

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ORAL AND WRITTEN ENGLISH IN SOME SELECTED SCHOOLS IN ONDO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Many researchers have been done on Oral and written English. However, only few have done a comparative study between the two. This study therefore concentrates on the comparative study of students' performance in oral and written English.

The descriptive survey method was used. The data collection are based on the Mock Examination result on Oral and written English. The research relied on the information from the classroom situation. Data collected was presented and analyzed using Spearman's ranking correlation coefficient.

The findings show that there is a higher positive relationship between the performance of students in Oral English and grammar. A poor performance in Oral English is sequel to poor performance in the other aspects. Again, it revealed that the greatest probability of passing essay writing, comprehension and of course, the summary exercise has correlation with the Oral skill. It was found out that there is an insufficient qualified personnel which often result to students' poor performance in the language.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers should actively engage students in more oral work and emphasis should be placed on both Oral and written work. Parents should endeavour to buy supplementary texts on Oral and written skills. and it is finally recommended that Oral English should not be scrapped from the School curriculum

Keywords: Oral and written English, Classroom situation, Performance of students, Insufficient qualified personnel, and Supplementary texts.

1. INTRODUCTION

English is undoubtedly becoming a universal language of the world. This is because it is being spoken by over two hundred million (200,000,000) people across the globe. It is spoken and read by millions of Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and South America as a second language. In some other African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Gambia, Kenya etc. it has become an official language in that the language now serves as the language of the government, business and commerce, education etc. Aremu (012), describes English Language as one of the most spoken language of the world

Bamigbose (1971) notes and asserts that “of all the heritage left behind in Nigeria by the British at the end of colonial administration, probably, none is important than the British language”.

Apart from the official status accorded English language, it has also been entrenched as a discipline, a subject to be studied at school just as the native languages, but more importantly, English language has become a medium of imparting knowledge to the university students. Emphasis is even placed on the study of English language so much that it forms part of the basic requirement that a candidate must pass creditably before he or she could be considered for an admission into the tertiary institutions. Except where it is otherwise stated, a credit pass is often demanded. However, a failure in English language put ones’ career at stake. The subject therefore becomes a core subject just as mathematics.

Like French (1963) observes, English language came to Nigeria via trade, religion and colonization which were brought about by the Europeans and since Nigeria society is multilingual in nature, their adoption of English language as the official language becomes inevitable so as to forestall national peace and unity.

Language is a means of communication and the essence of acquiring any language is to be able to communicate effectively and interact socially, economically, scientifically and politically with other people in the acquired language Bamigbose (1971) noticing these assess that “the Nigeria children access to the cultural and scientific knowledge of the world is largely through English since the language of instruction has remained largely English”.

Odušina (1980) attesting to this fact states that the aim of teaching language in Nigeria is to enable citizens to communicate orally and literally in the language study as well as to interact easily with the language speaking people in the world. From this, the researcher infers the language is the basic tool in the teaching-learning process.

The classroom situation becomes the microenvironment from the acquisition and the experimentation of language teaching and learning. The diversified use of language is taught here so as to facilitate communication in the larger society like any other factory product; the teaching and learning of the language undergo processes which should be painstakingly observed to attain perfection required in the English speaking community.

However, the performance of students in recent times, there has hitherto been a recurrent mass failure. And with the introduction of oral English again into S.S.C.E curriculum, the situation becomes worse than before. The result of mock examination conducted for students in some years past shows clearly the laissez-faire attitude of students to this aspect of English language. Some of them have developed a strong dislike for this aspect and they are confronted with the problem of how express themselves in simple and clear terms when asked to read or say few things on a given topic.

The inclusion of oral English in the S.S.C.E syllabus has become a necessity because of numerous school certificate leavers who could not express themselves clearly in good English in their daily encounters. It needs to be pointed out here that the attempt is not geared towards

bringing the students down, but an attempt towards improving their grammatical structure and write-ups.

Speaking has become a skill of paramount significance to acquire. Waddell (2011) posits that a good method to enhance students' speaking skill is through the use of digital video. A short film production through the use of Window Media player(WMM)which is a very basic programme enhances creative thinking, flexibility, originality and elaboration along with inspiration, motivation and confidence for both primary and secondary schools pupils and students to use English Language.

Writing according to Morolahan,Adegbaye,Balogun and Johnson(2017),can be perplexing for many students, because it requires correct use of grammatical structure. Unlike spoken Language, written Language cannot accommodate gestures orbody language to support that what it is that needs to be understood or conveyed.

In a way, this study is related to the influence of transfer of the knowledge of oral English to the study of English language.

Research Hypotheses

1. Is there any significant comparison in the performance of students' in Oral English and other aspects of English language?
2. Is there any significant comparison in the students' performanc3 in Oral English and Summary?
3. Is there any significant comparison in the students' performance in Oral English and Essay?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Oral English Component as an Integral Part of the English Language

From the foregoing, the researcher observed that there are two types of medium by which a language can be expressed. That is, the spoken and the written form. What then are the component of the spoken form on which students are tested? This question brings into the prominent of Oral English even through mobile application (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018).

Oral English according to Omugbo (1990) "Oral English is the spoken form of the written English which deal primarily with the production of sounds and its arrangement into words, syllable and sentences". Gimson (1969) an English phonetician defines oral as the study of the English speech sounds in relation to the place and manner of articulation and interplay of those sounds to form words, phrases and sentences that are being governed by other prosodic features. Simply put, Oral English is the primary form of language acquisition and language learning. Learning of any language, which Abercrombie's refers to as "noises" as earlier, pointed out and are being regarded as "contextualized systematic sounds" by Halliday. Oral English reemphasizes the significance of the widely acclaimed skills of language acquisition and learning

which leads to an effective performance of learner in the language. The four major skills of language learning have been identified as; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

The Listening Skill

Listening is receiving language through the ears .It involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences. Listening is the absorption of the meanings of words and sentences by the brain. Listening leads to the understanding of facts and ideas. According to Lawal (1981) listening is said to be an activity that continues throughout the child’s lifetime and communicative competence that is closely related to competence in the language concerned. The competence of a child in a language is a reflection of his listening ability. Listening is concerned with the use of auditory nerves. The linguistic data enter into the learner ear in a raw form before they are stored, recall processed and articulated for communication. The more perfect a learner is in listening skill, the more he improves in his performance in the language. The listener observes nonverbal cues such as facial expressions. Perspiration, respiration rates, gestures, postures and numerous other subtle body language signals. It is estimated that 80% of what we communicate comes from these signals. We listen with our eyes as well as with our ears (McGraw, 2016; Haung, Lee & Yang, 2019).

Speaking Skill

This is also an important skill as it portrays the learner’s performance over a language learnt. According to Dixon (1969), the speaking skill has two parts; producing accurately the sounds of the language and combining these sounds into utterances for the purpose of communication.

Reading Skill

Reading skill is a mental activity. Like Bayo Lawal observes, “reading is the window through which peep into the outside world”. Through reading we “get” to many places and “come across” many people and learn their way of life. In reading skill, the student decode the printed page, translate the written symbols into meaningful symbols and this use the idea gained from reading to comprehend text. The types of reading as listed by Akere: “The use of English” (1970) include reading aloud, silent reading, intensive and extensive reading.

Writing Skill

This skill according to Kolawole (1992), is the most complex of the four language skill. This is simply because it contains and demands more sophisticated artistic skill. The different types of writing such as narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative, letter writing etc. make the skill more complex.

The Nature of Oral English

Oral English was reintroduced into the senior secondary school’s syllabus with the aim of improving the performance of students in the language with reference to social situation.

Prominence is given to this aspect of the language and a score of 20% of the score in English is allocated to it.

West African Examination Council (WAEC) recommendation on Oral English (1990) stated that the test would be on: (1) Listening comprehension, (2) Oral composition reading

Listening Comprehension

Here, the listening skill of students are tested as they have to listen to recorded text on tape.

Oral Composition and Reading

These aspect are designed to forestall the oratory aspect of the language. They test for lexis and structure, free flow of thoughts, stress and intonation. The reading text is expected to be done twice, at the first reading the candidate is examined for the pronunciation skill while in the second reading; stress and intonation are taken of.

The Impact of Oral English on Other Aspect of English Language

Another major aspect of English language examination is the written form. This written including text on lexis and structure (grammar) essay and summary. According to Hornby (1975) "Lexis and structure are the arrangement of small piece of words into definite patterns." The structure of a language is perceived by Afolayan (1978) as "the systematic relation of words." Here, the focus is drawn at the constituent of each linguistic unit e.g. the subjects, predicate and adjunct. Oral English provides a recipe by which an improved performance on lexis and structure can be achieved e.g. Oral English takes cognizance of pronunciation, and words formation. All these could help learners to write good and well-structured sentences.

Oral English Virus Comprehension and Summary

Often times in language teaching the oral drill and vocabulary development precede the written comprehension. The essence of this is to acquaint learners with how to pronounce some of the words that they will come in contact with while reading the passage. Kolawole (1992) observes, Oral English provides an insight into knowing what the subject matter of a text is all about.

Summary is an extended form of a comprehension passage. Grieve and Pratt (1965) see summary as a bread form of the comprehension passage whose aim is to bring out only the silent point out of the numerous sentences that make up the piece. It has been observed that students who do well in reading will have their problem considerably reduced when tackling question on summary.

Oral English and Essay Writing

To say that somebody understands a language implies that he can speak it. In a school setting or any formal setting, the knowledge of a language has to do with both the oral and

written performance in the language. Like Akanbi (1991) observes “a teacher needs to be competent in the spoken form of English, construct good and well-structured sentences over a wide range of topics so as to inculcate good speaking and writing habits in the minds of his students”. The attainment of this objective as highlighted by Akanbi (1991) is a gradual process which I believe could be accomplished through the various unit of the English lesson of which the oral English is not the least but rather a basics towards understanding and improving students’ performance in English examination. It has been observed that students are asked to write topic. The point is unless one tries to speak a language he might not know the language. And since oral composition provides an avenue for students to express themselves, the written aspects becomes easier. Again, for one to continue written so that grammatical errors and malapropism might reduce.

Oral English provides a pool of writers to fish upon. It is then left for students to internalize all the rules that they have learnt pertaining the language and write on any topic out of their stock of experience and exposure.

According to Bamisaye (1992) “all phonemes, words and phrases and the prosodic features inherent in Oral English provide an insight towards a better performance of learners of English as a language users in all facets of English teaching-learning situation”. However, he assert further that the impact of Oral English is much more felt in lexis and structure comprehension and essay than in summary.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The type of research adopted was the descriptive type, using the survey method. The researcher has chosen the descriptive survey method above all others because he wanted to make a comparative study performance in oral and written English in some selected secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria.

The data collection are based on the mock examination result on Oral English and written English. The research does not manipulate any variable but rely on the information and suggestions of the classroom situation.

Population

The estimated population of the study was made up 160 students in the four selected secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government Area Ondo State, which include.

1. C.A.C Community Grammar School, Ondo-35 students
2. All Saint Grammar School, Ondo-35 students
3. St James’ Grammar School, Ondo - 50 students
4. Ondo Boys’ High School, Ondo - 40 students

Sample

The subject used for the study was the result of the mock examinations held in the above named schools. In all, the result of only four (4) schools in the Local area were randomly sampled.

The selection of the four secondary schools were based on simple random sampling using the balloting method to select the schools, the Researcher picked one schools from each zones of the Local government.

Instrument

The researcher collected the raw scores of learners’ performance on each aspect of the English Language and drew a correlation by comparing each of the data given against the other particular oral English.

Data Analysis

Data collected were presented and analysed using spearman’s ranking correlation coefficient for proving answers to each of the research questions raised for the study.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hypotheses1

A summary of scores of performance of students in oral English and other aspects of English language

Schools	No of students	Pass in English	Pass in Essay	Pass in Comprehension	Pass in Lexis & Structure	Pass in Summary
A	35	19	14	15	15	15
B	35	20	15	15	16	13
C	50	27	20	23	23	21
D	40	23	15	17	15	17
TOTAL	160					

The spearman’s ranking correlation co-efficient formular

$$R = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Is adopted to analyze the above data

School	No of students	Oral English	Comprehension	Total
A	35	19	16	35

B	35	20	15	35
C	50	27	23	50
D	40	23	17	40
Total	160	89	71	160

School	Oral English	Comprehension	9Differences ^(D)	Difference square (D ²)
A	19	16	3	9
B	20	15	5	25
C	27	23	4	16
D	23	17	6	36
Total				86

Formula

$$\frac{1 - ED^2}{n(n^2-1)^2}$$

$$1 - \frac{86}{4(4^2-1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{86}{4(16-1)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{86}{4(15)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{86}{60}$$

$$= 1 - 1.4333333$$

$$= 0.4333$$

$$=0.4$$

The result of correlation co-efficient reveals a considerable positive relationship between the performance of students in Oral English and comprehension.

Hypotheses II: English and Grammar

Ho: there is no significant relationship between the performance of students in Oral English and lexis and structure.

School	No of students	Oral English	Lexis & structure	Difference (D)	Difference square (D ²)
A	35	20	15	5	25
B	35	19	16	3	9
C	50	27	23	4	16
D	40	25	15	10	100
Total	160	91	69		150

$$Rh = \frac{1 - \frac{6ED^2}{N(n^2 - 1)}}{1 - \frac{150}{60}}$$

$$= 1.5$$

The result of correlation co-efficient which 1.5 reveal a higher positive relationship between the performance of student in Oral English and grammar.

Hypotheses 2: English and Summary

Ho: there is no significant relation between the performance of students in Oral English and summary.

School	No of students	Oral English	Difference	Difference ^D	Difference square (D ²)
A	35	20	15	5	25
B	35	22	13	9	81
C	50	29	21	8	64

D	40	23	17	6	36
Total					206

$$1 - \frac{206}{60}$$

$$= 1 - 3.4333$$

$$= 2.4$$

The result of correlation co-efficient which 2.4 reveal a higher positive relationship between the performance of students in Oral English and grammar.

Hypotheses 3: English and Essay.

School	No of student	Oral English	Essay	Difference (D)	Difference square (D ²)
A	35	21	14	7	49
B	35	20	15	5	25
C	50	30	20	10	100
D	40	25	15	10	100
Total					274

$$= 1 - \frac{274}{60}$$

$$4(4^2 - 1)$$

$$= 1 - \frac{274}{60}$$

$$1 - 4.57$$

$$= 3.45$$

$$= 3.6$$

The result of the correlation co-efficient reveals a higher positive relationship between the performance of students in Oral English and grammar.

5. DISCUSSION

It is necessary to point out here that the number of passes recorded was weighted on the average score of 40% taken as a pass mark on each aspect of English Language examination paper by taking into cognizance of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) regulation which takes 40% as the overall score of performance leading to the award of P8 unless where it is otherwise moderated for sex distinction and some other factors.

From the result given, it has been proved that an appreciable increase in the performance on the other aspects of the language while a decline in the number of passes in Oral English will automatically affect the number of passes in the other aspects too. This help to reinstate the primacy of the Oral aspect of any language towards performing in the language. A poor performance in Oral English is sequel to poor performance in the other aspect.

The research has also indicated that most students who pass oral English examination have the greatest probability of passing essay writing comprehension and of course the summary exercise.

No matter how people tend to under-value the oral form, it is the bedrock upon which other forms develop and a continued oral drill in the language structure could activate a better performance. With reference to the research result, hypothesis has been rejected and the little knowledge that students acquired or have learnt is poorly reflected upon essay writing but that the performance of students stands at the lowest in the two aspects of the language.

The data collected are reliable premised on the fact that in each of the school selected qualified personnel were employed to handle the SS II class even if he is the only one available that the schools can boast of. Although, this does not guarantee that such a teacher would not be too much saddled with a lot of responsibilities. Consequent upon insufficient qualified personnel, the teaching and learning process suffers lost and this often results in student's poor performance in the language.

This research does not in any way disregard some factors that militate against a good performance of students in English but sees the effects of the factors as a by-product in the student's performance.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the result of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

- The dominant language environment of the students plays a significant role on the performance of students in the language. The language environment conceived here include the school and outside the school environment. The research, however, submits that the use of language at homes and with peers could facilitate upward or downward trend performance.

- Team teaching can influence a better performance of students in both Oral and other aspect of English language rather than saddling a particular teacher with the teaching of all aspects of the language in the SSS class.
- The socio-economic status of the parents too can influence a better performance of students vis-à-vis the provision of electro media gadgets that could help facilitate the learning and performance in the language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With regards to the findings of this study, the researcher is of the opinion that there will be improved performance of students in all aspect of English language if the following recommendations are strictly observed:

- Teachers should actively engage students in more of Oral work in the Junior Secondary classes while emphasis should be placed on both oral and written work in the Senior Secondary Classes.
- Oral drill should be much employed in the teaching of lexis and structure so as to reduce maximally errors resulting from interference.
- Students should change their lazy attitude to some educative programmes being run at school so that they can see the correlation that exist in language units. Active participation of students in literacy and debating programmes is a way to achieving greater heights in language performance.
- Parents should endeavour to buy supplementary texts on grammar and essay writing for their children as this could bring about improved performance in language and usage.
- It has been observed from the practical points of view that students often dodge writing essays given to them by teachers. An improvement could be on this if the school authorities can provide incentive for the best essayist in school. Equally, essay competition at Local or inter-school levels should be encouraged.
- The study of literature in English should be made compulsory for students in the JSS classes so as to afford them a wide variety of vocabularies that could be useful to them both in speech and writing.
- Prompt and regular remuneration should be given to English language teachers as the best way to achieving improved performance of teachers not only in the language teaching alone but in other disciplines as well. This of course will surely make teachers to display ingenuities.
- Oral English should not be scrapped off the school curriculum. Workshop and seminars should be organized by the ministry of education to update and upgrade new trends in the teaching and learning of English as a second language with a view to improving the student's performance in Oral English, essay, lexis and structure, comprehension and

Summary.

- The government should ensure that there are enough language teachers in every school, so that, there would be appreciable and improved performance of students in the Subject under study and the issue of mass failure in it might be greatly reduced.

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