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EFFECT OF POST-LISTENING ORGANISERS ON NOTE-TAKING PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Listening, naturally the first accessible language skill to a child in the complex process of exploring the environment is also described as the polestar of language learning. The challenge all along has been to consistently improve students' understanding of instruction, which is entirely given in English language in mostly verbal interaction in Nigeria's schools. This study examined the facilitation of listening in English language through post-listening organisers and note-taking. 189 participants drawn from the five academic divisions (schools) of the three Government-owned Colleges of Education in Kwara State, Nigeria were involved in the quasi-experimental study. Four adapted TOEFL listening passages trial-tested and found to have a co-efficient of 0.773 were used as instrument for the study. The participants listened and took notes, which were graded and used as data for the study. The outcome of the study shows that students generally take poor notes; however, post-listening organisers have positive significant effect on note-taking performance of students. Therefore, listening should be taught and listed first in the curriculum as other language skills; and the National Universities Commission, National Commission for Colleges of Education among others should update teachers on the needful competence of listening teaching.

Keywords: Listening, Note-taking, Post-listening organisers, Academic performance, Language learning

Introduction

Listening is a process in an interaction by which a listener is actively engaged in construction of meaning from different contexts and input sources. Listening is a compulsory day-to-day activity which is demonstrated in listening to a friend, listening to direction when you are in a new place, and listening to lectures. Listening is by far more than merely hearing words. It requires effective comprehension through which outcomes of meaningful listening would be the actualization of the background objective(s) of making the speech.

Rost (1990) postulates basic indices for sustained listening that spoken words, which remain relevant to the end of communication require that such words inspire in the hearer the same idea they depict in the mind of the speaker. When this is not achieved, the entire communication becomes noise and distractions, or probably conveys interpretation parallel to the speaker's thought. In most cases, this situation creates a form of disconnect in discourse. Lynch (2004) constructs a sequence analysis of the stages constituting the process of listening in a conversation as indicated thus: the spoken sounds have to be identified from among the sounds in the

environment; the continuous flow of speech has to be divided into units that is recognizable as known words; the structure of the speech has to be mastered and the speaker's intended meaning has to be understood; and the listener has to bring his linguistic knowledge to bear so as to construct correct and appropriate response to what is heard.

Rost (1990) likens the listening process to the relevance theory that verbal communication is essentially a combined process that includes ostension (articulation of signals by a speaker) and inference (situating those signals in context by a listener). Listening comprehension therefore, refers to a conscious process which sustains transfer and exchange of meaning through oral input. Olaofe (1997) relates listening comprehension to a form of meaning scooping that does not lead to 'minimal or partial understanding, complete misunderstanding, misinterpretation, misquotation or ambiguity, communicative ineffectiveness, confusion and message abandonment.' (p.14). There is no gainsaying that a lot of useful information got to us through the instrumentality of listening, which allows us to make use of critical thinking to determine the worth of information made by a speaker. Critical thinking connotes a reasonable mental process focused on determining the worth of information gathered from observation, experience, or communication as basis to form an opinion, or take action (Hashemi and Zabihi, 2012).

The institution College of Education in Nigeria can be credited to the outcome of the Ashby Commission of 1959, which examined the need for upgrading the existing educational institutions to address the then teaching manpower challenges of the country. The Commission found that many of the teachers then were untrained. The recommendations of the Ashby Commission heralded the creation of a new institution and a new certificate: College of Education, and the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) respectively. The first set of these Colleges are called Advanced Teachers' Colleges (ATCs) Owerri, Lagos and Zaria (1961/ 62); Kano (1964) and Abraka with the name College of Education in 1968 (Iliyas, 2012). Kwara State is one of the 36 federating States and the Federal capital territory (FCT) located in the North central region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Kwara State was created in 1967 with the three Colleges of Education in Ilorin, Oro and (Technical) Lafiagi owned by the State government used for the study.

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) is described as a bit lower than university degree, but a highly qualitative professional certificate in education (Iliyas, 2012). The forms of this institution in the country are conventional and non-conventional Colleges of Education. The conventional being those that present courses in the Sciences, Languages, Arts and Social Sciences, Vocation and Technology. The non-conventional ones include the College of Education (Technical), which presents major courses in all areas of knowledge but Languages, Arts and Social Sciences; military College like the Nigeria Army School of Education (NASE); and specialised College of Education where its programme of study in the various fields include rigorous instruction in teacher training to attend

students with special needs (the physically challenged pupils). The College of Education runs an organized study programme where related fields of study are coordinated and run on school basis, a similitude of the faculty form at the university.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) is the Nigeria's government agency charged with the responsibilities to set standard, assure quality and supervise the activities of Colleges of Education. The NCCE (2012) presents in her latest edition of minimum standard for NCE teachers' topics on note-taking and listening competence across each of the Use of English courses of GSE 111, 121; 211, 221; and 321 presented to students in NCE I, II and III respectively. Listening features as a core aspect of the various Use of English courses. Some aspects contained in the document include: Types, strategies and listening defects; listening for note-taking, direction, and instruction; dimensions of listening purposes and critical listening among others.

The note taking components of the courses are sandwiched variously under study skills, writing and grammar. The study skills have such topics as spelling rules, vocabulary, words relation and registers. Also, under writing, punctuation, outlining, logical sequencing of ideas and summary skills are some note taking competence awareness offered in the NCE programme. These topics and such other related knowledge of grammar-verb forms, tenses; writing-summary, sequencing of ideas; speaking and reading- for inference, argument and question serve to communicatively equip students to be effective listeners and meaningful note takers.

As a means of sustaining proficiency in English language, the sole medium of instruction across the strata of Nigeria's educational system, learning listening as a receptive skill demands extra pedagogical efforts to make it effective due to its peculiar nature. These peculiarities arise from varied listening texts, learners' interest, speed and accent of speaker, background knowledge, and text familiarity or otherwise.

Post-listening organisers describe activities after the listening stage that are geared towards the construction of effective meaning from listening and the cultivation of the right skills in accomplishing listening monitors like taking notes. Saha and Talukdar (2000) submit that post-listening activities also called 'follow-up works' are tailored towards checking comprehension, evaluate listening skills and strategies, and apply the knowledge acquired in other contexts. The British Council submits that post-listening organisers is necessary:

for students to remember what they hear and practice some language activities like repetition, role play, retelling and discussion. Besides, such activities can promote students integrating skills by linking to other speaking and writing activities. (p. 4)

Saha and Talukdar (2000) add that post-listening tasks bear the features of being related to pre-listening organisers like confirming earlier prediction. Other activities

at this stage may involve creation of real life situation where learners are required to apply knowledge gained through listening; and, an extension of the topic so as to make learners remember new vocabulary.

Carrel (2007) posits that note-taking as a strategy is intuitively appealing to the teaching-listening and is generally seen as a way to enhance the process of learning and remembering. When listeners monitor their comprehension through observable task like note-taking, they are using metacognitive listening strategy (Vandergrift, 2007). Succinctly, note-taking is an endeavour to reduce ideas and facts to concise jottings and summaries as guide for reciting, reviewing and reflecting (Academic Skills Centre, 2001). Iliyas (2012) submits that the acknowledged importance of note-taking gives it pre-eminence in the Use of English courses of all tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

A few of the importance of note-taking, according to Iliyas (2012), include: produce easy to read outlines; check forgetting; unveil deficiency in comprehension enable practice in applying knowledge; and make revision and writing reasonably easier. Scholars (Vandergrift, 2007, Iliyas, 2012) have submitted a number of factors that inhibit appropriate note-taking to include students' lack of preparation, distractions, the speaker's delivery speed and style. Other situations are inadequate vocabulary, text unfamiliarity and essentially bad listening habits.

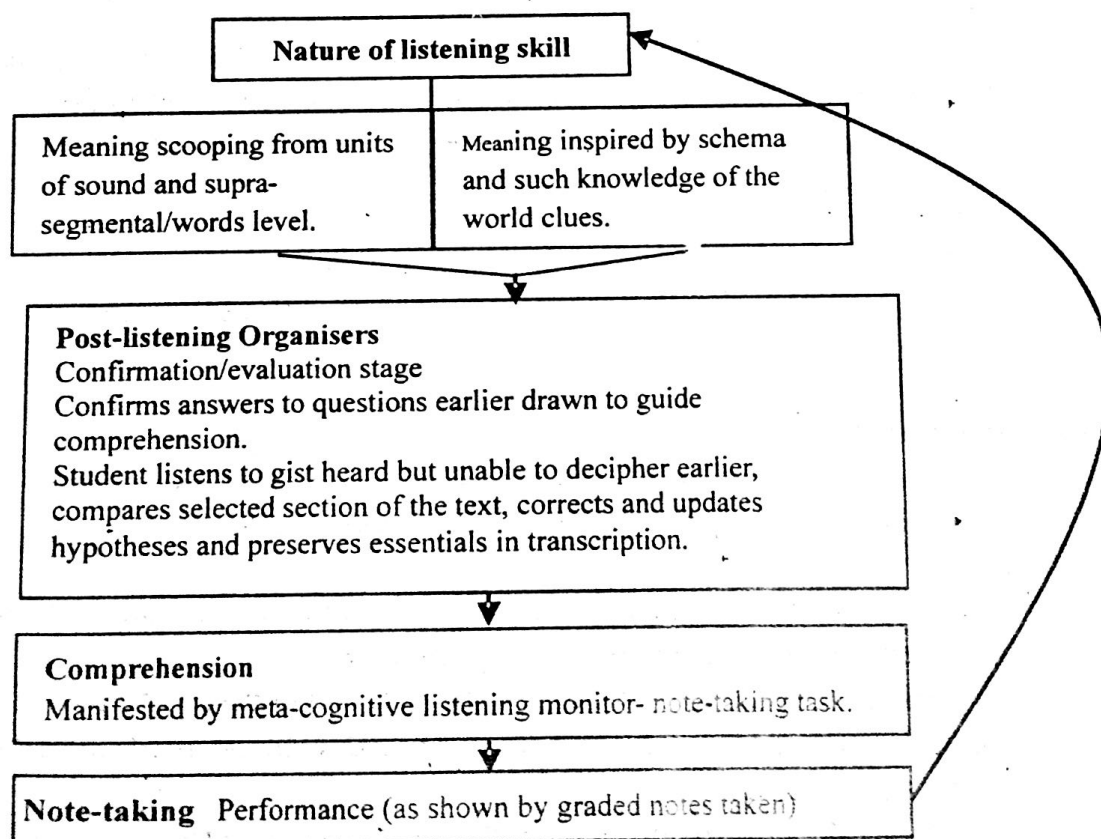


Figure 1: Researchers designed model of the nature of listening and instructional approach.

Statement of the Problem

There is growing awareness that listening competence is not just attained from attending to instructions on speaking. Although this is relatively a new development because listening attracts the least attention of the four language skills in term of understanding, teaching and research. Studies (Olaofe, 1994; Spivey and Cuthbert, 2006; Vandergrift, 2007; Passmore, 2011; Iliyas, 2012) have recognized and recommended a wide range of strategies for teaching listening. Yet, inadequacies persist on the compelling need to facilitate listening comprehension considering its place in general communication and indeed transmission of academic information. As a result of the cogent desire to improve academic performance of Colleges of Education students in Nigeria that effective listening and coherent note-taking are very central to, the Use of English course is used in this study, which accommodates listening and note-taking to understudy the variables of sex, different courses of study and unfamiliarity of text to determine the effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students of Kwara State Colleges of Education, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Essentially, this study seeks to find out the effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of Colleges of Education students in Kwara State, Nigeria at four levels of note-taking features: content of notes, organization of facts, expression of idea and grammatical accuracy. The study specifically, seeks to find out:

1. The benefit of post-listening organisers on the note-taking performance of students from listening text;
2. Whether or not differences will occur in the note-taking performance of students treated with post-listening organisers as male or female;
3. whether upon exposure to post-listening organisers differences will occur in notes taken by students from listening text on the basis of their different courses of study;
4. whether differences will exist in the note-taking performance of students exposed to post-listening organisers on the basis of the unfamiliarity of the text;

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study:

1. What is the general performance of the students in note-taking from listening text?
2. What difference will occur on the basis of sex in the note-taking performance of students exposed to post-listening organisers?
3. Will any difference exist based on the different courses of study in the note-taking performance of the students treated with post-listening organisers from listening text?
4. Will there be any difference in the note-taking performance of students exposed to post-listening organisers from oral input based on the unfamiliarity of the text?

5. What difference will exist in the note-taking performance of the students who are exposed to post-listening organisers and of those who are excluded from this treatment?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. Significant difference will not exist in the effect of post-listening organisers on students' performance in the note-taking features from listening text.
2. There will be no significant difference in the note-taking performance of male and female students exposed to post-listening organisers from listening text.
3. There will be no significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on the note-taking performance of students from listening text on the basis of the different courses of study presented severally in the schools of Sciences, Languages, Arts and Social Sciences, Vocations and Technology.
4. Post-listening organisers will not have any significantly different effect on the note-taking performance of students based on the unfamiliarity of the listening text.

Scope of the Study

Studies carried out by L1 scholars of ESL with largely estimated knowledge of ESL peculiar listening challenges as can be found in such milieu like Nigeria have yielded findings on strategies of fostering and inculcating listening skill (Vandergrift, 1999; Carrier, 2003; Vandergrift, 2007; and Passmore, 2011). This study examined the effect of specific application of listening strategy (post-listening organisers) to comprehension monitoring device (note-taking) to authenticate the degree of listening success. This study involved second year students of studies leading to the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) with adapted TOEFL listening texts used as instrument. Variables like sex, courses of study and text unfamiliarity constituted the intervening variables, and frequency count, simple percentage, mean scores, standard deviation and ANCOVA used as statistical tools to analyse data for the study.

Methodology

This study is a quasi-experimental type. The major hypotheses of this study were tested with 4x2x5 factorial design that includes:

- i. The three experimental groups and one control group;
- ii. sex of participants as male and female; and
- iii. the five schools of studies in the Colleges of Education (Languages, Arts and Social Sciences, Vocation, Sciences and Technology).

The target population was all the second year students (3200 in all) of the three years NCE programme. 189 students (participants) were purposively sampled in 2013

using quota sampling technique in selecting subjects for the study. TOEFL listening passages were adapted as instrument to generate data from the participants. Efforts were also made to make learners have clear understanding of the text topic in each case.

The tests for the current study were the notes-taken by participants from passages listened to which were then carefully graded using the following marking guides:

- Content of notes (10 marks);
- Organisation of facts (10 marks);
- Expression of ideas (20 marks); and
- Grammatical accuracy of notes taken (10 marks).

Graded notes taken were interpreted as listed below based on the conventional 100% format but divided by 2 for every range because the grading was all over 50:

- 43 – 50 – Very High
- 34 – 42 – High
- 25 – 33 – Average
- 16 – 24 – Low
- 0 – 15 – Very Low

The instruments were trial-tested for reliability in a two week interval test re-test on students at Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State Nigeria. The data obtained were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, giving a coefficient of 0.773, which showed that the instruments were reliable. The study covered a period of four weeks beginning with the conduct of the pre-study test and exposure to four different communicative listening passages of TOEFL. Participants took notes in every session that were done during the normal 'Use of English' lectures and a post-study test was conducted, outcomes of which serve as co-variant with the pre-test.

Results

What is the general performance of students in note-taking from listening text?

Table 1: Mean Gain Score of the general performance of students in note-taking from listening text

Group	No	Obtainable Score	Mean Gain Score	Standard Deviation	Decision
Science	65	50	10.9	1.5	Very
Low					
Vocation	66	50	10.6	1.5	Very
Low					
Technology	19	50	10.2	1.5	Very
Low					
Languages	18	50	11.0	1.6	Very
Low					
Arts and S.S	21	50	10.8	1.1	Very
Low					

The results in Table 1 show that students of the School of Languages obtained the highest mean score of 11.0 in the general performance of students in the listening text. This is followed by the Schools of Sciences, Arts and Social sciences, Vocation and those of Technology obtained the least mean score of 10.2. This implies that the students from the School of Languages led the note-taking performance from the listening text. Notwithstanding, the general performance was very low.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on students' performance in the note-taking features from listening text.

Table 2: Effect of post-listening organisers on students' performance in note-taking from listening text

Table 2: Effect of post-listening organisers on students' performance in note-taking from listening text

Variables	Mean Square (MS)	df	F.	Sig.	Decision
Post-listening organisers	977.636	97	140.777	.000	H ₀₁ Rejected

P=0.05 (significance level)

As shown in Table 2, the p-value of 0.000 is less than the calculated significant level of 0.05 at 97 degree of freedom. It therefore indicates significant difference at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, post-listening organisers have significant effect on students' performance in note-taking features from listening text.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the note-taking performance of male and female students from listening text upon exposure to post-listening organisers.

Table 3: Effect of post-listening organisers on the note-taking performance of male and female students from listening text

Variable	Mean Square (MS)	df	F.	Sig.	Decision
Sex effect on post-listening organiser and note-taking	31.828	96	1.188	0.279	H ₀₂ Accepted

P = 0.05 (significance level)

The data in Table 3 reveal that the p-value of 0.279 is greater than the significant level of 0.05 at 96 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted. The inference is that significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers does not exist in the note-taking performance of male and female students from listening text.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference in the effect of Post-listening organisers on the note-taking performance of students on the basis of variation in their main courses of study.

Table 4: Effect of Post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students on the basis of variation in their main courses of study

	Mean Square (MS)	df	F.	Sig.	Decision
Courses of study on post listening and note-taking	25.608	96	0.952	0.419	H ₀₃ Accepted

$P \geq 0.05$ (significance level)

Table 4 reveals that the p-value of 0.419 is greater than the stated significant level of 0.05 at 96 degree of freedom, indicating that the null hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there was no significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on the note-taking performance of students from listening text on the basis of variation in their main courses of study of Sciences, Languages, Arts and Social Sciences, Vocation and Technology.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students based on the unfamiliarity of the listening text.

Table 5: Effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students based on the unfamiliarity of the listening text

Variables	Mean Square (MS)	df	F.	Sig.	Decision
Post-listening organisers based on unfamiliarity of text and note-taking	4.552	96	0.646	0.588	H ₀₄ Accepted

$P \geq 0.05$ (significance level)

Table 5 shows the p-value of 0.588 as greater than the significance level of 0.05 at 96 degree of freedom, hence the null hypothesis was accepted. Thus, post-listening organisers did not have any significant effect on the note-taking performance of students based on the unfamiliarity of the listening text.

Table 6: Mean score of the difference that existed in the note-taking performance of the students who were exposed to post-listening organisers and of those who were excluded from the treatment.

Treatment	No of Students	Obtainable Score	Mean Score	Decision
Students exposed To post-listening Organisers	48	50	15.8	Very Low
Students excluded from the treatment (control)	49	50	13.4	Very Low

The results in Table 6 reveal that the students who were exposed to post-listening organisers had a mean score of 15.8 while the control group had 13.4 with the two groups having a very low performance rating from listening text.

Findings

Basically, outcome of data analysed reveal that:

1. Students are very deficient note takers from listening text in Colleges of Education.
2. There is positive effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students of Colleges of Education from listening text.
3. Post-listening organisers do not have any significantly different effect on the note-taking performance of male and female students of Colleges of Education from listening text.
4. Post-listening organisers have no significant effect on note-taking performance from listening text of Colleges of Education students on the basis of difference in their course of study.
5. The note-taking performance of students of Colleges of Education from unfamiliar listening text was not significantly affected by post-listening organisers' treatment.

Discussion

The poor note-taking outcome of participants from listening text in this study suggests a lack of basic linguistic competence for perception and production. This may result from inadequate due and deserved instructional attention to listening as a result of the highly erroneous feeling that listening would occur naturally. This neglect can be laid at the doorsteps of curriculum planners and teachers among others. The finding on the positive effect of post-listening on students' note-taking performance can be said to be due to the uncommon memory mending opportunity post-listening organisers afford listeners. Activities at the post-listening stage confront forgetfulness and provide hints on statements of essentials probably lost to acoustic overload.

The absence of significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on note-taking performance of students from listening text on the basis of sex however, may not be so surprising considering the fact that not until recently, listening had been generally perceived as a passive natural attribute that might not require any instructional drill to master. The absence of significant difference in the effect of post-listening on note-taking performance based on students' different courses of study found in this study can be said to have derived from such thoughts that informed Holden (2004) to assert that the pre-occupation in post listening activities is basically not about getting the 'right answers' in terms of demonstration of understanding what is heard, but how the answer was arrived at. Also, the non-existence of significant difference in the effect of post-listening organisers on

participants' note-taking performance found in this study re-emphasize the pre-eminence of listener's knowledge of the context of the text and relatedness of text to their schemata for comprehension and comprehension inspired task like note-taking to be meaningful.

In the same token, the very marginal difference in the mean scores 15.8 and 13.4 respectfully in the note-taking performance of those who benefited from post-listening organisers' treatment and the control group is again a clear demonstration of the poor comprehension capability of participants in the study. This challenge could have varied causes, which deficient listening skill is a core factor.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered based on the findings of this study:

- I. The teachers of English especially should attend to the four language skills without discrimination in their teaching of English as a second language; and teachers should be made to develop themselves through reading, workshops and seminars on listening research and teaching.
- II. The school administrators should provide usable audio and video gadgets; allowing listening to have a priority time on the school schedule of activities and motivate English language teachers (of listening) through sponsorship on related learned workshops, seminars and conferences.
- III. Agencies such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC); and the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in Nigeria should place listening in a vintage position in the curriculum of educational institutions; and convoke workshops and seminars on listening to update relevant teachers of latest trend on listening teaching.
- IV. Nigerian government should commit more funds to education, which can proceed from recruitment of right number of English language teachers to curb over-crowding in the Use of English classes; there should be addition of more credit hours and provision of sustainable incentives to teachers.
- V. Authors and publishers should call for special funds and utilize such effectively by publishing clearly leading and comprehensive texts on listening. It will also be of immense benefit to the teaching of listening if publishers endeavour to publish teachers' edition of listening texts.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of this study, it becomes imperative to advocate a rigorous emphasis on the teaching of listening just as speaking, reading and writing are being taught across the schools' strata. It will as well engender all-round language development and sustain academic success when students' confidence is sustained and simple exposure afforded students to perform tasks on listening to native and

non-native speakers of English; and especially from unfamiliar oral inputs. When listeners combine both bottom-up and top-down skills in observing post-listening skills, and listening outcome is tied to observable and measurable activity appreciable progress should be made. This can inspire a continuum for sustainable teaching of listening.

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