

Language Laboratory Availability and Usage as Predictors of Senior Secondary School Student Academic Achievement in Oral English in Ibadan South-west Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine language laboratory availability and usage as predictors of senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Oral English. The study used a questionnaire administered to two hundred randomly selected Senior Secondary School two (SSS2) students across five public and five private purposively sampled senior secondary schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area for the research. The findings of the study revealed that the availability level of the language laboratory is very low whilst the usage level is negligible. Also, the proficiency level of the students in Ibadan South-West Local Government in Oral English is at an average level. It was also revealed that there is significant combined and relative influence of availability and usage of language laboratory on the academic achievement of the students in Oral English. There is no significant school type difference while gender differences in academic achievement of students in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government area was significant. It is recommended that stakeholders should work towards

providing at least one audio-active language laboratory in each of the senior secondary schools in Ibadan Southwest Local Government area. Trainings and workshops should also be organized in order to enhance adequate usage of the language laboratories.

Keywords: Language Laboratory, Availability, Usage, Senior Students' academic achievement, Oral English.

Introduction

The English language is not the mother tongue of Nigerians. It was handed to us by the colonial masters is—and is to be learnt as a second language. Many speakers of the English language in Nigeria undergo the process of language learning, which is a result of direct instruction in the rules of the language (Haynes, 2018). For some Nigerians, due to the increasing rate of urbanization, English language can be said to have become one of the first languages acquired by a good number of Nigerian children. However, there are still lapses in the way Nigerian speakers of the English language use the language, especially in the areas of grammatical structures and phonology. This has reflected in the increasing poor—performance of Nigerian senior secondary school students in standardized examinations such as the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination English papers.

In Oyo state, statistics shows that between 2012 and 2017, the average percentage pass range has been 31.3%. Perhaps the 60.8% success rate in English Language in 2017 might be less impressive than it is if one considers that only 24,484 students sat for the English language paper which is far less than the 54,404 candidates that was recorded in 2015 which had a percentage pass range of just 18.7%. Some scholars like Meenakshi (2013) have attributed some of the struggles of non-native learners of the English language, especially in the area of speaking and pronunciation, to the interference phenomenon. It is a situation whereby the patterns of the mother tongue or first language influences influence the patterns of the target language used by the language learner. In simple terms, features of the mother tongue are reflected in the learner's use of the target language. A native speaker will definitely sound different from a non-native speaker.

Oral English is a key part of the senior secondary school English Language curriculum, which is concerned with the teaching and learning of

the usage of speech sounds, stress and intonation in the English Language. Oral English is relevant to the senior secondary school English language curriculum as the students are expected to develop the speaking skills required to effectively communicate in the language. It is aimed at improving the proficiency level of spoken English amongst English Language learners. Thus, the Oral English Examination or Test of Orals which forms part of the senior secondary school students' assessment in English language is, according to Inegbenechi (2018), aimed at testing the proficiency of the students in phonetic and phonological aspects such as vowel sounds, consonant sounds, rhymes, stress patterns and intonation. Some of the areas students are tested on include; emphatic stress, identifying words with same vowel or consonant sounds, identifying words that have a specified vowel or consonant sounds, stress patterns and so on (Inegbenechi, 2018). It must be considered that the English paper is a basic requirement for entry into the higher institution in Nigeria as a candidate must have at least a credit pass in the paper. Oral English or Test of Orals is usually the third paper for English which contains sixty questions that test candidates' ability to speak the language correctly (Inegbenechi, 2018).

It is only reasonable to concede that in order for the students to perform at an optimal level in Oral English as with other academic subjects they will sit, they have to be properly prepared by the teachers. The teaching and learning process is relevant to the chances of students performing well or poorly in any achievement test. Mohammed (2017) observed that the problem of lack of or inadequate practice is a major one that arises in the learning of spoken English as a result of absence or inadequate teaching materials and facilities. According to him, students would need intensive activities to attract them to practice listening and speaking in and out of their classes. This would include linguistic materials that contain stretches of speech to attract the learner's attention to listen and learn.

Therefore, the language laboratory is presented as appropriate for use in any programme or teaching that aims at fostering communication at normal speed, fluency and accuracy in a second or target language (Aulia, 2016). It must be striking that one of the main ends of the language laboratory is to facilitate and foster effective communication which is very key and essential to the pedagogical process. Aulia goes on to explain that

the language laboratory comprises of various technological aids such as computers, internet facilities and other techno-electronic devices. Tiwari (2016) is of the opinion that the Language laboratory can help to speed the process of internalising and adequately mastering the structures and patterns of the target language in keeping with the abilities of the learners. Pritchard (2000) classifies language laboratories into three based on the type and capacities of the equipment available. These are; listening laboratory which can also be referred to as an audio lab, audio- active laboratory and; audio-active-record laboratory. In the audio laboratory, the only function that can be operated by the learners is listening. It provides nothing other than the gramophone or tape recorder. The drawback of this installation as identified by the scholar is that the learners are passive and this could have a negative effect on the active participation required for learning to take place effectively. The teacher that uses this installation may be required to constantly monitor the learners and could be interrupting class activity in the process.

In the case of the audio-active installation, Pritchard (2000) opines that it could be the best installation for an average secondary school as it is less expensive than the audio-active-record laboratory which could be more appropriate for universities and colleges. This installation generally allows the students respond and hear their response through the headset. The idea is that they listen to the tape recorder of the same speech in the target language and are able to repeat and hear themselves as they do. It is easier for the teacher to monitor the learners at a more individualistic level in this installation as there is relative ease in accessing the problems and challenges of each learner, making it easier to correct them at their own pace. Also, the teacher will be able to adequately identify areas that need reinforcement in the previously presented materials which is an advantage over the normal classroom situation where the teacher has less flexibility.

In the audio-active-record installation, it is more complex and has more functions than the other installations. A key feature is the ability of the students to record their responses which could be of huge benefit to both learners and teachers.

However, scholars have bemoaned the low level of availability facility let alone the usage of the language laboratory. One would question how an unavailable facility can be used. Ajisafe and Okotie (2012) have

identified noticeable absence of the language laboratory in most Nigerian secondary schools and English Departments in tertiary institutions. In some cases where they are sparsely available, they are not adequately utilised. Some of the factors put forward as inhibiting the adequate availability of language laboratory and its usage include the expensive cost of building, equipping and maintaining the language laboratory. School heads are particularly put off by the exorbitant cost of setting them up (Ajisafe & Okotie, 2012).

Classroom size is another factor that has been identified as militating against the availability and usage of the language laboratory. Ajisafe and Okotie (2012) posit that the number of students that have to use the language laboratory per time is a huge headache for most Nigerian school heads as it is well established that particularly in the public space, class sizes are usually very large. This definitely has its recourse on the success of teaching and learning as the teachers might not be able to considerably meet every student at their respective points of need.

Also, the issue of getting skilled manpower that is versed in the management and maintenance of the language laboratory is another dilemma for school heads according to Ajisafe and Okotie (2012). Some of the teachers who use the laboratory may have little or no useful skills or experience to adequately use language laboratory equipment.

Whilst the language laboratory is not to replace the teacher, its major objective is to increase the effectiveness of individual student's practice (Brenes, 2006). This way, the learners' general difficulties can be dealt with in sessions that are constructively tailored towards that area which could be segmental (vowel and consonant sounds) or supra-segmental (stress and intonation).

This study thus aims to analyse the relevance of the availability and usage of the language laboratory and the effects it could have on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in oral English examinations. Considering the generally poor performance level of the students from previous WAEC results and the observation that most works by scholars have been centered on the use of language laboratory for teaching English from a communicative approach as well as other foreign languages and also looking at the peculiarities of schools in Nigeria but Ibadan South-West, Oyo State, Nigeria has not been extensively considered, this research to this end will investigate the availability and

usage of the language laboratory as predictors of Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English by looking at the following research questions:

1. what is the availability level of the language laboratory in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?
2. what is the usage level of the language laboratory facility in teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?
3. what is the proficiency level of the students in Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?
4. what type of language laboratory installation is available and used in the Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

H₀₁ There will be no significant combined influence of the availability and usage of language laboratory on students' academic achievement in Oral English.

H₀₂ There will be no significant relative influence of the availability and usage of language laboratory on students' academic achievement in Oral English.

H₀₃ There will be no significant school type difference in the students' academic achievement in Oral English.

H₀₄ There will be no significant gender difference in the students' academic achievement in Oral English.

Methodology

A descriptive research design, survey type was adopted for this research so as to capture firsthand data from the field and adequately analyse same. The population of the study is all the Senior Secondary School two (SSS2) students in Ibadan South-west Local Government in both private and public schools. A total of 200 SSS2 students across private and public secondary schools formed the sample for the study. A multistage sampling technique was used. At the first stage, simple random sampling was used to select 5 public secondary schools out of 21 and 5 private secondary schools out of 25 to make a total of 10 schools. SS2 students have been

purposively selected first because they are no longer transiting and second, they are stable enough to attend to and understand questionnaire items due to their age and class. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 SSS2 students from each school making 200 students.

A self-made questionnaire was used to gather data for the research. The questionnaire contained three sections with Section A generating demographic data of respondents, Section B generating data for availability and usage of language laboratory while Section C generated data for proficiency level of the students in Oral English through a teacher made achievement test. The students were given the questionnaire to fill and which was retrieved immediately.

Descriptive statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions, while inferential statistical tools such as multiple regression and t-test were used to analyze the hypothesis at 0.05% level of significance.

Results

The study investigated language laboratory availability and usage as predictors of Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State. Two hundred (200) respondents (SSS2 students) were sampled for the study. The administered questionnaire copies were correctly filled, returned and found useful for the study.

Bio Data Information

Table 1: Sex of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	97	48.5%
Female	103	51.5%
Total	200	100%

The table above presents the gender of the sampled respondents. The table shows that out of 200 SSS2 students sampled for the study, 97 students (48.5%) were males while 103 students (51.5%) were females. There is thus a good representation of both male and female in the study.

Table 2: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
11-14 years	82	41.0%
15-18 years	118	59.0%
Total	200	100%

The table shows the data for the age group of the respondents. 82 students representing 41.0% of the respondents were between 11 and 14 years of age whilst 118 students representing 59.0% of the respondents were between 15 and 18 years of age. There were more students between 15 and 18.

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the availability level of the language laboratory in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?

Table 3: Availability level of Language Laboratory in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Oyo State

No of Language Laboratory	Frequency	Percentage
None	179	89.5%
One	10	5.0%
Two	11	5.5%
Three or more	0	0.0%
Total	200	100%
Weighted Mean = 1.12		

Note: Mean response ranges from 0-1.4= Very low; 1.5-2.4= Low; 2.5-3.4= High; 3.5-4.0= Very high (Normal Test Value)

The analysis of responses to Research Question One on the availability level of language laboratory in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Oyo State presented in Table 3 above reveals that 179 respondents given as 89.5% indicated that there is no language laboratory available in their senior secondary schools while 10 respondents given as 5.0% indicated they have just one language laboratory and 11 respondents

represented by 5.5% indicated two language laboratories. None of the respondents indicated three or more language laboratories.

With the weighted mean given at 1.12, it implies that the response of the respondents indicates that the availability level of language laboratories in senior secondary schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State is very low.

Research Question 2: What is the usage level of the language laboratory facility in teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?

Table 4: Usage Level of the Language Laboratory Facility in Teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Item	Not at all	Once a While	Regularly	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have access to computer programmes that help me learn oral English better	140 70.0%	44 22.0%	16 8.0%	1.38	0.631
My teacher uses Language Laboratory to teach Oral English	177 88.5%	15 7.5%	8 4.0%	1.16	0.460
Weighted Mean= 1.27					

Note: Mean response ranges from 0-1.4 = Not at all; 1.5-2.4= Once a while; 2.5-3.0= regularly.

The analysis of the data for research question two gives figures for the usage level of the language laboratory facility in teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government. The table revealed that 140 respondents given as 70.0% indicated that they do not have access to computer programmes that help students learn Oral English better, 44 respondents representing 22.0% indicated once a while

whilst 16 respondents given as 8.0% indicated regularly thus, the mean is given at 1.38. On the other hand, 177 students, given as 88.5% indicated that their teacher never uses language laboratory to teach Oral English whilst 15 students, given as 7.5% indicated once a while and 8 respondents given as 4% indicated regularly to give the mean as 1.16. The weighted mean of 1.27 implies that the respondents indicated that the language laboratory facility in teaching Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area is not in use at all. Since the availability level of the language laboratory is very low, usage level is also expected to be very low.

Research Question 3: What is the proficiency level of the students in Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?

Table 5: Proficiency Level of Students in Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area, Oyo State

Grade	Frequency	Percentage
Poor (1-11)	68	34.0%
Average (12-15)	42	21.0%
Good (16-20)	49	24.5%
Very Good (21-25)	41	20.5%
Excellent (26-30)	0	0.0%
Total	200	100%
Weighted mean = 2.32		

Note: Mean response ranges from 0-1.4= Poor; 1.5-2.4= Average; 2.5-3.4= Good; 3.5-4.4= Very Good and 4.5-5.0= Excellent.

The above table shows that 68 respondents given as 34.0% scored between 1 and 11 marks in the proficiency achievement test administered; this is graded as poor performance. Also, 42 students given as 21.0% scored between 12 and 15 marks which is graded as average performance; 49 students given as 24.5% scored between 16 and 20 marks which is graded as good performance while 41 students given at 20.5% scored between 21 and 25 marks which is graded as very good performance. None of the respondents scored above 25 marks. The

weighted mean is given as 2.32 which indicate that the proficiency level of Senior Secondary School students in Ibadan South-West is at an average level.

Research Question 4: What type of language laboratory installation is available and used in the senior secondary schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area?

Table 6: Type of Language Laboratory Installation Available and in Use in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area, Oyo State

Language Laboratory	Frequency	Percentage
Audio Laboratory	4	2.0%
Audio Active Laboratory	7	3.5%
Audio Active Record Lab	0	0.0%
None	189	94.5%
Weighted Mean = 1.1		

Note: Mean response ranges from 0-1.4= Very low; 1.5-2.4= Low; 2.5-3.4=High; 3.5-4.0= Very High.

The analysis from the above table shows that only 2.0% of the respondents have the audio language laboratory installation in their school while 3.5% has the audio active laboratory. 189 respondents indicating 94.5% of the respondents do not have any of the installations in operation in their respective schools. With a weighted mean of 1.1, the type of installation is very low just as the availability and usage of language laboratory are very low.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 7: Combined Influence of Availability and Usage of Language Laboratory on Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Remarks
Regression	307.907	2	153.953	4.250	0.016	Sig.
Residual	7136.448	197	36.226			
Total	7444.355	199				
R = 0.203 R Square = 0.041 Adjusted R Square = 0.032						

Table 7 presents the analysis of Hypothesis I showing the combined influence of availability and usage of language laboratory on students' academic achievement in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government. The table shows that the two independent variables have positive and significant combined influence with students' academic achievement in Oral English ($R = 0.203$). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square = 0.032) showed that 32% of the total variations in students' academic achievement in senior secondary schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government is accounted for by the change in the independent variables (availability and usage of language laboratory). The linear combination of all the predictor variables was found to have significant influence with students' academic achievement ($F(2, 197) = 4.250$; $P < 0.05$). Then, the hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The implication of this is that availability and usage of language laboratory significantly have combined influence on students' academic achievement in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State.

Table 8: Relative Influence of Availability and Usage of Language Laboratory on Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English

Model	Unstandardised Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
(Constant)	18.053	3.810		4.738	0.000
Availability of Language	0.017	0.932	0.004	0.086	0.008
Laboratory	0.006	0.837	0.000	0.007	0.004
Usage of Language Laboratory					

Table 8 reveals the relative influence of availability and usage of language laboratory on the dependent variable, (students' academic achievement), this is expressed as beta weights, viz a viz availability of language laboratory ($\beta = 0.017$, $P < 0.05$) and usage of language laboratory ($\beta = 0.006$, $P < 0.05$). The results above show that the two independent variables in the study (availability and usage of language laboratory) were found to exert significant influence on students' Academic Performance in Oral English of Senior Secondary School in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State. The implication of the result is that availability of the language laboratory is important and significant to students' Academic Performance in oral English also, the usage of the language laboratory is important as well.

Table 9: Summary of T-Test Showing School Type in the Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	T	Df	Sig	Rmk
School Type: Public	100	15.66	5.461	0.727	198	0.468	Not Sig.
Private	100	14.93	6.326				
Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English	200	15.12	6.116				

Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 9 shows the t-test table of analysis of hypothesis three on school type difference in students' academic achievement in oral English in Senior

Secondary School in Ibadan South-West Local Government. The table reveals that there is no significant difference by school type in the Academic Performance in Oral English of the Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-West Local Government. ($t = 0.727$; $df = 198$; $P > 0.05$), then, the hypothesis is not rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is no significant school type difference in students' academic achievement in oral English in senior secondary school. The mean values for the public school and private schools in the table are given as 15.66 and 14.93 respectively while the standard deviation values for public and private schools are 5.461 and 6.326 respectively.

Table 10: Summary of T-test Showing Gender Difference in the Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	T	df	Sig	Rmk
Gender: Male	97	16.58	6.934	3.365	198	0.001	Sig.
Female	103	13.74	4.877				
Students' Academic Achievement in Oral English	200	15.12	6.116				

Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 10 above shows the t-test table of analysis of hypothesis four on gender difference in academic achievement in oral English of students in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government. The table revealed that there is significant difference in the gender difference in students' academic achievement in Oral English ($t = 3.365$; $df = 198$; $P < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is significant gender difference in academic achievement in oral English of students in senior secondary schools Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State. The mean values for the male and female students in the table are given as 16.58 and 13.74 respectively while the standard deviation values for male and female students are 6.934 and 4.877 respectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions can be made:

First, there are no language laboratories in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area. Most of the schools visited for this research lacked visible language laboratory structure and most of the students (respondents) were basically perplexed at the concept during the research.

Second, language laboratories are hardly used in the teaching and learning process of Oral English in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo State Nigeria.

Third, it is somewhat comforting that the proficiency level of the Senior Secondary School Students in Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo state Nigeria is at least at an average level. This however shows that there is still massive space for improvement. Perhaps with the availability and usage of the language laboratory, things can yet be better.

Fourth, that there is a significant combined influence of the availability and usage of the language laboratory on the students' academic achievement in oral English shows how immeasurable the impact of the language laboratory can be if available and adequately used.

Also, the significant relative influence of the availability and usage of the language laboratory on the students' academic achievement in oral English shows that; it is not enough to have the language laboratory but it must also be put to use where available.

In addition, the research has shown that there is no significant school type difference in the academic achievement of students in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government. Therefore, a student is likely to perform well in Oral English in Ibadan South-West Local Government whether he or she attends a private or a public senior secondary school. The school type is insignificant and has no influence on their performances.

Finally, the research has suggested that there is significance in the gender difference in the students' academic achievement in oral English in

Ibadan South-West Local Government area of Oyo state. From the result, females appeared to perform better than their male counterparts.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusion arrived at from this research:

1. Government and all stakeholders should provide adequate language laboratory facilities in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan South-West Local Government area in Oyo state Nigeria. The audio- active lab has been suggested because it is less expensive than the audio-active-record installation and it provides the learners with opportunities of listening to recordings and also attempting to respond and hear what they are pronouncing whilst learning Oral English.
2. Language laboratory facilities provided must be put into use. This can be done by providing adequate orientation and training for teachers and language laboratory technologists on how to use the laboratory adequately for the purpose of teaching oral English.
3. Teachers must be able to draw up plans on how to organise the class in the language laboratory. Students are also to be allowed to use language laboratory equipment appropriately and must be closely monitored.
- 4 Adequate oral drills are provided for the teacher in the language laboratories to help them develop more proficiency. The learners should have access to computer programmes where needed such as Computer Based Tests (CBT), Computer Assisted Instructions (CAI), or even games and applications that help the students learn more and become better in oral English.
5. Since there is no significant difference in the school type and the achievement of students in Ibadan South-West Local Government area, it is recommended that both public and private schools are adequately provided with this facility.
6. With the result suggesting that females are more likely to perform significantly better than their male counterparts in Oral English, the researcher recommends that male students be specially helped to bridge the gap but not to the detriment of the female learners.

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