



International Journal of Current Research and Academic Review

ISSN: 2347-3215 Volume 3 Number 7 (July-2015) pp. 13-22

www.ijcrar.com



An assessment of senior secondary students' introversion/extroversion level and performance in oral English in Kwara State, Nigeria

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KEYWORDS

Introversion,
Extroversion,
Performance, Test of
Oral English

A B S T R A C T

The focus of this study was to investigate the students' introversion/extroversion level and performance in Oral English. This study adopted descriptive comparative survey method. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 students from each of the three Senatorial Districts of Kwara State. Two instruments were used for this study, (1) researcher- designed English and test of oral questionnaire (ETOQ) with a twenty-item questionnaire and (2) researcher-designed students' introversion/extroversion questionnaire (SIEQ) also consisting of a twenty-item questionnaire. Test-retest reliability method was used to ascertain the reliabilities of the instruments by using Pearson Product Moment correlation co-efficient, and found to have reliability indices of 0.63 and 0.60 respectively, indicatives of being reliable instruments. The four research questions were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation Statistics while the two hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistics at 0.05 significant level. The findings revealed that despite the fact that general level of the students' introversion/extroversion and performance in English was good, the students' introversion and extroversion level and their performance in test of oral English was poor. It was recommended that teachers of English should pay more attention to test of oral English just as they do to other aspects of English language teaching. Teacher educators would also need to encompass teacher training programme that places greater emphasis on the use of test of oral to enable them attain high level of proficiency in oral English.

Introduction

Language as an instrument in man's life is used for a number of functions to achieve man's aims and aspirations in life. It is used

to gain entry into the larger world, to gain simple pleasure, to make communication for personal enrichment as well as to broaden

man's educational horizon (Bello, 2011). In Nigeria, the dominant role of language especially English language in the teaching and learning process is quite inevitable especially when one looks at the status and the importance of English language in the country, as such, ensuring and assisting students to perform more efficiently in English language is therefore an important task for all. It is in the light of this that John (1994) agrees that English language performs a wide range of functions such as the effectiveness of education, communication and general utility. In recognition of this, Lawal (2000) posited that English is the language of instruction in the formal education, also as declared by Saliman (2000) that the various functions performed by English language in Nigeria has promoted its study from 1862 to 1960. In line with this development, that National curriculum of education (2004) in line with the Federal Government policy on Education, developed documents for the teaching of English in secondary schools that would help the students to attain high level proficiency in the use of English language.

English language as a means of disseminating knowledge in all aspects of education in schools, is also a subject which all students are expected to take and pass at the school certificate level. English is made compulsory at all levels of education, whether primary, secondary or tertiary institution level. Similarly, Bello (2002) agrees that English language is now regarded as one of the major African languages, so essential is it as a tool in everyday life. Indeed without English there would, at present be little education above elementary level.

Although, English language has the status of the second language (SL) in Nigeria, a compulsory subject that every student must

pass, also has element of oracy as a major part of English examination during, and at the end of the students' educational career, they would be able to express themselves explicitly, fluently and lucidly in the language.

The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). It is a form of achievement test taken during the final examination of the senior secondary school. According to Abdulkadri (2003), achievement test is a form of test that measures students' attainment in school subjects in the primary, secondary and the universities.

English language like any other subject is taken as one of the subjects in the WASSCE as a means of measuring students' performance. Even though achievement test accounts for more than 95% of all the teacher-designed test used in secondary schools, WASSCE conducted by WAEC has been found to be objective in scoring with established norms and there are evidence of its validity and reliability (norm referenced) (Abdulkadri, 2003).

In the WASSCE, English language examination is divided into three papers (papers 1,2 and 3). Paper 1 is divided into sections A, B and C. Section A is designed to measure candidates' ability in continuous writing. In this section candidates are expected to write a composition of about 450 words. It is based on maximum scores of 50 marks. Section B of the paper comprises of comprehension in which candidates are to answer questions from a passage. It attracts maximum scores of 20 marks. Section C measures candidates' ability to summarize a given passage, attracting maximum scores of 30 marks. This paper is to be done within 2-3 hours.

Paper 2 is designed to measure candidates' ability of grammar, lexis and structure. It consists of 100 objective test items. The paper is meant to be done in 1 hour and total scores of 50 marks. Students' poor performance in paper 2 can be explained through what is described as poor grammatical foundation due to the fact that teachers who teach English in primary schools are not English specialists and most of them are faulted to have poor control of grammar (Tijjani, 1992).

Paper 3, another embodiment of the general English language is "test of oral". Test of oral is designed to test students' ability of oral English, that is the ability to recognize and discriminate between different sounds such as "she and see" /ʃi:/ and /si:/; "love and loaf" /lʌv/ and /ləuf/; etc, it is also meant to test students on their ability to differentiate and pronounce words such as "firm and farm" /fɜ:m/ and /fa:m/; "word and ward" /wɜ:d/ and /wɔ:d/; "live and leave" /liv/ and /li:v/; "pint and paint" /pæɪnt/ and /peɪnt/; "vine and fine" /væɪn/ and /fæɪn/; "thought and taught" /ə:t/ and /tɔ:t/; etc. It also tests students' ability on how to realize the various values of a particular sound that is realized differently in other contexts such as in:

father that is realized as /ɑ:/;
late that is realized as /ei/;
above that is realized as /ə/;
cat that is realized as /æ/;
village that is realized as /i/;
ball that is realized as /ɔ:/; etc.

Test of oral is also designed to enable students distinguish between consonant clusters, (the coming together of two or more consonants before or after a vowel sound) and non-consonant clusters. For instance, string has "s+t+r" coming together as an example of three consonant cluster, while state has "s+t" coming together as an

example of two consonant cluster, among other examples. Similarly, students should realize that the word "psychology" is not an example of consonant cluster (five consonant cluster even though the word contains "psych" which physically looks like consonant cluster of p+s+y+c+h), whereas the word that sounds "saik" an indication that the word "psychology" lacks consonant cluster. Whereas, the word "saved" which appears as having no consonant cluster, has the word sounding /seɪvt/ that is "v+t" coming together to form a cluster, among other examples.

In another development, students ought to be able to realize that words or sentences written the same way with same spellings could be pronounced differently, and so, giving them different meanings when stress marks are applied on them. For instance:

1. Their wrappers are made of 'blue cloth
2. Their 'wrappers are made of blue cloth
3. Their wrappers are made of blue 'cloth

The three sentences above, though written and spelt the same way, they have different meanings because they cannot be used to answer one question, rather, they answer three different questions as asked below:

- a. Were their wrappers made of white cloth? (1)
- b. Blue what were their wrappers made of? (3)
- c. What were made of their blue cloth? (2)

In spite of all efforts by the curriculum developers, textbook writers and teachers of English, reports from Examiners on the performance of students in oral test is not different from other papers on English language examinations. Lending credence to the above, Bello (2004) is of the view that conversations with some students showed poor knowledge and understanding of oral

English when they would say: “si is a beautiful girl” instead of she is a beautiful girl”; I will give you my hart because, I lof you” instead of I will you my heart because, I love you;” etc. However, Raji (2006) observed that this phonological problem is not unexpected in the life of Nigerian students due to the fact that English language and its contents are viewed as purely foreign. The advent of the colonial masters in the Nigerian coast some centuries back brought in this English language. Coupled with the above is the human nature that is full of individual characteristics (i.e. characteristics peculiar to different people). Learners generally are believed to have developed their personalities and mind before or when they start the act of learning generally, especially the second language (L2). These formed different individualized personalities that affect students’ learning procedures include attitudes, motivation, introversion, extroversion and aptitude (Bello, 2011).

Scholars on personality study have been concerned with the value system such as social behaviour, attitude and emotional dispositions of learners which eventually led them to the question of whether certain personality traits enhance or mar students’ performance academically. Wang (2002) posited that introversion/extroversion as concepts of personality traits are closely related to self-esteem. As human beings we all use to build self characters different from other people as generally, from infancy we begin to identify ourselves as being different from our own biological siblings. Similarly, Bello (2011) affirmed that in childhood, there is growing awareness and the ability to create a system of self-affective trait identified with self, and with time, physical, emotional and cognitive changes of the re-teenager and teenager bringing on mounting defensive inhibition to protect a fragile ego, to ward off unpleasant ideas, experiences

and feelings that seem to threaten the values and beliefs upon which appraisal of egocentrism has been found.

Vivian (2001) observed that it has been an age long belief that introverts learn slowly, focus on selves and prefer to be loners, but by no means imbeciles or timids. In the contrary, the extroverted learners learn faster than introverted learners. However, results of empirical research in this area of personality traits are inconclusive. Raji’s (2006) study in this area found no significant correlation between scores on an introversion/extroversion measure and performance in listening and comprehension and imitation tasks by some Nigerian senior schools students’ self-processed good language learners. Similarly, Wang (2003) found no significant correlation with extroversion when he measured English pronunciation skills of foreign students studying in American universities. Contrarily, Busch (1988) and Jung (1960) in different studies of Japanese learners of English in Japan found a significant negative correlation between test of oral English and extroversion. However, introverts tended to have higher scores in reading, that is test of oral and grammar components of standardized English test. It was only in the oral interview test that some of the junior male students who had tendencies towards extrovertism have higher scores. Extroversion also correlated positively with the length of the time students of an adult school spend studying English.

Other studies that have lent credence to the common perception that extroversion leads to language learning success is Vivian (2001) who agreed the more English-speaking children learning French in France were talkative and out-going, the more successful they are, while the quiet, reserved and conformist children were slow learners but by no means less successful. Similarly,

Ayowale (2004) found out that extroverted Nigeria adolescent students became proficient in oral English fluency more rapidly than the introverted students.

In other studies, while John (1994) found a relationship between aspects of sociability or outgoingness and communication skills among kindergartners learning English in the United States of America, Bialystock (1981) found no correlation between Canadian kindergartner traits of extroversion, sociability and talkativeness and children's performance in English tests. However, Ayowale (2004) and Aboyeje (2005) in separate studies found out that academic success could be function of low introversion/extroversion, although one would ordinarily expect high extroversion to be a strong facilitator of English learning. It could therefore be inferred that low introversion/ extroversion level is not a barrier to high performance in English at the Senior School Certificate Examination level especially given the fact that test of oral was not part of the examination.

Statement of the problem

Owing largely to the recurrent poor performance of students in English language, scholars have carried out studies on the causes of this mass failure which has been found to be partly caused by poor knowledge and understanding of test of oral English. Apart from scholars, parents all over Nigeria have been commenting on this menace, when English language all over the world is a major part of the secondary school curriculum, but studies have shown that there is more failure than success in the language. Bello (2011) submitted that the falling standard of English in times of failure in final examination is not peculiar to the primary schools alone, but the trend extends to even the higher institutions of

learning in Nigeria. Supporting the above submission, the Chief Examiner's report for year 2012 reflects the poor performance of students in English language despite the fact that the paper was said to be within the experience of the candidates, but that the candidates' performances were generally disappointing especially in the areas of Expression, Mechanical Accuracy and Test of Oral.

In view of this, Bello (2011) asserted that in spite of all efforts to make students perform creditably in English, a number of factors have always been identified as causes for students' failure in English which include the traits inherent in the students, poor teaching strategies, the teachers, non-availability of, or where available not enough instructional materials or even textbooks.

From the fore going therefore, one can them ask that does students' introversion/extroversion correlate with their performance in Oral English? Is academic performance in English dependent on students' innate factors? Based on these, there is therefore, the need for research on such personality variables (introversion/extroversion) that are associated with success in second language (L2) learning, this is precisely what this study has attempted to address.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the difference between students' introversion/ extroversion level and performance in oral English.

Research questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the general level of the students' performance in English?
2. What is the general level of the students' performance in Oral English?
3. What is the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of English language?
4. What is the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of test of Oral English?

Research hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were generated for testing in this study:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between students' introversion/extroversion and their performance in English language.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between students' introversion/extroversion and their performance in test of Oral English.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey method to find the difference between students' introversion/extroversion level and their performance in English language and test of Oral English.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The population sampled for this study consisted of all the senior secondary III (SSS III) students in Kwara State. The target population for this study were the SS III students in the three Senatorial Districts of Kwara State who have just written the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) but awaiting to write NECO examination (2013/2014 academic year). Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 students from each of the three Senatorial Districts of Kwara State, making a total of three hundred (300) students as respondents.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study for the purpose of data collection. They are (1) Researcher – designed English and test of Oral questionnaire (ETOQ) and (2) Researcher – designed students' introversion/extroversion questionnaire (SIEQ).

The two instruments consisted of a twenty-item questionnaire each. The students responded to the questionnaire using 4 option Likert scale type of "Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The ETOQ was given to two English experts while SIEQ was given to two psychology experts for construct and content validity.

Their comments and criticisms were used to draft the final questionnaires used in the study. Test re-test reliability method was used to ascertain the reliabilities of the ETOQ and the SIEQ by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic, and found to have reliability indexes of 0.63 and 0.60 respectively, indicatives of reliable instruments.

Data analysis and Results

The data collected for this study were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation statistics for the four research questions while the two research hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistic at 0.5 significant level. The results are presented in the tables below for easy interpretation:

Research Question 1: What is the level of Students' Performance in English?

The results presented in the table 1 above show that 300 students obtained a Mean score of 18.49 and a Standard Deviation of 12.195. This implies that the level of the

students' performance in English is high. This is in line with the findings of Lawal (2000) that English is the medium curriculum of Education (2004) in consonance with the Federal Government Policy on Education, developed documents for the teaching of English in secondary schools that would help students to attain high proficiency in the use of English Language.

Research Question 2: What is the level of students' performance in the test of oral English?

The results presented in the table 2 above show that 300 students obtained a Mean score of 5.03 and a Standard Deviation of 3.715, signifying that the level of the students' performance in Test of Oral English is low. This result agrees with Bello's 2004 findings through conversation with some students and found out that some students showed poor knowledge and understanding of Oral English when they were found reading "si is a beautiful girl" instead of "she is a beautiful girl". Raji (2006) also observed that this phonological problem is not unexpected in the life of Nigerian students due to the fact that English language and its contents are viewed as purely foreign.

Research Question 3: What is the Introversion/Extroversion Level of the Students in relation to the learning of English?

The results presented in the table 3 above show that the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of English language is high having obtained a Mean score of 16.98 and a Standard Deviation of 10.291. This result agrees with Busch (1988) and Jung (1960) in different studies of Japance learners of English in Japan and found and extroversion. However, introverts tended to have higher scores in

reading i.e. in test of oral and grammar components of standards English test.

Research Question 4: What is the introversion/extroversion level of the students' in relation to the learning of oral English?

The results of the analysis in the table 4 above show that the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of test of Oral English is low having obtained a Mean score of 7.68 and a Standard Deviation of 4.11. This result negates the findings of Jung (1960) in Bello (2011) in different studies as well as Ayowale (2004) and Aboyeji (2005) that academic success could be a function of low introversion/extroversion, although, one would ordinarily expect high extroversion to be a facilitator of English learning. It could therefore be inferred that low introversion/extroversion is not a barrier to high performance in English at the Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE) level, especially given the fact test of oral is part of English examination

Hypotheses testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between students' introversion/extroversion and their performance in English language

The results of the analysis in table 5 above indicate that the t-calculated of 1.797 is less than t-critical of 1.960. Since the t-critical (1.960) is greater than the t-calculated (1.797), the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant difference between students' introversion/extroversion and performance in English language is accepted. This conforms with Vivian (2001) that it has been an age long policy that introverts learn slowly, focus on selves, and prefer to be loners, but by no means imbeciles or timids.

Table.1 Summary of the General Level of Students' Performance in English

N	Maximum obtainable score	Mean score	SD	Decision
300	20	18.49	12.195	Good

Table.2 Summary of the Level Students' Performance in Test of Oral English

N	Maximum obtainable score	Mean score	Standard Deviation	Decision
300	20	5.03	3.715	Poor

Table.3 Summary of the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of English language

N	Maximum obtainable score	Mean score	Standard Deviation	Decision
300	20	16.98	10.291	High

Table.4 Summary of the introversion/extroversion level of the students in relation to the learning of test of oral English

N	Maximum obtainable score	Mean score	Standard Deviation	Decision
300	20	7.68	4.11	Low

Table.5 Summary of the t-test analysis on the difference between students' introversion/extroversion and their performance in English language

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-critical	t-calculated	decision
Students' introversion /extroversion	100	16.98	10.291	299	1.960	1.797	Ho ₁ accepted
Students' performance in English	300	18.49	12.195				

Table.6 Summary of the t-test analysis on the difference between students' introversion /extroversion and their performance in test of oral English

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-critical	t-calculated	Decision
Students' interoversion/ Extroversion	300	7.68	4.11	299	1.960	2.435	Ho2 Rejected
Students' performance in Test of Oral English	300	5.03	3.715				

In the contrary, Vivian posited further that the extroverted learn faster than the introverted learners. However, result of empirical research of personality trait is not conclusive. Similarly, Raji (2006) found no significant correlation between scores on an introversion/ extroversion measures and performance in listening/speaking and comprehension and imitation task by some Nigeria secondary school students self-processed good language learners.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between students' introversion/ extroversion and their performance in test of oral English

The results presented in table 6 above indicate that the t-calculated of 2.435 is greater than the t-critical of 1.960, and as such, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between students' introversion/extroversion and their performance in the test of Oral English is rejected.

This result is in conformity with Vivian's (2001) assertion that the more English speaking children learning French in France were talkative and outgoing, the more successful they are, while the quiet, reserved and conformist children were slow learners but by no means less successful. However, Ayowale (2004) posited that extroverted

Nigerian adolescent students become proficient in Oral English fluency more rapidly than the introverted students.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data collected and results of the findings, it is was revealed that despite the fact that the general level of the students' Introversion/Extroversion and performance in English was good, the students' introversion/extroversion level in relation to learning of test of Oral English was rather low.

Recommendations

As a result of the analysis of the data collected and the conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested: Teachers of English should pay attention to test of Oral English just as they do to other aspects of English language teaching such as grammar, comprehension, composition and summary, among others. Curriculum developers would need to focus attention on the concept of "English across the curriculum". They would have to ensure that the curriculum integrates tests and concepts from other subjects into the English syllabus so as to expose the students to a wide range of English vocabulary that will enable them express themselves freely and fluently in a wide range of ideas. Teacher educators

would also need to encompass teacher training programme that would place greater emphasis on the use of English (by implication Oral English) to enable them attain high level of proficiency in English, so that they would be able to distinctively assist teachers of English when they are given teaching job regardless of their discipline by way of supporting the theory of concept of “English across the curriculum”.

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