

PDF - EFFECT OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE METHOD ON STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKOKO SOUTH EDUCATION ZONE, ONDO STATE - researchcub.info

**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the Effect of Total Physical Response Method on Student's Achievement in English Vocabulary in Junior Secondary Schools in Akoko South Education Zone of Ondo State. Three research questions were posed and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study engaged quasi-experimental research design, otherwise known as pretest –posttest non-equivalent control group design involving two intact classes from each of the randomly selected schools. Purposive random sampling was used to select two schools for the study. The two intact classes randomly selected were assigned to experimental and control groups. The experimental group comprised 83 male and female students from schools located in rural and urban areas. The control group comprised 77 male and female students from rural and urban areas. The experimental group was taught English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method while the control group was taught English Vocabulary using Grammar-Translation method. The instrument which was validated by experts' and used for data collection was English Vocabulary Achievement Test (EVAT). Four different lesson plans for the two groups with the same instructional objectives and questions but different teaching strategies were developed. EVAT was administered to 20 students before the treatment for the purpose of estimating the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Kuder-Richardson's formula ( $K - 20$ ) and it yielded a reliability index of 0.75.

Data collected were calculated using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study were: Total Physical Response method had a significant effect on students' achievement in English vocabulary. Student taught English vocabulary with TPR method achieved significantly higher than their counterparts taught with grammar translation method. School location had a significant effect on students' achievement in English vocabulary. Also, gender had significant effect on students' achievement in English vocabulary. Based on these findings, it was concluded that the study provided empirical evidence of the efficiency of TPR method in enhancing students' achievement in English Language Vocabulary. It was recommended that the serving teachers should be encouraged to adopt this method as alternative to conventional method of teaching English language vocabulary. Also, students should be encouraged to engage in extensive vocabulary activities with the aid of total physical response method.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of the Study**

Communication, from time immemorial, has been a major means of

passing information to people in every human community. It is a means of exchanging ideas and disseminating information to the appropriate quarter and area. According to Fawehinmi (2007:224) "communication is the "process" by which thoughts, views, opinions are transferred from one end to the other". Communication is seen as a process because it changes human beings and tailors their behaviour towards expected outcomes. It is an important instrument that can be used to change human orientation. Nevertheless, it is observed that the use of language cannot be separated from communication and communication itself cannot be absolutely possible without the inclusion of language (Jimoh, 2007).

Language is an integral part of communication. Language as a means of communication plays many important roles among human beings in their day-to-day interactions and communications. According to Onyekwere, Chibueze, Roscolette, Matins & Quinette (2012, p. 3), "language is human specific in that it is a human activity. It is exclusive to human beings. Although animals communicate, such communication is not through speech or language". Language is specific to human beings because it is used to carry out series of functions among human beings and can only be learned by human beings. There are some theories that underline how language can be acquired or learned. These theories were developed to account for language acquisition and learning. Some of them include behaviourist- "say it after me", mentalist- "it is all in your mind", connectionist- "it is associative", interactionist- "linguistic environment interacting with innate capacity", among others.

Consequently, after the acquisition or learning, humans use language voluntarily to convey information, to influence others, to keep records, to document some ideas, to express themselves and to interact for phatic communication. Basically, language affects human endeavours and manifests itself in every facet of human life and activity (Fawehinmi, 2007). It is in light of this statement that various language policies have been made in Nigeria with regards to medium of instructions in our various institutions of learning. The language policy on education (2004) stated in Ibemesi (2012, p.444), states that;

... the languages are grouped under official, Nigerian and foreign languages. Under official languages, English, designated ( $L_4$ ) stands alone, while  $L_1$  to  $L_3$  designated, Nigerian languages are classified as: Mother Tongue ( $L_1$ ), language of the immediate community ( $L_2$ ) and major Nigerian languages as ( $L_3$ ) respectively. French and Arabic are classified as foreign languages and designated both as ( $L_5$ ).

The implication of this policy is that it makes mother tongue or language of the immediate community (if any) compulsory in the lower primary school, while English is compulsory from the senior primary school to secondary school.

English as one of the international languages of the world is indispensable because of its global status. According to Yang (2005), English language is not only a system of

communication but the pre-eminent language of science, technology and medicine and it has become the Lingua Franca in the 21st century. Its trend of communication revolves global recognition. People all over the world, today, are learning it either as a second language or foreign language to enhance their potential for international communication. According to Denham and Lobeck (2010, p.420), "Today, fewer than one-fifth of native English Speakers live in the British Isles". This means that many native speakers of English are not from British Isles.

In Nigeria today, English is adopted as national and official language at the expense of the so-called major languages: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba because of multilingual nature of this country. Consequently, there are objectives that underline the learning of English language in Nigeria as stated in Enaibe and Imonivwerha (2007): to produce Nigerian students whose spoken and written English is intelligible locally, nationally and internationally; to enable students to talk and write on prepared or impromptu topics with professional competence; to make students speak at normal speed with good pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation and to ensure high level of English skills with special emphasis on spoken forms. Based on these objectives, therefore, it is important that students achieve a high level of proficiency and intelligibility for them to be enlisted into the elite circle because English is a language of the elite.

For students to be proficient and intelligible, vocabulary language is needed (Scarborough, 2001). Vocabulary constitutes the knowledge of meanings of words possessed by individual learners. It is the body of words known to individuals. Yenny (2007, p.10) states; "vocabulary is a stock of words in a language, written or spoken, with meaning considered as cultural meaning used by group or individual community". With this statement, the number of vocabulary (words) in the linguistic repertoire of every learner determines his competence and performance. Learners' achievement on every aspect of English as in essay writing, comprehension, summary, lexis and structure is premised on the number of vocabulary they possess. It is believed that the more vocabulary students learn; the more ideas they should have, so that they can communicate their ideas more effectively. This view is supported by Edge (1993, p.27), "knowing a lot of words in a foreign language is very important. The more words we know, the better our chance of understanding or making ourselves understood".

Most often, speaking and writing in the target language is a complex-task. Internalizing chunks of vocabulary necessary for communication may be time-consuming and demanding. Teaching English vocabulary in the junior secondary school should be encompassing and different from adults' learning method. The teacher should make use of flash cards, vocabulary drills, language games, reading comprehension exercises, oral exercises and repetition to help the students develop the four language skills in the target language. The teacher must play important roles by motivating the students' learning interest. According to Harmer (2001, p.38) "young learners especially those up to the ages of nine to twelve

learn differently from older learners, adolescents and adults. They easily get bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so". This view is also stressed by Diego (2010), in his study on learning vocabulary through total physical response who observes that vocabulary learning is one of the most complex but important area when teaching English. It is the area of language learning needed to be taught on regular basis. The areas such as common prefixes and suffixes, plurals, parts of speech, word recognition, root of words and homonyms should be given adequate attention by the teacher to realize the aims of vocabulary teaching and learning.

Thus, the aim of teaching English vocabulary at the junior secondary school level is to motivate, prepare and make students have self confidence in listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as learning English in the senior secondary school and higher institutions. To make them also, understand simple idiomatic expressions while communicating with native and non-native speakers of English.

Despite these aims that underline the teaching of English vocabulary, students often find it difficult to express themselves clearly in the target language. This statement is invigorated by WAEC (West African Examination Council) Chief Examiner report (2008, p.7), ... the passages dealt with subject matters that are familiar and range of vocabulary was appropriate within the candidates ability to comprehend. Despite the appropriateness of diction and the familiarity of the subject matter, many candidates lifted their answers mindlessly from the passage. Such candidates revealed not only a lack of understanding of the questions but also an inability to re-state the ideas of the passage briefly in own words.

The report stated that the poor knowledge of students in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) contributed to their poor performance. Inadequate vocabulary to restate the ideas in the passage briefly in their own expression despite the use of vocabulary suitable to the students' level of understanding was another area of poor performance in the two comprehension passages. The report further stated that the candidates' expression was generally poor and their range of vocabulary was so limited. They lack adequate vocabulary to restate the ideas in the passages briefly using their own expressions. The need, therefore, arises to find out the causes of the students' poor achievement in their examination and the use of the English language in their everyday communicative purposes.

Many things can hinder students' academic achievement. These problems can be traced to teachers and their teaching methods, learning environment and gender. Augustine (2013), observes that non-enhancement of teaching with modern teaching resources, inadequate coverage of course contents, teachers' inadequacy to teach effectively and inability to assimilate what teachers teach students are problems facing teaching and learning of English language. In view of this statement, it can be inferred that these same problems are facing vocabulary teaching and learning. Ray (2007), opines that vocabulary is

a complex area of language learning, therefore, the best way to learn it is to use appropriate method and assign long period each day to focus on its direct teaching. Conversely, teachers often avoid teaching it on regular basis because its teaching makes little meaning to them. They see it as unimportant area of language learning and whenever they teach it, they use method that is not innovative and practical oriented (Ray, 2007).

There is general belief that method chosen by English language teachers to a large extent determines students' achievement in the language. Many writers hold the view that method of teaching is indispensable in the teaching-learning process of English as a second language. This view is reinforced by Bolunde (2005), stresses that the teaching method used by the English language teacher can affect student positively because it is a weapon of enhancing the language ability of his students. There are many teaching methods; these include Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audio-Lingual Method (ALT), Direct Method (DM), Eclectic Method (EM), Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLTM), etcetera. All these methods are conventional teaching methods. They are methods that involve teacher in complete verbal instruction or expression. Communication flows from teacher to students (Anyima, 2011). They stress on the knowledge of language than use. Azikiwe (1998), observes that, in conventional teaching methods, students learn the speech sounds like parrots. Students are expected to internalize the rules of the target language through memorization.

Most teachers have been using Grammar-Translation Method where learning instructions are presented to the students through verbal explanation in the mother tongue. The method emphasizes the development of writing ability and thereby neglects the development of speaking skill. Pei (2004), states that, in Grammar-Translation method, the aim is for student to read prominent literary texts and to write in the target language. The focus is on the teacher and learning activity is silent and passive. Learning takes place by using translation exercises.

Teachers are found not to be instrumental and skillful while using the method. The classroom is always boring because the method is teacher-centred. Opini (2007), observes that the method the teachers use is boring and cannot arouse the students' learning interest and thereby result in sleeping, chatting and moving out of the students from the classroom.

In using the Grammar-Translation method to teach vocabulary in Junior Secondary Schools, the teacher devotes the whole lesson period to explain the vocabulary items using mother tongue. There are no practical strategies such as flashcards and word games that will stick the vocabulary items into the students' memory. Throughout the lesson period, there will be no attempt made by the teacher to enable the students practise the vocabulary items in context and situation. The students, therefore, become passive rather than active in classroom activities. Since other methods and Grammar-Translation method have failed in the teaching of English vocabulary, the need therefore

arises to encourage the use of Total Physical Response method which is learner-centred and practical oriented.

The method was developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose State University in 1965 (Knight, 2001). It is a teaching method that demands students to respond physically to imperative (commands) given by the teacher, who has planned these commands in a way that the linguistic items (words) to be learned are covered. The teaching and learning of vocabulary using TPR is usually carried out step by step. According to Bahasa (2012), the following steps can be used to teach vocabulary with TPR method.

**Step I:** The method is briefly explained to the students by the teacher in mother tongue as well as the target language so that students will understand what they have to do.

**Step II:** Some students are asked by the teacher to come out. They come out and sit down with the teacher on the chairs lined up in front of the class. The students are the models to other students in the class. The command is given by the teacher and the action is also performed by the teacher while all the students listen and watch the teacher's command and action.

**Step III:** The action of the command given by the teacher is performed by the students in front of the class while other students listen and watch the teacher and their colleagues' command and action.

**Step IV:** The action of the command given by the teacher is performed by the remaining students in the class.

**Step V:** One of the students sitting down in front of the class is asked by the teacher to perform the action based on the command.

**Step VI:** The action is revised by the teacher or the students are asked by the teacher to give the command to each other (in pair)

Moreover, every vocabulary item to be learned by the students will be explained by the teacher in form of command. Command is an instruction (word or phrase) given to the students by the teacher based on the vocabulary items under teaching (Knight, 2001). This command is supported by the teacher's action on each vocabulary (word or phrase). The teacher does it so as to help the students understand each vocabulary. In other words, each vocabulary is presented to the students through command and it is reinforced by the teacher's action on the vocabulary. The teacher, however, uses his body to support the verbal explanation of the vocabulary (word or phrase). For instance, if the teacher gives command on vocabularies like 'headlights' and 'u-turn', the teacher explains them and support the explanation with body actions or gestures in order to demonstrate what headlights and u-turn are all about. This command is as emphasized as Asher regards language as "grammar based" with the verb used in the command being the central idea (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). However, this does not mean that verbs are only elements or words in given commands (sentences). One of the goals of using TPR is to help the students develop

listening fluency (Asher, 1965). The other language skills like speaking and writing, are supposed to be learned in a later stage as Asher believes that the ability to understand a language by listening to it, would later have a positive effect on building the other skills like reading. Other goals are: teaching oral proficiency at a beginning level, using comprehension as a means of speaking and using action-based drills in the imperative form (Yenny, 2007). Nevertheless, there are many learning activities that teachers can use Total Physical Response (TPR). They include exercise by using command; conversational dialogue; role playing as well as reading and writing activities.

Subsequently, Total Physical Response (TPR) as a teaching method is based on some language acquisition and learning theories. They include behaviourist theory that emphasizes learning through imitation, practice, reinforcement and habit formation (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Others are; Krashen's input hypotheses and mentalist theory. Similarly, there are some advantages attributed to TPR. It creates positive thinking which in turn facilitates the students' involvement in learning process; it develops verbal behaviour and makes communication easy. TPR also enables the students to understand meanings of words in real context and makes students to involve in activities with little stress. However, TPR has been used to carry out studies on listening and speaking skills as well as on verb. These studies were carried out by Pei (2004) and Bahasa (2012) respectively. These researchers gave credit to the effectiveness of TPR. Hence, the researcher wants to investigate whether exposure to TPR will have any effect on the achievement of junior secondary school students in English vocabulary.

Apart from method, school location is another important variable to look at, in this study. There are many literatures on the effect of school location and learners' background on their academic achievement. Some researchers believe that students from urban area are better than those from rural area in their academic achievement. School location can be referred to the place where school is situated. It is where teaching- learning process takes place. It can either be rural or urban location. Differences in school location imply the existence of differences in demographic and socio-economic parameters of the students (Ezema, 2002). In his view, Owoeye (2002), opines that urban students perform better than their rural counterparts in all forms of achievement test. Axtel and Bowers (1972), confirm that students from rural areas perform significantly better than their urban counterparts in verbal aptitude, English Language and total scores using the National Common Entrance as a base. These controversies call for further investigation. The researcher, therefore, intends to find out the effectiveness or otherwise of school location on students' academic achievement.

Apart from school location, gender difference is another important variable to look at, in this study. Gender has been emphasized to have effect on students' academic achievement. Jadesola (2002), opines that gender is socially constructed for the purpose of allocating

powers, duties, responsibility, status, roles in any social context. Gender is the disparity observable between male and female in terms of power, position and achievement in a particular context or field of study. Gender achievement has become an age-long debate in the field of language. Some linguists are in support of female outperforming male, while some are in support of male outperforming female. Whitney (2006), opines that female students outperform male students in almost all indices of achievement related to language skills. Conversely, Lynn (2004), states that male students have larger brain size than female students and therefore, would be expected to have higher average performance in picture vocabulary. As a result of these arguments, there is need for further research. The researcher is, however, interested in finding out whether gender has any effect on students' academic achievement.

Based on the previous studies, the effects of Total Physical Response (TPR), school location and gender on students' academic achievement seem to be inconsistent and contradictory. This calls for continuous and further research on effect of TPR on students' academic achievement from time to time and place to place. So also, effect of gender and school location on students' academic achievements should also be carried out regularly. Consequently, the aim of this study is to find out the effectiveness or otherwise of TPR, location and gender on students' academic achievement. This study, therefore, is designed to determine the effects of Total Physical Response on students' achievement in English vocabulary in junior secondary schools in Akoko South Education Zone.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The importance of English language cannot be undermined in everyday communicative activities. One of the objectives of teaching and learning of English language in Nigeria emphasizes training and producing students whose spoken and written English is intelligible locally, nationally and internationally.

Nevertheless, Nigerian students still find it difficult to communicate with English language despite these underlying objectives. Failure in this subject has been attributed to the methods and strategies of teaching vocabulary which is an important area in English Language. Another observation made is the limited vocabulary which the students possess in their speech repertoire. Previous report from WAEC Chief Examiners noted that in the comprehension section, most candidates usually exhibited poor understanding by giving the surface meaning of the passage due to limited vocabulary.

English language vocabulary teaching is presumably characterized by conventional teaching methods. They include Grammar-Translation method, Audio-Lingual method among others. Grammar-Translation method involves verbal explanation of the teacher in mother tongue. Learners are made passive because the method does not allow them to be active in the delivery of the lesson. This method may have likely been the bane of students' poor achievement in some aspects of English language like essay writing, lexis and structure.



Therefore, there have been consistent reports of poor achievement in English language among Nigerian students over the years. Considering the need to improve students' achievement in English vocabulary, the present study intended to investigate the effect which Total Physical Response would have on junior secondary school students' achievement in English language vocabulary.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of the study was to determine the effects of Total Physical Response on students' achievement in English language vocabulary. Specifically, the study was to:

Determine the effect of Total Physical Response on the students' mean achievement in English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method and Grammar Translation Method

Determine the effect of school location on the students' mean achievement in English vocabulary if taught with Total Physical Response method.

Determine the effect of gender on the students' mean achievement in English vocabulary if taught with Total Physical Response method.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study are expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the teaching and learning of English vocabulary. Theoretically, the study will hinge on behaviorist theory. It will hopefully recognize that vocabulary is hinged on behaviorist theory. It will hopefully encourage successful interactions between teachers and students in the classroom through the use of imitation, practice, gesture and performance. It will hopefully make teachers to be facilitators and make the learning situation students-centered for impactful output.

Practically, the study will hopefully be of help to language teachers, students, educators, curriculum planners, policy makers, administrators, textbook writers, institutions of learning and the general public. The findings of the study will help the English language teachers to use Total Physical Response in teaching the English language vocabulary. It will also, help them to use the method to teach other skills of English in order to realize the aim of second language learning.

The findings of the study hopefully will stimulate students to learn English vocabulary with TPR method. It will also make vocabulary learning enjoyable. Students will get themselves familiar with the meanings of the vocabulary items they want to learn. It will hopefully improve their mastery of the English language vocabulary. The findings will as well engender other researchers to embark on further researches on the effect of TPR method on vocabulary teaching and learning.

Finally, it is hopeful that the result of the study will help educators, curriculum planners, policy makers, administrators to project the effective method that will bring greater achievement in English vocabulary. It will also be an asset to textbook writers, institutions of learning and

general public in addressing all issues that have to do with the teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL) in Nigeria.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study was carried out in Akoko South Education Zone, Ondo State. The study focused on Junior Secondary School two (JSS II) students in Akoko South Education Zone. The choice of JSS two (JSS II) was made because the students' performance in vocabulary in this area is very poor. The researcher intended to investigate the effect of TPR on students' achievement in English vocabulary in this zone.

The study covered the following content areas; vocabulary, synonym and antonyms as well as vocabulary items such as registers, idioms and phrasal verbs. The vocabulary items were selected from Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) past questions. Grammar-Translation method was used for the control group while TPR was used for the experimental group to carry out the experiment. The variables of school location and gender were considered on Total Physical Response Method.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were used to guide the study.

What is the effect of Total Physical Response on students' achievement in English language vocabulary?

What effect does school location have on students' mean achievement in English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method?

What effect does gender have on students' mean achievement in English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at probability level of 0.05.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught English vocabulary with Total Physical Response method and those taught with Grammar-Translation method.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students from rural and urban schools if taught English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There will be no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students if taught English vocabulary using Total Physical Response method.

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**Regards!!!**