

USE OF SUGGESTOPEDIA TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

By

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Date Received: 17/09/2018

Date Revised: 13/12/2018

Date Accepted: 28/12/2018

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the use of suggestopedia to improve students' listening skill in English language. The study design used for this study was quasi-experiment. Pretest and posttest were applied to the groups selected. The population for the study comprised of 268 senior secondary school students in level two (SS II) of 2016/2017 academic session. The study was limited to two schools because of timeframe and the nature of the research. The participants were grouped into experimental and control group. The sample size of 80 students was drawn from the two schools using purposive sampling technique. The data collected were analyzed using Statistic Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Independent t-test was used to compare the differences between the groups. The results obtained from the study revealed that the use of suggestopedia method improved students' listening skill in English language. The findings indicated that students taught using suggestopedia method performed better than the ones taught using conventional methods. Therefore, it is recommended that language pedagogy should be incorporated into the curriculum of teacher training colleges and universities to allow student-teachers benefit from latest methods used in teaching English language.

Keywords: Suggestopedia, Listening Skill, English Language.

INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that teaching and learning of English language has received a wide recognition and acceptance worldwide. This is because English is an international language spoken in many countries as a native, as a second, or as a foreign language. It is taught in schools in almost every country. Today, English has become the universal language of knowledge, learning, working, business, research, and communication (Mohammed, 1995).

Historically, the teaching of foreign languages started from the practice developed during early centuries in teaching Latin and Greek in England and Europe (Tamura, 2006). Subsequently, language teaching began to emerge as a discipline and profession and it came into its own as a profession in the 20th century. Central to this phenomenon was the emergence of the concept of "methods" and "approach" of language teaching, which

is a powerful and the quest for better methods was a pre-occupation of teachers and applied linguists throughout the 20th century (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). Methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Moreover, it should be recognized that from the 1950s to now, many different methods and approaches have been developed such as Natural method and communicative approach. This in turn provided the necessary shift from general purpose learning to specific needs learning. Therefore, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) began to sprout. The demand for ESP soon grew and then branched out into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Occupational Purposes (EOP), Science and Technology (EST), etc. (Howatt & Widdowson, 2004).

Between 1976 and 1990 Earl W. Stevick published articles and books which seemingly reintroduced approaches that brought back “humanistic methods” into language teaching (Paling, 2013) that seemingly led to emergence of methods such as suggestopedia.

Suggestopedia is a teaching method that was introduced by Georgi Lozanov in 1970s. Lozanov (2005) states that suggestopedia is a teaching method that applies use of power of “suggestion” to pedagogy to help learners to eliminate negative feelings. The suggestion here is about something that can make students feel relaxed in teaching and learning process. Suggestopedia was originally applied mainly in foreign language teaching, and it is often claimed that it can teach languages approximately three times as quickly as conventional methods (Kharismawati & Susanto, 2014). Suggestopedia is useful in the teaching second language to young learners (Priyatmojo, 2009) a good method in the teaching of reading (Faidatum, 2012) and it is also useful in the teaching of speaking to young learners (Nopiyanti, 2012).

To this point, the current state of students' performance in English language in Nigeria is quite a worrisome as evidently reflected in the reports by the concerned examination bodies, such as WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB. There has been significantly mass failure in the results released insofar. Although there were variant rising and falling of marginal gaps from year to year, yet, the percentage of candidates obtained credits in English language has been quite a few. The mass failure in English language automatically invalidates grades obtained in other subjects no matter how high the grades may be (Adekola, Shoaga, & Lawal, 2015). This is because pass mark in English is a criterion for entry into the Universities and other tertiary institutions. This trend has triggered a great deal of concern of many persons ranging from parents, to teachers, to educators, and to researchers. Therefore, the researcher wanted to examine whether the use of suggestopedia method would improve students' listening and speaking ability in English language.

1. Statement of the Problem

What is the cause of students' mass failure and lack of

proficiency in English language? This is the common question triggered by the current trend of English language in Nigeria. Many researchers like Andrade (2006) have been able to come out with a number of factors, which could be held responsible for the downward trend in proficiency in English language by students in Nigerian schools.

These include:

- Lack of qualified and dedicated teachers
- Poor method of teaching
- Lack of interest and zeal on the part of the students
- Anxiety and hostility towards English language learning among students

Add to this, great numbers of teaching methods are used in English language teaching and learning and there seem to be apparent challenges associated with the methods that language teachers used so often in both public and private schools. The methods employed in most of the schools are not well suitable because they are conventional or traditional methods that are in use for centuries. Most of such methods are not student-centered or humanistic in nature. Constant employment of such methods and subsequently attitudinal resistance to it demonstrated by teachers seemed to have given birth to the current trend of teaching and learning of English language in schools. As a result, a vacuum has then been left by this trend, which itself is perceived to be a great problem that calls for the adoption of new method with a view to improving not only fluency and competency level among students, but also improving their language skills including listening and speaking abilities. It is for this main reason that this study tends to answer these questions:

- What is the effect of suggestopedia on students' listening skill?
- Is there any difference in the performance of students by gender when taught using suggestopedia?

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to examine:

- Effect of suggestopedia method on students'

listening skill.

- Effect of suggestopedia method on students' listening skill in English language by gender.

3. Hypotheses of the Study

The below null hypotheses were tested

H_{01} : The use of suggestopedia method does not influence students' listening skill in English language.

H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in listening skill when suggestopedia is applied.

4. Methodology and Tools for the Study

The study employed Quasi-experimental design to examine the effect of suggestopedia method on students' listening skill in English language. The population for this study comprised 268 SS II students (aged 16-17 years) in the two selected schools. The participants were grouped into experimental and control group. Each group was made up of male and female genders. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 80 students that were grouped into 20 experimental and 20 control groups in each school selected to participate in this study. The tools for this study were pretest and post-test that were administered to the experimental and control group to measure the effect of the suggestopedia method and its distinction from the other conventional or ordinary methods, such as Grammar Translation, Audiolingual, etc. Pretest was applied to both experimental and control group to measure the participants' listening skill. A test which was a topic of English language (The Journey through Pathholed Road) using suggestopedia method was applied to the experimental group while same topic was given to control group using conventional method. Eventually, posttest was also administered to both groups to measure the effect of suggestopedia on the students' proficiency. The field activities (pretest, treatment, and posttest) lasted for consecutive eight (8) weeks. The data collected were analysed using independent t-test.

5. Results and Discussion

The data were collected through pretest-posttest for

equivalent groups of 40 experimental and 40 control groups in both two selected schools and the data were analyzed via the statistical package for Social Sciences SPSS. Mean and standard deviation was used to compare the difference in the two groups to determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between the achievements of the two groups in the pretest and posttest.

Table 1 showed the mean score of both experimental and control group in pretest and posttest. The mean score of experimental group in pretest was (M=24.30, SD=9.381) while that of the control group was (M=23.00, SD=9.375). The results suggested that there was no significant difference between the performances of the students in listening ability before the treatment was applied at level of ($P = > 0.5$). This difference is considered to be not statistically significant. Hence, the two groups' performance was approximately equal; no group could be said to have performed better than the other in terms of listening ability. On the other hand, the performance of the students in listening ability was significantly different after the treatment. Thus, the mean score of the experimental group was (M=66.65, SD=6.221) in posttest. While mean score of the control group was (M=30.90, SD=7.146). The finding of this study suggests that there was significant difference between the performances of the students in listening ability after the application of the treatment. The two-tailed P-value was less than ($P < 0.0001$). By conventional criteria, this difference is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Therefore, the use of suggestopedia method in English classrooms improves students listening skills. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected at the statistically significant level of ($P = > 0.001$).

	Experimental and Control Group	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Pretest	Experimental Group	40	78	24.30	9.381	0.6199
	Control Group	40		23.00	9.375	
Posttest	Experimental Group	40	78	66.65	6.221	0.001
	Control Group	40		30.90	7.146	

Table 1. Pretest and Posttest Results of Experimental and Control Group on Listening Ability

	Performance by Gender	N	Df	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Pretest: listening skill	Male	40	78	23.30	9.762	0.3332
	Female	40		24.00	9.013	
Posttest: listening skill	Male	40	78	46.90	17.701	0.8731
	Female	40		50.65	20.607	

Table 2. Pretest and Posttest Results of Students in Listening Skill by Gender

Table 2 compares the performance of the participants by gender. The result showed that there was no significant difference in the performance of the students in listening ability by gender before the application of the treatment. The mean score of male in the pretest was (M=23.30, SD=9.762) while the mean score of female gender was (M=24.00, SD=9.013). The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the performance of male and female in listening ability in pretest result at the two-tailed P-value ($P > 0.7$).

Relatively, the mean score of male group regarding listening ability in posttest was (M=46.90, SD=17.701) while that of their female counterparts was (M=50.65, SD=20.607). The two-tailed P-value equals ($P > 0.38$), where this difference is not scientifically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was retained at the significant P-value (0.05).

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that use of suggestopedia in teaching English language is not only beneficial to both the learners and teachers of language, but also improves students' ability in listening. This was proven scientifically as the result of this study indicated. The results revealed that the use of suggestopedia method enhances students' listening skills in English language. This is because suggestopedia method involves use of aesthetic galleries, musical sounds, and suggestions that help learner remove anxiety, emotion, and fear that might preoccupy them.

Implications of this Study's Finding

The use of suggestopedia as indicated by the findings of this study enhances students' proficiency problems, especially in listening ability. It is imperative for school

administrators, education policymakers, and teachers as well to understand that the employment of the aesthetic gadgets, which is the salient feature of suggestopedia, in classroom has a significant influence on optimum environment for second language learners. As the core belief of suggestopedia, when students' anxiety and bad impressions are removed, they tend to learn easier and faster.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that language pedagogy should be incorporated into the curriculum of teacher training colleges and universities to allow student-teachers benefit from latest methods used in teaching English language.

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