



Effect of Interactive Approach on Students Speaking Skill in English Language in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State of Nigeria

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Abstract. This study investigates the effect of an interactive approach on the English-speaking skill of Junior Secondary School Students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Recognizing the critical importance of English proficiency in a globalized world, this research addresses the inadequacies of traditional, teacher-centered methods that often fail to develop students' speaking abilities effectively. The interactive approach, rooted in constructivist and communicative language teaching theories, emphasizes active student participation and authentic language use. Utilizing a quasi-experiment design, this study examined the speaking skills of 37 volunteer students from Junior Secondary School Three (JSS 3) before and after implementing an interactive teaching intervention. The results demonstrated a significant improvement in students' speaking skill, with the mean score in post-test was significantly higher than the pre-test scores ($t=21.216$, $p<0.0001$). These findings suggest that the interactive approach is a more effective method for enhancing speaking skills compared to traditional approaches. The study recommends integrating the cultural context of the region into interactive activities and leveraging technology to further support interactive language learning. It recommended that cultural context of the region should be integrated into interactive activities and assessments, as this can increase student engagement and motivation. For example, incorporating local cultural themes or legends into role-play scenarios can provide a rich and relevant learning environment.

Keywords: Interactive Approach, English Speaking Skills, Junior Secondary School, Maiduguri Metropolis.

1. Introduction

Language is a vital tool for communication, and in today's globalized world, proficiency in English has become increasingly important. As the lingua franca of international business, science, technology, and academia, mastering English, particularly its speaking component, is crucial for students' future success (Crystal, 2012). However, despite its importance, many students struggle with speaking English fluently and confidently, especially in countries where English is not the first language (Al-Hosni, 2014; Gan, 2012). Traditional teaching methods, often characterized by teacher-centered approaches and limited student participation, have been found inadequate in developing students' speaking skill (Brown, 2007; Nunan, 2003). These methods frequently focus on grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, leaving little room for authentic oral communication practice (Richards, 2006). As a result, students may excel in written exams but falter when it comes to real-life communication situations (Hedge, 2000).

To address this issue, language teaching experts have advocated for more interactive and student-centered approaches (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). These approaches, rooted in constructivist and communicative language teaching theories, emphasize active student participation, authentic language use, and meaningful interactions (Vygotsky, 1978;

Hymes, 1972). One such approach that has gained traction is the interactive approach, which promotes dialogic learning, peer collaboration, and real-life communication tasks (Van Lier, 1996). The interactive approach in language teaching is grounded in several key theories and concepts. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learning is a social process and that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction with others. In the context of language learning, this means that students develop speaking skills not in isolation, but through meaningful exchanges with peers and teachers (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Similarly, Hymes' (1972) concept of communicative competence emphasizes that knowing a language involves more than just grammatical knowledge; it includes understanding how to use language appropriately in various social contexts. This idea forms the basis of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes authentic communication over rote memorization of rules (Brown, 2007). The interactive approach aligns with these theories by creating opportunities for students to use English in meaningful, context-rich situations. It involves activities such as group discussions, role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks that encourage students to negotiate meaning, express opinions, and practice various language functions (Long, 1996; Swain, 2000).

Several studies have highlighted the potential benefits of interactive approaches on students' speaking skills. For instance, a study by Toro, Camacho-Minuche, Pinza-Tapia, and Paredes (2019) found that interactive activities like role-plays and simulations significantly improved students' fluency, vocabulary, and confidence in speaking English. Similarly, Kayi (2012) reported that discussion-based activities not only enhanced speaking skills but also promoted critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. However, despite these promising findings, the implementation of interactive approaches in many classrooms remains a challenge. Teachers may feel constrained by traditional curricula, large class sizes, or lack of resources (Littlewood, 2007; Carless, 2007). Moreover, students accustomed to passive learning may initially resist more participatory methods (Weimer, 2013).

In the Nigerian context, where this study is situated, these challenges are particularly acute. English, despite being the official language and medium of instruction in schools, is a second

language for most students (Jibir-Daura, 2014). Traditional, teacher-centered methods still dominate many classrooms, with a focus on preparing students for written exams rather than developing their communicative abilities (Olanrewaju, 2019). As a result, many Nigerian students struggle with spoken English, which can hinder their academic progress and future career prospects (Ajayi, 2008).

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the effect of an interactive approach on the speaking skill of junior secondary school students in English Language in Nigeria. By implementing and evaluating an interactive teaching intervention, this research aims to contribute empirical evidence to the ongoing debate about effective language teaching methods.

1.1 Hypothesis

There is no effect of interactive approach on students speaking skills in English language in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State

2. Methodology

This study adopted quasi experimental design. It is made up of experimental and control groups. Quasi-experimental design is a research approach that aims to establish causality between variables by using natural or pre-existing groups, rather than randomly assigning participants to conditions. This design is often used when random assignment is not feasible, but researchers still want to make causal inferences. (Shadish, 2014). The use of the pre-test and post-test is common in education and psychological research to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention or treatment. In this design, participants are assessed before and after the intervention to measure changes in their behavior, knowledge, or attitudes (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

The total population for this study consisted of all Junior Secondary School Students Three (JSS III) of the selected school. At the time of this study, there were one hundred and twenty-nine (129) students in the target class. Dip bowl simple random sampling was used to select one arm of Junior Secondary School three (JSS III) class comprising of thirty-seven (37) participants. English Language Speaking Skills Test (ELSPT) was used to determine the students' speaking proficiency in both pretest and posttest. The reliability of the instrument was achieved using correlation coefficient at

0.05 level of significance. An independent t-test was used to analyze the data.

2.1 Interactive Approach Method

Determination of assessment objectives: the specific aspects of students' performance are language proficiency, communication skills, collaboration abilities, or critical thinking skills.

Develop assessment criteria: Establish clear and measurable criteria for assessing students' performance based on your objectives. This may include rubrics, checklists, or rating scales that outline specific expectations and levels of achievement.

Utilize a combination of assessment methods: Employ a variety of assessment methods to gather a comprehensive understanding of students' performance. This can include formative assessments (e.g., observations, informal feedback), summative assessments (tests) and self-assessments.

Monitor students' progress over time: Regularly collect and analyze data on students' performance to track their development and identify areas for improvement. This can involve administering assessments at multiple points throughout the learning process and comparing results to evaluate the impact of the interactive approach.

Analyze the quality of student-teacher and student-student interactions: Observe and evaluate the nature of interactions within the

classroom, focusing on aspects such as active participation, collaboration, and communication. This can provide insights into how the interactive approach is influencing students' performance.

Reflect and refine: Regularly reflect on the assessment results and use them to inform adjustments to the interactive approach and improve overall teaching and learning practices.

Oral presentations are a commonly used method for evaluating speaking skills in interactive language learning. An oral presentation typically involves a student presenting a topic or argument to an audience, which can be their peers.

To measure the effectiveness of interactive approaches through oral presentations, teachers should consider the following:

Preparation: How well did the students prepare for the presentation, including organization, research, and use of language?

Fluency: The ability to speak smoothly and continuously without hesitation or pause.

Accuracy: The ability to use English correctly, including grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Coherence: The ability to organize thoughts and ideas in a logical and coherent manner.

Vocabulary: The ability to use a wide range of vocabulary to express ideas and opinions.

Pronunciation: The ability to use English pronunciation correctly, including intonation, stress, and rhythm.

3. Results

Table 1: t-test on effect of interactive approach on students speaking skill in English language

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	S.E	DF	t	Prob
Pre test	37	33.571	4.327	0.302	36	21.216	0.0001
Post test	37	55.274	6.910	0.462			

(t=21.216,df = 36; P= 0.0001)

The results presented in Table 1 suggest that the interactive approach has a significant positive effect on students' speaking skill in English language. The study used a pre-test and post-test design to assess the impact of interactive teaching on students' language skills. The mean score on the pre-test was 33.571 with a standard deviation of 4.327 and standard error of 0.302. In contrast, the mean score on the post-test was 55.274 with a standard deviation of 6.910 and standard error of 0.462.

A paired t-test was conducted to determine if the difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test was statistically significant. The t-

value was 21.216 with 36 degrees of freedom, and the p-value was less than 0.0001. This indicates that the difference in scores was highly significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance. These results showed that the interactive approach is effective in improving students' speaking skills in English language. Students who received interactive instruction had significantly higher scores on the post-test compared to the pre-test, suggesting that the interactive approach helped them develop their speaking abilities over the course of the study.

4. Discussion of findings

There is effect of interactive approach on students speaking skills in English language in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. In a comprehensive meta-analysis of 30 studies on communicative language teaching (CLT), which includes many interactive techniques, Sato and Oyanagi (2019) found no significant improvements in students' speaking skills compared to traditional methods. They argue that the methodological flaws in many studies supporting CLT, such as small sample sizes and lack of control groups, undermine the validity of their findings. Moreover, the theoretical underpinnings of interactive approaches have been questioned. The sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (1978), which emphasizes learning through social interaction, has been critiqued by cognitive psychologists. Anderson (2015) argues that language acquisition is primarily a cognitive process of rule internalization, not a social one. He contends that the emphasis on interaction can distract from the more critical task of mentally processing linguistic input.

Similarly, the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which is central to interactive approaches, has been challenged. Rajagopalan (2019) argues that this concept is too vague and culturally biased, favoring Western communicative norms. He suggests that what constitutes "appropriate" communication varies widely across cultures, making the universality of communicative tasks in interactive approaches problematic. Practical implementation issues also undermine the effectiveness of interactive approaches. Large class sizes, a common reality in many parts of the world, make meaningful interaction difficult. As Littlewood (2018) notes in his study of Asian classrooms, Teachers often resort to traditional methods because managing interactive tasks in classes of 50 or more is simply unworkable. This sentiment is echoed by teachers in numerous contexts (Carless, 2007; Olanrewaju, 2019).

Furthermore, the role of the teacher in interactive approaches has been criticized. Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues that the teacher's role as a "facilitator" can lead to a lack of clear direction and insufficient error correction. He states, "In the name of student-centeredness, teachers often abdicate their responsibility to provide the structured input and feedback that learners need. This can be particularly problematic for learners who are accustomed to more teacher-directed learning. The nature of the learners themselves can also

make interactive approaches ineffective. Introvert students, who make up a significant portion of any class, may find constant interaction stressful and counterproductive. In a study of Chinese EFL learners, Liu and Littlewood (2017) found that introverted students reported higher anxiety and lower participation in interactive tasks, leading to less speaking practice and slower improvement.

Additionally, the claim that interactive approaches prepare students for real-world communication has been challenged. Widdowson (2017) argues that classroom interactions often bear little resemblance to authentic communication. He states, "The artificiality of role-plays and simulations can ironically make students less prepared for the unpredictability of real conversations. Lastly, the emphasis on fluency in interactive approaches can come at the cost of accuracy. Pinter (2017) found that students in communicative classrooms often develop bad habits and fossilized errors because of insufficient focus on form. She argues, "Without systematic attention to grammar and pronunciation, students' speaking skills plateau at a level far below true proficiency.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study demonstrate that the interactive approach has a significant positive effect on students' speaking skill in English language. The interactive approach appears to be an effective tool for improving students' speaking abilities compared to traditional teaching methods.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the followings were recommended:

The cultural context of the region should be integrated into interactive activities and assessments, as this can increase student engagement and motivation. For example, incorporating local cultural themes or legends into role-play scenarios can provide a rich and relevant learning environment.

Technology can be a valuable tool for enhancing interactive language learning.

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