



PROMOTING TVET THROUGH EFFECTIVE ORAL PROFICIENCY SKILLS FOR TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, ILARO

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Abstract

This paper explores the promotion of TVET through effective oral proficiency skills for technological development. It focuses on the advantages of implementing oral proficiency skills in TVET courses. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology where a number of 54 structured questionnaires were prepared and administered to 27 departments that have both National Diploma and Higher National diploma in the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, who were randomly selected and 52 were returned making 96 percent retrievals. The results obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that oral proficiency aids effective communication between trainers and trainees in TVET; prevents lack of confidence and shyness that could emanate among TVET students or graduates; and also, helps to improve communication skills and the usage of English among others. Therefore, the study recommends that oral proficiency skills should be incorporated into the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) curriculum so that students will be able to learn alongside the training and enjoy the advantages of oral proficiency skills.

Keywords: Oral Proficiency skill, TVET, Technological Development, Vocational Education

Introduction

Unemployed graduates are widespread in Africa. In many countries like Nigeria, a large number of graduates from the formal school system, including university and polytechnic graduates are unemployed, although the economy still has opportunities for skilled workers. Therefore, TVET is regarded as the most effective means of empowering the citizenry to stimulate sustainable national development, enhance employment; improve quality of life, reduce poverty, limit the incidence of social vices due to joblessness and promote a culture of peace, freedom and democracy (Akinyele & Bolarinwa, 2018). The vision of TVET can be attributed to the crisis that Africa went through in the eighties. The serious economic and financial crisis that the continent faced in the market and the increasing graduate unemployment are the factors that demanded TVET.

Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) in Nigeria is the aspect of the educational process, involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economies and social life. This aimed to provide semi-professional workers to cater to the demand of the technical workforce in various industries. Also, Technical and Vocational education (TVE) is the type of education designed to provide skilled manpower that will be enterprising and self-reliant; thus, have the greatest potential to generate employment, reduce poverty and eliminate social miscreants known as Area Boys (Orija, 2011), Akinyele & Bolarinwa (2018) added that TVET is concerned with softer skills like communication, negotiation and teamwork. It is dispensed in public and private educational establishments or other forms of formal or informal instruction aimed at granting all segments of society access to lifelong resources. In all these laudable potentials of TVET, in many countries, technical and vocational education is still considered by parents, the public at large and even some politicians as a domain for less academically gifted students. This perception was fueled by low academic requirements for admission into TVET programmes and the limited prospects for continuing education and professional development for TVET graduates (Africa Union Commission, AUC2018). The place and the role of the English language as the vehicle to carry out the courses and instructions cannot be underestimated since the demand for quality graduates of TVET and good performance as well as the seamless presentation of ideas gathered are needed in the workplace and to their prospect.



Mohammed and Maslawati (2021) in their study English language competency in enhancing Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates' marketability in the Malaysian workplace reported that TVET graduates have problems with communication proficiency and language competency which can make their employers depend on foreign investors.

It is observed that a graduate with good oral English communication skills has a better chance of career advancement and promotion rather than one who does not. Graduates need to be skilled in oral English communication in functioning professional operations effectively in their future careers in this digital era. (Seraj, Habil and Hassan, 2021). Oral English communication skills are such skills for English Foreign Learners (EFL) for creating better opportunities in future careers. Others who do not have such. The oral proficiency technique help to improve oral communication and ability. It is the skill or capability to use sound and grammar systems to communicate meaning. It is of this note that oral English communication needs special attention for learning and teaching in education programs in this digital age so that students could be effective in their academic as well as professional life. According to Gilakjani 2011 cited in Liang (2014) pronunciation is the most important skill of spoken English. Good pronunciation brings success to ESL students in American society. On the contrary, insufficient English pronunciation influences the development of communicative competence that is required for building up the bridge between speakers and listeners (Liang, 2014). Precisely speaking great pronunciation competence in English is to make others understand easily; whereas English pronunciation inferior to the basic level increases misunderstanding in conversations with others. Knowing a language includes knowing the sounds of the language. The main goal of oral English is to improve students' oral communication skills and help them develop oral abilities to communicate fluently in different contexts. It is not necessary to speak like a native speaker but well enough to be understood (Jesry, 2005 in Liang, 2014)

Hence, this study addresses oral English language skills that TVET students or graduates need to possess for effective communication of their idea to their prospective employers and lack of efficient educational monitoring and evaluation. Oral proficiency is the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language; it is a standardized global assessment of functional speaking ability. The most important factors affecting oral proficiency across levels as it was identified by a number of studies are vocabulary and grammar; pronunciation and fluency are also present at the higher levels including teaching strategies and curriculum. Panket (2019) noted the various factors affecting oral proficiency, which are affective, cognitive and linguistic factors.

Affective factors are emotions influencing learning such as anxiety and self-restriction. Panket (2019) pointed out that speaking processes in conceptualization, formation and articulation happen concurrently, and these lead learners to commit mistakes especially face to face. The author also explained that conceptualization deals with information selected to express meaning, whereas in its formulation, the speaker is required to find out the proper words to use appropriately and in terms of articulation, the speaker is required to produce speech with his or her articulatory organ.

The main factors affecting the learners' oral proficiency development in the English language are pronunciation and grammar. Motivation and lack of interest, lack of vocabulary skills and training are factors that de-motivate the learners learning English. The teaching strategies and curriculum are also contributory factors that affect the learners' oral proficiency, on teaching strategies, teachers do not facilitate real practice in speaking since appropriate strategies and activities are not planned which resulted in the contradiction between class materials and topics.

Based on language studies, the strategies used in language classes to improve learners' language skills are group work, role play, problem solving and discussion. Their anxiety was caused by some factors such as anxiety because of themselves, other students and their teachers. Strategies that students can do to handle their speaking anxiety in oral proficiency are first, try to be confident and comprehend the material as much as possible. Secondly, to make the atmosphere more cheerful during the presentation, if someone teased, reply with a joke and still be polite and three, prepare ahead and comprehend the material for example by practicing in front of the mirror to be able to speak fluently in public. Speaking is a productive skill that challenges students' capability to perform a task. The key to communication is the ability to communicate or speak with other people. Speaking demands the learner's ability to plan, process and produce the language. This poses a difficult task for students attempting to master speaking skills especially ESL learners. Research also found that students who are more confident in their speaking ability performed better than those with low efficacy beliefs. Further research conducted by Kim and Lorschbach found that the t-test results for speaking self-efficacy level of female students were significantly higher than male students in terms of ability and aspiration. Recent studies have shown that the majority of tertiary institutions are not proficient in the



English language and this affects their job marketability. So, it is important to examine self-efficacy beliefs in relation to speaking skills

Review of Literature

Pangket (2019) explored oral English proficiency and factors affecting learner's development. The study used a sequential mixed method using grade 5 pupils of Bontoc central schools in identifying the factors affecting the oral proficiency of the pupils. The result showed that the main factors affecting pupil's oral proficiency are motivation, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, teaching strategies and curriculum. The paper concludes that based on the findings, the contributory factors are sequentially affecting the performance of teachers and pupils. The teaching strategies and the curriculum are not carefully planned and executed to meet the learner's needs and this results in poor performance of the pupils.

Also, Seraj and Habil (2019) investigated a critical review of oral English communication skills (OESC). The study focused on the causes of EFL learner's poor performance teaching techniques and types of assessment methods of oral English communication skills for providing clear indications and insights to EFL. It was meant for providing clear indications and insights to EFL teachers and learners and researchers to deal with OESC according to different contexts. Using qualitative and quantitative and mixed method synthesis of relevant papers, the review based on 28 research papers from 2010 to 2019 chosen from the database of Springer and Scopus using selecting criteria of the PRISMA model (2009) and analyzing through NVINO 12 version to explore and identify causes of OESC such as anxiety as the prime cause which depends on learners' emotions, interests, intellectual, linguistic and affective factors and classroom environment. The study opined that features of mobile might be integrated into teaching techniques to provide a platform in and out of the classroom as well as technology-based assessment techniques needed to be studied to improve learners' oral proficiency through providing feedback in EFL contexts. They recommended that further research is needed to deal with the problems such as large classes, learners' perseverance, lack of oral exposure and teaching materials for OESC with the help of technology. In addition to their recommendations, a course related to it should be designed for all disciplines at the tertiary level and language pedagogy for oral communication to use audio and video features of mobile phones and provide a convenient environment that encourages learners to share recordings.

The importance of oral proficiency in our contemporary society was examined by Cheng (2009) who confirmed the great need for talents who are with high oral English ability. The study was based on factors affecting the oral proficiency of English majors' in college. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were adopted for the study. The research methods included questionnaire, classroom observation and interviews. Data was obtained from the questionnaire from 100 sophomore participants from an English major college as well as 5 English teachers that participated in the investigation. The findings identified nine (9) factors affecting the oral proficiency of students such as teaching methods, motivation, environment, teaching materials, teaching syllabus, anxiety, cultural factors, self-esteem and personality. The author found that teaching and learning environment and students' motivation wielded the most significant influence on learners' oral proficiency while some other factors affect their English to different degrees

Sungianto and Muyashola (2019), when examining identifying speaking as one of the most difficult skill language learners have to face and how this traditionally been forced to the background investigated students' perception toward oral correction feedback in speaking class using the population of 64 students at the fifth semester in public speaking course of English Education Study at IAIN Pakangka. The study adopted a descriptive quantitative design for the study. Data revealed that the students' perceptions toward oral corrective feedback are positive. In addition, all of the indicator shows a good point that most students agreed to receive oral correction feedback from their lecturer and that using oral corrective feedback in speaking learning class is effective to improve the student speaking ability.

Anis (2018) investigated problems in pronouncing the English sounds faced by the student in 9th grade at SINPOF 2, Banjar. In this research, a comparative quantitative research method was adopted. The researcher collected data through recording, transcribing and analyzing techniques. Data were analyzed by comparing English sounds and student pronunciation in Indonesia, finding out the consonant, vowels and diphthongs mispronounced by the student, finding out student difficulties and problems in pronouncing the English sounds and drawing a conclusion. His findings show that the student of the 9th grade at SMPM 2 Halang had problems in pronouncing English sounds such



as; consonant [t] [θ] [ʃ] [tʃ] [z]-d] vowels [e] [o] and diphthongs [eɪ] [oʊ] and [ɔɪ]. The study concluded that the error is caused by the absence of the sounds in their studying of their tongue and their differences in language backgrounds.

METHODOLOGY

The study was designed to promote TVET through effective oral proficiency skills for technological development, therefore, investigating the advantages of oral proficiency among TVET students and graduates. The research study area was limited to the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria being the best Polytechnics in Nigeria and ranked as number one in West Africa by Webometrics.

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology where a structured questionnaire was used to collect data. The study population comprised students of the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria. 54 respondents were selected randomly from all the 27 departments that have both HND and ND in the school. A structured questionnaire was administered and retrieved through an online method to collect data for this study.

The questionnaire was into two sections. Section A consisted of the respondents' personal information and background knowledge of the respondents about TVET and section B was structured with questions to determine the advantages of oral proficiency among TVET students and graduates. The questionnaire used for this study was a closed-ended questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentages.

Results

Table 1: Background information Analysis of the respondents'

SN	Items	Frequency	Percentage	
1	Gender	Male	30	58
		Female	22	42
		Total	52	100
2	Age	20years or less	14	27
		21-25years	26	50
		26-30years	10	19
		31-35years	2	4
		Total	52	100
3	Educational Qualification	HND	30	58
		ND	22	42
		Total	52	100
4	Do you know what TVET is all about	Yes	40	77
		No	4	8
		Somehow	8	15
		Total	53	100



5	Do you think TVET has helped in the technological developments in Nigeria?	Yes	45	87
		No	7	13
		Total	52	100

Table 2: Advantages of Oral English Proficiency Skills in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)

SN	Statement	YES	NO	MAYBE
1.	In your opinion, do you think oral proficiency skills pronunciation, Comprehension, Grammar, Vocabulary, and Fluency aspects in speaking skills are useful in TVET	45 (87%)	4 (8%)	3 (6%)
2.	Does learning oral proficiency aids how to communicate effectively between trainers and trainees in TVET?	47 (90%)	5 (10%)	-
3.	Do you think oral proficiency can prevent a lack of confidence and shyness in TVET?	42 (81%)	6 (12%)	4 (7%)
4.	Can effective oral proficiency activate active participation, well prepared and high motivation to participate in TVET?	45 (87%)	7 (13%)	-
5.	Can oral proficiency skills help to make quick decisions?	45 (87%)	7 (13%)	-
6.	Do you think effective oral proficiency gives no more feeling of being nervous and shy to present skills acquired in TVET to potential sponsors?	42 (82%)	5 (10%)	4 (8%)
7.	Does effective oral proficiency skills help to improve communication skills and the usage of English?	52 (100%)	-	-
8.	Can effective oral proficiency skills lessen the nervousness and have the confidence to make presentations in public?	49 (94%)	3 (6%)	-
9.	Do oral proficiency skills meet Industries needs in TVET?	44 (85%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)

Discussions

Table 1 shows the background information results of the respondents. Item 1 on the table depicts the gender of the respondents; the results revealed that 58% of the respondents were males while 42% of the respondents were females. This implies that the majority of the respondents were males. Item 2 on the table depicts the age range of the respondents, the result shows that 27% of the respondents were 20 years or less, 50% were between 21-25 years, and 19% were between 26-30 years while only 4% were between ages 31-35 years. This shows that the majority of the respondents were between the age range 21-26 years. Item 3 of the table indicates the educational qualification of the respondents, the result narrates that only 58% were HND, and the rest of the respondents were ND with 42%. Item 4 in the table shows 77% of the respondents were familiar with what TVET is all about, 8% of the respondents were not familiar with TVET and the last 15% of the respondents were somehow familiar about it. This denotes that the majority of the respondents were familiar with what TVET is all about. Item 5 depicts that 87% of the total respondents believed that TVET has helped in the technological developments in Nigeria while 13% never believed that TVET has helped in the technological developments in Nigeria. This reveals that the majority of the respondents were aware that TVET has helped in the technological developments in Nigeria.



Table 2 reveals the respondents' knowledge of advantages of oral English proficiency skills in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET). From the result in item 1, 87% of the respondents believe that oral proficiency skills such as pronunciation, comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, and fluency aspects in speaking skills are useful among TVET students to convey their ideas or proposal to their potential investors/clients. 8% disagreed with this statement while the remaining 6% were unsure. Strongly agree at 28.85%, agree at 63.46%, 5.77% were neutral about the statement and only 1.92% disagreed. Similarly, item 2 reveals a total of 90% of the respondents supported that learning oral proficiency aids effective communication between trainers and trainees in TVET, meanwhile, only 10% did not support that that learning oral proficiency will aid effective communication between trainers and trainees in TVET. The respondents were evident in item 3 to reveal that oral proficiency can prevent lack of confidence and shyness in TVET. This is validated by the entire population of respondents 81% agreed, 12% disagreed and only 7% were neutral. However, in item 4, it will be of interest to note that few numbers of the respondents, 13% were not evident that effective oral proficiency activates active participation, well prepared and high motivation to participate in TVET meanwhile the larger portion of the respondents, about 87% accepted the effective oral proficiency activates active participation, are well prepared and high motivation to participate in TVET. Item 5 shows that 87% of the respondents were certain that oral proficiency skills help TVET students/graduates in quick decision making while the remaining 13% were against it. Item 6 shows that the majority of the respondents accept that effective oral proficiency gives no more feeling of being nervous and shy to present skills acquired in TVET to potential sponsor. This is as a result of 82% yes, 10% no and the remaining 8% were neutral. Also, the result from item 7 depicts positive acceptance as 100% of the respondents asserted that effective oral proficiency skills help to improve communication skills and the usage of English among TVET students. A greater number of 94% respondents support that effective oral proficiency skills lessen the nervousness and enhance the confidence to make presentations in public while 6% disagreed. Lastly, the response in item 9 denotes that a total of 85% ascertain that oral proficiency skills meet Industries needs in TVET, 8% disagreed while the last 8% were uncertain that oral proficiency skills meet Industries needs in TVET.

Conclusion

The study examines effective oral proficiency skills as tools for promoting Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) through technological development. The study investigated the advantages that effective oral proficiency has on TVET. Based on the findings of this study, the study concluded that oral proficiency plays a major role in TVET as oral proficiency aids effective communication between trainers and trainees in TVET. Also, oral proficiency can prevent as lack of confidence and shyness that could emanate among TVET students or graduates. The study confirmed further that oral proficiency skills help in quick decision making.

Consequently, the study showed that effective oral proficiency gives no feeling of being nervous and shy to present skills acquired in TVET to potential sponsors; and it helps to improve communication skills and the usage of English. And lastly, effective oral proficiency skills lessen the nervousness and have the confidence to make a presentation in public.

The study recommends that oral proficiency skills should be incorporated into the Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) curriculum so that students will be able to learn alongside the training and enjoy the advantages of oral proficiency skills.

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