Assessing Language Laboratory on the Speaking Proficiency in English Language Among Undergraduate Students in Ondo State

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Abstract

The study focused on assessing language laboratory on the speaking proficiency in English Language among undergraduate students in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo state, Nigeria. The study population comprised all the degree English Language students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo state, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was sixty (60) respondents. The sampling technique used was a simple random sampling technique. Findings of the study revealed that gender did not affect the speaking proficiency of students in English Language. Therefore, null hypothesis rejected. Recommendations were made that students should have access to language laboratory, students should also avail themselves with the opportunity of language laboratory, so as to enhance their speaking proficiency in the language. Conclusion was therefore made that language laboratory could play important role in the speaking proficiency of English language students.

Keywords: Assessment, Language, Laboratory, Speaking, Proficiency

Background to the Study

Nigeria is a nation where many languages are being spoken. Thus, it is a multilingual country. Multilingualism is a situation, where people belonging to the same geographical entity, community or society speak different languages. Farinde and Ojo (2008) noted that multilingualism thrives in many countries of the world, Nigeria, inclusive. Since Nigeria is a multilingual country, this necessitated the adoption of English Language as a major languageThus, becoming a language for carrying out several activities.

According to Ezugu (2010), English Language is a language of instruction in the schools.Invariably, this necessitated the emphasis that is being placed on the study of English Language at all levels of education in Nigeria. Anibueze (2009) opined that English Language is a lingua-Franca in Nigeria andit also serves as a unificationfactor thus, enables

people of different linguistics backgrounds to relate together mutually and in unity.

Observable, many learners and speakers of Englishlanguage often exhibit poor speaking habit of the language and this has been attributed to several factors, such as, mother-tongue interference, among otherIts non-proficiency could be seen in the area of phonological interference, a manner in which a speaker perceives and introduces a sound of one language in-terms of his or her mother- tongue in English Language, such as, "soosi-church", "siit-cheat", "chalk-solk"(syntactic interference). The picture painted above, necessitated the use of language laboratory in schools, most Nigerians, in order to improve their proficiency.

Webster's Encyclopedia (2013) defined language laboratory as an audio or audiovisual installation used as an aid in modern language teaching. The first language laboratory began at the University of Grenoble in 1908. They were taped, based in the 1990s till 1950s, using cassette, but now installations are generally multi-media PCs. Language laboratory comprises of a master console (teacher position), which is electronically connected to a number of rows of student booths, tape recorder, headset and microphone. The teacher pronounces a particular word and the students repeats with aid of headset for correct pronunciation through frequent playback of the programme. Therefore, the use of language laboratory on speaking English Language proficiently emerged as a result of mispronunciation of some oral sounds, wrong intonation and wrong stress placement of words by the second learners of English. Language laboratory helps students to know how to pronounce some words and speaks fluently, like the native speakers of the language to them.

Richards (2010) posited that the significance of the language laboratory has been much felt in the domain of communication. We live in a multilingual and multicultural world, which is being Shrink to the size of a village by the advancement of science and technology for effect communication. Ojo (2008) noted that language laboratory is an important facility needed in the educational system both at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. He argued further that language laboratories in schools have helped the non-native speakers of English Language in Nigeria to speak like the native speakers of the languageBamgbose (2008) maintained also that the major speaking of language laboratory is to correct flaws commonly observed in the use of English Language.

Several researchers have carried out studies that are related to this study but much of the studies were self-reporting without empirical findings.It is against this foregoing background, that this study was carried out on assessment of language laboratory on speaking proficiency in English Language in Adeyemi College of Education Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

This study focused on assessment of language laboratory influence on speaking proficiency in English Language in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo state, Nigeria. Hence, it has been observed that most challenges that are confronting the said speaker of English Language are associated with stress, intonation and so on. Particularly, Mother-tongue interference poses a great challenge to speaking proficiency of the second speakers of the language. This therefore, necessitated this study.

However, some questions which keep on lingering in minds are:

i. Will the use of language laboratory enhances fluency and proficiency in the speaking of English Language?

ii. Will the use of language laboratory enable the learners to know how to articulate sounds of English Language, and so on?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is on assessment of language laboratory influence on speaking proficiency in English Language in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Ondo state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. determine the impact of language laboratory on speaking proficiency of in English Language;

ii. ascertain, whether the use of language laboratory could enhance good articulation of the language;

iii. enable the teachers of English Language to determine the impact of Language laboratory on stress placement in speaking of the language.
iv. help to determine the positive impact of Language laboratory on intonation in speaking English Lanugage.

Significance of the Study

The findings from the study will provide valuable information to the government, Educational Research Centre, the curriculum planners and so on in the following ways;

i. The findings of the study will bring public awareness on the importance of English language laboratory in the speaking of the language
ii. The result of the research will also enable the teachers, educational planners to solve the problems of the wrong pronunciation of words, stress placement and intonation among the learners of English Language by making language laboratory a compulsory centre in school.
iii. The findings of the study will help the English Language teacher to see the justification of using English Language laboratory in the teaching of the subject.

Research Questions

One research question was raised to guide the study.

i. What is the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students exposed to practicals in English Language laboratory viz; speaking proficiency, sound articulation, intonation and stress placement?

Research Hypotheses

One hypothesis was also raised to guide the study. They are:

i. There is no significant difference in speaking proficiency of male and female English Language students exposed to English Language laboratory.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study.

The population of this study comprised, English Language degree students of Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. Sixty (60) English Language degree students were drawn as sample size for the study. Fifteen students were selected from each of the four levels, through a simple random technique.

The research instrument used for this study was self-developed check list by the researchers, entitled, "Assessment of Language Laboratory Speaking Proficiency of English Language Students (CALLSPELS)". The instruments were validated by the experts in test and measurement atAdeyemi College of Education, Ondo State, Nigeria. Corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the instrument. While,it reliability of the instrument was done through test re-test method at an interval of two weeks. The coefficient reliability obtained was 0.70. Therefore, the researchers adjudged the instrument to be reliable enough for the study.

Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used. Simple percentage was used to analyse the research question. t-test was used to analyse data on hypothesis one, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for hypothesis two.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: What is the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students exposed to practical in language laboratory viz: speaking, sound articulation, intonation, and stress placement?

Table 4.3   **Level of English Language Students' Speaking Proficiency viz;Speaking**

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. D
1	The scrapping stopped and everybody clapped.	3.40	1.42
2	The vicar got up from the front row and beamed on the company.	3.63	1.52
3	She looked at me over the top of her cup 'Good evening' are you enjoying it?	3.70	1.41
4	When do we start the importation?	3.88	1.55
5	The class resumes tomorrow.	3.82	1.60
	Weighted Average	3.69	

Key: 1 = Very Poor, **2** = Poor, **3** = Average, **4** = Good, **5** = Very Good, **6** = Excellent
Decision Value: *Low* = 0.00-2.00, *Average* = 2.10-4.00, *High* = 4.10-6.00

Table 4.3 shows the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students. The table also shows that the students are average on the first item that was used to measure them: the scrapping stopped and everybody clapped (= 3.40). On the other four items, the students were good: the vicar got up from the front row and beamed on the company (= 3.63), she looked at me over the top of her cup 'Good evening' are you enjoying it? (= 3.70), when do we start the importation?(= 3.88), the class resumes tomorrow (= 3.82). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average (3.69 out of 6.00 that is obtainable), it can be inferred therefore that the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of speaking is average.

Table 4.4 shows the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of sound articulation. The table shows that the students are good on the following four items: the spare key for the door has been found (= 3.52), for my birthday I received two bouquets and wasn't sure on which to use (= 3.57), feminist say that male chauvinism is still prevalent in cultures worldwide (= 3.58) and a sachet of curry will not be enough for the quantity of food to be cooked if is to be a delicious meal (= 3.80). On the last item, the students were average: the moustache between his nose and upper lip is causing him pain according to the doctor (= 3.40). Based on the value of the weighted average however, it can be inferred that the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of sound articulation is average.

Table 4.5 shows the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the area of intonation. The table shows that the students are good on items 11, 13 and 14: the country which has the largest population in Africa is Nigeria (= 3.72), Oh, had I known! I would have recommended him for your project (= 3.52) and when I came back, I went to bed because it was already late (= 3.55). On items 12 and 15, the students were average: who bought the book yesterday and gave it to you? (= 3.43) and yes, how may I help you? Is Lagos the capital of Nigeria? Yes or No? (= 3.03). Based on the value of the weighted average however, it can also be deduced that the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of intonation is average.

Table 4.4   **Level of English Language Students' Speaking Proficiency viz Sound Articulation**

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. D
6	The spare key for the door has been found.	3.52	1.56
7	For my birthday I received two bouquets and wasn't sure on which to use.	3.57	1.41

S/No	Items		
8	Feminist say that male chauvinism is still prevalent in cultures worldwide.	3.58	1.58
9	A sachet of curry will not be enough for the quantity of food to be cooked if is to be a delicious meal.	3.80	1.36
10	The moustache between his nose and upper lip is causing him pain according to the doctor.	3.40	1.51
	Weighted Average	**3.57**	

Key: 1 = Very Poor, **2** = Poor, **3** = Average, **4** = Good, **5** = Very Good, **6** = Excellent
Decision Value: *Low* = 0.00-2.00, *Average* = 2.10-4.00, *High* = 4.10-6.00

Table 4.5   Level of English Language Students' Speaking Proficiency viz; Intonation

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. D
11	The country which has the largest population in Africa is Nigeria.	3.72	1.34
12	Who brought the book yesterday and gave it to you?	3.43	1.54
13	Oh, had I known! I would have recommended him for your project.	3.52	1.49
14	When I came back, I went to bed because it was already late.	3.55	1.58
15	Yes, how may I help you?/Is Lagos the capital of Nigeria? Yes or No.	3.03	1.38
	Weighted Average	**3.45**	

Key: 1 = Very Poor, **2** = Poor, **3** = Average, **4** = Good, **5** = Very Good, **6** = Excellent
Decision Value: *Low* = 0.00-2.00, *Average* = 2.10-4.00, *High* = 4.10-6.00

Table 4.6   Level of English Language Students' Speaking Proficiency viz; Stress Placement

S/No	Items	Mean	Std. D
16	Madam, good morning I was her yesterday to make complain about the missing document but was told by your secretary that you are not around.	3.37	1.52
17	The exportation and importation of goods into the country needs to be cleared by the custom first said the president of Nigeria for its authenticity.	3.28	1.43
18	Conflict between two ethnic community as result of political differences needs to be resolvedimmediately for the peace of the country.	3.42	1.38
19	To comprehend the delay tactics used by some politicaloffice holders when it comes to change of office should be questioned.	3.68	1.61
20	The photographer made a mistake by printing the wrong choice of picture for his customer and this caused a lot of fortune.	3.78	1.62
	Weighted Average	**3.51**	

Key: 1 = Very Poor, **2** = Poor, **3** = Average, **4** = Good, **5** = Very Good, **6** = Excellent
Decision Value: *Low* = 0.00-2.00, *Average* = 2.10-4.00, *High* = 4.10-6.00

Table 4.7   Summary of T-test showing Difference in Speaking Proficiency of Male and Female English Language Students, exposed to Practical in Language Laboratory

Variable	N	Mean	Std. D	df	T	Sig (p)	Remark
Speaking Proficiency Males	31	70.84	19.87	58	-.107	.916	Not Significant
Females	29	71.34	16.64				

Table 4.8:   Scheffe's-Post-Hoc Pair-wise Comparison of the Students' Speaking Proficiency based on the Level of students studying English Language Course of Study

Levels of students	Mean	100 Level	200 Level	300 Level	400 Level

studying English Language					
100	66.19			*	
200	59.67			*	
300	83.71	*	*		
400	75.93				

Table 4.6 shows the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of stress placement. The table shows that the students are average on items 16, 17 and 18: madam, good morning, I was here yesterday to make complain about the missing document but was told by your secretary that you are not around (= 3.37), the exportation and importation of goods into the country needs to be cleared by the custom first said the president of Nigeria for its authenticity (= 3.28) and conflict between two ethnic community as result of political differences needs to be resolved immediately for the peace of the country (= 3.42). On items 19 and 20, the students were good: to comprehend the delay tactics used by some political office holders when it comes to change of office should be questioned (= 3.68) and the photographer made a mistake by printing the wrong choice of picture for his customer and this caused a lot of fortune (= 3.78). Based on the value of the weighted average however, it can be inferred that the level of speaking proficiency of English Language students in the areas of stress placement is average.

4.2 Test of the Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the speaking proficiency of male and female English Language students, exposed to practical in the language laboratory.

Table 4.7 shows the difference in speaking proficiency of male and female English Language students, exposed to practicals in language laboratory. The table shows that the mean score of speaking proficiency of the male students is 70.84, while that of the female students is 71.34. These values reveal no appreciable difference. Thus, it can be said that there is there is no significant difference in the speaking proficiency of male and female English Language students exposed to practicals in the language laboratory(df = 58; t = -.107; p>0.05).

Based on this result, the Null hypothesis 1 therefore is accepted.

Table 4.9 revealed that the significant difference that is shown in Table 4.11 was as a result of the significant difference in the speaking proficiency of: 100 level and 300 level students, 200 level and 300 level students, 300 level students and 100 level students, 300 level students and 200 level students. There is no significant difference in the speaking proficiency of 100 level students and 200 level students, 100 level students and 400 level students, 200 level students and 100 level students, 200 level students and 400 level students, 300 level students and 400 level students, 400 level students and 100, 200 and 300 level students (in that order).

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The results presented in tables 1-4 show assessment of language laboratory on speaking proficiency in English Language. Based on research questions 1 and its sub-scales, the use of language laboratory weighted average based on speaking sound articulation, intonation and stress placement. Thus, proficiency in speaking English does not have anything to do with gender i.e. females and males as it could be found in hypothesis 1 that there is no significant difference between them. The above corroborates with the findings of Ojo (2008) that language laboratory is an important facility needed by both male and female in primary, secondary and tertiary level to be proficient in speaking. Similarly, he is of the view that out of 100 students tested, 50 males and 50 females,

68% of the males performed well while 32% in female. While Bamgbose (2010) opinion is in contrast with the findings Hypothesis 1.Hence, he attributed speaking proficiency in the langue to environment. It therefore shows that there is no significant difference in the speaking proficiency of female and male English Language students exposed to practicals in the language laboratory.

The findings in hypothesis I, revealed that there is no significant difference in the speaking proficiency of male and female English Language students exposed to practical in the language laboratory. Based on the result which shows the mean score of speaking proficiency of the students is 70.84 while that of female is 71.34, these values reveals no appreciable difference therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This aligns with Stevens (1995) submissions that gender does not determine the level of proficiency in English. It is also in consonance with Bamgbose (2006) opinion that being female or male has nothing to do with speaking proficiency, that the best way one could be proficient in speaking English language is through the use of language laboratory as an oral drill.

The results of Hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant influence of level of students studying English Language on the speaking proficiency of English Language students exposed to practice in language laboratory. Based on the result which shows the overall mean score of the speaking proficiency of 100 level students (66.19), the students in 200 level (56.67), those in 300 level (83.71), 400 level (75.95).Thus, revealed that there is significant different in the speaking of English based on their levels. The findings align with the findings of Jones (2000) who is of the opinion that has student become more exposed, more experienced while when they just started using it. This finding are also in consonance with Onadeko (1998) and Jones (2000) findings in their research that the more you make use of Language laboratory, the more you become enlightened.

Conclusion

Based on the findings language laboratory plays an important role in the speaking proficiency of English Language student. This is in line with Boniface (2014)pines that, communication skills are indispensable for the success of any profession and that if one wants to reach out to people, he or she has to speak a language and speak it effectively which all depends on the effective use of language laboratory. Gas Mackey & Ross-Fidman (2005) and Robert Peter (2009)also maintained that the effective use of

language laboratory reduces time spent on teaching students on a particular sound or word unlike teaching in normal class, which consumes more time and energy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made;

i. More researches should be conducted to find out more about the importance of language laboratory to English Language students in order for government, school owners and other stakeholders to concentrate more on equipping the schools'laboratory.

ii. Students should be made to haveaccess into the language laboratory often and not till they get to a particular level or based on gender or when there is a particular topic to be taught in English.

iii. Students should take activities in language laboratory serious based on its influence on enhancing speaking proficiency in English Language.

iv. Government and other stakeholders in the provision of education should ensure that schools at different levels have a well-equipped language laboratory.

v. Students should be encouraged to avail themselves with the opportunity of language laboratory so as to enhance their speaking proficiency in the language.

vi. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for teachers on the effective use of language laboratory and its impact towards speaking proficiency in English Language.

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