Teachers and Students Variables in the Teaching of Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between teachers' competence and teachers' attitude to the utilization of media types with a view to improving students' performance in Oral English. The study adopted the survey design. The population consisted of 143,166 students and 467 English language teachers in the 541 senior secondary schools in Osun State. The sample comprised 907 students and 45 teachers selected using stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments titled: "Teachers' Competence and Attitude towards Utilization of Media Types Questionnaire" (TCAUMQ) and "Achievement Test on Oral English" (ATOE) were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using chi-square and Pearson Correlation Statistics. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' competence and teachers' attitude to media utilization ($\chi^2 = 27.5$, $p < 0.05$). Also, there was a significant relationship between media utilization and students' performance in Oral English ($r = .306$, $p < 0.05$). The study recommended that Schools must be well supervised to make sure that teachers comply by using media types to enhance uniformity and quality in Senior Secondary Schools level and to aid better performance of learners   .

Keywords: Teachers' variables, students' variables, oral English, Senior Secondary Schools

Introduction

As essential as the media types are in teaching oral English to Senior Secondary School Students, it has been observed that most teachers do not use them. Some teachers that use them do not use them effectively while some teachers have been unduly attached to using the same media types which invariably has rendered oral lessons monotonous and boring. The media types should be varied and teachers should prepare their students "by teaching them to ask and respond to questions effectively, by giving them practice speaking, and by encouraging classroom participation" (Ferris Tagg, 1996, Umunadi, 2009, Deang, 2012, Olaitan, Oniyanji, Ojerinde and Onifade, 2012). Classroom exposure and teaching of oral English are limited in most schools because of class size and mixed levels in the students. In such situations, students cannot reach fluency with accuracy.

Moreover, some teachers are too over-sensitive to students' mistakes in pronunciation and this has marred students' positive attitude. Brown (2001) discovers that "one of the major obstacles learners have to overcome in learning to speak is the anxiety generated over the risks of blurting things that are wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible'. For students to participate actively in oral English lesson the teacher has to "avoid having the students freeze for fear of being corrected every time he opens his mouth". (Wallace, 2003). Constant correction of students in terms of accurate pronunciation of words whenever they speak might frustrate and affect their interest and enthusiasm in the oral lesson. Such students might reduce or not participate in class to avoid being corrected. Emphasis should be on interest, the students should be made to develop interest in oral English as it is taught.

English Language is dynamic, therefore the language teacher should not be limited to the knowledge acquired through training. Instead he should keep on learning and acquiring more skills in using media types that will enhance his effective teaching of oral English for students maximum performance. Bygate (1987) makes a "distinction between knowledge about a language, and skill in using it." He offers an analogy of knowing the control of the car and using the skill to drive the car. It seems that knowledge alone is not enough, "learners should learn to speak a foreign language through the various tasks which can be made available for them". This invariably implies that language teachers should have knowledge about the various media types.

They should be skillful in using them to explain, illustrate or elucidate teaching and learning activities, as well as arouse interest of and motivate the students. When teachers are encouraged to get and develop basic skills and knowledge in planning and using media types they will easily utilize them as a necessary and integral part in any oral English teaching tasks.

Research findings in linguistics and psychology furnish the language teacher with knowledge and ideas to plan oral English lessons. (Burns et al, 1996; Carter & Mccarthy, 1997; Burns, 1998; Bygate, 1998; Bygate, 2001; Riggenbach, 1999; Paltridge, 2000) are backing the use of authentic data to teach oral English. The language teacher should feel free to select the media types he can use at ease while teaching and that which the students could be free to interact and learn in a potentially anxiety-free laden environment of second Language (L_2) classes.

The teacher should diagnose the problems the learners are encountering with interference of the mother tongue and thus find ways of curbing them. McDough (1995) discusses the strategies in learning oral English by tracing back to the studies from the 1970s to the 1980s. One of the strategies he describes in detail is termed as achievement strategy: (a) code-switching (b) interlingual transfer (c) inter-intralingual transfer and (d) non-linguistic mime, gesture etc. This shows that having a fore-knowledge of the audio-oral peculiarities of the learner's mother tongue and their likely difficulties will give the teacher a clue to using appropriate strategies for oral English learning.

Summarily, teachers' attitude to effective use of media types in teaching oral English at Senior Secondary School level will go a long way in reducing problems students normally encounter in pronunciation, stress, intonation and at large, performance in English language.

Research Questions

1. **Is there any significant relationship between teachers' competence and teachers' attitude to the utilization of media types in teaching oral English in Senior Secondary Schools?**
2. **Is there any significant relationship between media utilization and students' performance in oral English?**

Methodology

The study is exploratory and the design is a survey design. The population for this study consisted of 143, 166 students and 467 English teachers in the 541 Senior Secondary Schools in Osun State. The sample consisted of 907 students and 36 teachers that were randomly selected from five local governments in the State which comprise of three schools in each of the local governments were selected using stratified sampling technique with school ownership (i.e. public, private) as strata. In all, 15 schools constituted the study samples.

Two sets of research instruments were used to collect relevant information for the study. These include; "Teachers' Competence and Attitude Towards Utilization of Media types Questionnaire (TCAUMQ) and "Objective Test on Oral English" (OTOE). These instruments are each described as follows:

(1) Teachers' Competence and Attitude Towards Utilization of Media Type Questionnaire (TCAUMQ). This instrument was developed by the investigator. The questionnaire consists of two sections, that are divided into Section A was based on personal information on teachers teaching oral English in Senior Secondary 2 Classes. Section B entailed two parts, the first part consisted of 14 items, statement on teachers' competence in the use of media types, while the second part consisted of 12 items, statements on teachers' attitude towards utilization of media types. The items were scored as follows; Strongly Agree = 4, Agree =3, Disagree =2 while Strongly Disagree =1

(2) Objective Test on Oral English (OTOE). This instrument consisted of 20 objective questions on Oral English based on the SS2 syllabus. The items were already standardized because they were picked from WAEC past questions on oral test. Each item consisted of 4 options in which students chose only one correct option.

The two instruments were validated before use and reliability coefficients yielded 0.76 and 0.86 respectively. Data were analyzed using chi-square and Pearson statistical analyses.

Results

Research Question 1

Is there any significant relationship between teachers' competence and teacher's attitude to the utilization of media types in teaching oral English in Senior Secondary Schools?

The relationship between teachers' competence and teachers' attitude is as shown in Table 1

Table 1: Relationship between Teachers' Competence and Teachers' Attitude to Media Utilization

			Attitude to Media utilization			Total	χ^2	df	p
			Low	Moderation	High				
Teacher Competence	Low	Count	1	2	3	06			
		% within teacher competence	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	100.0%			
		% within attitude to media utilization	16.7%	15.4%	11.5%	13.3%			
		% of Total	2.2%	4.5%	6.67%	13.3%			
	Moderate	Count	2	75	14	23			
		% within teacher competence	8.7%	30.4%	60.9%	100.0%			
		% within attitude to media utilization	33.3%	53.8%	53.3%	51.1%	27.5	4	<0.05
		% of Total	4.5%	15.6%	6.7%	51.1%			
	High	Count	3	4	9	16			
		% within teacher competence	18.8%	2.5%	56.3%	100.0%			
		% within attitude to media utilization	50%	30.8%	34.6%	35.6%			
		% of Total	6.7%	8.9%	20.0%	35.6%			
		Count	6	13	26	45			
		% within teacher competence	13.3%	28.9%	57.8%	100.0%			
		% within attitude to media utilization	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%			
		% of Total	13.3%	28.9%	57.8%	100.0%			

Table 1 shows that the X^2 observed value indicating the relationship between teachers' competence and teachers attitude to the utilization of media types is 27.5; p<0.05. p value is less than 0.05 alpha level. This implies that there is significant relationship between teacher's competence and attitude to the utilization of media types in teaching oral English in Senior Secondary Schools.

Research Question 2

Is there any significant relationship between media utilization and students' performance in oral English?

The Pearson correlation analysis result of media utilization together with students' performance in Oral English is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between Media Utilization and Level of Performance in Oral English

		Media Utilization	Students' Performance in Oral English
Media Utilization	Pearson	1	.306*
	Correlation sig. (2-tailed)		.041
	N	45	45
Students' Performance in Oral English	Pearson	.306*	1
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.041	
	N	45	45

The Pearson correlation analysis yields significant values of .306 at 0.05 confidence level. This shows that there is a significant relationship between media utilization and students' performance. This implies that teachers did not have adequate knowledge of media types and this affected their utilization in teaching Oral English.

Discussion of Findings

The result obtained indicated that significant relationship existed between teachers' competence and attitude to the utilization of media types in teaching oral English in Senior Secondary Schools. This implies that teachers of English language must be knowledgeable and have positive attitude towards the use of the media types capable of facilitating effective teaching and learning of oral English in our secondary schools. This result corroborated the view of Olumuyiwa (1997) who pointed out that individual teacher should be competent in the use of media types available to support his or her teaching thereby sensitizing the learners with the opportunities available for effective learning. In addition, the major findings Ghanney (2008) on his own study on the use instructional materials in the teaching and learning of environmental studies in primary schools, indicated that about 83% of teachers in primary schools rely heavily on the use of only chalkboard and textbook for lesson delivery on Environmental studies and suppose other teaching materials that could facilitate effective teaching and learning. Also, Warner and Coffey (2005) also remarked that teachers need to bridge the gap for effective communication and enhance teamwork among learners. Thus, he believed that the use of audio visual in teaching and learning will go a long way in enhancing effective communication through technology.

The result of the findings revealed that there is significant relationship between the media utilization and students' performance in oral English. This implies that effective utilization of media type is capable of enhancing students' performance in oral English and vice versa. This was in line with the view of Adegbile (2007) who was of the view that oral English is one of the integral aspects of the English language curriculum and that its role in the Nigerian society or in our educational system cannot be over emphasized. According to him, he said that despite the fact that it has an enviable status in the educational system, the performance of learners in this aspect of English language has not been encouraging. He went further to say that the secondary learners pronounce English words badly and that they find it difficult to pronounce English consonants, vowels, and diphthongs correctly. He therefore advocated for the effective teaching of oral English in order to improve learners' in both private and public schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that media types will help learners to learn English language faster, better and in more realistic context which will invariably lay a more solid foundation for learners' better performance in English Language and other subjects. Teachers should be trained and retrained through workshops, conference, refresher courses and seminar to use the media types which are of immense value in teaching oral English. Such various forms of self improvement expose teachers to current teaching /learning techniques which are necessary for the achievement of educational objectives. Schools must be well supervised to make sure that teachers comply by using media types to enhance uniformity and quality in Senior Secondary Schools level and to aid better performance of learners.

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