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Effects of Television and Radio on Speaking and Writing Skills of Senior Secondary School Students in Jos Metropolis (*Pp. 92-108*)

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Abstract

Parents, school authorities and members of the public have been concerned about the pervasive and powerful nature of the broadcast media to attract the youths, the much time they spend with the media as opposed to the little time they spend in their studies. Their concern arises from the noting that these could become powerful distractors to structured learning, despite their positive contributions to the dissemination of information. This scenario coupled with the poor speaking and writing among Nigerian youths necessitated this research efforts. Results of findings indicate that both television and radio have a positive influence on speaking skills of students, but no effect was indicated on their writing skills. The findings were interpreted in terms of what teachers could do to use the TV and radio to promote the development of spoken and written English.

Background and Problem

The English Language is arguably the most significant but controversial subject taught in Nigerian schools and is a major requirement for University and further education. Nevertheless, students and young people see it as a major obstacle to their further studies, because they find it difficult to pass it at the O level examinations. This frustration appears to cause resentment among learners about the continued significance attached the English Language in the school curriculum as they not only perform poorly in examinations, but are also poor communicators in the language.

Statistics released by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) Nigeria office in Lagos in 2003 revealed that the poor performance of secondary school students in English Language had been a recurrent decimal. The report indicated that problematic areas of the language are of grammatical constructions, spellings and punctuation including both comprehension and summary. In addition, a major feature of English Language teaching and learning in Nigeria is that, it is not static but constantly changing and developing new ideas in response to the classroom, sociological and political realities on ground. Realities that bring about new developments and change of ideas in relation to English Language is the broadcast media because they are pervasive and easily accessible as media of entertainment, information and even education.

The broadcast media, to which the television and radio belong, is identified as alternative to classroom teaching. Dooerken (1982), Hyde (1983), Barren (1999) and Lratim-uba (2001) note that by the time children arrive kindergarten, they would be able to name more fictional characters from television and radio than people in real life due to the fact that the television and radio give variety of information well beyond what children might be expected to obtain from primary groups such as the family, the school and the classroom. The broadcast media, including the television and radio are not just mechanical devices for creating worlds of illusions, but are avenues of creating new language with new powers of expressions. These powers of expressions influence English Language usage in the educational sector through the use and misuse of the language. For instance, in an attempt to mobilize the public for action or for a change of attitude; programmes are packaged and presented to reach both rural and urban dwellers without sensitivity to the rules of the English Language. In addition, commercial and advertisements further mangle the language with incomplete comparisons. These comparisons are heightened by the way sales are implied, suggested and given hint to - almost say things which codes, rules and regulations and good taste forbid.

This brings about a generation of children and learners who are unable to express themselves clearly and therefore, unable to write decent language, especially the English Language. This effect is to be expected since programmes of the televisions and radio are largely oral and visual, with little or no opportunity provided for interaction with prints. This deprives children

of the nuances of written expression that involve much review, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. For a second Language situation where students are supposed to read lots of materials in order to grasp the nuances of the language, the television and the radio discourage this. Thus, the study set out to investigate how the television and radio affect the English Language learning skills of speaking and writing among students in Nigeria, especially in Jos metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the television and radio on the English Language speaking and writing skills of students in secondary schools. To achieve this, the study:

- i. Surveyed the time spent in watching and listening to programmes of television and radio
- ii. Determined the effects of television and radio on secondary school students speaking abilities.
- iii. Determined the effects of television and radio on secondary schools students writing abilities.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study

1. How much time do secondary school students spend in watching and listening to television and radio programmes?
2. Do television and radio programmes enhance or inhibit writing and speaking abilities of secondary school students?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were also formulated to give guidance and direction towards resolving the problem of the study:

There is no significant difference;

1. In the pre-test achievement mean scores of students exposed to programmes of the same media and the control group in spoken and written expression.
2. Between the pre-test and post-test achievements mean scores in spoken expression of students exposed to programmes of television and radio and those not exposed to programmes of the same media.

3. Between the pre-test and post- achievement mean scores in written expression of students exposed to programmes of television and radio and those not exposed to programmes of the same media.
4. Between the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of students exposed to radio programmes only in both spoken and written expression.
5. Between the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of students exposed to television programmes only in both spoken and written expression.

Theory of using Television and Radio in Language Teaching and Learning

In discussing television and radio in language learning, efforts were made to highlight its methodology and practice. Weisse (1985) note that, in an age of rapidly expanding international communications, the need and ability to speak an international language are growing, and that no medium can bring to life more authentically and efficiently the target countries of language learning and a stronger motivation to learn a language than the television and radio. He observe that by 1985, several hundred television and radio language courses and series with over 22,000 individual programmes had been produced around the world, thus explaining the enormous worldwide expansion of these audio visual educational disciplines which fuse together language teaching, information and entertainment.

In an earlier treatise, Sherrington (1973) had highlighted that the television and radio had not taken to language teaching with the warmth and creativity with which they had embraced other subjects in the curriculum and attributed the situation to the seeming inherent deficiencies of both the television and radio in applying educational principles in teaching. However, in further analyzing the probable reasons for the lack of enthusiasm for teaching language programmes in the television and radio, Sherrington (1975) further notes that it was not because the television and radio were not good media for language bearing programmes. He rather explained that the advantages of language broadcast programmes in schools conditions were questionable because of the methodology. Whereas, in mathematics or science, these corroborates advantages were outstanding because they dealt with prescribed techniques. Herman (1985) reported a survey conducted by Hickel on television language-teaching programmes in nineteen countries who were

signatory to the European Cultural Convention in 1965; which stated that though almost all those countries had educational system at a child's fourth level of development, they offered few programmes for complete beginners. The survey also noted that most of the instructions were geared to students with two or three years of prior study of the language, while there was a large gap in instructional television until the stage of pre-university cultural teaching. In explaining these gaps, Hickel (1965) questioned whether the medium itself was at fault, whether these gaps were deliberate or fortuitous, or if these were due to an inherent lacuna in the television presentation of language teaching.

These questions indicate that the misgivings about the use of television in language teaching stems from the supposition that "Language teaching is a well-defined, unchanging factor. Therefore, any inability to accommodate television to its demands must be the fault of the television. But language teaching has not in fact remained unchanging. It had changed and developed over the years as theories and methodologies have won wide spread approval and are still being eclipsed by other ideas and methodologies. In addition, Sherrington (1973) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (200) give two features of programmes aimed at teaching language by the television and radio as shown below:

1. Programmes for teaching English overseas where inducing viewers to react to stimulus is a strong element of this approach. Thus, lengthy periods are spent with a television teacher conducting drills from the screen, cuing the audience for repetitions and substitutions in the manner of pattern practice, the type of exercise, which dominated audio-lingual methodology for many years. The cue may be verbal or visual but the aim was to make the learner produce automatically the structure being dealt in the programme. The few English language learning programmes found in the broadcast medium in Nigeria have largely adopted this approach to language teaching and learning.
2. A second feature of programmes for teaching language is the demonstration of language as behaviour. This approach views television and radio as enabling teachers to structure for the viewer the contexts within which language behaviour occurs. Language behaviour occurs haphazardly in life, while, for the purpose of

teaching, it needs to be examined, broken down and served in a structured form, so that it can then be graded and sequenced as a language item to fit each stage.

It is in this light that Saporta (1986), Bazzal (1989), and the British Broadcasting

Corporation (2000) note that the television and radio can and do present natural situations within which language occurs – with no forced information patterns, no contrived actions such as opening and closing doors to illustrate ‘he is opening’, ‘she is closing’, with no need to hold up a book and ask “what is this?”. For, when the answer to such issues is obvious, the greater will be its teaching value. Therefore the television and the radio are able to do what the classroom teacher can never do and that is to present language together with a great deal of its extra linguistic environment. ‘BBC English’ and ‘Television English’ have embraced this approach to language teaching and learning to accommodate new innovations and viewer’s needs.

Furthermore, Bazzal (1980) and Saporta (1986) further emphasize that initially, most audio-lingual, audio-visual and television language courses emphasis the primacy of the spoken English, often ignoring completely the reading and the writing skills. It was often said in defence of this sequence of stages that this was a natural progression, reflecting the sequences in which a child acquires his or her first language. The literate skills are said to be easier to approach from a firm grounding in the spoken language, perhaps in the light of the popular linguistics theory of those days. Nevertheless, it seems unnecessary to erect this idea into a principle, irrespective of the situation in which the language is being taught. In a second or foreign language situation, the relative importance accorded to the various skills in the selection of material will presumably vary according to the degree to which students are likely to use them. There may be a good case for mixing the four basic language skills from the beginning.

If this is the situation in language teaching and learning in television and radio, how can the media audience then react to such phenomena where no link exists between them and the studio teacher? It is here that the researcher thinks that some distinction needs to be made between teaching procedures that can involve the mental capacity of the students to a greater extent and

practice procedures (in which certain types of stimulus-response work may be used to enhance the proficiency of learners or students)

Practice of Using Television and Radio in English Language Teaching

Since the English Language is an international language used by most broadcast media organizations, and is also the focus of the study, the literature will examine how some international broadcast organizations have used it in teaching those who use English as second language. The voice of America (VA) transmit programmes in American English for education, entertainment and information, though it has a segment for teaching “English for second speakers” on Thursdays at 6:30 am Nigerian time.

The British Broadcasting Corporation on the other hand, has established and maintained its position as the world’s leading producer of films, television, video and radio courses and materials for English as a foreign or second language. Courses are designed to suit various needs such as beginners, intermediate and relatively advanced learners and with content covering diverse topics of English grammar. With time, the content was broadened to include dramatization to test listening comprehension and documentaries on novelists, dramatists, poets and authors for those interested in literature. Phone-in chat shows and quiz were also introduced to cover diverse areas of the language components of the programmes. Courses are all designed for television and radio transmission, classroom use and individual study or a combination of rather two or three of these. (BBC English and English by radio 2002).

Television English, a programme jointly developed by the British Council and BBC English by television, is also a further improved attempt at using the medium in teaching English. This takes the form of videos, which students or audiences watch and then respond to specific questions each of which has a different purpose and focuses on a different aspect of the video. A range of activities explore, for instance, the visual and verbal meanings, the language terms used and demand further different skills ranging from informal discussion, formal reporting, using oral reading and writing task. The programme is titled BBC English (world learning) and transmitted at 5.30 –pm local time every Wednesday (British Council and BBC English (2002)).

In Plateau State of Nigeria, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Jos, broadcasts “Sesame Street” and “Fun Bus” that teach junior primary children literacy skills, and “You Need to Know” that teach senior secondary students skills on answering examination questions in various subjects, including English language and literature, while learning about issues in life. Plateau Radio Television Corporation, (PRTVC) Jos, broadcasts “Schools challenge” on general knowledge “Schools Debate” and “Primary Quiz” on the radio arm of the organization. It broadcasts “English Made Simple” on its arm of television as part of its programme of teaching secondary school students major school subjects on the television. These programmes are both studio and out of studio recordings involving some selected students and studio teachers/presenters. Therefore, it is clear that programmes of the electronic media show language in action, since language behaviour is a practice procedure and not only a teaching technique. This study considered the use of the television and radio as complementary to the school’s curriculum rather than supplementary especially to the English classroom activity and would also integrate the two approaches enumerated by Sherrington (1973) in the use of the broadcast media in language teaching and learning.

Methodology

Theoretical framework

The social learning theory (recently changed to social cognitive theory) was the theoretical framework used as it emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviour, attitudes and emotional reactions of others. Medcalf Glynn and Moore (2004) in describing Bandura’s social foundation of Thought and Action asserts that the theory focuses on the acquisition of behaviour, believing that people acquire behaviour through the observation of others, and then imitate what they have observed. The modelling process underlying observational learning includes;

- (a) Attention
- (b) Retention
- © Motor Reproduction and
- (d) Motivation

This theory was chosen as the theoretical framework of the study because students were likely to acquire certain English Language Communicative skills from the media as they observed (watch listen and imitated these observable tendencies from the media). Negative or positive influences of

English Language learning skills from the electronic, media were enhanced or discarded at the “retention” “reproduction” and motivation levels of these principles of the social learning theory.

Research Design, Instruments and Validation

The study used the combination of the survey and the experimental designs. The survey design involved the survey of the accessibility of the television and radio to students, time they spend in watching and listening to TV and radio and the determination of their programme preferences. This served as a baseline survey, where information was used in the experimental component. The experimental design component was used to determine how the electronic media affect the oral and written communication expressions in English Language.

The questionnaire was used during the component, while the Pre-test, post-test control group and two sets of English Language test were used during the experimental aspect of the research. The questionnaire was structure into four sections (A – D), with each section constructed to obtained information on students’ biodata, TV and radio accessibility, programme and language transmission preference and time spent in watching and listening to TV and radio programmes. The two sets of English Language tests had two questions in each test , requiring students to narrate and write on topics related to what they had seen or listened on the TV and radio. The scoring of the tests were over ten for each question type for oral and written, narration.

Pronunciation

Consonants and vowels	-	3 marks
Stress and pitch	-	2 marks
Fluency	-	3 marks
Pause	-	2 marks

Type for Written task

Punctuation and Spellings	-	3 marks
Expression	-	4 marks
Organization	-	3 marks

Sample, Data Collection and Analysis

Four hundred senior students from four secondary school students in Jos metropolis were selected for the study using the stratified random sampling for selecting the students, and the purposive sampling technique for the schools. All four groups were pre-tested using one set of the English Language test to determine their pre-test condition for spoken and written competencies in English Language. The experimental groups were then exposed to programmes of Television and radio for eight weeks after which, all both experimental groups and the control group were post-tested using the second set of the English test. The results of the two sets of English test were tested to determine whether there was an effect or no effect of TV and radio programmes on students.

The t-test statistics and One-Way Anova were used to test the hypotheses – differences between the pre-test and post-test achievement mean score of students in the two English tests. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions of the study.

As shown in table 1, most boys spend 4 hours daily watching and listening to both radio and television, while a few spend 1 -2 hours doing same. On the other hand most girls spend 1 – 2 hours daily watching to both TV and radio, while a few spend 4 hours and above in doing same.

Tables 2 (2a & 2b) are produced to answer research question 2 which states thus “Do television and radio programmes enhance or inhibit writing and speaking abilities of secondary school students?.

Television and radio enhanced speaking better than writing as the means of speaking in all the media types are greater than those of written expression in all the media types, while deviation is also greatest at the speaking expression.

The calculated P of the post-test achievement mean scores of the four groups of students in the spoken expression (0.36) is less than the P value of .05 indicating that they were significantly different. Therefore the null hypothesis is reflected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The alternative hypothesis states that there are significant differences between the

post-test achievements mean score in the spoken expression of senior secondary school students exposed to programmes of TV only, Radio only, TV and Radio group and those not exposed to programmes of the same media.

The calculated P. value of the Post-test mean scores of spoken expression was less than the P.critical value, while that of written expression was higher at the P.critical value. This meant that the Pre-test condition of the students in written expression were no the same in the groups, while it was the same for the spoken expression. Thus the null hypothesis was rejected for the written expression and accepted for the spoken expression. The total language skill types indicate that there was no significance in the 2 language skill types at the pre-test level (See table 4).

The pre-test spoken expression as shown in table 5 had no significance with P.critical value of .802 while the Post-test spoken expression had significance with P.critical value of .000. The pre-test of written expression had significance with P.critical value of .000, while the post-test expression had no significance value of .139.

The Pre-test and Post-test of spoken expression indicated a significant difference in favour of a significant effect of TV only on spoken expression, while the Pre-test and Post-test of written expression showed that there was no significant. See table 6

Discussion

Analysis of results indicated the following findings. There was no significant difference in the total pre-test achievement mean scores of students in the experimental groups and the control group for the three levels of comprehension and spoken expression, although a significant difference was found in the pre-test achievement mean score of written expression of the experimental groups and the control group.

A further finding of the result showed that there was a significant difference between the Post-test achievements means scores in spoken expression of senior secondary school students in the three experimental groups and control group implying that the television and radio had an effect on the spoken expression of students. This effect was on the positive side.

No significant difference was established between the achievements mean scores of students in the experimental groups and those in the control group in written expression, implying that exposure of students to the programme of television and radio did not have any effect on their writing skills.

Curriculum Implication and Conclusion

From the foregoing research findings, it could be inferred that the TV and Radio can enhance some English language learning skills especially the spoken expression. This implies that the television and radio programmes can be integrated into the English Language lessons. However this should be done with caution and the following approaches are suggested: students should have exercises of making writing versions of oral forms of television and radio programmes such as documentaries, new and soap operas. These programmes could also be used as basis of initiating and enhancing topics and themes for essay writing.

The television and radio programmes should be used with appropriate spoken English language skills in English lessons to enhance appropriate language skill acquisition in children. Students should also be asked to correct wrong English Language usage found in both programmes of television and radio as classroom exercise. They should be taught the difference between media language of news reporting, entertainment, advertisement and expositions and how these can affect their acquisition of English Language skills. Finally, media education should be introduced into the curriculum of English language teacher training programmes to better equip teachers in handling the incorporation of media programmes into the secondary schools English language curriculum.

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Table 1: Frequency and mean of time spent by students in daily watching and listening to programmes of the television and radio by gender

Time Spent in Watching and Listening to Programmes	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1 – 2 hours	30	20	35	25	65	22
2 – 4 hours	45	30	95	63	140	47
4 hours plus	75	50	20	13	95	37

Table 2a

Mean and standard deviation of speaking in the three media group types

Type of Expression	Media Group	N	X	SD
Spoken Expression	Television only	100	7.85	2.70
	Radio only	100	7.04	2.39
	TV and radio	100	7.00	2.69
	Control Group	100	3.01	1.40

Table 2 B

Mean and standard deviation of writing in the three media group types.

Type of Expression	Media Group	N	X	SD
Written Expression	Television only	100	7.85	2.70
	Radio Only	100	3.53	1.60
	TV and Radio	100	3.49	1.85
	Control Group	100	3.38	1.52

Table 3: Result of the one-way ANOVA for Differences in the post-test Achievement mean scores of the radio only, TV only, Both TV and Radio groups and the control group in spoken expression.

Language Skill and Type	Source of Variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean of Square	F.Cal	F.Crit Value
Spoken Expression	Between Groups	44.18	3	14.73	2.13	.036
	Within Groups	2736.99	396	6.91		
	Groups	2781.17	399			
	Total					

Note: P= 0.05

Table 4: Result of the one-way ANOVA for Differences in the post-test Achievement mean scores of Radio only, TV only, and the control group

Language Skill Type	Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Means of Squares	F.Cal	F.Crit Value
Spoken Expression	Between Groups	40.527	3	13.509	2.04	.108
	Within Groups	2621.398	396	6.620		
	Total	2661.924	399			
Written Expression	Between Groups	164.850	3	54.950	13.66	.000
	Within Groups	1592.340	396	4.021		
	Total	1757.190	399	20.950		
Total of Language Skill Type	Between Groups	50.987	3	7.679	5.88	.064
	Within Groups	268.887	396			
	Total	390.874	399			

Table 5: Result of t-test for difference between Pre-test and post-test Achievement Mean scores of secondary school students in radio programmes only and those in the control group.

Test	Group	n	X	SD	t.Cal	df	t. crit value																																																								
Pre-test spoken expression	Radio only	100	6.80	2.30	-1.74	198	.082																																																								
	Control Group	100	7.40	2.71				Post-test spoken expression	Radio Only	100	7.40	2.39	-.88	198	- .000	Control	100	7.36	2.71	Pre-test Written	Radio Only	100	5.14	2.20	-4.98	198	.000	Control	100	3.90	1.35	Post-test written expression	Radio Only	100	3.53	1.60	-1.50	198	.139	Control	100	3.84	1.34	Pre-test Total	Radio Only	100	16.71	2.95	-1.07	198	.060	Control	100	15.15	3.65	Post-test Total	Radio Only	100	12.35	2.42	-3.42	198	.000
Post-test spoken expression	Radio Only	100	7.40	2.39	-.88	198	- .000																																																								
	Control	100	7.36	2.71				Pre-test Written	Radio Only	100	5.14	2.20	-4.98	198	.000	Control	100	3.90	1.35	Post-test written expression	Radio Only	100	3.53	1.60	-1.50	198	.139	Control	100	3.84	1.34	Pre-test Total	Radio Only	100	16.71	2.95	-1.07	198	.060	Control	100	15.15	3.65	Post-test Total	Radio Only	100	12.35	2.42	-3.42	198	.000	Control	100	16.12	3.34								
Pre-test Written	Radio Only	100	5.14	2.20	-4.98	198	.000																																																								
	Control	100	3.90	1.35				Post-test written expression	Radio Only	100	3.53	1.60	-1.50	198	.139	Control	100	3.84	1.34	Pre-test Total	Radio Only	100	16.71	2.95	-1.07	198	.060	Control	100	15.15	3.65	Post-test Total	Radio Only	100	12.35	2.42	-3.42	198	.000	Control	100	16.12	3.34																				
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	Control	100	16.12	3.34																																																											

P = 0.05

Table 6: Result of t-test for difference between Pre-test Achievement mean scores of TV only students and those in the control group.

Test	Group	n	X	SD	t.Cal	df	t. crit value
Pre-test spoken expression	TV only	100	7.63	2.80	0.60	198	.547
	Control	100	7.40	2.71			
Post-test spoken expression	TV Only	100	7.83	2.70	1.22	198	.021
	Control	100	7.36	2.71			
Pre-test Written Expression	TV Only	100	3.96	1.41	0.56	198	0.574
	Control	100	3.85	1.35			
Post-test Written Expression	TV Only	100	3.48	1.42	-1.83	198	.067
	Control	100	3.84	1.34			
Pre-test Total	TV Only	100	13.51	2.36	-2.44	198	.591
	Control	100	15.12	2.34			
Post-test Total	TV Only	100	13.32	2.37	-2.44	198	.001
	Control	100	14.12	2.34			