

# Effect of Audio Instructional Package on Basic Pupils' Performance in English Pronunciation Skills in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

OGUNLADE, O. *Olufunmilola* PhD and AMOSA, A. Alesa

## **Abstract**

*Basic education in Nigeria can be described as formal education given in a government recognized institution to children from age five to 11 years. Audio instructional package affords the pupils opportunity to achieve meaningful and productive learning experiences that will in turn make their education more effective. Pronunciation skills are also very important in developing a good foundation in English language as Nigerian lingua franca. This study was geared towards finding out the effect of an audio instructional package on basic school pupils' performance in English pronunciation skills in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study investigated; the differences in the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and those taught using the expository method and their achievement based on gender. A pre-test, post-test and control group quasi-experimental design was adopted for this study. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were answered and tested respectively. Intact classes of two basic schools were selected from two different public primary schools from Ilorin south and Ilorin west local government areas, Kwara State using the purposive sampling technique. The two sampled schools comprised 60 pupils who were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups (30 pupils in each group). The t- test statistical technique was employed to analyze the data collected. The findings indicated that the pupils taught using the audio instructional package performed significantly better than their counterparts taught using the expository method. Also, there was a significant difference in the achievement of pupils in experimental group based on gender. Based on the findings, it was recommended that; the audio instructional package should be employed to enhance pupils' pronunciation skills in English language. Hence, no significant difference existed between male and female pupils in the experimental groups; the instructional package should be continuously utilized to ensure the continuity in their respective interests. The audio instructional package used as a treatment in this study is called audio life player. It was presented by the British Council of Education to the selected public primary schools in Kwara State*

**Keywords:** Audio instructional package, Basic school, English pronunciation skill, Phonetics

## **Introduction**

English language is the lingua franca in Nigeria, on the basis of this; Federal Government of Nigeria made it one of the core subjects offered by all students across all levels of education (FRN, 2004). Meanwhile, deficiency in pronunciation skills can be an immense drawback to anyone that needs to survive in the nation where English language is being taken as an official language. Pronunciation skills are very important in assessing the performance of the learners. Pronunciation concerns the features of the sounds used in languages.

Pronunciation is probably one of the hardest skills in English to learn. It takes a lot of time and effort to improve one's pronunciation. Some non-native speakers live for a long time in English speaking countries but still have poor pronunciation. Other speakers seem to pick up

English pronunciation with little effort, and some may do so without visiting any English speaking country at all. English language is regarded as Nigeria's lingua-franca so it is imperative that citizens especially the educated must put in efforts to learn. The best starting point to learn pronunciation is actually at the foundational stage.

English language has gradually become a global language in term of its usage both in daily business transaction and communication. The world's most widely used language is English which has over 1.8 billion users worldwide. In addition, English language is a language spoken internationally and which is learned by many people as a second language. The real key to having good pronunciation is what is regarded as 'comfortable intelligibility'. In other words, the person or people listening to an individual should be able to understand what he or she is saying with minimal strain. This is something completely different from losing ones accent entirely.

Phonetics, which refers to Oral-English, is an aspect of English language, which is very important in assessing the performance of the learners. Phonetics concerns the concrete characteristics of the sounds used in languages. Enyeazu (2001) defines phonetics as a systematic study of the sounds of the language and the way in which they are produced. Thus, the best way to learn the pronunciation of the language which is embedded in phonetics is by a systematic study of the sound of the language

English language is regarded generally as the language that can provide communication universality, so much so that parents know how important it is for their children to acquire and master English language for them to succeed. Pronunciation is essential for speaking and understanding spoken English well. It should be the first thing to learn when studying a language.

Learning the correct articulation techniques for pronouncing a language, slowing down speech rate and the use of correct syllable stress are all important skills in English pronunciation (Ravin, 2011). The aim of using the phonics instruction is to promote the ability of young learners to be able to pronounce words correctly by matching object with alphabetic sounds. English language has absorbed many words from other languages throughout its history, usually without changing the spelling patterns of many languages (Old English, Old Norse, Norman French, Classical Latin and Greek, as well as numerous modern languages) super-imposed upon one another (McGuinness, 2004).

Phonics instruction enhances better skills, especially for kindergarteners, and older pupils that are struggling with reading and pronunciation. It is important to have an explicit instruction and practice Phonemic and Phonological Awareness, sound relationships, blending, syllabication, and other phonics and word study skills. It is therefore imperative that audio instructional package can be introduced to assist learners. Thus, the need to find out the effects on pupils' academic achievement is paramount to teaching and learning.

This kind of material for phonics instruction will improve children's ability to identify words through teaching children both the sounds of letters in isolation and in words, blending the sounds of letters together to produce approximate pronunciation of words. It also states that phonics instruction should be in conjunction with opportunities to identify word in meaningful sentences and stories. Phonics is an effective way to teach students the alphabetic code, as well as building and developing their skill in decoding unknown words. When children learn the alphabetical code early, students can quickly release mental energy they have used for word

analysis and devote this energy to meaning, with the intention of having a stronger comprehension in elementary school.

People from all countries of the world today are working and living in a globalized environment. In this global community, instantaneous communication occurs frequently. Labour mobility and the existence of international employment opportunity have heightened the need to communicate and be understood. Hence, English pronunciation skills become imperative in order to achieve effective and efficient communication. Thus, the skills can be meaningfully learnt through the use of instructional materials.

Instructional materials are resources for transmitting information, ideas and notes that can help in facilitating learning. They help in making students comprehend, retain and recall concepts, principles or theories and acquire professional skills (Onasanya & Adegbija, 2007).

Instructional materials are therefore classified into three main groups, which are; audio, visual and audio-visual materials. Utilization of instructional materials in teaching and learning process would assist the learners to have the necessary and quality learning experiences that can bring about meaningful and productive learning. The use of instructional materials in teaching guarantees greatest value and effectiveness in the teaching and learning process. However, teachers should ensure the careful use of instructional materials in accordance with the stated instructional goals and objectives (Amosa, 2013).

Audio instructional package conveys information by sound. Some of the audio media that one might find in the classroom or in the school's library or media resource centers are phonograph records, audiotapes, poetry, animal and nature sounds, student presentations, audio tapes, records, on the air broadcast from the radio stations, telephonic and mobile systems of communication and audio CD, among others (Abolade, 2009).

According to Ogunlade (1988) instructional package has a meaningful effect or impact on instructional effectiveness in that addition of pictorial presentations improve the effectiveness of verbal instruction, pictorial addition also facilitates comprehension of students. All the same the researcher is also of the opinion that instructional package without the teacher's skills is useless. Thus the teacher that will use an audio package must also be skillful in such area.

However, audio instructional package is the easiest medium through which learners can pay attention to range of human and non-human speakers on variety of topics in teaching and learning process. Audio Instruction is the use of teaching materials and techniques that do not depend mainly upon text books to pass on learning instruction. It is also known as instructional medium that appeals to the sense of hearing.

These materials are frequently used to present music, stories, poetry readings, dramatic performances, and speeches. Students can record and listen to themselves with the help of tape recorders and similar devices. Indeed, audiotope is the most accessible piece of voice recording equipment and can be used to achieve educational objectives in the three domains of learning; psychomotor, cognitive and affective (Nworgu, 2000). Audio recordings are used in teaching and learning to educate learners using particular language by using explanations in the learner's individual language. Alternatively, audio recordings can be used to teach sound effects to show meaning of words and their correct pronunciations. However, the uniqueness of audio recordings in teaching and learning is that some recordings have pauses for the learner to speak (Malenie, 2014).

Audio materials generally provide variety and arouse interest in learners for pronunciation to be clearer to pupils involved. The audio material is an accommodative technique employed in content area classes to address some of the problems encountered by teachers and students . Moreover, pupils having difficulty in the class may find the package beneficial as a means of gaining competency for the class and before the audio package can be made effective the following impediments will have to be removed.

- i. Lack of skills in expressing intending idea by the sender
- ii. Hearing impairment, auditory fatigue, e.t.c
- iii. Lack of listening skills by the receiver
- iv. Lack of skills in comprehending the idea

Experimental studies in teaching and learning in Nigeria involving audiotape and conventional method are available. Adejumo (2007) focused on the poor performance of students in basic technology. The focus was on the effect of audio-graphic illustration on junior secondary school students' performance in basic technology. Finding of the research revealed that students taught with audio graphic performed better than those taught with conventional methods .Kutigi, Gambari and Gana (2010), in their own study found that those taught with audiotape and audio compact disc instructional packages did better than their counterparts taught using conventional method.

Gender is a condition of being male or female that is boy or girl, a man or woman. Concern about gender and academic achievement had been a major research to educational researchers for long, yet the matter is inconclusive. Thus, academic achievement based on gender centers on differences in the learning endeavours at various capacities. Moreover, Amosa (2013), Issa (2004), Gambari and Zubair (2008), among others reported that gender had no significant influence on academic achievement while Adejumo (2007) had contrary findings. This research was also geared towards finding out the effect of audio instructional package on teaching pronunciation skills in English Language.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Problems with learning good pronunciation begin at Elementary School or even at Kindergarten. It seems that many teachers are not prepared to teach this area of English to young learners and so, pronunciation activities are very often skipped because they are considered a waste of time and they prefer to devote some more time to grammar. As a result, children are not able to communicate with others properly in their older life. It is very sad to see that many students who were not taught good pronunciation at an early age have problems with understanding the spoken language and they cannot even produce sounds properly (Enyeazu, 2001).

However, some teachers see it as an extra task to use audio instructional package for the pupils at the elementary level classes because it takes more time to cater for the individual differences of such classes. In addition, most public school teachers are not taking cognizance of the importance of using instructional package in teaching and learning considering the levels of the learners.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of audio instructional package on basic school pupils' performance in English pronunciation skills in Ilorin, Kwara State. Specifically, the study found out:

1. The difference between the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught using expository method.
2. The interactive effects of gender on pupils' achievement when taught using audio instructional package.

## **Research Questions**

Answers were sought to the following questions:

1. What is the difference between the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught with expository method?
2. What is the difference between the achievement of male and female pupils when taught using audio instructional package?

## **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught using expository.
- H<sub>02</sub> There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils when taught using audio instructional package.

## **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was the pretest-posttest experimental control group design. The population for the study was made up of all pupils of basic schools in Kwara State. The sampled students comprised sixty (30 males and 30 females) basic school students, who are randomly selected from two public schools from Ilorin South and Ilorin West local government areas of Kwara State. In each school, 30 pupils were randomly selected for the study and gender was considered in the selection.

The teaching was done for five weeks with control group being taught with expository method and the experimental group taught using audio instructional package (treatment). The test questions were administered to the students before and after the treatment for both control and experimental groups. Each of the tests were marked and scored accordingly. All research questions were answered through their corresponding hypotheses, while all the hypotheses were tested using t-test.

## The Research Instruments

Audio Instructional Package (Audio Life Player): the audio instructional package called audio life player used as a treatment in this study was designed and presented by the British Council of Education to selected public primary schools in Kwara State. The school selected as an experimental group was one of the beneficiaries of the instructional package.

Phonetics Achievement Test: This validated test instrument was designed by the researchers to determine the effectiveness of the audio instructional package. The achievement contained 20 items with multiple choice responses.

## Results

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected for this study. Data obtained in respect to research questions were analyzed through their corresponding hypotheses, while all the hypotheses were tested using t-test.

### Hypotheses Testing

Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils when taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught using expository.

**Table 1:** t-test analysis showing the difference in the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught through expository.

Variance	Groups	N	Mean	df	t	Sig	Decision
Pre-test	Experimental	30	33.38	68	0.98	0.00	Sig.
	Control	30	32.00				
Post-test	Experimental	30	58.60	68	5.83	1.39	
	Control	30	35.93				

Table 1 shows the difference between the performance of pupils in pre and post-test in both experimental and control groups. The t-test shows t-value of 5.83 in favour of the experimental group at the P value of 1.39. This means that there is a significant difference between the achievement of pupils taught with audio instructional package (treatment) over control group taught without the package in the post-test. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils when taught using audio instructional package.

**Table 2:** T-test analysis showing the difference between the achievements of pupils taught using audio instructional package based on gender.

Variance	Groups	N	Mean	df	t	Sig	Decision
Experimental	Male	15	37.23	28	1.02	0.00	N.S
	Female	15	32.00				

In the post-test examinations as shown in table 2, the t-test analysis shows a t-value of 1.02 in support of male pupils using audio instructional package. It reveals a significant difference; therefore the null hypothesis that states there is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package based on gender was rejected.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

Based on the analysis of responses of the students, it was revealed that:

1. The use of audio instructional package in learning of pronunciation skills among basic school pupils enhanced effective learning.
2. There was a significant difference in the achievement of pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught through expository method.
3. There was a significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils in favour of the males in the use of audio instructional package for learning pronunciation skills.

### **Discussion**

From the findings in this study, it is implied that use of audio instructional package in teaching and learning of basic pupils have created unprecedented opportunities and also have profound effect on how students learn pronunciation skills in primary schools. In addition, the result of the analysis revealed that, there was a significant difference between the pupils taught using audio instructional package and their counterparts taught through expository method. Also, the significant difference existed on the basis of gender.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Pupils, irrespective of their gender should be encouraged to make use of audio instructional package in learning of English pronunciation skills.
2. Pupils should be trained in order to make them technologically inclined academically and in real life situations.
3. Teachers should include the use of audio instructional package in order to make learning effective and to motivate learners.
4. The audio instructional package should be continuously utilized to ensure the continuity in the learners' interests.
5. Necessary attention should be accorded audio instructional package in the primary school setting, especially for teaching Phonetics in Nigerian schools.
6. Since the findings of this study showed that students who taught Phonetic with audio instructional package performed better than those taught with expository method,

teachers, textbook writers, and curriculum planners should emphasize the use of audio instructional package for teaching and learning at all levels of education.

### **About the Authors**

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OGUNLADE, O. *Olufunmilola* PhD and AMOSA, A. Alsea are working in Department of Educational Technology, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. ONUOHA, U. Daniel is working in Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

E-mail: [bleglom@gmail.com](mailto:bleglom@gmail.com); [aaalasela@hotmail.com](mailto:aaalasela@hotmail.com); [o\\_udochukwu@yahoo.com](mailto:o_udochukwu@yahoo.com)

Phone Numbers: +2348032455690, +234-806-519-2161, +2348037705425



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