



IMPACT OF TEACHER-STUDENTS' INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDE AND PERFORMANCE IN ORAL ENGLISH IN BENUE STATE- NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach on students' attitude and performance in oral English in Otukpo Local Government Area. Specifically, the study was designed to find out whether students taught using Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy (TSIS) and Communicative Approach (CA) would perform better in oral English than those students taught using the form-focused approach. Three research questions were answered and three null hypotheses were tested at $P > 0.05$ level of significance. A quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group design was used for this study. Purposive and random sampling were used to obtain 152 secondary school two (SS2) students in four intact classes in Otukpo Local Government Area and were assigned to two experimental and one control groups. Data were collected using Oral English Language Performance Test (OELPT) and Oral English Attitude Survey Instruments (OEAS). The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The reliability of OELPT and OEAS yielded 0.084 and 0.74 using Kuder Richardson ($K-R_{20}$) and Cronbach Alpha respectively. The finding indicated that there is significant difference in the mean impact of TSIS, CA and form focus approach on students' attitude [$F(2,146) = 148.54$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$], performance [$F(2,146) = 718.98$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$], performance in vowel sounds [$F(2,146) = 338.98$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$] performance in consonant sound production [$F(2,146) = 225.57$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$] and performance in stress and stress pattern [$F(1,146) = 199.72$; $P = 0.00 < 0.05$] in oral English. It was also found that there is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude [$F(1,47) = 1.01$; $P = 0.32 > 0.05$] and performance [$F(1,47) = 0.39$; $P = 0.54 > 0.05$] in oral English. Similarly, there is no significant difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude [$F(1,47) = 0.17$; $P = 0.69 > 0.05$] and performance [$F(1,47) = 0.54$; $P = 0.47 > 0.05$] in oral English. It was concluded that TSIS and CA were valid for improving students' attitude and performance in oral English in Otukpo Local Government Area. Based on the findings, it was recommended that oral English teacher should adopt TSIS and CA so as to enhance performance in oral English and academic tasks.

Key words: communicative approach, form focus, oral English, attitude

Introduction

English language occupies a strategic place in the political, social, economic and educational spheres of Nigeria. It cuts across the curriculum as the language for teaching and learning, a subject of instruction and the language of examination (Udu, 2017). Its importance has led the Government of the Federation to make its teaching and learning mandatory in schools. At the secondary school level of education, candidates wishing to proceed to tertiary schools must earn a credit pass in English language. This development has placed a heavy demand on English language. Experts in teaching English language are in short supply and many of those teaching the subject are not using effective teaching strategies. On their part, students device different ways of passing the subject to the extent that some engage in examination malpractice.

The teaching of English as the second language poses a challenges for teachers and instructional designers. This is recorded in the incessant poor performance of students reported in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). These challenges range from speaking and pronunciation of words, verbal fluency and speech work among others (Acikalın, 2006). These could be attributed to inappropriate use of strategies like form-focused approach. In this case, there is need to adopt the use of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach which seen to have positive effect on improving students' attitudes and performance especially in oral English (Muodumogu & Ibrahim, 2018).

According to Oyetunde and Muodumogu (1999), the critical step in making the learning of English language meaningful in school is to develop in students the ability to understand and speak English. This is because it would appear that oral English is not receiving any systematic teaching/learning. Research and experience indicate that it is often haphazardly done. It is generally assumed that oral English is by-products of instruction in reading and writing and do not need to be emphasised as essential skills in themselves. Where it is taught, the students are limited to non-functional drills. There is need to consciously teach oral English with a view to

developing in the students' oral communicative skills which will enable them to communicate effectively in English in the different domains of interaction. The goals of teaching oral English are: to help the students to express their thoughts, or talk about things in their environment, to encourage use of speech as a social instrument, that is, to communicate with others in the form of sharing ideas, giving commands, making request, asking questions and supplying answers as underlying the principles of Teacher-Students' Interaction (TSI) and Communicative Approach (CA).

Also, one of the major areas of recent concern expressed by some Nigerian academics is students' poor performance in English language. Reports of students' performance conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and some other examining bodies such as National Examinations Council (NECO) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) in Nigeria on English language between 2015-2020 reveal poor performance and low percentage passes in the subject (Ajayi, 2019; Amuseghan, 2017; Ehinola, Ehinola, 2019). Some researchers blame it on students' negative attitude to the subject (Akuka, 2018; Muhammad, 2018), while others attribute it to rigid strategies and ineffective strategies of teaching segmental and supra-segmental features which are the core aspects of the oral English (Udu, 2014; Amuseghan, 2017). Such rigid strategies often present the English language teacher as dispensers of knowledge who may succeed only in making students passive recipients of information who regurgitates the fact on demand without being able to use the language communicatively.

In a similar vein, The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) Chief Examiners' report (2020; 2021; 2022) for English language has consistently reported that students' performance in English language is not satisfactory. One component that students are not performing well is the oral English section. Candidates often show a poor grasp of pronunciation, stress and rhyme. This is particularly worrisome because, the spoken aspect of language is the most basic and students need this aspect to be able to interact with others

on the streets, in the market place, worship centres and most importantly on school campuses. Students need to communicate effectively and know how and when to communicate in English as this will enhance their communicative competence and also understand other subjects in the curriculum (Agayo & Udu, 2020). This crucial aspect falls under what is popularly called oral English. Enyeazu (2000) defines oral English as the systematic study of the sounds of language and the way in which they are produced. The best way to learn the pronunciation of the sounds which is embedded in oral English is by a systematic study of the sounds of the language through intensive oral practice.

Many learners of English as a second language have faced difficulties in the pronunciation of English sounds. The problem is made worse by the phenomenon of mother-tongue or first language interference. Apart from the problem of poor pronunciation, students in secondary schools have poor intonation and lack the required skills in phonetic transcription and ability to stress words. All these areas are tested in the oral English paper in national examinations such as Senior School Certificate Examination and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examinations. Udu (2013) avers that, the teaching of oral English is weighed down by various factors which have contributed to the slow pace and ineffectiveness in teaching the subject. For instance, the predicament that second language speakers face is that, even if they have knowledge of sounds and words when written down, hear and produce in isolation, yet students may not recognize them in connected speech. Could, teaching strategies, students' attitude and gender exacerbate these problems? Efforts to investigate these problems have led researchers to test the efficacy of using teacher-students' interaction and communicative approach to determine if students' attitude and performance in oral English can be enhanced.

Teacher-students' interaction strategy is a collaborative learning strategy which involves a mutual exchange of knowledge between the teacher and students or among students in the classroom to attain higher performance and to facilitate the education of a group of students. Bicha (2016) affirms that learners consider the teacher-students' interaction a useful strategy to

discover and learn oral English skills and to improve classroom instruction. Teacher-Students' Interaction (TSI) could encourage students' positive attitude and improve their academic performance as it provides them with more stimulating experiences than the form-focused approach.

Besides, the content of segmental and supra-segmental features of oral English lessons may pose another challenge. A student learning oral English has to learn a lot of unfamiliar topics such as production of sounds, phonetic symbols, consonant and vowel sounds, primary stress, syllable structure, stress pattern, emphatic stress and rhymes. The challenge becomes a task that requires teacher-students' interaction and communicative approach such as discussions, group works, role playing, collaborative dialoguing, and negotiation of meaning through co-construction of meaning that could stimulate learners' background knowledge (Ochogwu & Ojobor, 2019).

Ogoanah (2018) notes that one of the reasons for mass failure of students in oral English in West African Examinations Senior School Certificate Examinations is that some English language teachers have "misinterpreted attack on oral English" (p.23-56).

Such worrisome comments on students' failure in the public examinations seem to point accusing fingers at the English language teachers. This is because candidates' exhibitions of poor knowledge of oral English sounds and poor attitude towards the subject seem to indict the competence of the teachers who teach them in terms of the strategy employed by the teachers. Eyisi (2013) notes that if a teacher's language is awful, then his or her students exhibit the same. This assertion possibly suggests why attention ought to be paid to the manner of teaching oral English in Nigeria and Otukpo Local Government in particular.

Test of Oral English may be insufficient without measuring students' attitude to the subjects, such attitude is necessary because important decisions, which students make are strongly bound to their attitude. Adelabu, (2018) reports that poor result in English language at the senior secondary school examination level may be due to the students' negative attitude towards

the subject and the teachers' use of ineffective methods. Researchers such as Akuka (2018) and Bicha (2016) revealed that students' poor attitude towards oral English has created a hindrance to grasp the conceptual knowledge of English language among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Attitude is a key factor in learning because it often drives behavior. It is known that people tend to act favourably towards things they like and unfavourably towards things they do not like. This implies that it is a predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to given object. Attitude is also viewed as predisposition or tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Attitudes influence an individual's choice of actions, and response to challenges, incentive and rewards (together called stimuli) (Business Dictionary, 2013). The crux of the matter here is the students' attitude towards oral English which implies how they view and react to oral English teaching and learning within and outside the classroom. This underscores their positive or negative predisposition toward the subject. Students' attitude towards oral English, therefore, would be referred to as how they view and react to oral English teaching and learning.

When all or a number of learners share the same mother-tongue, they tend to use it because it is easier for them (Tuan & Mai, 2015). Tuan and Mai justify why students' use of mother-tongue in class. First, when students are asked to have a discussion about a topic that they are incapable of, if they want to say something about the topic, they will use their own language. Another reason is that the use of mother-tongue is a natural thing to do. Consequently, if teachers frequently use the students' language, the students will feel comfortably to do it (Tuan & Mai, 2015).

Muodumogu and Ibrahim (2018) identify teaching methods and the teacher as other factors that could influence students' attitude towards oral English learning. Juny (2016), states that "College students' low proficiency in speaking is due to form-focused approach and students' attitude towards oral English practice play an important role in their engagement in the practice" (p.4). Adoption of appropriate teaching methods by the teachers and their ability to use

them properly arrest the learners' attention and interest during lessons. Whereas a teacher who selects inappropriate teaching methods and with poor mastery of his or her subject will not only get the learners disinterested in his or her subject, but also, in him or her as a person (Muodumogu & Ibrahim, 2018).

The cultural background of child plays a great role in influencing the child's attitude towards language learning. Shamija, (2019) affirms that every child has his moral and social values which tend to influence the personality of the child reared in such cultural background. He stresses further that children from two different cultural backgrounds exhibit different attitude towards learning. Kurihara, (2006) affirms that certain students' formal reserved attitudes are cultural traits fostered in high school contexts, taking the enormity of the influence of cultural background on English language learning into consideration. Ajibola (2010) warns that because English as a Second Language students come from different cultural backgrounds, there is need to ensure that each student feels a part of the classroom while becoming accustomed to the teacher's ways. The teacher needs to ensure that students do not feel a loss of their own culture while learning about a new culture.

For many years, oral English has been made an integral part of the curriculum in Nigeria. The efficiency of the English language in the wider Nigerian society depends largely on the English curriculum and the competency of the teacher (Soneye, 2018). In the teaching of English as a second language, the differences and the similarities between the sound systems of English and that of the mother-tongue should be pointed out. For example, English has twenty vowel sounds which comprise twelve pure vowels and eight diphthongs whereas the case is different with some Nigerian languages. There is a difference between the English sounds /ā/ or /ā:/, /ɔ:/ and /ɜ:/ and the Nigerian language are sounds /é/, /ā/ and /ɔ:/ (Jones, 2019) respectively. Speakers of English in Nigeria substitute the English sounds for the indigenous language sounds. This often impedes intelligibility (Egwuogu, 2012; Muodumogu & Ibrahim, 2018).

The English curriculum in senior secondary schools in Nigeria is poised to find out how well

the school has prepared learners for life outside schools (Amusegham, 2017). Amusegham, (2017 p.322) also posits that: “the overall aim of language teaching is to create in the learner a capacity to communicate in the target language. Regrettably, a number of language activities in our language textbooks carried out by English language teachers and students do not conform to the nature of communication.” In communicative approach, attempts are to give the learner of English as a second language the natural setting for them to grapple with communicative activities (Oyetunde, 2013). This will enable the learners to try to from the very beginning not only to understand the message produced by other speakers but also to produce their own utterance in the second language, expressing their own ideas and meaning (Muodumogu & Ibrahim, 2018). This would enhance students' performance in oral English especially in Otukpo local government area.

Muodumogu and Ibrahim (2018) investigated a study on the impact of classroom interaction pattern on students' attitude and performance in oral English and in their study revealed that students engaged in teacher-students' interaction had significantly higher mean attitude scores than those in conventional group. However, there was no significant difference in the attitude of students in teacher-students' interaction as an instructional strategy. The finding of no significant gender different in students' attitude agreed with that of Fakeye (2010) which found that there was no statistically significant difference in the attitude of male and female students in English language and maintains that students' attitude is not gender related. The finding corroborates with that of Babalola and Oyinloye (2012) which revealed that gender had no significant influence on students' ability to acquire the tools for language of communication.

Closely Related, Bicha, (2016) carried out a study on improvement of learners' oral production, using teacher-students interaction and the results showed that 93.75% of students had justified their claim that interaction with people and speakers is a necessity to develop their oral communication, thus, giving them all chances to practice and awareness on how

language should be used in the various situations. Similarly, Udosinaand Adegbenyi (2012) investigated the performance of students in oral English on Junior Secondary two in Oyo State. The finding revealed that female students outperformed the male students in oral English. This is in agreement with Ekwutosi (2013) who found that students' performance in oral English using CA significantly enhance student's performance in oral production of speech sounds, vowel and consonant vowels and stress more than the traditional method.

In addition, gender is another variable that could affect students' performance in oral English. This is because certain studies support female superiority over male in the verbal speech and grammar (Delazer, Desenhamer, Fleishaker, Kemler& Weiss, 2013), in the knowledge of segmental and supra-segmental features such as phonetic symbols, vowel and consonant sounds, stress pattern, primary stress, emphatic stress and rhymes (Onuigbo, 2015). Yet, other studies are still neutral and revealed that gender equality in the studies of the English language (Muodumogu& Ibrahim, 2018). Such intense debates on gender parity in the studies of oral English together with a critical appraisal of the contribution of teacher-students' interaction and communicative approach to the knowledge of oral English particularly in the secondary schools merit some attention.

Deficiency in the components of oral English such as vowel sounds, consonant sounds, primary stress, rhyme, emphatic stress and transcription using phonetic symbols can be a great factor responsible for poor performance in oral English. The ability of students to express themselves become essential in the academic environment, as English language holds the ace (Muodumogu, 2018). Oral English is an aspect of English language which is very important to ascertain whether students' attitude can facilitate their performance at senior secondary school level because it determines their effectiveness in pronunciation and spellings when engaged in writing. Often, students tend to write the way and how they pronounce words. Oral English is concerned with the concrete characteristics of the sounds used in language.

The segmental features are the vowels and

the consonants. Vowels are produced with no restriction or obstructions to the flow of air from the lungs to the mouth or nostrils. Consonants on the other hand, are produced with obstruction to the flow of air by any of the organs of speech, such as the teeth, lips, palate, uvula, nose, and so on. Spoken language begins with sounds. Knowledge of the sounds of the target language is therefore necessary for intelligibility (Jones, 2019). The supra-segmental features are stress, rhyme, intonation and rhythm. Stress is defined by Gimson (2017) as acoustic energy which the speaker uses to produce a syllable. There are three degrees of stress: primary, secondary and contrastive stress. However, the two degrees of stress have been identified for the purpose of this study, this is, stress and unstressed syllables. In English pronunciation, stress is very meaningful. A change in the stress pattern of a word may change completely the meaning and class of the word. Stress is problematic to many Nigerian students of English because the students' Mother Tongue (MT) is syllable-timed while English language is stress-timed. A syllable is a minimal pronounceable unit of words with a single, interrupted sounding of the voice. Where a vowel exists it must contain not more than one vowel phonemes, examples are: de-mar-ca-tion, a-bove and ca-noe.

Main or primary stress in the use of English refers to the words that carry more information and meaning take stress on certain syllables. Nouns, adjectives, interrogative pronouns, most adverbs and demonstratives belong to this category. On the other hand, grammatical or non-content words such as auxiliaries, articles, prepositions and conjunctions do not take stress unless special meaning is intended (Roach, 2018). Stress pattern varies from word to words. A list of short words indicating their stress pattern is presented as:

Read aloud each word in group, two or three times, placing a strong stress on the syllable in bold type; COUNTry, confESS, persoNAlity and probabiLity.

This could be on the first, second, third and fourth syllable depends on the class of words.

In Emphatic stress, a word is marked out as a focus of information in a sentence context. The word could either be content or a form word. The

speaker may want to create a special meaning as a response to the question. Only the way he stresses the word can convey the meaning he intends. The word marked out as a focus of information is either italicised or in bold type. The speaker conveys his intention emphatically.

Rhyme means sameness in sounds of words and syllables (Ogoanah, 2018). When two words end with the same sound, they are said to rhyme. Rhyme is divided into two parts, nucleus (peak) and coda (Udu, 2013). Coda refers to the consonant cluster after the nucleus. Nucleus is also called peak which refers to the vowel in the middle of a syllable. Syllable is the smallest pronounceable units of a word. A syllable is said to rhyme if it has identical sequence of sound in verse. To determine whether or not two or more syllables rhyme, find out if the vowel (nucleus) and the final consonant (coda) of the syllable match. For example, "riding" and "guiding" rhyme. According to Jones (2019), coda is the end of a syllable, made up of a peak and a coda. The peak and the coda constitute the rhyme (or rime) of the syllable. Examples, in the word spoon the rhyme is (u:n), in "ten", it is /ten/ and in "strength", it is /strenθ/. The spelling "rhyme" also refers to a pair of lines that end with the same sequence of sounds in verse.

Tzu-pu (2013) observes that one of the skills of oral English which the teacher should teach his/her students is the ability to speak and produce speech sounds correctly which is the purpose of language for communication, self-expression and interaction in day-to-day activities. Poor pronunciation ability of candidates account for heavy loss of marks allotted to grammatical expression in essay writings. Students tend to write as they pronounce the words and this reflect in their spellings (Umaru, 2020).

The teacher should see the communicative activities such as dramatization, role-play, switching-role, turn-taking, interrogation, and discussion in pair or groups as vehicles of speech development. These should therefore be frequent and guided and facilitated by teachers. This would make oral English learning in particular a pleasure, meaningful and functional (Oyetunde & Muodumogu, 1999) classroom activity. Teacher-students' interaction could be an effective strategy involving the use of three main components: (a)

collaborative dialogue, (b) negotiation of meaning and (c) co-construction of meaning (Runmei, 2018),

Collaborative dialogue as components of teacher-students' interaction entails effective conversation between two or more students. In an oral English classroom, students are the most indispensable subjects in the learners' activities in enhancing the learning of oral English. Dialogue and interaction are the outcomes of the students' active learning activities which involve both teacher and students themselves. Runmei, (2018) posits that collaborative dialogue is where language use and language learning can co-occur. It is the use of language which enhances the performance of oral English. In this sense, collaborative dialogue helps students to always engage themselves in oral practice or conversation to improve on their communicative skills. So, classroom interaction strategy should take the role of collaborative dialogues for its significance in communicative approach and learning of oral English. It also accelerates the development of the students' language use if the classroom plays an effective role as social settings.

The most important element of second language learning is the need to negotiate meaning in any language learning situation. The concept of negotiation of meaning is very familiar in intellectual approaches in second language learning. It is generally defined as "discussion to reach agreement" According to Bicha (2016), interactive negotiation should be person to person communication. Negotiation then is seen as a type of real life language use that is relevant to the purpose of the learning oral English. Target language skills for the students to develop in the classroom through simulated negotiation can be seen also in terms of negotiation of meaning, which is defined by Bicha (2016, p.87-95) as the "conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seek to prevent a communication impasse that has arisen". In other words, it is verbal expressions use in order to prevent communication breakdowns, that is., especially in the classroom situation where teaching and learning is the ultimate.

Negotiation of meaning plays a significant role in learning of oral English in the classroom

environment. Students will achieve more in communication when they engage in discussion among themselves as the reticent students will be given opportunity for expression orally. The classroom interaction in this case will be less free of all forms of anxieties and phobia, therefore, allow students to improve their performance in oral English. Negotiated interaction then is very important for input to become understood and comprehensible, and this will appear when students interact and communicate with each other. They modify their speech in order to be helpful for other students to participate more in any communicative situation (Runmei, 2018). This is essential to the learning of oral English as it promotes group interaction among students in the class.

Co-construction of meaning is defined as the joint creation of form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion or other culturally related meaningful reality. According to Runmei (2018), interactional competence includes the knowledge of language co-created by students in interaction including their active participation, skills, feelings, and the cultural knowledge. In classroom interaction strategy, Second Language (L₂) students are responsible for the construction of an effective interaction. Thus, the negotiation of meaning is cooperatively co-constructed in social context when students build up their skills of communication and competence for language use in a social environment. This will enhance positive attitude to and performance in oral English especially at the senior secondary two levels.

One of the trending methods of teaching English as a second language is Communicative Approach (CA) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign language that emphasizes interaction as both the means and ultimate aim of learning a language (Oyctunde, 2013). According to Tomori (2017), communicative approach is a reaction against the view of language as a set of structures. It is a movement away from the teaching of language where emphasis is on mastery of different aspects of grammar and practice through controlled activities such as memorisation of dialogues and drills towards the use of pair or group work activities, role plays,

project work and classroom activities that best facilitate learning. It sees language learning as acquiring the linguistic means to carry out different functions (Okoh, 2016).

Experts such as Zulu, (2019) and Williams (2004) believe that integrated nature of CA does not enable language teachers to view themselves as the only sages on the stage or enforcers of one technique or method of learning language. Rather than adopting one rigid strategy, the advocates of CA promote diversity as part of language development. They also encourage students' wealth of experience in the classroom and encourage the use of many devices which could help learners in their groups according to their age, attitude or interest.

The form-focused approach according to Adolf and Prieto (2016) has its focus on the acquisition of vocabulary, according to the prescribed rules of grammar which a learner should join to form sentences. The method emphasizes more on the knowledge of the language than the use. In this approach, language learning is grammar-based and its emphasis is on developing learners' ability to write. It therefore neglects the development of the speaking skills (Egbe, 2015). Azikiwe (2016) notes that in the form-focused approach, students learn the speech sounds like parrots. There is a total neglect of the communicative skills with virtually little or no emphasis on accurate pronunciation and intonation.

In using the form-focused approach to teach oral English in Nigerian secondary schools, teachers devote a full lesson to the teaching of phonology. The teacher spends 30-40 minutes of the lesson period teaching phonetic symbols which students usually memorise. Memorisation here is taken as a process of drilling. The selected symbols are written in one column with the words in which they occur in another column (Ekwutosi, 2013):

Teacher: /i/ as in sit

Student: /i/as in sit

Teacher: /e/ as in pen

Student: /e/ as in pen

Students are often expected to internalize the target symbols and words through repetition, mimicry and memorization. Throughout the lesson period, little or no attempt is made to

provide relevant contexts or situation for oral exercises.

Although learner-centered teaching method is preferable in today's classrooms, the form-focused approach which is teacher-centered has persisted in most Nigerian schools. Form-focused approach refers to a teaching method which involves an oral presentation of lesson by the teacher (Paris, 2014). Many Nigerian classrooms are arranged to portray 'the talking teacher and the listening learners'. The arrangement gives the teacher opportunity to 'dish out' knowledge to the 'ignorant' students sitting passively and 'do-pencil-paper' work on desk.

As result of this ineffectiveness recorded from the form-focused approach, Runmei (2018) identifies three main components which are involved in teacher-student interaction strategy that could enhance performance in oral English at Senior Secondary two students: collaborative dialogue, negotiation of meaning and co-construction of meaning. These elements are really needed for successful learning of oral English through interaction and contributes not only to language improvement and building learners' self and intellectual development, but also to awaken a variety of mental developmental processes of students that are activated only when they are cooperating with each other in order to reinforce students' attitude to and improve performance in oral English (Bicha, 2016). This study thus, investigated the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach on Senior Secondary two students' attitude to and performance in oral English in Otukpo Local Government Area, Benue State?

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach on Senior Secondary two students' attitude to and performance in oral English in Otukpo Local Government Area, Benue State. Specifically, the study:

1. determined the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English.
2. found out the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female

students' attitude to oral English.

- ascertained the impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- What is the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English?
- What is the difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English?
- What is the difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English?

Hypotheses

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English.
- There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English.
- There is no significant difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English.

Research Method

The study employed a quasi-experimental design of non-equivalent (pre-test, post-test) control group type. The design was adopted because intact classes were used since the condition did not give room for complete randomization because it is a school situation. The population of this study comprised all Senior Secondary two students of government approved secondary schools in the local government area.

The available data from the Ministry of Education, Area Office Otukpo shows that there are 65 approved secondary schools in the area have a population of 3,674 senior secondary two students. One hundred and fifty two students in three intact classes made up of the sample size. The sample size of 152 participants is large enough because this is a quasi-experimental study. The three intact classes were randomly selected, one each from each of the three schools were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the schools and the schools were assigned to research conditions using balloting to decide which group is to be experimental or the control group. Purposive sampling was used to get a list of mixed secondary schools in the local government. Mixed schools were used to enable both male and female students to participate in the study. The selected schools were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Two research instruments were used to collect data for the study, they are: (a) Oral English Language Attitude Survey (OELAS) and (b) Oral English Language Performance Test (OELPT). The instruments are (OELAS and OELPT) and Lesson plans were validated by the two experts in English language Education in the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education and one expert in Test and Measurement in the Department of Science and Mathematics education respectively, Benue State University, Makurdi for evaluation and necessary correction before use. The lesson plans as an intervention material were equally validated by the same experts. The OELAS and OELPT yielded reliability coefficient of 0.84 and 0.74 using Kuder Rihardson ($K-R_{20}$) and Cronbach Alpha respectively. The data collection involved the administration of pre-test, treatment and post-test done within seven weeks by the research assistants using Oral English Language Attitude Survey (OELAS) and Oral English Language Performance Test (OELPT). The research questions were answered using means and standard deviation. All the hypotheses were tested at $P < 0.05$ significant level, using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with pretest scores as covariate.

Results

Research Question One

What is the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English?

Table 1: Mean Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy, Communicative Approach and Form-Focused Approach on Students' Attitude to Oral English?

Strategies		PreOELA S	PostOELA S	Mean Gain
Teacher -Students' Interaction Strategy	Mean	2.85	3.23	0.38
	N	50	50	
	Std. Deviation	0.27	0.16	
Communicative Approach	Mean	2.57	3.13	0.56
	N	50	50	
	Std. Deviation	0.26	0.18	
Form-Focused Approach	Mean	2.41	2.45	0.04
	N	50	50	
	Std. Deviation	0.21	0.24	

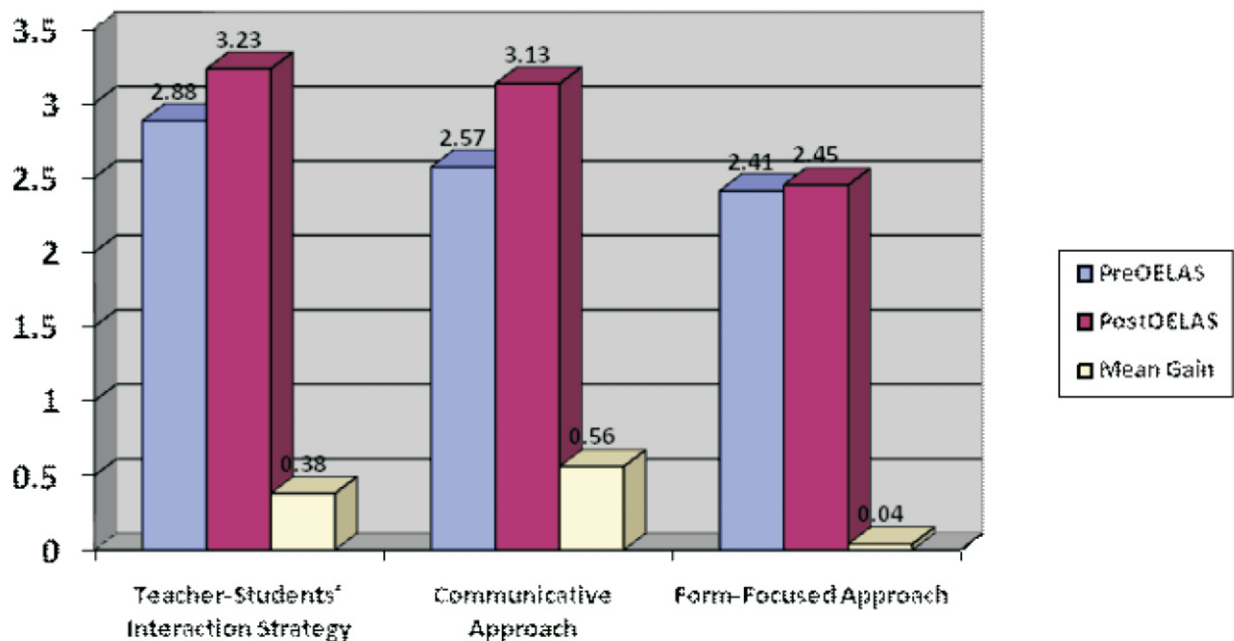


Figure 1: Pretest, Posttest and Mean Gain of Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy, Communicative Approach and Form-Focused Approach on Students' Attitude to Oral English

Table 1 shows the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English. The table shows that 52

students were taught oral English using teacher-students' interaction strategy, 50 students were taught oral English using communicative approach and 50 students were taught oral English using form-focused approach. Making a total number of students of 152. The table reveals that the mean attitude ratings of students taught oral English using teacher-students' interaction

strategy is 2.85 with a standard deviation of 0.27 during pre-test and 3.23 with a standard deviation of 0.16 in post-test. The mean attitude ratings of students taught oral English using communicative approach is 2.57 with a standard deviation of 0.26 during pre-test and 3.13 with a standard deviation of 0.18 in post-test. While the mean attitude ratings of students taught oral English using form-focused approach is 2.41 with a standard deviation of 0.21 during pre-test and 2.45 with a

standard deviation of 0.24 in post-test. The table further shows that the mean gain for teacher-students' interaction strategy is 0.38, while that of communicative approach is 0.56 and form-focused approach is 0.04. The summary of the pretest, posttest mean performance score as well as the mean gain in the attitude ratings of students in teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach is as shown in Figure 1.

Research Question Two

What is the difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English?

Table 2: Mean Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy on Male and Female Students' Attitude to oral English

Gender		PreOELAS	PostOELAS	Mean Gain
Male	Mean	2.83	3.25	0.42
	N	27	27	
	Std. Deviation	0.29	0.18	
Female	Mean	2.86	3.20	0.34
	N	23	23	
	Std. Deviation	0.25	0.15	
Mean difference				0.08

Research Question Three

What is the difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English?

Table 3: Mean Impact of Communicative Approach on Male and Female Students' Attitude to Oral English

Gender		PreOELAS	PostOELAS	Mean Gain
Male	Mean	2.55	3.14	0.59
	N	23	23	
	Std. Deviation	0.31	0.18	
Female	Mean	2.59	3.12	0.53
	N	27	27	
	Std. Deviation	0.22	0.19	
Mean difference				0.06

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English.

Table 4: ANCOVA of Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy, Communicative Approach and Form-Focused Approach on Students' Attitude to Oral English

Dependent Variable: PostAttitude

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	17.897 ^a	3	5.966	143.408	.000	.747
Intercept	9.715	1	9.715	233.545	.000	.615
PreAttitde	.101	1	.101	2.429	.121	.016
Strategies	12.359	2	6.179	148.544	.000	.670
Error	6.073	146	.042			
Total	1320.981	150				
Corrected Total	23.970	149				

a. R Squared = .747 (Adjusted R Squared = .741)

Table 4 reveals that $F(2,146) = 148.544$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English. Based on evidence from data analysis there is significant difference in the mean impact

of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English. The partial Eta square of 0.670 was obtained for the strategies meaning that 67.0 percent of students' attitude to oral English can be accounted for by the strategies employ in the teaching process

Table 5 Comparisons of Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy, Communicative Approach and Form-Focused Approach on Students' Attitude to Oral English

Dependent Variable: PostAttitude

(I) Strategies	(J) Strategies	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b
Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy	Communicative Approach	.071	.045	.348
	Form-Focused Approach	.730*	.050	.000
Communicative Approach	Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy	-.071	.045	.348
	Form-Focused Approach	.659*	.042	.000
Form-Focused Approach	Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy	-.730*	.050	.000
	Communicative Approach	-.659*	.042	.000

Table 2 shows the bivariate comparisons of the strategies of teaching oral English and its effect on the mean attitude ratings of students at $P = 0.348 > 0.05$ for teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy and Communicative Approach. Again, comparisons of the strategies of teaching oral English and its effect on the mean attitude ratings of students at $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ for teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy and form-focused approach. Similarly, comparisons of the strategies

of teaching oral English and its effect on the mean attitude ratings of students at $P = 0.000 < 0.05$ for Communicative Approach and form-focused approach. Therefore, the rejected null hypothesis is confirmed and upheld. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English.

Table 6 ANCOVA of Impact of Teacher-Students' Interaction Strategy on Male and Female Students' Attitude to Oral English

Dependent Variable: PostAttitudeTSIS

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.096 ^a	2	.048	1.707	.193	.068
Intercept	3.530	1	3.530	125.820	.000	.728
PreAttitudeTSIS	.073	1	.073	2.589	.114	.052
GenderTSIS	.028	1	.028	1.006	.321	.021
Error	1.319	47	.028			
Total	523.706	50				
Corrected Total	1.414	49				

a. R Squared = .068 (Adjusted R Squared = .028)

Table 3 reveals that $F(1,47) = 1.006$; $p = 0.321 > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English. Based on evidence from data analysis, there is no significant difference in

the mean attitude ratings of male and female students taught oral English using teacher-students' interaction strategy. The partial Eta square of 0.021 was obtained for the gender meaning that only 0.2 percent of students' attitude to oral English can be attributed to their gender in teacher-students' interaction strategy class.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English.

Table 4: ANCOVA of Impact of Communicative Approach on Male and Female Students' Attitude to Oral English

Dependent Variable: PostAttitudeCA

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	.038 ^a	2	.019	.531	.592	.022
Intercept	4.390	1	4.390	123.596	.000	.724
PreAttitudeCA	.034	1	.034	.946	.336	.020
GenderCA	.006	1	.006	.166	.686	.004
Error	1.669	47	.036			
Total	492.429	50				
Corrected Total	1.707	49				

a. R Squared = .022 (Adjusted R Squared = -.020)

Table 4 reveals that $F(1,47) = 0.166$; $p = 0.686 > 0.05$. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English. Based on evidence from data analysis, there is no significant difference in the mean attitude of male and female students taught oral English using communicative approach. The partial Eta square of 0.004 was obtained for the gender meaning that only 0.4 percent of students' attitude to oral English can be attributed to their gender in communicative approach class.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach on Senior Secondary two students' attitude to and performance in oral English in Otukpo Local Government Area, Benue State. Since the population of the study consists of both male and female students, gender was incorporated as a moderating variable for comparison. Discussion of findings was tailored along the variables in the study as guided by the answers to research questions and test of hypotheses.

Impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach on students' attitude and performance in oral English

Finding revealed that there is significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' attitude to oral English. The bivariate comparisons of the strategies of teaching oral English and its effect on the mean attitude ratings of students confirmed and upheld the rejected null hypothesis. This implies that oral English could be better taught using teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach than form-focused approach. Finding agrees with Marzuki, Emirati and Syam (2021) that grammar practice activities through CLT proved to increase the students' attitude and involve the students as a centre of teaching/learning process towards English grammar. Finding also agrees with Abu (2021) that questions that elicit answer and repetition

purpose were mostly answered chorally in both single and mixed schools it was also found that the feedback of the teacher affects the pattern and extent of classroom interaction in Physics lesson. Finding concurs with Forty (2019) that attitude was a significant factor in students' achievement in English language tenses. The students taught with the collaborative learning method had higher post attitude mean score than those taught with lecture. Finding agrees with Muodumogu and Yusuf (2018) that students engaged in teacher-student interaction pattern had significantly higher mean attitude scores than those in the conventional group.

Finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy on male and female students' attitude to oral English. This implies that the use of teacher-students' interaction strategy is gender friendly with reference to students' attitude to oral English. Finding agrees with Muodumogu and Yusuf (2018) that there was no significant gender difference in the attitude of students in teacher-student interaction patterns. However, the finding disagrees with Abu (2021) that female students interacted positively among themselves more than their male counterparts in Physics lessons.

Gender stereo-typing permeates English language class when teacher-students' interaction strategy was used to teach oral English. The attitude to oral English of male and female students was found not to be significantly different. The use of teacher-students' interaction strategy in the present study involved collaborative dialogue which helps learners to construct linguistic knowledge of the language and use it at the same time in social context in which learners go beyond their mental process of language learning irrespective of gender. The present study has shown that the instructional strategy is gender friendly and enhances development of positive attitude to oral English among male and female students.

Finding revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean impact of communicative approach on male and female students' attitude to oral English. This means that the use of communicative approach is not gender sensitive with reference to students' attitude to oral English. Finding agrees with Fakeye (2010) that there is no

significant difference in the attitude of SS 2 male students and SS 2 female students towards English grammar and vocabulary.

The attitude to oral English of male and female students was found not to be significantly different. The use of communicative approach in the present study involved person to person communication which involves the use of real life language that is relevant to the learning purpose of the learners. The conversational exchanges that arise is maintained using communicative approach when interlocutors seek to prevent a communication impasse. The present study has shown that the instructional strategy is gender friendly and enhances development of positive attitude to oral English among male and female students.

Finding revealed that there is significant difference in the mean impact of teacher-students' interaction strategy, communicative approach and form-focused approach on students' performance in oral English. The bivariate comparisons of the strategies of teaching oral English and its effect on the mean performance scores of students confirmed and upheld the rejected null hypothesis. This implies that the use of teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach enhanced students' performance in oral English than the use of form-focused approach. Finding agrees with Mofor (2022) that the learner autonomy method was more effective than communicative language method on students' achievement in French Grammar. Finding agrees with Obieckzie and Afiene (2022) that CLT delivery method had significant effects on pupil's attitudes in English Grammatical Structure learning. Finding agrees with Abu (2021) that teachers used only one style of feedback (affirmation) and neglected other forms of feedback styles that could enhance positive interaction among teachers and learners for better learning outcomes in Physics lessons.

Finding agrees with Udu and Agayo (2020) that there is a significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students taught oral English using computer assisted instruction and those taught using lecture method. Finding agrees with Dodo, Akanyi and Akanyi (2020) that students' interaction strategy has significant impact on the academic performance of senior

secondary school students in Economics. Finding agrees with Shamija, Utulu and Aboho (2019) that students engaged in teacher-student interactions is significant and student-student interaction. Finding agrees with Ochogwu and Ojor (2019) that students taught oral English using communicative language teaching method had higher academic performance than their counterparts in the conventional group. Finding agrees with Adokpela, Anyebe and Ogwuche (2019) that students taught English post-modifiers and determiners using communicative language teaching performed better than those taught using conventional strategy because there was statistical significant difference in the mean achievement towards English post modifiers and determiners between the experimental and control groups. Finding agrees with Ochogwu and Ojor (2019) mean performance scores in all the four aspects of oral English investigated using CLT were significant compared to the conventional method.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have generated the following conclusions: Teacher-students' interaction strategy and communicative approach are effective interactive methods that could be used among secondary school students in Benue State to enhance students' performance and attitude to oral English. The students performed significantly better in oral English when they were exposed to TSIS and CA. The two strategies benefited both male and female students in the area of vowel and consonant sounds production, stress pattern and emphatic stress, phonetic symbols and rhymes.

It is evident from this study that form-focused approach of teaching oral English could be improved upon through the use of TSIS and CA in order to upgrade students' performance and improve students' attitude towards oral English as well as enhance their communicative competence.

Recommendations

From the conclusions of this study, the researcher recommended that:

1. Teachers of English language should adopt TSIS and CA to improve students'

performance and attitude to oral English so that their students would find productive use of language interesting.

2. This would help students to improve on their spoken English and expressions to communicate better in the English language.
3. Pre- and In-service training programmes often designed for English language teachers should include TSIS and CA strategies such as group discussion, collaborative dialogue, negotiation of meaning, turn-taken and role play.

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