

Teachers' Use and Availability of Facilities for Oral Narrative Techniques in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State

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Abstract—The study examined the use of Oral Narrative Techniques by pre-school and primary school teachers in fostering speaking skills among children in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. It also assessed the adequacy of Oral Narrative Resources in pre-school and primary schools in the study area. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Samples for the study which included one hundred pre-school and primary schools teachers were randomly selected from ten public and ten private nursery/primary schools in the study area. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. The instruments used for the study are “Teachers Use of Oral Narrative Techniques Questionnaires” (TUONTQ) and Item Inventory of Oral Narratives Resources. Data collected were analysed descriptively using simple percentage. Results showed that most of the teachers in the study area use of narrative techniques to a certain extent. Finding also revealed that orals narrative resources were available in the schools, though not in adequate quantities. It was recommended among others that oral narrative resources should be made available in schools to enhance development of speaking skills among pre-school and primary school children.

Keywords—Availability, Facilities, Oral Narrative Technique, Teachers' Use

I. INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition is vital in the life of a child. Language development is one of the developmental domains that need to be developed in a child for growth, understanding and social interaction. The acquisition of language is one of the most remarkable achievements of early childhood. By age five, children essentially master the sound system and grammar of their language and acquire a vocabulary of thousands of words. Oral language is the least formal style of language; it is usually highly contextualized with information that supports the exchange such as objects being discussed, facial expressions, gestures, and international cues. It has to

be fostered in children for them to understand their environment and communicate well with their environment through speaking.

Speaking skills refer to the ability of the children to be able to talk and understand the nature as a result of the experience gained from the narration of story, songs, poem, etc. taught in the classroom. This skill could be fostered by rich environment where the child is, meaning that the environment needs to be rich. Therefore, there is need for teachers, parents and adults in the environment to help in developing language skill in children. One of the goals of primary education in Nigeria is inculcation of permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively. For a child to speak very well there must be acquisition of some skills that enhance speaking. Pupils can learn literacy skills through instruction and practice of speaking, reading, writing and listening (Grayson, 2013).

There are many methods by which speaking skills can be fostered. One of the methods is oral narrative techniques which could be acquired by teachers teaching their pupils in the classroom with the use of stories, poem rhymes, and games and so on. Labov (2002) defined narrative as a method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred. Researchers have analyzed children's narrative skills from different dimensions. Those dimensions share some similarities, and the key dimensions of narrative skills can be synthesized as story structure, cohesion knowledge, contextual knowledge, evaluation, storybook language, and syntactic complexity (Level & Senechal, 2011).

Zipes (1995) opined that oral narrative technique is concerned with how we learn what happens, for example, events that normally follow each other in

some chronological sequence. Oral narratives are monologues rather than dyadic, but they contain dialogue that is similar in style to conversation. Narratives are in a middle ground between familiar oral language styles and more difficult literate forms (August & Shanahan, 2006). Furthermore, learning to speak through games is another method of narrative technique that could be seen as an effective way to develop speaking skills for young learners. Not only are games important parts of their everyday life, the game setting also allows children to co-operate and interact which is a natural way for developing speaking skills. When the children speak to prepare and run the games, they are not just answering questions or asking questions, but interacting with the others by making suggestions, responding to others' suggestions, asking questions and evaluating the answers from the others (Olsen and Kegan, 1992). In other words, oral narrative techniques promote interaction among the pupils.

Moreover, some core elements of co-operative learning could be observed as children develop their speaking skills. Some of these elements include positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and group skills; and group processing (Marzano, Pickering & Pollock, 2001). For instance, to optimize classroom oral language learning opportunities, there is need to make time each day for pupils to talk to each other while working in a variety of situations, including paired reading, group research projects, group work at learning centers, brainstorming in writing topic and sharing news with the entire class. Tales and stories are effective and useful listening materials for children to develop listening comprehension and literacy both in their first and second language (Zevenbergenn and Whitehurst, 2003). Storytelling is one of the oldest methods of communicating ideas and images (Mello, 2001).

The classroom is a natural environment for a large variety of oral language learning opportunities. As a teacher, one can organize his or her classroom in ways that encourage the two most important elements of oral language development, comprehensible input and social interaction, keeping in mind that a predictable schedule helps pupils and provides easily acquired basic vocabulary with the repeated routines. In addition to the basic routines of roll call, recess, snack, lunch, and dismissal, the use of routine

instructional events also provides oral language learning opportunities. Some typical routine instructional events include circle time, literature study circles, process writing, projects, theme studies, and other lesson sequences in content areas, such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

These instructional events mentioned maintain the same structure while the content changes, they provide a familiar routine with repetition of familiar language that scaffolds children participation and learning. For example, a literature study circle has a small-group discussion format centered on one book. The format remains stable throughout the year, but the content, that is, the book being discussed, changes. Another stable feature of the literature study circle is the discussion of literary elements and the informal turn-taking procedures. Thus pupils become familiar and comfortable with the literature study circle is an interactional format that supports their oral language use and development. Whether teachers are engaging their pupils in literature study, process writing, or theme studies, it is always important to review their own instructional delivery to incorporate additional cues to convey meaning, especially nonverbal cues such as dramatization, gesture, pictures, graphic organizers, and concrete objects. Other oral techniques that could be used in the class include songs, drama, show-tell, tape-recording, children's recreations of wordless book stories, taping and dubbing a television show and riddles and jokes.

In spite of the numerous advantages embedded in teaching and learning through narrative techniques that lead to speaking development skills in children, researches have revealed that teaching and learning activities that should involve the use of oral narrative techniques in our schools are not effectively utilized by teachers (Smith, 2009). Teachers in class expose learners to listening comprehension, and answers are mostly supplied by the teachers. This situation has been detrimental to the development of speaking skills in children. Similarly, it is not certain whether pre-school and primary school teachers in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State are familiar with this technique or whether necessary facilities for using it are available in pre-school centres and primary schools in the area. It is against this background that the researchers have decided to embark on this study to find out whether pre-school and primary school teachers in Ondo West Local

Government Area of Ondo State use Oral Narrative Techniques in developing language skills in children. The study also seeks to find out whether resources for using these techniques are available and adequate. Findings of the study will assist in recommending appropriately what should be done by teachers, school management and other stakeholders in fostering effective use of this method. Hence, this study.

Research Questions

1. Do Teachers use Oral Narrative Techniques in developing speaking skills?
2. How adequate are the facilities for oral narrative techniques skills?

II. METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed descriptive survey research design for this study. The population for the study consisted of all the teachers teaching Kindergarten, Nurseries and Primaries 1 and 2 in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Stratified Random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) public primary schools and ten (10) private nursery/primary schools. Five (5) teachers were selected in each school making a total of 100 teachers in all. These were teachers teaching kindergarten, nursery and primaries 1 and 2. The researchers made use of two instruments for the study. The first one was a questionnaire titled

“Teachers Use of Oral Narrative Technique Questionnaire (TUONTQ)”. The TUONTQ has two sections A and B. Section sought to get demographic information of the respondents while section B contained 10 items questions which sought to determine teachers use of Oral Narrative Technique. The second instrument was an Item Inventory containing a list of Oral Narrative resources which sought to determine the availability and adequacy of the resources in the schools. The researchers first paid visits to the schools used for the study and discussed with the school authorities. Discussions were also made with the teachers before the questionnaires were distributed to them. The researchers went back after a week to retrieve the questionnaires. Data collected were analysed descriptively by using sample percentages.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The questionnaire was given to two experts in Language Education for necessary correction and critique to ensure face and content validity. To ensure reliability of the instrument, it was subjected to reliability test using Kuder-Richardson and the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.82

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One: Do teachers use oral narrative techniques in developing children speaking skills?

Table1: Teachers’ use of oral narrative techniques in developing children speaking skills

	Items	Yes	%	No	%
1	I have heard about oral narrative skills before	76	76	24	24
2	I develop learning materials to provide for the introduction of story-telling	83	83	17	17
3	I go for different oral narrative techniques training programme that prepare me to cope effectively with the use of it in classroom situation	45	45	55	55
4	I download multimedia stories and music from internet to teach in my class	34	34	66	66
5	I create phonological awareness through hearing and thinking about language to help my pupils in learning and reading	49	49	51	51
6	I offer my pupils the opportunities to tell stories, riddles and jokes	79	79	21	21
7	I make use of oral narrative techniques in the class	63	63	37	37
8	My teaching fosters speaking development skills in children	53	53	47	47
9	I use different oral narrative facilities to develop speaking skills in my class	57	57	43	43
10	My school organizes training on the use of oral narrative facilities in my class	38	38	62	62
11	I make use of drama in presenting learning ideas	42	42	58	58

12	I turn poems into songs	86	86	14	14
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Table 1 shows teachers' use of oral narrative techniques in developing speaking skills in young children. Thus, 76% have heard about oral narrative skills before while 24% have not heard, 83% said that they develop learning materials to provide for the introduction of story-telling while 17% do not, 45% established that they go for different oral narrative techniques training programme that prepare them to cope effectively with the use of oral narrative techniques while 55% did not, 34% said that they do download multimedia stories and music from internet to teach in their classes while 66% do not, 49% create phonological awareness through hearing and thinking about language to help their pupils in learning and reading, while 51% did not. The table also revealed that 79% do offer their pupils the opportunities to tell stories, riddles and jokes in classrooms while 21% did not, 63% make use of oral narrative techniques in the class while 37% do not, 53% said that their teaching foster speaking development skills in their pupils, while 47% did not.

Also, 57% of the respondents affirm that they use different oral narrative facilities to develop speaking skills in their classes while 43% do make use of the facilities, 38% acknowledge that their schools organize training on the use of oral narrative facilities in their class while 62% said their schools do not organise such trainings. About 42% of the respondents make use of drama in presenting learning ideas while 58% do not. Finally, it could be seen from this table that 86% turn poems to songs while 14% do not.

The above results generally show that teachers in pre-schools and primary schools in the study area make use of Oral Narrative Technique to develop speaking skills in children. This result is in agreement with Mello (2001) that story telling is one of the oldest methods of communicating ideas and images.

Research Question Two: How adequate are the facilities for Oral Narrative Techniques skills?

Table 2: Adequacy of Facilities for Oral Narrative Techniques.

Ad- Adequate		NAd-Not Adequate			
	Items	Ad	%	NAd	%
1	Language Teaching Aids	34	34	66	66
2	Dubbing TV shows	32	32	68	68
3	Radio	46	46	54	54
4	Instructional Television	44	44	56	56
5	Board game materials	26	26	74	74
6	Tape Recorder/Player	72	72	28	28
7	Materials for show and tell	61	61	39	39

From table 2, items identified as adequate are tape recorder/player (72%) and materials for show and tell (61%). About (34%) of the teachers indicated that Language teaching aids are not adequate. Also, other items that are inadequate are radio (46%), instructional television (26%), clubbing TV shows (32%) and board game materials (26%).

Available data from the study revealed that majority of the sampled teachers have heard of oral narrative skills before and an appreciable percentage of them prepare their classrooms and learning materials to provide for the use of this skills. They also attend workshops and utilize knowledge and skills gathered from such training to creatively present their lessons in such a way that fosters development of speaking skills in the children.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The above results generally show that teachers in pre-schools and primary schools in the study area make use of Oral Narrative Technique to develop speaking skills in children. This result is in agreement with Mello (2001) that story telling is one of the oldest methods of communicating ideas and images. This positive disposition to the use of this technique cannot be unconnected with their knowledge and awareness of the importance of the use of songs, stories, drama, games, poems e.t.c in fostering language development generally and speaking skills in particular. These findings are also in agreement with Grayson (2013) that pupils can learn literacy skills through instruction and practice of speaking, reading, writing and listening. This finding also

supports Olsen and Kegan (1992) that when Children speak to prepare and run games, they are not just answering or asking questions, but interacting with the others by making suggestions, responding to others' suggestions, asking questions and evaluating the answers from the others.

Despite the fact that the sampled teachers use oral narrative techniques, it could also be seen from the results that resources that can facilitate effective use of this method are not adequate in the schools. Facilities such as language teaching aids, radio, and instructional television and board game materials are not adequate. This is a reflection of the general state of instructional facilities in our schools especially the public schools which are owned by the government. This will no doubt hinder effective utilization of this technique.

V. CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that teachers at pre-school and lower primary school levels foster the development of speaking skills in children the use of oral narrative techniques. Children language development especially speaking skills are fostered when they are engaged in rhymes, songs, dram, folk tales, games e.t.c. It is therefore important that early childhood teachers develop skills of effective use of these techniques in the classroom.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. Teachers should plan their lessons around the use of different resources that can foster speaking skills.
- ii. Facilities that will promote the use of this technique should be made available in early childhood centres and primary schools.
- iii. Teachers should plan their instruction in such that will encourage effective use of oral narrative techniques in the classroom.

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