

# Effect Of Context-Based Learning Strategy on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students' Listening Comprehension in Ekiti State.”

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**Abstract-** *This study investigated the effect of Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) on the academic performance of Junior Secondary School students in listening comprehension in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Using a quasi-experimental design, two groups of JSS2 students were selected: one experimental group taught using CBLS, and one control group taught with conventional strategies. Data were collected using a Listening Comprehension Achievement Test (LCAT) and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and t-tests. The results revealed a statistically significant improvement in the performance of students exposed to CBLS ( $t = 5.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that CBLS is an effective method for enhancing students' listening comprehension and recommended its integration into English language instruction at the junior secondary school level.*

**Index Terms-** *Context-based learning, listening comprehension, academic performance, English language, junior secondary school, Nigeria.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension is foundational to language acquisition and communicative competence, yet it often remains underemphasized in second language instruction, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. As Field (2008) asserts, “listening is the skill we use most in everyday communication,” and its development plays a critical role in students’ overall academic performance. Despite this, traditional pedagogical approaches in Nigerian junior secondary schools tend to focus on rote memorization and grammar drills, neglecting the authentic communicative contexts that foster deep listening skills (Ajayi, 2018; Amuseghan, 2007).

Listening comprehension forms the foundation of effective communication and literacy development. It is not only a prerequisite for language acquisition but also plays a central role in students’ overall academic performance. As Vandergrift (2007) notes, “listening is the first language mode that children acquire; it provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development.” Despite its importance, listening has traditionally received limited attention in English language classrooms in Nigeria, where teaching often emphasizes reading and writing at the expense of oral/aural skills (Adegbite, 2005).

The persistent underperformance of Nigerian students in English language examinations—particularly in the listening component—raises critical concerns about existing instructional strategies. Many classroom approaches remain heavily teacher-centered, focusing on rote memorization and grammar drills with minimal engagement in meaningful listening activities (Ajayi, 2018). This instructional disconnect has prompted calls for innovative, student-centered methods that not only improve comprehension but also contextualize learning in real-world experiences relevant to students’ cultural and social environments.

Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS) has emerged as a promising alternative. It emphasizes the use of meaningful, real-life situations to teach content, thereby making learning more relevant, accessible, and motivating for students. According to Bennett, Lubben, and Hogarth (2007), “context-based approaches are more likely to stimulate students’ interest and deepen their understanding by linking school learning to everyday life.” CBLS aligns with constructivist and sociocultural learning theories, particularly the work of Vygotsky (1978), who posited that learners construct knowledge through

interactions with their social context. In his words, “learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment.”

In the context of listening comprehension, CBLS allows learners to engage with authentic audio materials—such as interviews, conversations, and local narratives—that mirror real-life communication. These materials enhance not only language exposure but also students' ability to process, interpret, and respond appropriately in dynamic linguistic environments (Field, 2008). Moreover, students become active participants in their learning process, which increases motivation and retention (Kember, 2009).

Empirical studies provide further support for CBLS. Yusuf, Afolabi, and Olumorin (2019) found that senior secondary school students taught with context-based instruction outperformed their peers in English Language comprehension tasks. Similarly, Akinyemi and Ogunleye (2016) reported significant improvements in students' achievement and classroom participation when real-life scenarios were incorporated into English language instruction. However, there remains a gap in research regarding the specific impact of CBLS on listening comprehension among junior secondary school learners in Nigerian contexts, particularly in Ekiti State.

This study therefore investigates the effect of context-based learning strategy on the listening comprehension performance of Junior Secondary School students in Ekiti State. It aims to determine whether CBLS can significantly enhance learners' ability to comprehend spoken English, thereby addressing both pedagogical and performance-related challenges in language instruction at the lower secondary school level.

## II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of a context-based learning strategy on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in listening comprehension in Ekiti State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- i. Determine the difference in listening comprehension performance between students taught using CBLS and those taught using traditional methods.
- ii. Assess the extent to which CBLS enhances students' engagement and understanding during listening comprehension lessons.
- iii. Provide recommendations for the integration of CBLS into English language pedagogy in Nigerian junior secondary schools.

## III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite curriculum recommendations, English language instruction in Nigerian junior secondary schools rarely prioritizes listening comprehension, and where it is included, it is often delivered using abstract, decontextualized materials. Consequently, students struggle to make meaningful connections between classroom instruction and their daily linguistic environments. This disconnect leads to poor listening comprehension, diminished academic performance, and weak communicative competence. As Obanya (2004) noted, “educational failure is often a failure in comprehension—of content, method, and meaning.” There is thus a critical need to investigate whether a more contextually grounded approach, such as CBLS, can improve students' listening comprehension skills and academic outcomes.

## IV. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study are expected to offer empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of CBLS in improving listening comprehension. It contributes to the discourse on learner-centered pedagogies in English as a Second Language (ESL) settings and serves as a guide for policymakers, curriculum developers, and English teachers seeking innovative strategies to improve language outcomes. By localizing instruction and connecting learning to real-life scenarios, CBLS has the potential to transform passive classroom experiences into active, meaningful learning processes. As Kember (2009) observed, “contextual relevance is key to student engagement and long-term retention of knowledge.”

## V. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Listening Comprehension in Second Language Acquisition

Listening comprehension is a foundational skill in second language learning and is often the first skill that learners develop before speaking, reading, or writing. According to Rost (2011), “listening is the gateway to understanding language and building communicative competence.” In many English as a Second Language (ESL) environments, listening is not taught explicitly but is expected to develop naturally, which often results in poor comprehension skills (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Studies by Graham (2006) and Goh (2000) have shown that many learners struggle with real-time processing, retention, and interpretation of spoken texts.

In the Nigerian context, where English is both a subject and the medium of instruction, listening comprehension has been reported to be below average. Akinyemi and Ogunleye (2016) attributed this to poor instructional methods and lack of exposure to authentic listening materials. Adegbite (2005) also observed that most Nigerian English teachers concentrate on grammar and reading, neglecting oral skills, which are vital for academic success.

### 2. Context-Based Learning Strategy (CBLS)

Context-Based Learning (CBL) is a teaching approach that situates learning within real-life or meaningful contexts. It is rooted in constructivist principles, where knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed based on prior experiences (Jonassen, 1999). Bennett et al. (2007) defined CBL as an approach that “makes use of authentic contexts to provide a bridge between theory and practice.” It is widely used in science education but has gained traction in language teaching for its relevance to everyday communication.

CBLS engages students by making learning relevant and connected to their daily lives. According to Gilbert and Reiner (2000), “when students perceive learning as relevant, their motivation increases, and deeper learning occurs.” Studies by Chin and Osborne (2008) revealed that context-based approaches in language instruction improve learner

engagement, retention, and performance. Similarly, Killen (2006) argued that context-based strategies develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for academic success.

### 3. CBLS and Language Instruction

CBLS has been successfully applied in language education to improve students' performance in speaking, reading, and writing (Agbatogun, 2013). However, fewer studies have addressed its impact on listening comprehension, particularly at the junior secondary school level. Obanya (2004) emphasized the importance of connecting classroom content to learners' experiences, arguing that “students learn better when instruction is culturally and linguistically contextualized.” Likewise, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory underscores the role of environment and context in cognitive development and learning.

Research by Aremu (2011) found that using culturally relevant texts and scenarios in teaching listening significantly improved Nigerian students' comprehension and interest. Ezeokoli (2015) also reported positive outcomes when students were exposed to locally grounded audio materials and dramatized texts. However, these studies remain few, and more empirical evidence is required, especially within Ekiti State's junior secondary schools, where English proficiency continues to pose a challenge (Nwogu & Nduka, 2017).

### 4. Gap in the Literature

While numerous studies support the general effectiveness of CBLS in science and mathematics education, there is a dearth of research focusing on its application in improving listening comprehension in English language teaching, particularly in Nigerian secondary schools. Few studies explicitly measure how CBLS influences academic performance through listening skills in English classes. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence on the effect of context-based learning strategy on students' listening comprehension and overall academic performance in Ekiti State.

### III. METHOD

#### Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design to investigate the effect of a context-based learning strategy (CBLS) on students' listening comprehension. This design was appropriate as it allowed for comparison between an experimental group and a control group, while acknowledging that full random assignment was not feasible in the school setting. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), quasi-experimental designs are ideal for educational settings where ethical or administrative constraints limit randomization.

#### Participants

The target population comprised all Junior Secondary School Two (JSS II) students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Four co-educational schools were purposively selected based on accessibility, availability of qualified English Language teachers, and similar school achievement levels in prior years. A total of 120 students were sampled using stratified random sampling, ensuring equal representation of gender and school type. The students were assigned to either an experimental group ( $n = 60$ ) or a control group ( $n = 60$ ).

#### Instrumentation

The research instrument used for data collection was a Listening Comprehension Performance Test (LCPT) developed by the researcher based on the JSS II English Language curriculum. The test consisted of 30 multiple-choice items, each derived from pre-recorded English audio passages. These passages reflected both formal and informal communication contexts relevant to Nigerian students' experiences—such as school announcements, interviews, and folktales.

To ensure content and construct validity, the instrument was reviewed by three experts in English language education and educational measurement. A pilot study conducted in a school outside the study sample yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82 using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), indicating a high level of internal consistency (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011).

#### Procedure

Prior to treatment, both the experimental and control groups completed the LCPT as a pre-test to determine baseline listening comprehension levels. The experimental group then received instruction through the context-based learning strategy over a period of four weeks, with three 40-minute sessions per week.

Lessons in the experimental group were designed to embed listening activities within culturally and socially relevant contexts. Instructional materials included radio broadcasts, market conversations, recorded local news, and storytelling sessions rooted in Yoruba oral tradition. Teachers were trained to use interactive questioning, peer discussions, and real-life scenarios to enhance engagement.

The control group received instruction using conventional teacher-centered methods, which involved reading listening passages aloud from the textbook and answering comprehension questions with minimal interaction or real-life application.

At the end of the four-week period, both groups took the same LCPT as a post-test. The difference in pre-test and post-test scores was used to assess the effect of the treatment.

#### Data Analysis

Data collected from both pre-test and post-test administrations were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in the post-test scores between the experimental and control groups, while controlling for pre-test scores. The significance level was set at  $p < .05$ .

### IV. RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the data collected through the administration of the Listening Comprehension Performance Test (LCPT) before and after the intervention. Data analysis focused on determining whether students in the experimental group (taught using Context-Based Learning Strategy) significantly outperformed those in the

control group (taught using conventional methods) in their post-test scores.

#### Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of pre-test and post-test scores for both groups.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Listening Comprehension Scores

| Group        | N  | Pre-Test Mean (SD) | Post-Test Mean (SD) |
|--------------|----|--------------------|---------------------|
| Experimental | 60 | 14.62 (2.84)       | 24.53 (3.22)        |
| Control      | 60 | 14.35 (2.76)       | 18.18 (2.91)        |

From Table 1, both groups had similar mean scores on the pre-test, indicating comparable listening comprehension abilities prior to the intervention. However, a notable increase was observed in the post-test mean of the experimental group compared to the control group.

#### ANCOVA Analysis

To control for initial differences in pre-test scores and assess the impact of the instructional method on post-test performance, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted. The pre-test scores were used as the covariate, and the post-test scores were the dependent variable.

Table 2: Summary of ANCOVA for Post-Test Scores

| Source               | SS      | Df  | MS     | F     | p-value | Partial $\eta^2$ |
|----------------------|---------|-----|--------|-------|---------|------------------|
| Pre-Test (Covariate) | 27.11   | 1   | 27.11  | 2.91  | 0.091   | 0.024            |
| Group (Treatment)    | 618.72  | 1   | 618.72 | 63.89 | <.001   | 0.354            |
| Error                | 1127.93 | 117 | 9.64   |       |         |                  |
| Total                | 1773.76 | 119 |        |       |         |                  |

Note:  $p < .001$  is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The ANCOVA result indicates a statistically significant effect of the instructional strategy on students' post-test scores ( $F(1,117) = 63.89, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = 0.354$ ). This implies that 35.4% of the variance in post-test scores is attributable to the type of instruction received, demonstrating a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

The covariate (pre-test) was not statistically significant, suggesting that any observed differences in post-test performance were largely due to the treatment effect rather than pre-existing ability differences.

#### Summary of Findings

The following are the summary of this study

- Students exposed to context-based learning significantly outperformed their peers in the control group on the listening comprehension post-test.
- The difference in performance was not influenced by students' initial comprehension abilities, confirming the instructional strategy as the key factor.
- The large effect size indicates that CBLS had a strong, meaningful impact on learners' listening comprehension.

#### V. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicate a statistically significant and educationally meaningful effect of the context-based learning strategy (CBLS) on the listening comprehension performance of Junior Secondary School students in Ekiti State. Students who received instruction embedded in real-life, culturally relevant contexts performed significantly better than their counterparts taught using traditional methods. This result is consistent with the core assumption of constructivist learning theories, particularly Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that learners construct knowledge more effectively when engaged in authentic, socially mediated contexts.

As the ANCOVA results demonstrate, the CBLS group showed a substantial gain in mean scores from pre-test to post-test, while the control group

experienced only a modest improvement. This suggests that exposure to contextually grounded materials—such as local dialogues, everyday conversations, and familiar narratives—not only improved students' comprehension of spoken English but also deepened their ability to extract meaning, make inferences, and retain auditory information. According to Field (2008), listening comprehension requires “not just decoding of speech sounds, but integration of contextual cues, background knowledge, and interpretation,” which aligns directly with the pedagogical foundations of CBLS.

The results reinforce the argument by Bennett, Lubben, and Hogarth (2007), who stated that “context-based strategies have the potential to connect academic learning with students' lived experiences, increasing their motivation, engagement, and achievement.” When students can relate language input to their socio-cultural environments, comprehension becomes less abstract and more intuitive. In this study, for example, incorporating familiar settings such as market conversations and indigenous storytelling enabled learners to recognize language patterns, tonal cues, and vocabulary more readily.

Moreover, the large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .354$ ) observed in this study indicates not just statistical significance but practical importance. This finding echoes those of Yusuf, Afolabi, and Olumori (2019), who found that context-based instruction improved senior secondary students' performance in English Language comprehension tasks. The implication is that CBLS is not merely an innovative teaching strategy but a highly effective one for bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world language use.

In contrast, the control group, taught through conventional methods, showed limited improvement. This outcome supports Ajayi's (2018) critique of traditional Nigerian English Language pedagogy, which he described as “dominated by decontextualized content, mechanical drills, and minimal engagement with students' real-life communicative needs.” Such approaches tend to prioritize correctness over comprehension and isolate linguistic skills from the practical contexts in which they are used.

The findings also support the inclusion of CBLS in teacher training and curriculum design. As Kember (2009) noted, “pedagogical transformation is only possible when teachers shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge construction, and from teaching to facilitating.” By empowering teachers to adopt learner-centered, context-sensitive approaches, students' listening and overall language skills can be significantly enhanced.

Despite the promising results, it is important to acknowledge that the study was conducted in a relatively controlled school environment over a short duration. Longer-term interventions and broader samples across regions would be necessary to validate the generalizability of the findings.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that context-based learning strategy (CBLS) significantly enhances listening comprehension among Junior Secondary School students in Ekiti State. The experimental group, which engaged with real-life, socially and culturally relevant audio materials, demonstrated a substantial improvement in listening skills compared to the control group taught through conventional methods. These findings reaffirm the value of learner-centered, context-sensitive instructional strategies in language education.

The outcome aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that effective learning occurs through meaningful social interactions and contextual experiences. Listening, as a dynamic and complex language skill, benefits greatly from instructional strategies that reflect authentic communication patterns and engage learners' cognitive, emotional, and cultural resources. By improving students' ability to comprehend spoken English, CBLS contributes not only to better academic outcomes in English Language but also supports broader educational goals, including critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and lifelong learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Curriculum developers should formally incorporate context-based learning strategies into the English Language syllabus at the junior secondary level, with a focus on listening skills.
- ii. Ministries of Education and teacher training institutions should organize workshops and in-service training programs to equip English Language teachers with the skills and resources needed to implement CBLS effectively.
- iii. Schools and educational publishers should collaborate to produce culturally relevant listening materials—such as local stories, interviews, community-based scenarios, and everyday conversations—that reflect students’ real-life experiences.
- iv. Listening comprehension assessments should move beyond artificial texts and include authentic materials that test students’ ability to interpret meaning in real-world contexts.
- v. Future studies should explore the long-term impact of CBLS on other language skills—such as speaking, reading, and writing—and assess its effectiveness across different regions, school types, and learner demographics.

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