



## Influence of School Proprietorship on the Achievement of Students Taught Oral English with Games Technique

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### ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to find out the influence of proprietorship on the achievement of students taught Oral English with games technique. One research question and two null-hypotheses guided the study. The quasi-experimental research design involving non-equivalent control group was used for the study. The sample consisted of 304 Junior secondary III students drawn from eight intact classes in Idah Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. Pre-test and post-test were administered to all the groups (treatment and control). A 60-item Oral English Achievement Test (OEAT) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, while content validation was ensured using a table of specification.. The instrument was trial tested using a sample 30 JS III students drawn from an equivalent group in Igalamela/Odolu Local Government Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. The data collected from the trial testing were used for both item analysis and in estimating the reliability index of the test items. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Kuder Richardson formula 20. The reliability co-efficient based on K – R 20 estimate was 0.86. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that students in private schools achieved higher than their counterparts in public schools. The result also revealed that even though there was no significant difference in the achievement of private and public school students, there was significant interaction effect of method and school proprietorship. Based on

these findings, the paper recommends, among others, that government should provide adequate learning materials to public schools to bring them up to the standard of the private schools.

**Keywords:** *School proprietorship, students' achievement, oral English, and games technique*

### Introduction

Language is known to be a conventional medium used for communication by speech communities. This convention covers the significant sound units (phonemes), the inflexion and arrangement of words, and the association of meaning with words. When the association of meaning with words is mentioned, it means that although some words may look the same, their meanings may differ. Pronunciation gives correct meaning, while wrong pronunciation may give wrong meaning. It is important that in spite of mother tongue interference, students learning English as a second language (L2) should try to target making their speech intelligible to other users of English. The teaching of Oral English therefore is inevitable to young learners of L2.

Oral English, also known as spoken English, is the form of English used when people speak to one another. It is the way in which the English language is transmitted through a conventional system of sounds. Students who are learning English as L2 may have difficulties in Oral English because of the phonological differences between the English

language and their mother tongue (Otagburuagu, Obah, Onuigbo and Okorji, 2007). Effective speaking depends largely on paying accurate attention to segmental and supra-segmental features of speech sounds. The art of communicating one's thoughts and feelings through speaking is therefore, considered important since man's interpersonal relations and activities on the planet are executed mostly through the speaking act (Mgbodile, 1999). Linguists and language experts now place emphasis on the development of the oral or speaking skill following the realization that speech is primary and indispensable in human affairs. Every normal human being needs to communicate with his fellow human beings through speaking and anybody that is incapable of this is regarded as having a natural speech defect. One can hardly think of any human activity that does not involve or call for the use of oral forms of expression. Following this realization, modern theories of language teaching adopt procedural strategies that attach emphasis on speech. Spoken language has, therefore, acquired a special status in education. This is possibly in realization that effective communication provides for proper mastery of the written form.

If the lofty ideas must be realized, there is every need to correct the students' speech habits at the early stages of their English language learning. Although the learners will encounter interference problems as a result of structural difference between the phonological system of the target language and that of the mother tongue, effective learning can always be achieved through improved teaching of the vowels and consonants of the English language.

In the last few decades, Nigeria has been experiencing what can be termed a dramatic revolution in education provision. There has been an explosion of private schooling at both primary and higher levels. Many parents are opting to send their children to high fee paying private schools rather than the non-fee charging or low fee charging government schools. This transformation in education sector has generated many concerns among which equity issue has been raised to the fore. The unprecedented growth of substandard private schools has also raised questions regarding the role of these institutions in the delivery of education, the question of parental choice as well as the future of government educational policy.

Proprietorship refers to the ownership of schools attended by students, that is, whether it is established by government or individuals and private organizations. In Nigeria government owned schools are referred to as public schools while those established by individuals or private organizations are referred to as private schools. At the centre of the debates about quality of schooling is the private-public school divide. While Cox & Jimenez (2009) and Jacob, Holsinger & Mugimu (2010) argue that private schools are more effective than public schools in enhancing achievement, Lockheed and Bruns (2009) and Psacharopoulos (2007) report mixed findings. In Malawi, there is evidence to show that the quality of most private schools is poor due to lack of government regulations (Kirnan, Latham, Macrae & Read, 2010). According to Ridell (2009), the relative advantage of private and public schools have to be viewed against particular goals.

The question of achievement and achievement gaps in school is an important one because of its implications for equity between different social groups, and equity is a central concern of Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Unfortunately, not much study has been done in this area in Idah Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria to demonstrate precisely the relationship by proprietorship of schools and achievement though private and public schools have been said to differ in terms of students' composition, teacher quality, resource/facility availability and school management. These factors are among those that have been consistently associated with high students' achievement by studies on the relative efficiency of private and public schools. This study is driven by these fundamental issues evolving in Nigeria's educational set up.

A game is a kind of competition governed by rules and regulations. It is a pursuit or an activity with rules performed either alone or with others, for the purpose of entertainment. Cobuild (2007) defines game as an activity or sport involving skill, knowledge, or chance, in which one follows fixed rules and try to win against an opponent or to solve a puzzle. Turtledove (2006) sees game as a structure that has rules, goals and agreement of players on the surface and wonderful hidden processes underneath. In many games, the objective is to win by defeating the other player(s) or being the first to reach a specified goal, while in others, role-playing or co-operation is

emphasized. The use of games as a teaching technique was pioneered by John Dewey in 1944 (Yannias and Goulka, 2008). Since then more researches have been carried out with regard to its application in different subject areas (Umo, 2004; Ugwoke, 2008; Huyen & Nga, 2008). However, the researcher has not come across any study reported regarding the influence of proprietorship on the achievement of students taught Oral English with games technique in Idah Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study attempted to fill this gap. The aim of this study, therefore, was to find out the influence of proprietorship on students' achievement in Oral English using games technique. The purpose is to determine the achievement of students in public and private schools in Oral English using games' technique. To guide the study, one research question and two null-hypotheses were formulated. These are:

### Research Question

What is the mean achievement score of students attending public and private schools taught Oral English with games technique?

### Hypotheses

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students attending public and private schools taught Oral English with games technique.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect of method and school proprietorship on the achievement scores of students taught Oral English with games technique.

### Method

The sample for this study was 304 junior secondary school students three (JS III) drawn from eight schools in Idah Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. In the first instance, stratified random sampling technique was used to draw four schools from each strata (urban and rural), making a total of eight schools altogether (four public and four private). The balloting procedure was used to draw the eight schools. The researcher wrote the names of all the public schools in the urban area on pieces of paper which were squeezed and dropped on the floor. Then four were picked at random. The same procedure was used to sample the four private schools in the urban area. This procedure was repeated all over again to sample public and private schools from the rural area

for the study. One intact class in each of the sampled schools in each location were then randomly assigned to treatment and control groups respectively by balloting. Only mixed (co-educational) schools were sampled for the study since there were no single sex private schools in the study area.

The instrument for data collection was a 60-item multiple-choice Oral English Achievement Test (OEAT). It is an audio C.D which students were required to listen to while it was playing and then answer basic questions. Three words numbered A to C were written on paper but only one word out of the three was pronounced on the audio C.D. Students were then required to identify the word they heard on the C.D and write the letter of the alphabet that corresponds with the word pronounced. Each question correctly answered carries 1 mark, i.e. 60 marks. The instrument was face validated by three experts, two in Language Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Content validation was done using table of specification. A trial testing of the instrument was carried out using a sample of 30 JS III students drawn from an equivalent group in Igalamela/Odolu Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. The data obtained from the trial testing were used for both item analysis and in estimating the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the test items was determined using Kuder Richardson Formula 20. The reliability co-efficient based on K – R 20 was 0.86.

Two weeks before the commencement of the experiment, the test instrument, Oral English Achievement Test (OEAT), was administered as pre-test on the 304 students sampled for the study. Since the test instrument was an audio C.D, it was not possible for the researcher to reshuffle the test items. This was why it had to be administered two weeks ahead of the commencement of treatment. The actual treatment session was conducted by the regular English Language teachers in their respective classes using the lesson plans prepared by the researcher which were validated along with the instrument. The major treatment was the teaching of Oral English. The experimental groups were taught with the lesson plans on games' technique while the control groups were taught with the lesson plans on the conventional method. The researcher regularly monitored the classes to ensure compliance with the procedure of instruction.

Four games developed by the researcher were used for the experiment. The games were the traditional non-computer type games that relied on props and teams and the creation of an entertaining learning environment that emphasized sound production, discrimination and placement. Specifically, they were pronunciation games that were anchored on a combination of flashcards and guessing games tagged 'sound production puzzle', 'sound placement puzzle', sound 'identification and discrimination puzzles'. Game one dealt with production of sounds. It was aimed at developing students' skills for the production of the sounds of English Language in such a way that a listener could understand the sounds so produced without doubts as to the quality and meaning of the utterances. Games two and three dealt with identification and placement of sounds. They were aimed at developing students' skill for proper identification of vowel and consonant sounds presented to them by the teacher. It was a kind of guessing game. While game four dealt with discrimination of the sounds of the English Language.

It was aimed at developing the ability of students to perceive similarities and differences between two or more speech stimuli. In this game, students learnt to attend to differences among sounds or to respond differently to different sounds. The treatment session lasted for six weeks. After treatment, the same test was re-administered as post-test on the two groups – treatment and control. The data were analyzed based on the research question and hypotheses. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation of the test scores. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. They were tested at 0.05 level of significance

## Results

### Research Question

What is the mean achievement score of students attending public and private schools taught Oral English with game techniques?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the achievement scores of students in public and private schools in experimental group**

Proprietorship	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain Score
		Mean	Stan. Dev.	Mean	Stan. Dev.	
Public	151	23.69	2.26	29.15	4.98	5.49
Private	153	33.29	8.13	43.43	0.12	10.14

Table 1 shows the mean achievement score and standard deviation of students attending public and private schools in the experimental group. The result reveals that the students attending public schools had the mean achievement score of 23.69 and standard deviation of 2.26 for pre-test; mean achievement score of 29.15 and standard deviation of 4.98 for the post-test. Similarly, students attending private schools had the mean achievement score of 33.29 and standard deviation of 8.13 for pre-test; mean achievement score of 43.43 and standard deviation of 0.12 for the post-test. This result shows that the students attending

private schools with the gain score of 10.14 achieve higher than their counterparts attending public schools with the gain score of 5.49 in the post-test.

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students attending public and private schools taught Oral English with game techniques.

**Table 2: Summary of ANCOVA table for significant difference in the mean achievement scores of public and private school students taught Oral English**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	29932.055 <sup>a</sup>	4	7483.014	227.681	.000
Intercept	152.537	1	152.537	4.641	.032
Pretest	14812.358	1	14812.358	450.687	.000
Groups	3228.080	1	3228.080	98.219	.000
proprietorship	54.950	1	54.950	1.672	.197
Groups * proprietorship	622.426	1	622.426	18.938	.000
Error	9826.984	299	32.866		
Total	437062.000	304			
Corrected Total	39759.039	303			

Table 2 shows the Summary of ANCOVA table for significant difference in the mean achievement scores of public and private school students taught Oral English with games technique. The result reveals that the F-value for the proprietorship is 1.67 with the significant value of 0.19. However, this value of F is not significant at 0.05. This is because 0.19 is greater than 0.05, that is ( $p = 0.19$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null-hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted; hence, there was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students attending public and private schools taught Oral English with games technique.

## Hypothesis 2

There is no significant interaction effect of method and proprietorship on the mean achievement scores of students taught Oral English.

Table 2 is used to address this hypothesis. The result reveals that the F-value for the interaction of method and proprietorship (Groups \*proprietorship) is 18.93 with the significant value of 0.00. However, this value of F is equally significant at 0.05. This is because 0.00 is less than 0.05, that is ( $p = 0.00$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null-hypothesis claiming no significant interaction effect was rejected. Hence, there was significant interaction effect of method and proprietorship on the mean achievement scores of students taught Oral English.

## Discussion

The results presented on table 1 shows that students in private schools achieved higher than their

counterparts in public schools This finding support existing evidences on the relative efficiency of private schools over public schools (Yilwa & Olarinoye, 2004; Coleman, Hoffer & Kilgore, 2008; Omachonu & Offorma, 2008); and Kingdon, 2010.

To answer hypothesis 1 the results on table 2 show that statistically, there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students attending public and private schools. Therefore, the null-hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted. On whether there is a significant interaction effect of method and school proprietorship, the results on table 2 reveal that there is significant interaction effect of method and proprietorship. This finding agrees with Yilwa and Olarinoye (2004) who studied the influence of proprietorship, among other variables, on junior secondary school students' performance in the skill of observing and found that there was significant interaction effect of method and proprietorship. Based on the fact that most private schools are better equipped with learning materials and teachers than public schools, it could be concluded that school environment affects students' learning. It is therefore necessary that proprietors and administrators of schools should be aware that these factors affect learning and should make adequate effort to neutralize their effects.

Coupled with the above is teachers' lack of commitment to duty in the public schools unlike the private schools which teachers are properly monitored and supervised to ensure commitment to duty. According to Olumese (2005), teachers in public schools in Nigeria are not committed to duty because of frustrating conditions of service. Most of the

teachers have become traders in the classroom (Alaba 2007). This should not come as a surprise because persons realizing low reward from their occupation divert their energies and interests away from the fulfillment of their occupational functions toward activities designed to enhance their economic subsistence. This apathy towards the performance of their duties on the part of teachers in public schools could have been responsible for the poor achievement of students in public schools.

This finding, however, disagrees with Kamwendo (2010) who did a comparison of students' achievement in private and conventional public secondary schools from a gender perspective in Malawi and reported that the pass rate for both males and females was higher in public than private schools. Kamwendo further reported that females' achievement was highest in public single sex schools than public mixed schools.

The no significant difference in the achievement of private and public school students taught Oral English with game techniques could be attributed to the commitment of the teachers trained for the Oral English instruction using the lesson plans on games technique prepared by the researcher. The strict adherence to the Oral English instruction by the participating teachers in this study ensured homogeneity of instruction across the sampled schools in both private and public schools, thereby leading to almost equal achievement. The implication of this finding is that, if students are exposed to equal treatment with regard to classroom instruction, there might not be much difference in the achievement of students attending schools in private and public schools.

### Recommendations

Given the poor state of most public schools in Nigeria where learning environments are awkward and incompatible with the requirement for treatment of specified content, teaching and learning seem ineffective. This creates the impression that Oral English is difficult to teach or learn. Government should make concerted effort to bring up public schools to standard with regards to facilities and amenities for effective teaching and learning of Oral English. This would help bridge the gap between students in private schools and their counterparts in public schools.

The fact that private school students achieved higher than their counterparts in the public schools could also be attributed to lack of monitoring and supervision of public schools unlike the private school teachers that are properly monitored. Government should, therefore, pay attention to this factor, i.e. proper monitoring and supervision of teachers in public schools in the performance of their duties.

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