

Investigating the Impact of Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching on Communicative Competence of Secondary School Students in Gusau Metropolis Zamfara State

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the Effect of Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching on communicative Competence of Secondary School Students in Gusau Metropolis Zamfara State. Pretest-post-test quasi-experimental research design was used. The population of the study was 19,094 and four intact classes comprised 230 SS I students were drawn from the population. The instrument of the study was an adapted oral test version of English Language Speaking Test (ELST) and it was tagged Student Communicative Competence in English Test (SCCIET). It was validated by the experts in Language Education at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The modified SCCIET was pilot tested for two weeks. After test-retest, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was computed and coefficient of $r = 0.82$ was established. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance. T-test was used in testing all the three null hypotheses. After testing, all the three null hypotheses were rejected. The findings showed that Experimental group performed better than control group in English communicative competence. The study recommended the use of Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching to teach students because it develops proficiency in English language speaking skills and reduce the level of speaking anxiety.

Keywords: *Communicative competence, Classroom language, Social language process language, Oral approach, Situational language teaching*

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Background to the Study

The setting of language teaching and learning in a multilingual society affects second language (L2) or foreign language proficiency. Apart from interference phenomenon manifested at all levels of language (phonology, morphology, Lexis, syntax and semantic) language learners do not use the target language after their school hours. It is obvious, when children enter school, they will work within a communication system which consists of language structure (sound structure, inflection, syntax), content (meaning) and use (purposes of communication, appropriate forms of communication). Therefore, the knowledge about meaning, language function (pragmatics), discourse genre, and more complex syntax continue to develop during schooling.

Based on the above, the researcher thought to introduce an approach that could be used by teachers to improve student oral English for example pragmatics used in different contexts such as classroom language (language commonly use in classroom), social language (language use in different social settings e.g market, hospital e.t.c) and process language (language use to explain the process of doing something). This approach namely Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching (SLT).

Oral approach and situational language teaching is an approach introduced by Harold palmer and A.S Hornby early 1920s to 1960s. It emerged as an improvement over obsolete Direct Method, which was monolingual, inductive, and demonstrative and pronunciation focused method. But Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching will help the students to speak up and the material becomes personal skill for them (Hussain, 2015).

The theory of learning underlying situational language teaching is behaviorist learning theory; it addresses primarily the process rather than the condition of learning. The process means when the students receive the material then fix the subject matter in their memory and practice it until become their personal skill. Situational language teaching adopts an inductive approach to the teaching of grammar. The meaning of word or structure is not to be given through explanation in native tongue or target language but to be induced from the way form is used in situation. In situation means use of concrete objects, realia, which together with action and gesture can be used to demonstrate meaning of language item.

Communicative competence is the basic language tool for mental, emotional and social development. It has an important place in processes such as establishing communications, expressing emotions and thoughts, integrating with the outer world, and interacting with people. Therefore, for communicative competence regards as an interaction of the grammatical (formally possible), psycholinguistic (implementational feasible), sociocultural (contextually appropriate), and probabilistic (actually done) systems of language. Sabri, (2018) in Hymes (1972), points out that communicative competence doesn't only represent the grammatical competence but also the sociolinguistics competence, therefore, communicative competence refers to the psychological, social and cultural rules which discipline the use of speech in social settings

Shekari, (2015), conducted a study on the Effects of Communicative Teaching method on the performance of Students in English Language in Junior Secondary School in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The research work sought to find out if there was a significant difference or no significant difference in the performance of students in English Language when taught using interactive teaching techniques in JSS. The study finds out that students taught English Language in JSS in Kaduna state using Interactive Teaching Techniques performed better than those taught without the techniques. Sani, (2017), investigated on the effects of communicative language teaching method on senior secondary Hausa Language students' performance in Kaduna state Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: determine the effects of communicative language teaching method on senior secondary Hausa language students' performance. The study found that there was a significant difference in the performance of students taught manner of articulation using communicative language teaching method in senior secondary schools. Likewise, Christiana, (2019), evaluates the communicative approach adopted in the teaching of language in Nigerian Secondary Schools. This study analyses the communicative language teaching approach in line with the language difficulty situation of the Nigerian students. The study suggests that teachers of the English language need to be more proactive and less nonchalant in their use of the communicative approach. They also need to implement appropriate communicative activities consciously to meet the learning styles and needs of their students in the Nigerian context.

Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching

The term Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching can be divided into oral approach (an approach) and situational language teaching (a method): The oral approach is a set of assumptions and ideas about how second and foreign language can be taught whereas situational language teaching can be said to be a method and technique about how the oral approach's ideas and assumptions are implemented (Kumaravadivelu 2006; Nehla, 2013). Nevertheless, both terms are usually combined together and are rarely separated (Richards and Rogers, 2001).

Strength of Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching

Shih, (2011) presented the strengths of oral approach and situational language teaching as follows:

- a) Suitable for introduction to the language.
- b) Oral production without risk.
- c) Values practical grammar and vocabulary.
- d) An accessible method for teachers.
- e) Inexpensive to use.

This method is suitable in introducing new language to the learner for example, in Nigeria where the English language being use as second and official language it could be helpful when the students are being taught the language situationally. In addition, this method would be a good method if the teacher wants to teach vocabulary, pronunciation, accuracy and fluency at the same time because it is simple and direct to the situation.

Weakness of Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching

Shih, (2011) presented its weakness as follow:

- a) It is boring
- b) Inauthentic Teacher-controlled
- c) Condescending
- d) Conflicts with natural acquisition

Here it can be understood that it is boring because the teacher has heavy load for proving situational contents to be taught at the right time. It can be considered as inauthentic Teacher-controlled this means that it can be unauthentic when the teacher is not a skilful manipulator. It is condescending in the sense that it lowers the students' creative. It conflicts with natural language acquisition whereby language acquisition also requires an innate predisposition that will lead the learner to a certain kind of linguistic competence. In addition, the learner has no control over the content of learning. They are required simply to listen and repeat what the teacher says and to respond to questions and commands. This method does not account for the fundamental characteristic of language namely the creativity and uniqueness of individual sentences.

Teachers' Guide for Oral language Teaching Approach

Oral language teaching approach procedure to facilitate Learning in the classroom.

Individually

Students are sometimes assigned an oral activity without a clear understanding of what is expected to and how to be most effective. By taking the time to teach specific oral strategies in the context of your subject area, you will boost your students' confidence and performance

Pair work

Working in pairs provides students with an opportunity to “think aloud” about what they know, and a process for acquiring and reflecting on information.

Small-group discussions

The strategies for small-group discussion give students the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, build positive relationships, work cooperatively, and participate actively in their learning. By taking the time to guide them in the context of your subject area, you will boost your students' confidence and performance

Whole-class discussions

Students learn more readily in a class where they experience cooperation and a sense of belonging. By involving the whole class in shared activities, and by teaching students how to be good speaker/ listeners, to respect each other and to participate without fear, you can maximize participation and minimize speaking anxiety for all students.

Presentations

Talk and explain as well students talk their way into meaning and understanding through verbal rehearsal.

Have specific roles to fulfil and participate actively in their learning,
The quality of presentations improves with effective instruction, practice and support.

Conclusion

Consider adding a writing activity as a productive follow-up to some importance points.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers Onukaogu, (2002), Nworgu, and Ellah (2019), have observed that learners exhibit poor competence and performance in the language. One of these problems is low proficiency that manifests itself numerous syntactic errors and inappropriate selection in their use of English. Examinations Council (WAEC) (2019) describes that over the years, failure rate in English Language and General Mathematics has been comparatively higher than it is with other school subjects. This has always, been a major problem in oral English in Nigerian schools. Therefore, the researcher thought that using an Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching may enhance communicative competence performance of students in English Language in senior secondary schools.

Objectives of the Study

This study is aimed to:

- 1 Find out the effect of oral approach and situational language teaching on students' communicative competence performance in classroom language.
- 2 Ascertain the effect of oral approach and situational language teaching on students' communicative competence performance in social language.
- 3 Ascertain the effects of oral approach and situational language teaching on students' communicative competence performance in process language.

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following Research questions are formulated which will guide the conduct of this research.

1. Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of the students taught classroom language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method?
2. Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of the students taught social language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method?
3. Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of the students taught process language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method?

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the communicative performance of students taught classroom language using oral approach situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught social language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught process language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Methodology

This research employed the quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, it is the non-randomized, control group, pre-test, post-test design. This design was adopted because the students that were used for the experiment were already in intact classes and randomization would disrupt the existing structure in the school, thus posing some administrative problems. Moreover, the study utilized the design for the suitability to the demands of comparing two teaching methods (independent variables); oral approach and situational language teaching method and direct methods on dependent variable i.e., the scores of students on the communicative competence performance.

Population of the Study

The total population of this study is 19,094 Senior Secondary Students from the 24 senior secondary schools in Gusau metropolis Zamfara State (Zamfara State Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2018). The subjects aged between 15 and 17 years old. The majority of the subjects under study have Hausa language as their mother tongue. They are predominantly attending public senior secondary schools and sharing the same curriculum. The participants' gender was not considered as sub-variable.

Samples and Sampling Techniques

The subjects of this study were drawn from 24 senior secondary schools in Gusau Metropolis. It is quite impossible for the researcher to study the entire population due to some limitations which includes limited time among others. Hence the study purposively sampled out four (4) schools: Danturai Government Day Secondary School Gusau and Government Girls Day Secondary School S/kudu (Snr 1); used as experimental group and Government Science Secondary School, Gusau and Government Girls Arabic Secondary School (Snr I) were used as control group. This is because these sampled schools share the common characteristics with population. Moreover, the researcher sampled one intact class from each of the 4 schools sampled comprised 230 students and the subjects in those intact classes.

Table 1 shows the schools, the number of subject and the intact classes for the study:

Instrument

The instrument of the study was an adapted oral test version of English Language Speaking Test (ELST) used by Aly, Muhammad and Abdel-Sadeq (2013). This instrument was tagged Student Communicative Competence in English Test (SCCIET). The components of the speaking rating scale focus on comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Thus, component takes 2 marks each that give total 10 marks to each question of the three leaning experiences (classroom language, social language and process language). The oral test and analytic rubric were included in the appendix section. It was validated by the experts in Language Education at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The modified

SCCIET was pilot tested for two weeks. After test-retest, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was computed and coefficient of $r = 0.82$ was established. The co-efficient obtained signifies that the instrument for this study is very reliable

Data Collection Procedure

The experiment lasted for eight weeks but the lessons were taught for six weeks. The researcher initially divided the subjects into experimental and control groups and all the lessons were taught by the researcher. On the other hand the researcher requested three English language teachers (research assistants) and researcher himself to be the interview raters/interviewers in pre- and post-treatment oral tests. The research assistants were trained on what was expected of them at the conduct of the oral test.

Treatment

In administering the lesson, two situational method classes were carried out and two conventional method classes were conducted for the experimental and the control schools. The researcher used the normal school time-table of 40 minutes per lesson for these two methods in order to determine whether the proposed instruction would enhance learners' communicative competence on classroom language, social language and process language.

Classroom language

Students in experimental group were taught about cause and effect as well as Seeking clarification using oral approach and situational language teaching. These students learnt receptive vocabularies through video clips and face-face communication. While those in control group were taught same topic using conventional method.

Social language

Students in experimental group were taught Talking to Doctor at Hospital and Library conversation using oral approach and situational language teaching method, the students were exposed to hospital and school library while those in control group were taught same topic using conventional method.

Process Language

Students in experimental group were taught Asking for and giving directions as well as Phrases on How to switch on and Shutdown the Computer using oral approach and situational language teaching method, the students were exposed to school ICT room. While those in control group were taught same topic using conventional method.

Data Analysis Procedure

This research is quantitative research, so it needs the data analysis. To analyze the data, the researcher uses descriptive and inferential analyses. Also, the researcher used Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17.0 in analyzing the data. The descriptive statistics was used in answering all the research questions then inferential statistics of t-test was used to test all the three null hypotheses at 0.05 Alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught classroom language using Oral approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught using direct method?

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation for Classroom Language

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental	126	8.11	0.63	0.93
Control	102	7.18	0.78	

Table 1 showed the performance of students taught classroom language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using traditional method in Gusau metropolis Zamfara State. The result revealed that the mean performance of students in the experimental class 8.11 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.18. Therefore, the difference between the performance of students taught classroom language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis was significant with 0.93 mean difference.

Research Question 2: Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught Social Language using Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught using direct method?

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation for Social Language

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental	126	8.05	0.63	0.63
Control	102	7.42	0.85	

Table 2 showed the performance of students taught Social Language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis Zamfar State. The result revealed that the mean performance of students in the experimental class 8.05 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.42. Therefore, the difference between the academic performance of students taught classroom language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis was significant with 0.63 mean difference.

Research Question 3: Is there any difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught Process Language using Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught using direct method?

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation for Process Language

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Experimental	126	7.79	0.90	0.73
Control	102	7.06	0.91	

Table 3 showed the performance of students taught Process Language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis Zamfara State. The result revealed that the mean performance of students in the experimental class 7.79 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.06. Therefore, the difference between the performance of students taught Process Language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis was significant with 0.73 mean difference.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significance difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught classroom language using oral approach situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Table 4: Summary of T-test Analysis for Students taught Classroom Language Using Oral Approach Situational Language Teaching and Those Taught Using Direct Method

Groups	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Experimental	126	8.11	0.63	224	9.54	0.000	Rejected
Control	102	7.18	0.78				

α--value = 0.05

Table 4 shows that at the post-test level, the performance of experimental and the control groups were calculated at (T = 9.54, P = 0.000 < α = 0.05). Therefore, the P-value (0.000) is less than statistical level (α = 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the performance of the students taught Classroom language using Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught via Direct Method in favour of the former group (Experimental)

H₀₂: There is no significance difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught social language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis of Students Taught Social Language Using Oral Approach Situational Language Teaching and Those Taught Using Direct Method

Groups	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Experimental	126	8.05	0.63	224	6.54	0.000	Rejected
Control	102	7.42	0.85				

α -value = 0.05

Table 5 shows that at the post-test level, the performance of experimental and the control groups were calculated at ($T = 6.54, P = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the P-value (0.000) is less than statistical level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the performance of the students taught Social language using Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught via Direct Method in favour of the former group (Experimental)

H₀₃: There is no significance difference between the communicative competence performance of students taught process language using oral approach and situational language teaching and those taught using direct method.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis of Students Taught Process Language Using Oral Approach Situational Language Teaching and Those Taught Using Direct Method

Groups	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Experimental	126	7.79	0.90	224	6.11	0.000	Rejected
Control	102	7.06	0.91				

α -value = 0.05

Table 6 shows that at the post-test level, the academic performance of experimental and the control groups were calculated at ($T = 6.11, P = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the P-value (0.000) is less than statistical level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the performance of the students taught Process language using Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching and those taught via Direct Method in favour of the former group (Experimental).

Findings

Based on the data collected, analyzed and interpreted, the major findings were summarized as follows:

1. Oral approach and situational language teaching is effective in teaching English functional language: classroom language.
2. Oral approach and situational language teaching is effective in teaching English language in social language.

3. Oral approach and situational language teaching is effective in teaching English functional language for communicative competence. The Experimental groups performed better than the control groups in process language.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one (1) found that the experimental group (OASLT) performed significantly better than the control group (traditional) in English language classroom language. OASLT enhanced the students' ability to arrange their dialogue in a sequence to produce coherent utterances in classroom activities. Moreover, the descriptive statistics result revealed that the mean performance of students in the experimental class 8.11 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.18 with 0.93 mean difference. In the oral English, the experimental showed the ability to control the ordering of the sentences in terms of the language students need to communicate in the classroom than control group. Experimental improved in their knowledge of doing peer checks (“what do you have for number 1?”), checking instructions (“what page?”), requesting things (“can I borrow a pen?”, “can I be excused?”), as well as seeking for clarification. Henceforth, the study seems to answer that the students who were taught classroom language through OASLT can better their articulation in accordance with situation. This is in accordance with the findings of Shekari, (2015), that, students taught English Language in JSS using Interactive Teaching Techniques performed better than those taught without the techniques and that of Sani, (2017) that students taught Hausa language using communicative language teaching method performed better than those taught using traditional method in senior secondary schools students.

Hypothesis two (2) found that the experimental (OASLT) developed more English language vocabulary than the control (direct) in social language. This was illustrated in descriptive statistics that revealed the mean performance of students in the experimental class 8.05 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.42 with 0.63 mean difference and the post-test academic performance where experimental group demonstrated some mastery in the use of appropriate registers in their oral discussion. They understood that every profession has some vocabulary or terminologies that are associated with it. They understood some lexicon of English language that are associated with profession like, seeing doctor in hospital, talking to teacher in school etc. This study found changes in student's use of language for social purposes and appropriate use of language in different social and cultural settings. Learner gained self-confidence to make conversations among their friends. They improved in the use of expressions appropriate to the convention of professional community like talking to the teacher in school (“Sir, I like English language lesson”), a doctor in hospital (“Doctor I have tooth ache”) and in barber shop (“please barber I want shave my head). Therefore, this study seems to answer that the students who were taught social language through OASLT in context form can better their lexicon and word choice in discourse making. This result agrees with the findings of the study of Christiana, (2019), that, CLT learning activities are helpful for language learning. The researchers found that the students with the situational mashups support had a better learning performance and improved behaviors.

However, hypothesis three (3) found that the experimental group (OASLT) performed significantly better than the control group (direct) in process language as well as descriptive statistics result revealed that the mean performance of students in the experimental class 7.79 is greater than the mean performance of the control class 7.06. Therefore with 0.73 mean difference. The experimental students showed ability to arrange their dialogue in a sequence to produce coherent stretch of utterances, link words and conjunctions (first, secondly, then, often that etc). This includes their ability to control the ordering of the sentences in terms of topic and sequencing. They demonstrated some improvement in their ability to structure and manage dialogue in terms of thematic organization, coherence and cohesion, logical ordering, style and registers. They improved in their communication in the community because they showed some ability to structure information under the observance of macro-functions (description, request, explanation etc.), how to give a direction, how to borrow a book in the library, and how to use a computer. This finding is in accordance with the finding of Christiana (2019) that communicative approach is effective in teaching language in Nigerian secondary schools and teachers need to implement appropriate communicative activities consciously to meet the learning styles and needs of their students in the Nigerian context.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study:

1. Oral approach and situational language teaching method is an effective method for teaching English language.in secondary schools.
2. Direct method is not effective method in teaching functional language when compared with oral approach and direct language teaching method.
3. There is significance difference in the communicative competence performance of students taught functional language (classroom language, social language and process language) using oral approach and situational language teaching method and those taught using direct method in Gusau metropolis Zamfara State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers of English Language in the rural and urban settings should thoroughly study oral approach and situational language teaching. The method develops proficiency in English language speaking skills and reduce the level of speaking anxiety and makes student an active participant in the class activity.
2. Curriculum planners should include oral approach and situational language teaching in teaching English language at secondary school.
3. More effective training through workshops, seminars, conferences, in-service courses on how to implement oral method may help to give teachers more support in trying to implement the oral approach in their classroom lessons

Implications of the Study

1. The oral approach and situational language teaching as found here can be an effective and serve as an alternative method to direct method because it is a core method which students are allow to practice in their own (that is, independently).
2. Speaking instruction situationally which in any case is rarely adopted in the secondary schools' classrooms in Nigeria. Thus, incorporating oral approach and situational language teaching into senior secondary schools' classrooms would be beneficial in implementing the communicative language teaching and learning.
3. This research may contribute to the existing literature by providing reference materials for English language teachers and researchers.

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