International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Impact of Different Methods of Picture Presentation on Students' Performance in Oral French Proficiency as 'Words' in Cross River State

Eroma Okimba Ayang

Department of French Education, College of Cross River State Education, Akamkpa
08065185680; okimbayang@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

There has been growing concern about the best method of teaching which will make for better performance of students of secondary schools in Oral French Examinations. The effect of pictures when used by teachers on students' performance in oral French has not been empirically determined. The study, therefore, was aimed at determining the effects of the mode of picture presentation as an instructional material on students' performance in articulating Oral French sounds as 'Words'. The pretest-posttest, control group design was adopted. Forty-nine SS1 students were randomly assigned to the different modes of presentation of pictures namely: picture presentation after and before writing word examples on the board and word examples only without pictures, which was used as a control. The students were pretested, taught and post-tested using a test of Oral French. The findings showed that the use of pictures, especially, its presentation after writing word examples on the board to concretize and contrast the words, facilitated the learning and performance of students in Oral French.

Introduction

Among the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, speaking is the cornerstone of language teaching. This is the ability to express oneself clearly in a manner that is nationally and internationally acceptable. It is also the study of speech sounds, which helps one to make accurate pronunciation of words (Okwo and Anozie, 2010). It comprises the speech sounds, how they are combined, and their stress and intonation for the proper functioning of these in actual speech production. Generally, we set out to learn a foreign language to desire to expand our possibilities of communication, especially with native speakers to express feelings and/or to resolve matters between individuals or groups (Spencer-Oatey and Zegural, 2013). Teaching a language generally requires the development of the mastery of that language for communication. On the other hand, however, learning of language whether a first or a foreign language like French is not an easy process. It requires efforts at developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing some kind of interaction (Burns and Seidlhoper, 2013). To be able to use the language in an interactive way and in any communicative activity such as taking turns listening and speaking in conversation requires and involves more than one language skill. Therefore, there is a need to find ways of improving the spoken French of students. The picture is thus, one of the learning resources that could assist in improving students spoken French.

According to Erikson in Okwo and Anozie (2010), the picture could be defined as instructional material that can be used to convey meaning without complete dependence upon verbal symbols or language. In other words, it is the method of supplementing spoken words with diagrams, models, or similar means to concretize them. The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (Hornby, 2001), defines pictures as a design or representation made by various means such as painting, drawing, or photography; a description so vivid as to suggest a mental image or give an accurate idea of something. From these definitions, the relevance of picture in instruction, cannot be overemphasized. Picture appeals to visual learners who suffer in speaking and listening-based classrooms. The picture also offers an opportunity for movement and a multi-dimensional perspective which will reach our kinaestic learners. Picture is a learning resource which appeals to the sense of sight. It is a valuable means of summarizing information and processing ideas. It concretizes learning and makes information processing easier. It increases the interest and motivation of the learners on the learning task. Above all, the picture is available and cheap and may not require projection viewing. Picture may be presented before giving word example in which case it can act as an advance organizer. It may be presented after giving an example with possible post-organizing effects. Each presentation mode presents a peculiar change, which may produce differential effects on learning. It does appear that pictures may facilitate the learning of words.

'Word' is the larger form of the segmental features of oral French, (vowels and consonants) formed by a syllable or combination of syllables. Hence 'word' as used here, refers to the connected form of vowel and consonant sounds and its articulation in isolation. The pronunciation of sounds of a word in isolation is easier as its stress and intonation are readily determined than their pronunciation in connected speech like phrases and sentences. So, words in this research represent the whole sounds emphasized in monosyllabic form. 'Word' therefore, is an aspect of oral French proficiency and the only form where combined sounds could be pronounced in isolation for emphasis.

Proficiency is defined, according to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) and Merriam-Webster (2017), as the advancement in knowledge or skill. Proficiency is further defined as a mastery of a specific behaviour or skill demonstrated by a consistent superior programme, measured against established or popular standards. Going by these definitions, one can deduce that oral French proficiency is a student's advancement in his natural aptitude to perform beautifully or excellently in the oral practice of the language, be it in the classroom settings and/or outside the classroom. Oral proficiency in the French language therefore includes the ability of the individual student to exhibit the acquired knowledge to speak, read, listen and write in French successfully and skillfully. Of course, when the students develop this aptitude in French, they will be able to understand and achieve very well in the French language in real-life situations, academics and most especially with native speakers.

Statement of the Problem

Most French classes are dominated by written work and little or no attention is given to oral work. Even during the class titled Oral Expression almost only written work is done and in English or the mother tongue too. This does not give the students the possibility of developing the necessary competence for oral comprehension and production. Thus, this investigation will be informative and provide positive change in French teaching, especially in the teaching of oral skills.

Also, students' performances in the oral French have been poor as indicated in WAEC and NECO results yearly. This could be observed from the students' spoken French as well as their results. The poor performance could have been due to the predominant use of verbal symbols in oral French instruction. Although the French curriculum in the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2012) insists on the use of a learning resource approach, most French teachers are conservative and do not apply instructional materials in the teaching of oral French. Therefore, there is a need to find ways of improving the spoken French of students. The picture is thus, one of the learning resources that could assist in improving students spoken French.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to find out the extent to which the mode of picture presentation can enhance students' performance in articulating the sounds of oral French proficiency in connected form as 'word'. Especially, it intends to find out the:

1.   Effect of different modes of picture presentation namely: picture before word examples, word examples before pictures and word example only on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French proficiency in connected form as 'word'.

2.   Influence of gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French proficiency in connected form as 'word'.

3.   Interaction effect of mode and gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating oral French proficiency of sounds in connected form as 'word'.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1.   To what extent do the modes of picture presentation namely: picture before word examples, word examples before pictures and word examples only on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French proficiency in connected form as 'word'?

2.   What is the influence of gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French proficiency in connected form as 'word'?

3.   To what extent does the interaction effect of mode and gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating oral French proficiency of sounds in connected form as 'word'?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1.   There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in articulating the sounds of oral French in connected form as 'word' when exposed to the following modes of picture presentation: word examples before picture, picture before word examples and word examples only.

2.   There is no significant difference in the mean scores of students in articulating the sounds of oral French in connected form as 'word' due to gender.

3.   There is no significant interaction effect of mode and gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating oral French sounds in connected form as 'word'.

Methodology

Research Design

The research employed an experimental research design. A pretest-posttest, control group design was used to find out the extent to which the modes of the words-pictures, picture-words and words-only will affect the mean achievement scores of students in articulating oral French proficiency sounds as 'word'. The design is as follows:

E_1: O_1 Xw-p O_2

E_2: O_3 Xp-w O_4

C: O_5 Xw O_6

Where:

E_1 and E_2 are experimental groups 1 and 2 respectively;

C is the control group

Xw-p is the word before picture mode

Xp-w is a picture before word mode

Xw is word-only mode.

O_1, O_3 and O_5 are pretest scores, for groups 1, 2 and 3 respectively

O2, O4 and O6 are post-test scores for group 1,2 & 3 respectively

Area of the Study

The research was carried out in Secondary Schools in the Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State. **Population of the Study**

The population of the research comprised forty-nine (49) SS1 students.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of forty-nine (49) SS1 students using the purposive sampling techniques to select schools were used.

Development of Instructional Materials

The following instructional materials were developed for the study. These are pictures and lesson plans.

Pictures

A total of sixteen (16) pictures were developed. The pictures were drawn by a graphic artist and validated by two French lecturers and one Educational Technologist.

Lesson Plan

A total of six lessons were developed. These were based on the aspects of oral French taught. Each treatment group has a different and corresponding lesson plan. They were validated and corrections suggested were reflected in the final lesson plans.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for collecting data is a six-item oral French test. The same instrument was used for the three groups. The test covered the contents which have to do with articulating the sounds of oral French in connected form as 'word', such as long and short vowels, and voiced and voiceless consonants. It will consist of multiple-choice items, each with four options of which only one of the options is correct. The test was validated by three French lecturers.

Experimental Procedure

All the forty-nine (49) SS1 students were called out and forty-nine ballot papers numbered "1,2 or 3" were given out while each student was allowed to pick a ballot paper.

Those who picked ballot number '1' were pre-tested and exposed to the mode "words before picture". The word examples of each sound were written on the board, and pronounced after writing the symbol for the sound. The students pronounced each word after the teacher, and the students were drilled on the right pronunciation before the pictures of the words were presented to contrast the minimal pairs. The students were also drilled on the right pronunciation of the words after presenting the pictures.

Those who picked ballot number '2' were presented and exposed to the mode "pictures before words". The sounds were written on the board and pronounced by the teacher. The students pronounced after the teacher. Then the picture of each word that bears each sound was presented to the students by the teacher as an example of each sound. Each word represented by the picture was pronounced by the teacher and the students were drilled on the right pronunciation of each word. Then, those word examples were written out on the board to contrast the minimal pairs of the sounds used and students were drilled more on the right pronunciation of each word.

Those who picked ballot number '3' were pretested and exposed to the mode 'words-only'. To this group, the sounds were written on the board and pronounced by the teacher. Next, word examples of each sound were written on the board and pronounced by the teacher. Then, the students were drilled on the right pronunciation.

For group 1 which comprised five (5) males and eleven females, each word was given and pronounced for the students before matching with an appropriate picture. At the end of the teaching, the post-test was administered.

For group '2' which comprised four (4) males and twelve females, the sound symbols were written on the board and pronounced. Then the pictures for each sound were shown to the students before writing the word example of each sound in minimal pairs on the board for further pronunciation and drill. The post-test was administered at the end of the teaching period.

For group '3' which comprised seven (7) males and ten (10) females, no picture was shown to them. They were taught with word examples of each sound only. The students were tested also with the same test instrument at the end of treatment.

Method of Data Analysis

The mean score ($\bar{X}$) and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The purpose of the study guided the presentation of the results.

1. Effect of modes: word examples before pictures, pictures before word examples and word examples only on the student's mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'.

Table 1: Mean ($\bar{X}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) scores of post-test 'word' achievement scores of students in the three groups.

Group	Number (N)	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Word before picture	16	4.88	1.78
Picture before word	16	4.63	1.12
Word only	17	3.59	1.12
Total	49	4.35	1.47

Table 1, shows that the students in group 1, who were presented with word examples before pictures with a Mean ($\bar{X}$) of 4.88 and a Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.78 did slightly better than those in group 2, who were presented with picture first before giving word examples with $\bar{X}$ = 4.63 and SD = 1.12, who in turn did better than those in group 3 who were taught with word examples without pictures with $\bar{X}$ = 3.59 and SD = 1.12.

Table 2: Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of Post-test achievement scores in 'word' by treatment (mode) and gender

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance of F	Remark
Covariates	8.913	1	8.913	5.083	0.02	
Pre-test 'word'	8.913	1	8.913	5.083	0.02	
Main effect	15.606	3	5.202	2.967	0.04	
Gender	0.733	1	0.733	0.418	0.52	NS
Treatment	15.426	2	7.713	4.398	0.01	S
2-way interaction	4.932	2	2.466	1.406	0.25	
Gender X Treatment	4.932	2	2.466	1.406	0.25	NS

Explained	29.452	6	4.909	2.799	0.02	
Residual	73.650	42	1.754			
Total	103.102	48	2.148			

S = Significant at 0.050   NS = Not Significant at 0.050

Table 2, shows that the calculated F value for treatment is 4.398 at a 0.01 level of significance. The value is thus significant at 0.05. therefore, the null hypothesis concerning the mean scores of the three groups in 'word' is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students in the three groups in the articulation of oral French sounds as 'word'.

2. Influence of gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'.

Table 3: Mean scores in 'word' due to gender.

Gender	Number (N)	Mean (X̄)
Male	16	4.56
Female	33	4.24
Total	49	4.35

Table 3, shows that students who are males with a mean of 4.56 did slightly better than female students with a mean of 4.24.

Table2 shows that the calculated F value for gender is 0.415 and is significant at 0.52. The value is therefore not significant at 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores due to gender in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'.

3. Interaction effect of mode and gender on students' mean achievement scores in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'.

Table 4, shows that in the interaction of mode and gender in 'word', the female students with a mean (X̄) of 5.09 performed better than the males with X̄ = 4.40 in 'word' before picture. However, the male with X̄ = 5.25 did better than the female with X̄ = 4.42 in 'picture before word'. Male students with X̄ = 4.29 did better than the female with X̄ = 3.10 in 'word-only'.

As shown in Table 2, the interaction effect of mode and gender has calculated an F value of 1.406 which is significant at 0.25. The value is not significant at 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis concerning the interaction effect of mode and gender on students' mean achievement scores in the articulation of sounds of oral French as 'word'.

Discussion and Interpretation of Results

The group presented with word examples before pictures during instruction performed best followed by the group presented with pictures before word examples and finally the group presented with word examples only. However, there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of the students exposed to the word example before pictures and word examples only mode in favour of the former.

It is, therefore, clear that the use of pictures facilitates learning of sounds as 'words' in oral French class, and that the best mode of presenting pictures is after giving word examples. The presence of the pictures concretized the learnt examples and provided a non-verbal channel for further contrasting of the minimal pairs. The pictures performed these functions best when they were used as post organizers. This is so because, oral French which is concerned primarily with sound, the presentation and pronouncing of the word example are required before the presentation of the pictures that concretized and organized the minimal pairs more effectively in the memory of the learners. The presentation of pictures before word examples became less effective than the presentation after word examples because the words which are being contrasted have not been presented. However, this mode appears to be better than word examples without picture mode which denies the learners the opportunity of non-verbal encoding and processing of information.

The results are in agreement with the findings of Anieke (2006) and Jordi, Jean-Luc, Tahar and Pierce (2006). Anneke (2006) found that the presentation of recorded audio before the picture had a little advantage over the picture before audio and the audio-only mode on students' achievement in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'. Jordi et al (2006) found that the efficacy of audio-visual interaction in speech perception is due to some complementariness, and some synergy between audition and vision. These two factors operating at information and information processing levels respectively provided the modes with pictures, the advantage which facilitated learning over the mode without pictures.

On the other hand, the male did slightly better than the female. However, there is no significant influence of gender on students' performance in learning oral French sounds such as 'word'. Also, no mode of presentation is best for any particular gender. Hence, there is no significant interaction effect of mode and gender on students' achievement in learning oral French sounds as 'word'. Therefore, when a particular mode of presentation is used, it benefits the students equally irrespective of gender.

Conclusion

The following conclusion can be drawn from the results:

1. writing out-of-word examples on board and pronouncing them first before presenting a pictures to contrast and concretize the pronounced words is the most effective mode concerning the student's achievement in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'. The conventional mode that does not involve the use of pictures is the least effective.

2. Male and female students performed equally in articulating the sounds of oral French as 'word'. Genders do not facilitate or hinder the learning rate of oral French.

3. No mode of presentation is particularly effective for any gender interaction effect of mode and genders.

Education Implication

The results of the research imply educational practice. The use of pictures during oral French instruction improves students' performance in oral French as 'word'. Thus, the conventional method of teaching oral French in which picture is not used, is partly responsible for students' poor performance in oral French.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should use pictures while teaching oral French for effectiveness.

2. Pictures should be presented after the pronunciation of words to concretize the meaning of the word used.

References

Anieke, E.O. (2006). Effect of Pictures on the performance of Students Learning Oral English from an Audio System. Unpublished PGDE Project, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Balogun, T. A. (2016). L'emergence des typologies des me'thodesou approached pour ensegner le francais langue e'trange're: comment se de'crocher? Journal of Modern European languages and literatures, 5 (1), 192-206.

Burns, A. & Seidlhofer, B. (2013). Speaking and pronunciation. In N. Schmitt (Ed), An introduction to applied linguistics (2nd edition, pp. 197-214), London: Rutledge.

Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Hornby, A. S. (2001). Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jordi, R., Jean-Luc, S., Tahar, L. & Pierce, E. (2006). Complementary and Synergy in Bimodal Speech: Auditory, Visual and Audio-Visual Identification of French Oral Vowels in Noise. Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, 103(6), 3677 – 3689.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2017). Merriam-Webster incorporated. Retrieved 10 May 2019 from https://www.merriam-webster.com/.../.

Okwo, F. A. & Anozie, P.O. (2010). Effect of different modes of picture presentation on students' achievement in oral English as word. Journal of CUDIMAC, 3(1),293-304.

Spencer-Oatey, H. & Zegaral, V. (2013). Pragmatics. In N. Schmitt (Ed). An introduction to Applied Linguistics (pp.1-15. Routledge: Milton Park, USA.