



Creative Dramatics and Listening Development: A Study of Pantomime and Poem Dramatization Effects on Pupils' Comprehensive And Discriminative Listening Skills.

¹Osemwegie, Mojisola Omowumi; ²Osemwegie, Osayomwanbor

¹Department of Theatre & Creative Arts,

²Department of Educational Management,

Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo.

mojisteve@gmail.com; osemwegieo@afued.edu.ng

08062953900, 08066189792

Abstract

Poor acquisition of listening skills has been lamented by stakeholders in the education system in recent years, especially at the primary school level. Evidence indicates that the origin of this problem can be traced to the early years of these children, especially during their nursery education. Though researchers observed that improving this scenario requires a learning and teaching process that can be achieved through creative dramatics technique, there is a dearth of studies on creative dramatic techniques and their relationship to listening skills, especially, in private nursery schools in Ondo State. It is against this background that the study investigates the impact of creative dramatic techniques (Pantomime and Dramatization of Poem) on listening (comprehensive listening and discriminative listening) skills among private nursery school's pupils in Ondo West Local Government, Ondo State. The study was conducted through the administration of questionnaires whose respondents are 105 purposively selected teachers across 53 private nursery schools in Ondo. The results showed that creative dramatic techniques and listening skills have a strong correlation ($R = 0.556$, $P < 0.05$), and that the dramatization of a poem ($\beta = 0.51$, $t = 9.998$; $P < 0.05$) contributes significantly to listening skills than pantomime ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 4.238$; $P < 0.05$). It is therefore recommended that government and stakeholders implement training to improve teachers' knowledge of creative dramatics, particularly for nursery school teachers. In conclusion, adopting pantomime and dramatization of a poem in the teaching of nursery school pupils will stimulate their learning capacity and help them readily acquire the skills required to cultivate comprehensive and discriminative exercises.

Keywords: Creative Dramatics, Dramatization of Poem, Listening Skills, Pantomime.

Introduction

Fundamentally, quality nursery education serves as the bedrock upon which the successful acquisition of subsequent levels of education is sustained and promoted. The need for high-quality nursery education in Nigeria has never been greater than in this dispensation, in which both registered and unregistered nursery schools proliferate across cities. It is important to know that if the foundation is faulty, it will systematically and structurally affect the whole educational system. Regrettably, most nursery education in Nigeria is left to private individuals and groups whose primary objective is financial gain (Unuigbokhai & Jimah, 2011). In this scenario, where the administration of nursery education is left to private individuals with little or no government oversight, effective policy implementation is bound to fail.

Nursery education is the care, protection, stimulation, and learning provided to children aged 0-4 years in a crèche or nursery (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). Those early years are the best opportunity for a child's brain to develop the connections it needs to become a healthy, capable, and successful adult. The connections needed for many important abilities, such as motivation, self-regulation, problem-solving, and communication, are formed in the early years. If not formed early in life, these essential brain connections are harder to establish later in life. Given these peculiarities and the importance of nursery education in Nigeria, Obiweluzor (2015) laments that there is no standard curriculum to guide teachers' activities; when the curriculum is improvised, teachers are neither trained nor qualified as early childhood care specialists.

Moreover, many private nursery schools in Nigeria are ill-equipped and substandard. It was also noted that many schools, in an effort to impress parents, exposed children to academic activities intended for older children (Salami, 2016). Despite the state of nursery education in Nigeria, the nation's socio-economic problems compelled parents to work regardless of their children's ages. Parents are aware that the physical, mental, and emotional development of their children is important at these stages; hence, compulsory enrolment of their children in nursery school. Although parents believe that quality child development can be achieved only in well-organized nursery schools with adequate facilities and a clean, hygienic environment, most nursery schools lack these qualities.

Regarding the quality of nursery education and the provision of essential facilities, Oyeyemi (2014) posits that there are exceptions from the general perceptions that most private schools are established, basically for the purpose of enriching the pockets of their owners. In Oyeyemi's (2014) opinion, there are few nursery schools established by some universities, colleges of education, companies, and a few rich individuals are who already financially stable and are only interested in giving back to their society through the establishment of standard private schools in order to encourage quality education. Domike and Odey (2012) observe that the curriculum of a typical nursery school owned by most private individuals includes alphabet, numbers, nursery rhymes, colouring, and story time, and, in some cases, rudiments of reading and arithmetic. Consequently, the emphasis of most nursery schools is on pupils' intellectual development rather than ensuring the development of the other domains. This position corroborates Domike and Odey (2012) assertion that once pupils can recite and memorize poems, verses, and passages, the school is adjudged a quality school.

From the above observations, it is evident that, for children to memorize and recite poems, rhymes, and passages, their listening skills must be developed. This position aligns with Pearson (2010) opinion that literacy for young children begins with speaking and listening to words and sentences. In another stance, Roskos, Tabors, and Lanhart (2009) affirm that oral language is the foundation of learning to read and write. This position highlights the important role played by spoken language in the development of literary skills, especially as it involves the art of speaking and writing. By extension, oral language forms the basis for the conversion of letters into sounds that generate words or sentences. Wilson (1997), therefore, concludes that children who do not develop strong listening and speaking skills will face lifelong consequences as a result of this deficit. This position, therefore highlights the critical role of listening and speaking skills in a child's overall development. One can therefore, argue that, this foundational language skill is an important instrument, not only for the children's academic success, but for the development of other domains like their social and emotional growth. Therefore, there is a pressing need for training in listening skills for young children today because a deficiency in these areas can lead to significant challenges in many aspects of their life.

Several studies have shown that listening involves more than the physical process of perceiving and modifying sound waves in the human ear. For instance, Gaines (2007) highlights the polygonal role that listening skills play in the children's cognitive and social development. Regardless of the gender of the children, listening exceeds passive activity, it is an active process that impacts how information is absorbed engaged and makes sense out of the world around us. Gaines (2007:74) avers that "listening not only facilitates communication but also develops learning, understanding, and cognitive skills". In the same vein, Selma and Nazli (2015) maintain that listening entails making choices from what is heard, organizing them, integrating what the speaker conveys with background knowledge, and structuring them mentally. However, in Feagin (1986) opinion, there appears to have been a deficiency in the development of listening skills from history. This concern was expressed as far back as Shakespeare's time when he remarked, "It is the disease of not listening That I am troubled withal" (King Henry IV, 1603; Feagin, 1986:1).

It is disheartening that the issue of poor acquisition of listening skills in nursery schools remains unresolved in Nigeria. To this end, researchers are seeking more creative approaches and implementing activities to improve students' listening at all levels of education.

Several studies have focused on the applicability of creative dramatics to improving students' listening skills. Unfortunately, various creative dramatic techniques have been empirically studied, but little or no research has examined the impact of pantomime and dramatization of poems on listening skills among nursery school pupils. Studies have found that pantomime can enhance listening among primary and secondary schools (Hartaty, 2018; Zdatev, Zywiczyriski & Wacewicz, 2020), whereas little or no empirical studies exist on the impact of pantomime and dramatization of poems on listening skills in nursery schools.

With this in mind, the present study investigates the impact of creative dramatics (Pantomime and the dramatization of poems) on listening (comprehension and discriminative listening) skills in nursery education in selected schools in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State.

Statement of the problem

Researchers have observed that improving poor listening skills among pupils requires activities and a learning and teaching process that creative dramatics can achieve. It is disheartening to

know that the creative dramatics as a teaching method is sparingly used in nursery education in Nigeria. In fact, nursery schools that use creative dramatics focus solely on improvisation and role-play techniques. Moreover, there is a dearth of studies on the pantomime and dramatization of poems as a creative dramatic technique in relation to listening skills in nursery schools in Ondo State. Against this background, the study aims to investigate the impact of creative dramatic techniques (pantomime and dramatization of a poem) on listening skills (comprehensive and discriminative) in nursery schools in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of creative dramatic techniques on listening skills in nursery schools in Ondo State. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following purposes:

- a. To investigate the relationship between creative dramatics and listening skills among nursery school pupils in Ondo West Local Government, Ondo State.
- b. To examine the relative contribution of the dramatization of the poem and pantomime on listening skills among nursery school pupils in Ondo West Local Government State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between creative dramatics and listening skills among nursery school pupils.

Ho₂: There is no relative contribution of dramatization of the poem and pantomime to listening skills among pupils of the nursery school.

Significance of the Study

It is obvious that, in any system, including education, the dysfunction of a part will operationally affect the whole. Issues of students' deficiencies in listening and speaking skills at different levels of the education system have become a concern to all stakeholders. Thus, an investigation into the impact of creative dramatics on listening among nursery schools in Ondo State would be significant in the following ways:

First, this study will familiarize nursery school teachers with potential teaching methods to improve their pupils' listening.

Secondly, the proprietors and head teachers of nursery schools will find the study highly beneficial, as implementing the recommendations can create a new strategy and technique for improving the quality of teaching and learning in nursery classes.

Finally, the policy makers will also find the results of the study useful in the planning of Early Child Care and Development Education and the Basic Education's curriculum and syllabus in the state and nation at large.

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design. This design was also suitable for this study because the sampled pupils had undergone the same learning experience in Nursery One. The population of the study consisted of all teachers of private nursery schools in Ondo West Local Government Area. To obtain a manageable sample that adequately represented the study, purposive sampling was used to select 105 teachers from 53 private nursery schools, based on accessibility, proximity, qualification, experience, and official registration. Data for the study were collected from a primary source. The instrument used to collect data is the Teacher Creative Dramatics Questionnaire (TCDQ), of which only 97 were completed and returned by teachers. Thus representing 92.38% rate of returns. The data collected was analysed using inferential statistics. Hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC), while hypothesis 2 was tested with Regression at a 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Testing of the Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between creative dramatics and listening skills among nursery school pupils.

Table 1: Summary table of correlation analysis between creative dramatics and listening skills

	N	<u>X</u>	SD	Correlation (R)	Sig
Creative Dramatics Techniques	97	28.443	2.91531	.556**	.000
Listening Skills	97	31.6804	4.07622		

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

The analysis of the relationship between creative dramatics and listening skills shows a strong correlation ($R = 0.556$). The P -value = 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level, indicates a significant association between creative dramatics and listening skills. Also, from the mean difference, it can be inferred that the mean value for creative dramatic techniques (28.443) is lower than that for listening skills (31.6804). This implies that creative dramatic techniques have a significant impact on the listening skills of nursery school pupils. In view of this, H_{01} was rejected.

H_{02} : Dramatisation of poems and pantomimes has no relative contribution to listening skills among pupils of nursery school.

Table 2: Relative Contribution of Dramatisation of Poem and Pantomime on Listening Skill

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.852	2.007		3.415	.001
¹ Dramatisation of a Poem	.510	.051	.660	9.998	.000
Pantomime	.135	.032	.280	4.238	.000

Coefficients^a

Table 2 shows the relative contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable (listening skill). Dramatisation of poem ($\beta = 0.51$, $t = 9.998$; $P < 0.05$) and Pantomime ($\beta = 0.14$, $t = 4.238$; $P < 0.05$) contributed significantly to listening skill. This implies that the two independent variables contributed significantly to the dependent variable. Nevertheless, the results indicate that the poem's dramatization significantly improved nursery school pupils' listening skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although teaching nursery pupils was not an easy task for any teacher, especially when considering the learning environment in the nursery schools, nevertheless, the results of this study have shown that adopting creative dramatics techniques in the classroom will have a remarkable impact on the development of comprehensive and discriminative skills of the pupils. When adopting creative dramatic techniques with pupils in nursery classes, several factors must be considered and challenges addressed. Although the study was considered objectively achieved, not all expectations associated with the rigidity of the activities were met. In addition, mastery of pantomime activities would, in turn, increase pupils' enthusiasm for solving complex tasks as they progress in their studies. Premised on the findings that dramatization of a poem would help improve the pupils' listening skills, as it contributed significantly. Therefore, it is recommended that the government and stakeholders implement training to enhance teachers' knowledge of creative dramatics, particularly for nursery school teachers.

References

- Domike, G.C., and Odey, E.O. (2012). The critique of the implementation of early childhood education in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Education Research*, 14(2); 79-86
- Feagin, E. (1986). A curriculum for developing listening skills in kindergarten. UNF Graduate Thesis and Dissertation. 18. Retrieved on Oct. 10, 2021. From <https://digitalcommonsunf.edu/etd/18>.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2012). National Policy on Education (4th Ed.). Lagos: NERCDC.
- Gaines, E. (1991). *Freedom light*. Cleveland: New Day.
- Hartati, L. (2018). The influence of pantomime on students' vocabulary in the first semester of the fifth grade in SDN 5 JatiMulyo in the academic year 2017/ 2018.
- Oyeyemi, K. (2014). Policy implementation in pre-primary education in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Sciences. G. Linguistics & Education*. 14(3).
- Pearson (2010). Children's speaking/listening. Retrieved from www.pearsonhighered.com on October 20, 2021
- Roskos, K.A., Tabors, P.O., and Lenhart, L.A. (2009). Oral language and preschool literacy. *Young Children* 63(1), 88-92.
- Selma, G. and Nazli, D. (2015). A study aiming to develop the listening skills of elementary second-grade students. *Procedia-social and Behavioral Sciences*. 191: 103-109.
- Unuigbokhai, O.A., and Jimah, M.S. (2011). Nursery Education in Nigeria: Policy implementation and problems. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*, Vol 20, No1.



- Wilson, J.A. 1997. A program to develop the listening and speaking skills of children in a First Grade Classroom. University of Virginia page 44.
- Zlatev, J., Zywczyriski, P., Wacewicz, S. (2020). Pantomime as the original human-specific communicative system. *J. Lang. Evol.* 156-174. 156-174.