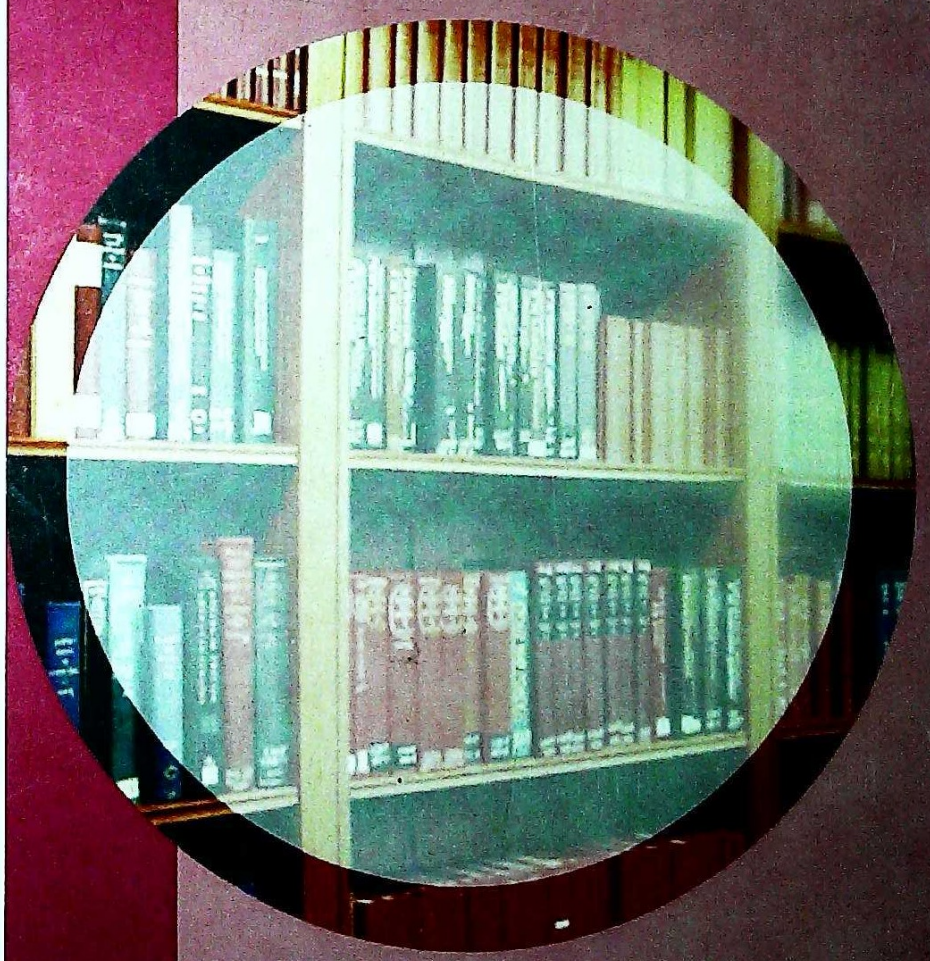


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Analysis of Listening Comprehension Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Kaduna, Nigeria

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Abstract

English as a language of instruction in Nigeria has been a barrier to effective listening skill. Communication is a way of disseminating information among people which may involve the use of a language or any other conventional means. The role of listening skills in communication cannot be underestimated at all levels of education. This study examines listening comprehension performance of senior secondary school students in Kaduna, Nigeria. It also analyses the level of listening comprehension performance of senior secondary school students in at the informative level based on gender. The study adopted a descriptive survey research type. The population for the study comprised all the senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis, while the target population consisted of all the senior secondary school two students in the sampled schools. Researchers' designed a listening comprehension test to elicit information from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test-retest procedure and a reliability index of 0.76 was recorded using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents had average performance in the general level of listening comprehension. Also, most of the respondents had low performance in informative level of listening comprehension, while

there is no significant difference in the male and female students' performance at the informative level of listening comprehension. Based on the findings of this study, It was recommended that senior secondary school students should be sensitised on how to pay attention to what they hear and read to be able to listen with purposeful mind.

Keywords: *Listening, Listening Comprehension, Listening Skills, Informative, Performance*

Introduction

Language, as a tool for communication has a great input on the cognitive development of man. Individuals in the society are able to express their thoughts, views and also perform a lot of speech acts through language. This is why communication is a way of disseminating information among people as it involves the use of a language or any other conventional means. However, communication can only be successful when the appropriate language is being used. Language that is both familiar and well understood by both the speakers and the listeners either through listening, speaking, reading or writing should be employed. More so, the degree of one's proficiency in these skills determines one's achievement and success in all human endeavours. Communication is the basic component of the process of learning for every human being (Eng, Mohamed & Javed, 2013). Listening is one of the four basic language skills. Listening and reading are known as 'interpretative' or 'receptive' skills. As a skill that aids understanding, listening makes people to receive and understand the message of the speaker. It also helps the learner in the accomplishment of any task related to auditory function (Brownell, 2010). Listening iinvolves readers'devoting time and paying attention to the acquisition of knowledge and competence on an academic subject in education. Lack of listening will definitely affect learners' performance, as Ibrahim (2013) affirms that for an excellent performance, there is need for students to form good listening habit. The need to help the individuals build their academic potentials requires training in the development of listening habit. Effective listening habit enhances student understanding. Listening is an information-receptive

skill which is based on the selection of significant sound and message from numerous sounds captured by the ear. It is a vital component of oral communication that involves a conscious and deliberate effort in following and recognising the essential points of what is spoken and ensuring their understanding. This requires concentration which is the essence of effective listening. It is an active curricular process that involves the recognition, selection and comprehension of the significant items in a spoken discourse (Oloruntoba, Oju & Alebiosun, 1998). It is universally observed that people spend 70 percent of their active time in communication and that much of the time is spent on listening and speaking. As observed by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; while writing takes about 9%. The listening skill therefore plays a major role in enhancing communication and language learning (Nunan,2002).

Therefore, the process of listening helps to decode and comprehend a meaningful message. For instance, when a listener listens attentively and correlates the newly received information with the already saved information in the Long term Memory (LTM), then the level of comprehension increases gradually (Ibrahim, 2013). Researchers in the field of reading have made the meaning of "reading" clear and definite. Such is not the case with 'listening'. Still, various terms are being used to explain the mental processes involved in the reception of verbal sounds and linguistic behaviour attached to it. Different terms such as 'listening comprehension', 'aural comprehension', 'auditing' and 'auditory comprehension' are used. Out of all these terminologies, 'listening comprehension' is commonly used (Modi, 1991).

Listening plays a significant role in daily communication and educational process. In spite of its importance, listening has long been the neglected skill in second language acquisition, research, teaching and assessment. However, in recent years, there has been an increased focus on L2 listening ability because of its perceived importance in language learning and teaching (Abbas & Mohammad, 2011). Listening involves an active process of deciphering and constructing meaning from both verbal and non-verbal messages (Nunan, 1997). Thus, the label of passive skill applied to listening is a misnomer because it is hearing that is passive while listening is active and involves the use of brain to process information. This misunderstanding may stem from the fact that superficially, learners seem to only sit in a language lab quietly, listen to pre-recorded dialogues and write the answers to some questions related to the oral

stimulus. It is evident. then. that listening is not as passive as it has been claimed to be as it demands a number of complicated processes on the part of the learners.

The importance of listening skills in English language teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized because it is important in the acquisition of a language (Hamouda. 2013). Rost (1994) maintains that listening is vital in language classrooms because it provides input for learners. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Thus. language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the critical component in achieving understandable language input. As a result of this. listening is a fundamental language skill which should be given prominence among the four skills of language. As Hasan (2000) pointed out. listening comprehension provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of other language skills. Listening, therefore, is essential not only as a receptive skill but also to the development of spoken language proficiency. Rost (2002) however indicates that developing proficiency in listening is the key to achieving proficiency in speaking.

Identifying the importance of listening. Huy (2015) noted that learners from kindergarten through high school were expected to listen 65-90 percent of the time. Listening consumes more of daily communication time than other forms of verbal communication. It is central to the lives of students throughout all levels of their educational development. It is also the most frequently used language skill in the classroom. Both instructors and learners acknowledge the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings. Numerous studies indicated that efficient listening skills were more important than reading skills as a factor contributing to academic success (Huy, 2015). Nevertheless. it is evident that listening is more important for the lives of students since it is a primary medium of learning at all stages of education. Listening is a complex mental process that involves perception, attention, cognition. and memory retention.

The effectiveness with which a student receives, stores and retrieves all the information relevant to his academic work enables one to measure his scholarship and indeed his performance (Babatunde, 2005). Both success and failure of a student hinges on effective information processing, reception, storage and retrieval (Oliyide, 2013). Effective reception involves definite strategies such as note making, outline and summary. The aforementioned

information reception techniques can also be regarded as information storing strategies. According to Yusuf (2015), there are different categories of listening which are discriminative, attitudinal, informational, appreciative, aesthetic and critical listening. Training in listening can be tailored to achieve competence in each of them. Weber (2003) identified five levels of listening: ignoring, pretending, selective, attentive and emphatic listening. According to Weber, we listen at five different and distinct levels.

According to National Teachers Institute (2012), there are four types of listening: attitudinal, informational, appreciative and critical listening. Training in listening can be tailored to achieve competence in each of them. The type of materials selected for use and the type of activities carried out during the lesson will determine the focus.Attitudinal listening entails that the teacher needs to create a positive environment that makes students want to hear what the teacher says. Teachers must always find ways of motivating interest in what they want to say either as a story, a descriptive or passage. On informational listening, teacher needs to make the information relevant by helping the students to appreciate the usefulness of what they are about to listen to, they will certainly become more willing to clearly define what students are going to do or achieve after listening.

Appreciative listening requires students to listen beyond the information given to them. They should also strive to assess the attitude and possible beliefs or values of the speaker. The teacher can render help to students by telling them what they would be required to express their opinion after listening. Alternatively, the teacher may ask students to describe the attitude of the speaker to what they listened to. Critical or analytical listening is the highest of the four levels of listening. It involves listening to the points made by the speaker, assessing the implied attitude, beliefs and thereafter draw conclusion on the appropriateness or otherwise of the subject matter.

Yusuf (2015) opined that listening helps to achieve all the communication goals (physical, instrumental, relational and identity). In general, students with high scores for listening ability have greater academic achievement. Therefore, an introductory lesson must provide for listening aspect of communication. Abubakar (2013) identified four levels of listening marginal, appreciative, attentive and analytical. However, how students listen in the classroom will definitely have a significant impact on their success. The type of materials selected for use and the type of activities carried out during the lesson will

determine the focus. For the purpose of this study, informative level of listening is identified and discussed on how it influences learners' performance.

Listening comprehension is regarded as a complex interactive process in which listeners are involved in a dynamic process of construction of meaning; modulating listening action since we do not listen with the same level of concentration to all information and at all times, our attentions depend on our purpose of listening. Sound discrimination enables listeners to understand the oral input, poor knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structure, stress and intonation as well as other use of linguistic, paralinguistic or even non-linguistic clues in contextual utterance (Rost, 2002). An individual who cannot listen effectively cannot perform well in English language as well as other subjects especially at the senior secondary school level.

There are variables that are likely to affect listening comprehension performance of senior secondary school students such as gender. According to Obayan (2006), gender (sex) has a lot to do with the performance of students in English language as it is submitted that females tend to be more favourably disposed to the study of English language and other linguistics courses than their male counterparts. Baum (2016) averts that gender identity is our internal experience and naming of our gender. Gender has a unique influence on listening comprehension. Therefore, it should be kept as a constant variable in any training on listening comprehension. Gender factor is very strong in learning and thus a determinant factor of students' interest and achievement (Lyn, 2002). Ismail and Othman (2006) investigated the effect of student's gender and past performance on their performance during schooling. Their research results showed that female students were found to have better results than their male counterparts.

Statement of the Problem

Language of instruction in Nigeria has been a barrier to effective listening skill being the second language to the learners. Many students find it difficult to comprehend and could not get the information that is being passed to them in teaching learning situation. This has led to poor performance of students who could not cope with learning in this situation. In effect, students with poor listening skill cannot contribute effectively to national development (Osada, 2004). This study analyzed effective listening skill as an important tool for good academic performance of students at the senior secondary schools. Although,

many researchers realised the importance of listening in language learning, it remains the most neglected and the least understood aspects of language teaching (Carrier, 1999; Buck, 2001).

Therefore, the main aim of many studies on listening skill is to explore the good way to help learners to be effective in their listening. The education of every society is not only purpose-driven but language-driven. Language efficacy in playing developmental roles of planning, implementing and evaluating human ideas and concepts towards the making of a cultured and functional man cannot be overemphasised. In other words, a good listener would eventually become a good speaker or an orator in the society. Hamouda (2013) studied the listening comprehension problems encountered by students in English language listening classroom. The focus of this study was the accent, pronunciation, speed of speech, insufficient vocabulary, lack of concentration, anxiety and bad quality of recording were the major listening comprehension problems of students.

Huy (2015) investigated the listening strategies of English as a foreign language student at a high school in Mekong, Delta. The study found that students used the memory cognitive, effective comprehension, metacognitive and social strategies. As observed by Hamouda (2013), learners have serious problems in English listening comprehension due to the fact that schools pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not important parts of many course books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to these skills while designing their lessons. Most teachers take it for granted and believe that it will develop naturally within the process of language learning. In other words, they assume listening is synonymous to breathing-automatic (Ina & Brian, 2007).

Efforts have been made by a number of researchers to identify the difficulties experienced by students in second language learning and how they deal with the difficulties (Nunan 1997; Nunan 2002). This present research tries to address these challenges by analysing the listening comprehension performance of senior secondary school students in Abeokuta and to determine the level in which students are performing better in order to bring out the best level of listening suitable for teaching and learning processes. It is evident that none of the previous studies focused on the analysis of listening comprehension performance of senior secondary school students in Kaduna, Nigeria. This has thus created a gap in knowledge, part of which this study filled.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is the general level of listening comprehension performance of the senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis?
2. What is the level of listening comprehension performance of the senior secondary school students at the informative level in Kaduna metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the research study:

HO_1: There is no significant difference in the male and female senior secondary school students' performance at the informative level of listening comprehension in Kaduna metropolis.

Methodology

This study captures the analysis of listening comprehension performance of the senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis, Nigeria. This is a descriptive survey research type. The population for the study comprised all the senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis. The target population therefore consisted of all the senior secondary school students in sampled schools. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select 315 SSII students drawn from randomly selected secondary schools. The choice of SSII students was based on the knowledge they have acquired in the earlier classes. Researchers' designed listening comprehension test was used to elicit information from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test-retest procedure of two week-intervals. The two sets of scores were correlated using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistics to obtain the reliability index of 0.76. The data collected were analysed using percentage and the t-test independent statistics at 0.05 alpha level.

Data analysis and Results

Data were obtained from a total of three hundred and fifteen (315) senior secondary school two (SS2) students. The descriptive statistics of the respondentsbased on gender was described using the percentage and is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	159	50.5
Female	156	49.5
Total	**315**	**100**

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by gender. It is revealed that 50.5% (159) of the respondents were males, while 49.5% (156) of the respondents were female students. This implies that more male respondents participated in the study than their female counterparts.

Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: *What is the general level of listening comprehension performance of the senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis?*

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna based on General Level of Listening Comprehension Performance

General Level of Listening Comprehension Performance	Frequency	Percentage %
High	64	20.3
Average	180	57.1
Low	71	22.5
Total	**315**	**100**

Table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the general level of listening comprehension performance among senior secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis. It is indicated that 64 (20.3) of the respondents had a high general level of listening comprehension performance, 180 (57.1%) of the respondents had an average general level of listening comprehension performance, while 71 (22.5%) of the respondents had a low general level of listening comprehension performance. This implies that most of the respondents had average performance in the general level of listening comprehension.

Research Question Two: *What is the level of listening comprehension performance of the senior secondary school students at the informative level in Kaduna metropolis?*

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Senior Secondary Schools in Abeokuta, Nigeria based on level of listening comprehension performance at the informative level

Informative Level of Listening Comprehension	Frequency	Percentage %
High	70	22.3
Average	99	31.4
Low	146	46.3

Total	**315**	**100**

Table 3 presents the percentage analysis of the informative level of listening comprehension among senior secondary school students. It is revealed that 70 (22.3%) of the respondents had a high informative level of listening comprehension performance. 99 (31.4%) of the respondents had average informative level of listening comprehension performance, while 146 (46.3) of the respondents had a low level of listening comprehension at the informative level. Thus, majority of the respondents had low performance in informative level of listening comprehension.

Hypothesis Testing

A null hypothesis was formulated and tested for this study. The hypothesis was tested using the independent sample t-test statistics at 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the male and female senior secondary school students' performance at the informative level of listening comprehension in Kaduna metropolis.*

Table 4: t-test Analysis on Male and Female Senior Secondary School Students' Performance at the Informative Level of Listening Comprehension

Gender	No	Mean	S. D.	df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Male	159	2.22	0.78				
				313	1.96	0.63	**Retained**
Female	156	2.26	0.81				

*Insignificance at p>0.05

Table 4 shows that the t-value 1.96 is obtained with a p-value of 0.63 when computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.63 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, there is no significant difference in the male and female senior secondary school students' performance at the informative level of listening comprehension in Kaduna metropolis (t_{313} = .0.63, p>0.05).

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of study revealed that most of the respondents had average performance in the general level of listening comprehension. This finding supports the outcome of Yusuf (2015) who opined that listening helps learners to achieve all the communication goals. Brown (1995) also maintained that listening difficulties are related to the level of cognitive demands made by the

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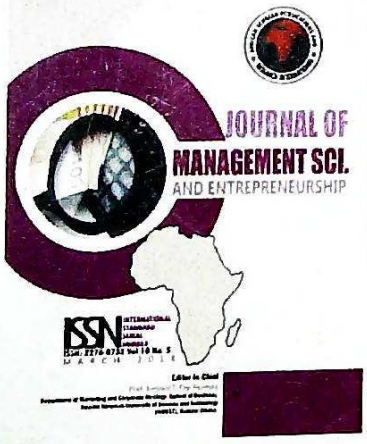
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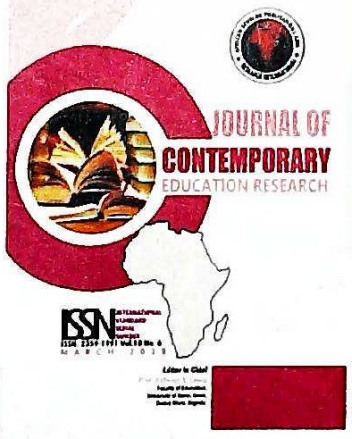
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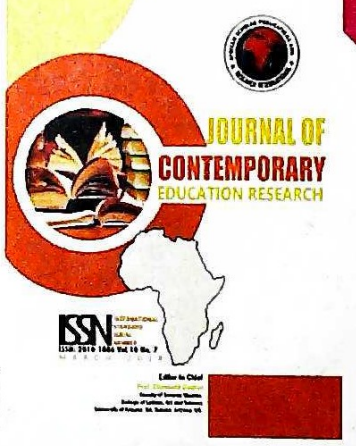
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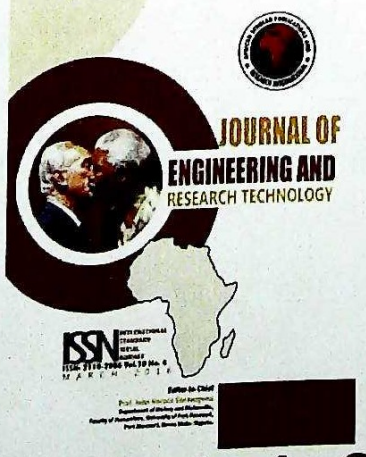


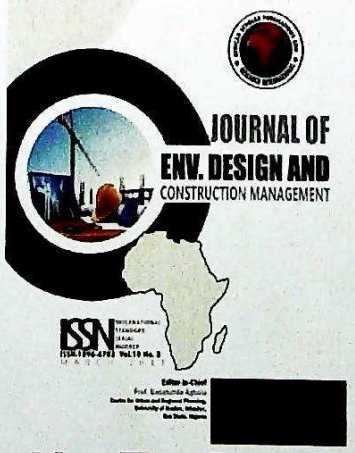












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