2003).

Secondly, it is fairly difficult to give instructions without using imperatives, so the language input is basically restricted to this single form (Dickerson, 1989, Gass, Selinker, 2001).

Thirdly, the relevance of some of the language used in TPR activities to real-world learner needs is questionable (Fraser, 2000).

Finally, moving from the listening and responding stage to oral production might be workable in a small group of learners but it would appear to be problematic when applied to a class of 30 students (Adrian Akmajian, Richard Demers, Ann Farmer, Robert Harnish, 2010).

In defence of the approach, however, it should be emphasized that the TPR method was never intended by its early proponents that it should extend beyond beginner level. Although in theory it might be possible to develop it by making the instructions lexically more complex.Short TPR activities, used judiciously and integrated with other activities can be both highly motivating and linguistically purposeful. Careful choice of useful and communicative language at beginner level can make TPR activities entirely valid. Many learners respond well to kinesthetic activities and they can genuinely serve as a memory aid. A lot of classroom warmers and games are based, consciously or unconsciously, on TPR principles (Celce-Murcia; Brinton; Archibald, 1995; Goodwin, 1996).

Conclusion

The importance of speech to other language skills cannot be over emphasized and as such an in- depth study of the oral English is necessary. The production of sounds in English

and other features of the spoken English should be diligently studied by learners, particularly at a time when language learning task is geared to instant interpersonal communication with efficiency and precision; the teaching of the English prosodic features could not have gone unnoticed in the preparation of English teaching curricula. The supra-segmental features of speech, a major feature of communication, have usually been avoided by teachers, partly due to the unduly little importance attached to its teaching, and partly due to the unavailability of a concise, salient, practical and workable framework. It has been observed that language teachers are not in control of practical, workable and trustworthy strategies through which the prosodic features could be effectively taught, in order to make its learning comprehensible.Consequent on the above observations, this article discussed various instructional strategies and has observed that the Audio-lingual method is a reliable and innovative tool that can be used by language teachers to teach oral English.

Recommendations

i. Owing to the findings of this study, it has been confirmed that the adoption of the Audio-lingual method of teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools will bring about better performance in the academic achievements of students.
ii. In-service training, conferences, lectures, workshops and seminars should be organized regularly for language teachers since language is dynamic and not static. Also, English language teachers' resource centre should b established in order to equip teachers for the challenges of teaching Oral English.
iii. It is evident that a good model for the students to emulate enhances better performance in Oral English class; as a result teachers should act as good models so that students can pronounce the sounds correctly and clearly.
iv. Furthermore, language teachers can also present authentic speech samples and natural discourse for learners' study. This will assist learners and also support social interaction and effective communication.
v. Moreover, teachers could supplement with useful activities to support discussion by assigning topics that could reveal deficiencies in learners and thereby offer prognostic solutions to them.
vi. Any feature of intonation should be analyzed and discussed against a background of this phenomenon: tonic stress placement, choke of tones and keys are applicable to almost all intonation units.
vii. In order to understand the role of stress and its patterns of occurrence in English words, language teachers can consider structural units that organize English syllables. Metrical feet play a fundamental role in English phonology. Just as syllables provide an external organizational framework for phonemes, so 'feet' provides an external organizational framework for syllables.

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