

# Effects of Guided Interaction Strategy on the Lower Primary School Pupils' English Phonology and Morphology Skills in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria

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## Abstract:

English Language is not only a foreign language but a language of instruction in Nigerian schools. However, the National Policy on Education (2014) stipulates that mother-tongue should be used as medium of instruction from crèche to lower primary school. This has not been strictly adhered to by most nursery and primary schools operators in Nigeria instead, English Language is mostly used. From this premise, it becomes imperative to lay a solid foundation on the proper learning and acquisition of needed skills of English Language by the pupils at the lower level so as to enhance their performance in their subsequent academic pursuit hence the use of a strategy called Guided Interaction strategy (GIS) to enhance the performance of the pupils in English phonology and morphology. Two lower primary schools were used where one school was used as experimental group and the second school as control group. The results obtained, after a six week experiment, show that the GIS has significant improvement on the pupils' acquisition of phonology and morphology skills.

**Keywords:** Guided-interaction-strategy, phonology, morphology, foreign language, mother-tongue and conventional-teaching-method

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## Introduction

Language is essentially important in any human endeavor. For a society to experience harmonious relationship, language becomes an important element that must be given prominent attention. Language, besides being the major distinguished phenomenon between man and other creatures, is evidently the most enduring of every people's cultural heritage. It reflects the culture of a people and it is inextricably bound up with it (Babajide, 1999). He further asserted that without a knowledge of people's language, any attempt made by a non-member of the speech community to understand the peoples' culture will yield no tangible result. This assertion is expedient because people's culture, philosophy, religion, lifestyle, and everything uniquely theirs is expressed and reflected on their language. English Language has been identified to be the most widely studied foreign language in the world and this has generated into massive increase on how learners are exposed to learning it (Suhendan, 2014).

Ohidur (2018) reiterated that English Language in the twenty-first Century serves as vehicle for wide spread information in the technologically-ridden era in which humans have been located. He further maintained that information has reduced the whole world into a village where people 'sit together' through Facebook, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram and the likes to share ideas and communicate effectively. In like manner, Ajayi and Jedgede (2018) quoting Hu (2005) said monolingualistic nations of the world such as China, Japan, Germany, Arab world and the like, as a matter of necessity, always require interpreters to function and keep pace with Anglophone counterparts in commerce, trades, and international camaraderie. More importantly, these countries have been developing an earnest interest in English Language education for the sole purpose of internationalism.

According to Fawole and Salami (2017), English Language assumes an unparalleled role in the sphere of education in Nigerian educational institutions. Although National Policy on Education (2014) recognizes medium of instruction to be mother tongue or language of the immediate environment yet English Language plays a crucial role in the later years of a child's educational journey. Parents want their children/wards to start speaking English language, if naturally possible, while still in the womb. The importance placed on the language is telling to the extent that parents and guidance would term a school as incompetent even performing below the standard if their wards do not start to speak in English Language on the first day of arriving from the school where they are enrolled. The prize position assumed by English Language in Nigeria is nonnegotiable. Every sector embraces it and of course, it is seen as a necessity as water is a necessity of life (Fawole & Salami 2017).

The ability to gainfully use language demands every human to be armed with an array of skills which an essential part is phonology (a branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic organization of sounds) and morphology (the study of words, how they are formed, and their relationship to other words and parts of words such as stems, root words, prefixes and suffixes). Others are syntax (sentence in a language), sentences (the study of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning) and extensive vocabulary (the body of words used in a

particular language) (Cook, 2016). It is of interest that phonology and morphology play the first role in language acquisition and deserve more than the usual attention on how they could better be taught to pupils in basic Lower primary School.

Like many others, English dictionaries contain hundreds of thousands of words, but it is fairly true to say that most speakers do not know all of these words. So, how many words do we know? This, over the years, has been seen to be one of the most difficult questions to answer because our vocabulary has an open-ended aspect that makes a great contribution to our using language creatively. According to Pinker (1999), a pupil who is six years of age and begins school at such an age is already blessed with about 13,000 words. The feat does not end here as his horizon and knowledge continues to widen. He benefits from his exposure to new words spoken by the adults and what he gleans from print media around him. Then, a student who is a graduate of high school has a repertoire of about 60,00 words while twice that number is possessed by a university graduate, that is about 120,000 words. What all this portends is that new words are learnt throughout our lives. Language lives with us; only conscious efforts are required to tap the resources that a language provides.

A language bestows on humans different experiences that could further be communicated via the same language. In summary language a language is tantamount to learning surprisingly a large *list of facts encoded in the form of words* (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish, 2010). Even though it may not be a complete one, this long list of words for any language is called its *lexicon* (or mental dictionary), and it is an important component of our linguistic knowledge. The earlier a child is wantonly exposed to basic morphology and phonology skills would serve as a springboard to his or her becoming firmly rooted in having a great repertoire of vocabulary. Second language learner researchers found out that acquisition of second or foreign language at much older age could be somewhat daunting and extremely complex and difficult (Collier, 1995; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). As such, there are developmental stages that a learner passes through which is comparable to when a learner or a pupil is learning a first language.

According to Yule (1996), the important role morphology plays in the acquisition of language cannot be over emphasized. Yule claimed that a child who is three years of age would be moving away from telegraphic form of speech, that is, the child leaves above uttering three to four letter words. At this stage, a child has linguistically matured to incorporate some of the inflectional morphemes which signal the function of the nouns and verbs used in relation to grammar. Further attempt made by a child is the addition of -ing to regular verbs as could obtain in “My daddy is sleeping”, “Mummy is cooking”, etc. Thereafter, the child marks regular verbs with -s form. This he demonstrates by adding -s to cook=cooks, buy=buys, eat=eats, etc. It should as well be noted that the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) does not underestimate the importance of phonology and morphology in their curriculum. Hence, provision was made for the aspects to be taught in the class even right from primary one. Specific details are also provided on how these aspects could be taught. One does not need to be too surprised for the inclusion of these germane aspects of English Language from what could be termed as the scratch of education. Solid foundation starts from the beginning neither in between nor thereafter. A child who gets exposed to basic morphology and phonology skills at a very early stage stands a great chance of becoming successful in any tests or examination in English Language. Such a child could significantly become a dictionary of knowledge in all other aspects of academic endeavours.

On the performance of pupils on English Language in relation to gender, researchers have carried out works on the effect that gender could exert on the performance of pupils in English Language. Majority of the research done centred on the performance of students in different disciplines or subjects. However, a lot of research have been carried out in English Language Language as well. Ofofu, (2012), in her research, found out that there is no significance difference between the performance of male and female secondary school students in English Language learning and acquiring tools of language. It is however not certain if this could be the same at the lower primary school level in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

To carry out this study, Guided Interaction Strategy (GIS) was used along with Conventional Teaching Method (CTM). Guided interaction entails a situation whereby children, adults and technology interact with the sole aim of improving the capacities of the practitioners in the use of ICT. The term was first used in relation with computer though its usage has been broadened, extending to other disciplines. The interesting aspect of the term is that it recognizes the presence of a teacher and the learners who determine the essence of a teacher. The term was used in earlier research to refer particularly to computers and the use of interactive media in classrooms and was viewed primarily in terms of how design of the interface could aid communication between the computer and the student when the physical presence of a teacher is not visible (Plowman, 1996).

### **Objective of the Study**

The following objectives guided the study in order to;

- (a) ascertain the effects of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils’ phonology skill in Ile-Ife, Osun State;
- (b) determine the effects of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils’ morphology skill in the study

- area; and
- (c) examine the effects of the strategy on the lower primary school pupil's phonology skill based on gender in the study area.

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated to achieve the objectives of the study;

- (1) There is no significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill in Ile-Ife, Osun State.
- (2) There is no effect of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skills in the study area.
- (3) There is no significant effect of the strategy on the pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender in the study area.

### Methodology

The study adopted the non-equivalent pre-test posttest control group design. The population consisted of private primary schools in Ife Central Local Government Area. The sample comprised primary three pupils in three intact classes. The study employed random sampling technique. The sample is comprised of primary three pupils in three intact classes drawn from three purposefully selected primary schools. The schools were purposefully selected. Two research instruments were used for this study namely: Pupils' Basic Phonology Test (PBPT) and Pupils' Basic Morphology Test (PBMT). A pilot test requiring test and retest method was carried out on pupils outside the study area for ascertaining the reliability of the instruments. Thirty pupils were used in a school outside the sample of research for the appropriateness of the instruments. Results from the pilot study was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability of the instruments. The reliability statistics for the two instruments are Pupils' Basic Phonology Test (PBPT) of  $r = 0.71$ , and Pupils' Basic Morphology Test (PBMT) of  $r = 0.78$  yielded those coefficient respectively and adjudged that the instruments were reliable in gathering the intended data. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analysis involved the use of frequencies while the inferential statistics employed the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) statistical techniques for the hypotheses.

### Results

The level of significance employed for the study is .05. A probability value (p-value) of less than or equal to .05 indicates that the independent variable significantly influences the outcome of variable

### Testing of Hypothesis

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill in Ile-Ife, Osun State.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill having been exposed to Guided Interaction Strategy (GIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in the study area were subjected to descriptive analysis and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using pretest scores of the pupils' basic phonology skill as covariate and their posttest scores as dependent variable and the results are presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

**Table 1:** Descriptive analysis of the effect of guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill

S/N	Instructional Strategies	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	GIS	14	11.7857	2.00686
2.	CTM	16	9.5000	1.63299
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>10.5667</b>	<b>2.12835</b>

Results in Table 1 showed the descriptive analysis of the effect of guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill in the study area. It can be observed from the table that lower primary school pupils exposed to guided interaction strategy with a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =11.7857) acquired better phonological skill than their counterparts that were exposed to conventional teaching method with a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =9.5000). But the table does not show the effect size of the strategies on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill.

**Table 2:** Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of the effect of the strategies on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Post Phonology Skill Scores						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	40.079 <sup>a</sup>	2	20.039	5.927	.007	.305
Intercept	182.548	1	182.548	53.992	.000	.667
Pre Phonology Strategies	1.069	1	1.069	.316	.579	.012
Error	33.042	1	33.042	9.773	.004	.266
Total	91.288	27	3.381			
Corrected Total	3481.000	30				
	131.367	29				

R Squared = .305 (Adjusted R Squared = .254)

(F = 9.773, p < 0.05)

Data presented in Table 2 showed that there is significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill in the study area (F = 9.773, p < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill is hereby rejected. The partial eta squared value of 0.266 accounted for the effect size of 26.6% of the strategies on the pupils' basic phonology skill. The result implied that guided interaction strategy have significant effect on the pupils' basic phonology skill in English Language.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill in the study area.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill having been taught with Guided Interaction Strategy (GIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in the study area were subjected to descriptive analysis and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using pretest scores of the pupils' basic morphology skill as covariate and their posttest scores as dependent variable and the results are presented in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.

**Table 3:** Descriptive analysis of the effect of guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill

S/N	Instructional Strategies	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	GIS	14	12.9285	2.99908
2.	CTM	16	9.0625	1.94829
<b>Total</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>10.8667</b>	<b>3.13746</b>

Results in Table 3 showed the descriptive analysis of the effect of guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology skill in the study area. It can be deduced from the table that lower primary school pupils taught with guided interaction strategy with a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =12.9285) had better morphological skill than their colleagues that were taught with conventional teaching method with a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =9.0625). But the table does not show the effect size of the strategies on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill.

**Table 4:** Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of the effect of the strategies on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Post Morphology Skill Scores						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	115.987 <sup>a</sup>	2	57.994	9.239	.001	.406
Intercept	494.834	1	494.834	78.833	.000	.745
Pre_Morphology Strategies	4.387	1	4.387	.699	.411	.025
Error	110.655	1	110.655	17.629	.000	.395
Total	169.479	27	6.277			
Corrected Total	3828.000	30				
	285.467	29				

R Squared = .406 (Adjusted R Squared = .362)

(F = 17.629, p < 0.05)

Data presented in Table 4 showed that there is significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill in the study area (F = 17.629, p < 0.05). Hence, the null

hypothesis that states that there is no significant effect of guided interaction strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic morphology skill is hereby rejected. The partial eta squared value of 0.395 accounted for the effect size of 39.5% of the strategies on the pupils' basic morphology skill. The result implied that guided interaction strategy have significant effect on the pupils' basic morphology skill in English Language.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant effect of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender in the study area.

In order to test this hypothesis, data collected on lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender having been taught with Guided Interaction Strategy (GIS) and Conventional Teaching Method (CTM) in the study area were subjected to descriptive analysis and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) using pretest scores of the pupils' basic phonology skill as covariate and their posttest scores as dependent variables based on sex and the results are presented in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.

**Table 5:** Descriptive analysis of the effect of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender

Strategies	Sex	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
GIS	Male	9	11.5556	1.58990
	Female	5	12.2000	2.77489
	Total	14	11.7857	2.00686
CTM	Male	11	9.1818	1.66242
	Female	5	10.2000	1.48324
	Total	16	9.5000	1.63299
Total	Male	20	10.2500	1.99671
	Female	10	11.2000	2.34758
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>10.5667</b>	<b>2.12835</b>

Data presented in Table 4.8 showed the descriptive analysis of the effect of the guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender in the study area. Using the total mean scores, it can be observed from the table that male pupils exposed to guided interaction strategy have a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =10.2500) while their female counterparts have a mean score of ( $\bar{x}$ =11.2000) revealed not much difference. Table 6 showed the effect of the strategy on lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based gender in the study area.

**Table 6:** Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) of the effect of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Post Phonology and Morphology Skills Scores						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	47.369 <sup>a</sup>	5	9.474	2.707	.045	.361
Intercept	82.460	1	82.460	23.560	.000	.495
Pre_Phonology	2.586	1	2.586	.739	.398	.030
Pre_Morphology_Skill	.824	1	.824	.235	.632	.010
Strategy	29.956	1	29.956	8.559	.007	.263
Sex	5.526	1	5.526	1.579	.221	.062
Strategy * Sex	1.105	1	1.105	.316	.579	.013
Error	83.998	24	3.500			
Total	3481.000	30				
Corrected Total	131.367	29				

R Squared = .361 (Adjusted R Squared = .227)

(F = 0.316, p > 0.05)

Results in Table 6 showed that there is no significant effect of the strategy on the lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender in the study area (F = 0.316, p > 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant effect of the strategy on lower primary school pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender in the study area is hereby not rejected.

## Discussion

This research work was embarked upon with the sole aim of investigating the effect of two instructional strategies on the acquisition of basic phonology by lower primary school pupils in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Three research objectives were raised in the study while three hypotheses were also generated to cover the scope of the study. The purpose of the hypotheses generated was to guide the study and serve the purpose of accomplishing the objectives of the study. The hypotheses generated were subjected to scrutiny and the results gathered



provided the main thrust of the study.

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant effect of the guided interaction strategy on the acquisition of phonology skill. The result showed that there is positive significant effect of the strategy on the pupils' phonology skill at the lower primary school level. This corroborates Pressley's (2006) finding that early guided instruction in phonology and blending phonemes that enable readers to develop the prerequisite decoding skills in learning how to read. The result showed that English language learners need targeted, repetitive practice in separating and blending of sounds. As they listen to the podcast at home or in school, students would use the picture cards to work alongside the speaker on the podcast and therefore receive additional support. The result also is in support of the research carried out by Ryder, Tunmer and Greany (2008) which claimed that guided instruction on phonemic awareness and phonemically based decoding skills was an effective intervention strategy for children with early reading difficulty. The result is also in line with the pilot evaluation carried out in USA. The pilot evaluation maintained that guided teaching mathematical language leads to better outcomes for Kindergarten-8 English Language Learners.

The second hypothesis stated that there is no significant effect of the strategy on the acquisition of basic morphology skill by the lower primary school pupils. The null hypothesis was rejected since there was a significant effect on the mean score of the pupils taught with guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method. Lower primary school pupils that were taught with guided instruction strategy acquired better morphology skill in English Language than their colleagues that were taught with guided interaction strategy and conventional teaching method. This result is in line with the outcome of the research carried out by Ogunleye and Akinsola (2016) which maintained that the use of explicit instruction strategy exerted a greater influence on the students that were taught with the strategy who had higher post attitudinal score. This also corroborated by Akinsola and Olowojaye's (2008) finding that employing explicit instruction strategy is adequate for teaching Mathematics. Kathleen and Mohr also averred that guided interaction strategy provides a good opportunity for pupils' language acquisition. Spiro (2011) also corroborated this result when he maintained that guided interaction strategy worked out favorably for pupils when pupils were properly guided in carrying out group discussions.

The third hypothesis posited that there is no significant difference of the strategy on the pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills based on gender. The mean scores of both male and female in basic phonology and basic morphology skill had no significant difference. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant effect of the two strategies on the lower primary school pupils' phonology and morphology skills is hereby not rejected. The results thereby implied that gender is not a predictor of lower primary school's pupils' basic phonology and morphology skills in English Language. This is in line with Arigbabu and Mji (2004) who maintained that the whole of Africa still count the issue of gender as an entity to reckon with but it contrasts the assertion of Haworth, Dale and Plomin (2008) that gender issues that generated a debate is not much pronounced at the primary level of education though well pronounced at the higher level of education. Ofodu (2012), Ajayi (2012) and Babalola (2010), in their empirical study also found out that gender or sex does not have significant effect on the performance of student in English Language but it contrasts the findings of Chukwu (2012), Akabogu and Ajijowo (2015) who claimed that gender has a significant effect on the performance of students or pupils in English Language and Literature.

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