

DIGITALIZATION, FILM PRODUCTION AND GLOBAL EDUCATION DYNAMISM: A STUDY OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SPEECH PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT: *This study determined the effect of digital film production on pre-service English teachers' speech proficiency in English. The study adopted the pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental design. A total of 140 part three students studying English at Colleges of Education in Ondo and Ekiti states participated in the study. The instrument utilized were Speech proficiency Achievement Test ($r=0.73$). Treatment lasted for six weeks. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data retrieved were analysed with t-test. The results showed that there was no significant difference ($t_{(1,284)} = -0.09$) in the pretest mean scores of the experimental and control groups ($p = 0.93 > 0.05$). Also, results showed that digital film production strategies revealed significant difference ($t_{(1,138)} = 156.62$) in the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$). Based on the findings, implications for further studies and practices were highlighted comprising language teacher education, English language learning and digital media inclusion in speech proficiency.*

KEYWORDS: digitalization, film production, global education, pre-service teachers, speech proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher training programmes in virtually all parts of the globe are significantly designed to equip pre-service teachers with relevant communicative skills for formal instruction purposes. In the Nigerian space, teacher trainers in Colleges of Education comprise lecturers saddled with the duty of developing these pre-service teachers in utilizing relevant communicative skills

such as the essential proficiency of spoken English. Consequently, the development of relevant oral skills in the teaching and learning process are expected to assist the pre-service teachers in their eventual academic tasks and assignments within primary or secondary school levels of education in Nigeria. Consequently, Westbrook, et al (2013) identified that pedagogical cum communicative competence in segmental and suprasegmental features becomes essential through interaction between teachers' ability to communicate in the classroom and what they see as the outcome of their practice. To this end, Shahzada (2012) and Gilakjani (2012) reiterate the need for teachers' to appreciable levels of proficiency in the prosodic features of the sound system which actually reflects the fluency in English language.

Consequently, the teaching strategies employed by lecturers in these colleges, perhaps, have contributed to the inability of some teachers to make significant impact on the communicative competence of learners. Moreover, the introduction of courses such as theatre and drama in education in spoken English content appears inadequate in enhancing the oral communication competence of these teachers. In addition, there is the need to attempt and maintain a pedagogical shift from analog strategies to digitally interactive strategies of teaching courses with strong practical orientation. It is against this backdrop that digital film production strategies are considered as a possible instructional medium for enhancing pre-service English language teachers' speech proficiency in English.

LITERATURE

Colleges of Education in Nigeria are designed to train teachers in the art of applying both pedagogical and communicative knowledge to their eventual sojourn in the primary school or junior secondary school (JSS) classroom. In the realm of communication skill acquisition, various courses offered in Colleges of Education underpin the necessity of exposing pre-service teachers to both theoretical and practical instruction in use of appropriate and effective spoken English befitting a professional teacher. However, the communicative competence, with emphasis on speech proficiency, of teachers in Nigerian public primary and secondary schools has continued to be a source of concern for all stakeholders in states across Nigeria. In 2012, the Ekiti State Government attempted to conduct a Teachers' Development Needs Assessment (TDNA) for public primary and secondary school teachers in Ekiti State numbering about 16,000 (Ekiti State Government, 2012). The reason for embarking on the test is suggestive of the fact that quality teachers may be on the decrease regardless of the quantum of pre-service teachers being produced by Colleges of Education. In a bid to salvage the abysmal communicative competence of teachers, the regulating national body for professional teachers in Nigeria stipulates that teachers must effectively utilize productive instructional strategies to teach spoken language through interesting and learner-friendly approaches and other techniques to share information with and enrich understanding of the learners (Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, 2012).

Going forward, the regulating body of Colleges of Education in Nigeria, National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) in the last decade has been engrossed in concerted efforts such as workshops and conferences to mention a few, in order to reduce the avarice between teacher certified qualification and quality of their on-job performance ((National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2012). Also, different courses have been designed to assist pre-

service teachers in improving their speech proficiency in English including introduction of interactive pedagogical strategies involving the utilization of language laboratories. Unfortunately, the learning outcomes of the pre-service teachers in speech proficiency enhancement has continued to dwindle in spite of the integration of various teaching and learning strategies and techniques (Faloye, 2020). Furthermore, teachers are expected to key in to the global digitalization paradigm of teaching and learning pedagogies believed to be of immense instructive benefit to the learners. Egbe (2020) concurs to the fact that digitalized instruction seems to be non-negotiable from a global perspective.

The synthesis of digitalization and communicative competencies of pre-service teachers can be viewed from a social cum interactional constructivist theoretical point of view. During film production activities, the learners could be afforded the opportunity to construct, dis-construct and re-construct various speech acts. An assumption of the theory posits that learners of English as a second language are likely become proficient constructors of English in its spoken form due to the emphasis of learner-centeredness through communicative language teaching strategies. This assumption is hinged on Vygotsky's theoretical framework of Social Constructivism.

Digital film production involves the utilization of dramatic features including script reading, role playing, real-time editing of lines among others in interactive contexts. Moreover, digital film production, according to Simone (2020) involves the study of contemporary forms of film making which has diverse pedagogical avenues for students to explore. Howard (2015) considers digital film production strategies as an opportunity of synthesizing drama-features with speech proficiency strategies in English language learning contexts. Furthermore, Okoli (2017) expects communicative language teaching to form the bedrock of pedagogical strategies in enhancing students' speech proficiency in both simulated and real-time contexts of language learning. Similarly, Adeosun (2014) opines that pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education are expected to be equipped with the relevant oral skills considered as vital in using English as a medium of instruction in public primary and junior secondary schools.

In Colleges of Education, English language learning, to some extent, depends on pedagogies based on lecture methods and related strategies. In this regard, global trends have attempted to encourage lecturers to adopt a paradigmatic pedagogical shift from teacher-centred to a learner and interactive pedagogy. In the same vein, the teaching and learning of communicative skills, with specific focus on the use of spoken English, has been carefully presented in the NCCE minimum standards documents as an interactive-based model. The possibility of under-performance of pre-service teachers in communicative skills such as speech proficiency defects cannot be ruled out. Prior to COVID-19, there was a dearth of poor quality language teachers in the Nigerian educational systems which has often been a source of concern to relevant stakeholders in Nigeria. In the view of Joshua (2020) and Egbe (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic appears to have re-aligned teacher education with the digital world of events. Colleges of Education will require integrated interactive pedagogies that would hybridize digitalization with a project-based strategy to enhance improved teacher performance in communicative skills in English (Jayesala, 2014).

Currently, most countries are considering the use of digital media as a means of upgrading the quality of teachers. In Nigeria, various governmental agencies are embarking on digital programmes for teachers in public schools in their respective states. However, Okoli (2017) observes the consistent abysmal speech proficiency of pre-service teachers which could have adverse effects on the young learners in these schools. As long as English maintains instructional status as language of instruction in Nigeria, teachers need to be equipped with adequate communicative skills for presenting lessons in class. This communicative deficiency in teachers' speech proficiency can be considered as a major factor that contributes to the dip in educational standards in Nigeria. Hence, there is the need to focus on the use of digital film production as an interactive pedagogy towards improving and sustaining pre-service language teachers' communicative skills, through professional field work and instructional dramatic tools intended to assist the young learners in Nigerian public schools

Statement of the Problem

The problem of unimpressive performance of pre-service English language teachers in spoken English has been a cog in the wheel of quality instruction. Moreover, the National Policy on Education (2013) considers English language as the medium of instruction in primary schools with the expectation that the teachers would be adequately trained in using appropriate features of spoken English. However Okoli (2017) observed that a significant number of pre-service teachers in Colleges of Education demonstrate inadequate proficiency in the use of spoken English at various fora. One of such fora occurs during the annual teaching practice assessment exercise which occurs during the 2nd semester for final year student-teachers. Consequently, learners in primary schools are likely to become deficient in the use of prosodic and isolated speech patterns in various spheres of human endeavour. Hence, this study intends to present a more dynamic and learner-centred platform for English language learning with the interactive aid of digital presentation of films for enhancing teachers' spoken English at segmental and suprasegmental phonological levels.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of digital film production strategies on pre-service English language teachers' speech proficiency in English.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the performance pretest mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups before treatment in speech proficiency in English.
2. There is no significant difference in the performance posttest mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups after treatment in speech proficiency in English.

METHOD

The study employed a pretest-posttest, control group, quasi- experimental design. Multistage sampling procedures was used in randomly selecting 70 students each from two government-funded Colleges of Education in Ondo and Ekiti states. Similarly, using simple random sampling techniques, 70 students each were distributed to the experimental and conventional

groups at the selected Colleges. The participants were part three students studying English in the state Colleges of Education in Ekiti and Ondo states. The Colleges were selected based on the availability of professional instructors in theatre and drama. The instrument used for the study was Speech Proficiency Achievement Test ($r \approx 0.73$) and an instructional guide. The topics utilized for this study were adapted from the Spoken English course content for NCE programmes. The duration of the treatment was six weeks. The data retrieved after the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics of t-test to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Experimental Procedure

The experimental procedure involved the training research assistants by professional film producers. After the preparatory stages, the experimental groups were exposed to digital film production strategies while the control group were taught features of spoken English conventionally in the designated College. The instructional strategy involved the exposure of students to film production procedures such as digital scripting procedures, digital editing of students' oral presentations and participation in communicative interactive sessions on set. The treatment was done for six weeks while the administration of a pre-test and posttest occurred on the first and eight week respectively.

FINDINGS

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the performance mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups before the treatments in speech proficiency.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of performance pretest mean scores of pre-service English language teachers in speech proficiency

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Err. Mean	t	Df	Sig.	Decision
Experimental Group	70	24.73	0.98	0.12				
Control Group	70	24.74	0.97	0.12	-0.09	138	0.93	Accept

$p > 0.05$ (not significant)

The results in Table 1 show that there was no significant difference ($t_{(1,284)} = -0.09$) in the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups ($p = 0.93 > 0.05$). The mean (24.73 and 24.74) and standard deviation (0.98 and 0.97) values also show no significant differences in the pretest scores of the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the performance mean scores of students in the experimental and control groups after the treatment in speech proficiency.

Table 2: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of posttest mean scores of the experimental and control groups

	N	Mean	SD	Std. Err. Mean	T	Df	Sig.	Decision
Experimental Group	70	81.03	13.13	1.57				Do not
Control Group	70	25.59	2.43	0.29	156.62	138	0.00	Accept

$p < 0.05$ (Significant)

The results in Table 2 show that there was significant difference ($t_{(1,138)} = 156.62$) in the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$). The mean (81.03 and 25.59) and standard deviation (13.13 and 2.43) values also show significant differences in the posttest scores of the experimental and control groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of data using t-test revealed that there was significance difference between the two groups of pre-service English language teachers. Table 1 shows no significant difference between the scores obtained before the groups where exposed to digital film production strategies in enhancing speech proficiency in English. However, the posttest mean scores obtained after exposing the student-teachers to digital film production strategies such as scripting procedures, captioning of films in English and group editing of scripts showed that is significant effect of treatment on their speech proficiency skills in English. In line with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, the finding buttresses the importance of allowing students to interact, create and consolidate communication skills without being overwhelmed by the presence of overbearing instructors. Previous studies have established this digital interactive pedagogical necessity in the realm of speech proficiency enhancement at segmental and suprasegmental levels (Jayesala, 2014 and Simone, 2020).

Similarly, findings from the study corroborates the stance of Egbe (2020) on digital literacy benefits for 21st century teachers, with regards to English language teaching strategies. Moreover, the findings support the pedagogical shift from conventional (analog) instruction in speech proficiency to a hybridized form of digital and media instruction in a College of Education context. From the table 2 presented for the study, the mean scores for the experimental and control groups (81.03,25.59) respectively implies strong effect of the use of digital film production strategies on students exposed to treatment. In addition, the phonological importance of prosodic features of speech which foregrounds proficiency levels in speech efficiency appears to be enhanced in the performance of pre-service English teachers. This finding provides significant and additional information on specific arears of phonological enhancement concerning English language teachers. As such, this finding, to an extent, may be viewed as an improvement over some related studies in English language teachers' proficiency in spoken English. Moreover, this study focused specifically on pre-service English language teachers use of connected and isolated speech as a medium of instruction. Hence, the study attempted to fill the gap noticed in some related studies through a distinctive study of spoken

English involving segmental and suprasegmental features of speech as well as the inclusion of digital film production strategies for pedagogical relevance in the 21st century.

Implications of Research and Practice.

The findings of this study underscore various implications for the pre-service English language teacher in Colleges of Education and faculties of Education in universities, regulators of Colleges of Education (NCCE), lecturer's resident in departments of English in government-owned and private Colleges, digital literacy advocates and professionals in the media and arts department.

In tandem with the findings of this study, the research aligns with the global call for a paradigmatic shift from passive strategies of teaching to an active pedagogy. Consequently, this study serves as an outlet for embracing the training and retraining of teachers in the area of utilising learner-friendly strategies such as digital film production strategies which are expected to attract the attention of learners.

Secondly, vital implication of this study culminates in the enhanced speech proficiency of English language teachers in the use of segmental and suprasegmental features of spoken English. The findings suggested a relative weakness in the use of connected and isolated speech before the application of treatment. The phonological challenges in teachers' speech proficiency in these articulatory aspects of spoken English may need to be addressed further. Conclusively, the NCCE would be sensitized on the urgent need to update the minimum standard documents for languages from 2012 to the present time to include a major use of digital film production processes as a means of impacting on the speech proficiency levels of English language teachers.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showcase the pedagogical relevance of applying pedagogical components of digital film production strategies towards the development of efficient language teachers in Colleges of Education. The idea of training English language teachers without proper interactive and digital skills expected in the speech work lesson may be counterproductive in various educational perspectives. Regulators of teacher training programmes such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) have put in so much effort in sidetracking counterproductive learning outputs concerning primary school pupils' communicative competence. In this regard, NCCE and relevant stakeholders in teacher education are expected to achieve immense improvement in teachers' speech proficiency in English through the systematic insertion of digital film production content in the language education curriculum in Colleges. Consequently, the utilization of digital film production, to a large extent, exhibits potency of enhancing English language teachers' speech proficiency in preparation for the instructional tasks ahead. Hence, the inclusion of digital film production strategies in the language education curriculum is likely to bridge the avarice between teaching strategies and pre-service English language teachers' interactive speech proficiency skills vital for formal instruction in primary schools while providing bearing to further research in language teacher education.

Further Research

This study provides a quantum of opportunities for future research with regards to English Language Learning (ELL), media inclusion in Language instruction, Teacher Education (LTE) and hybridization of digital cum entertainment strategies for speech proficiency at basic and post basic education levels. The benefits of unearthing more challenges while proffering realistic solutions leading to this study may be considered as novel in the area of digital interactive pedagogies and language teacher education. Furthermore, this study stimulates the necessity of aligning digital film production strategies with virtual mode of instruction with the prevalent circumstances precipitated by the Delta Covid pandemic. Lastly, this study is expected to beset more states in Nigeria.

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