

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

THE IMPACT OF TELEVISED AND NON-TELEVISED INSTRUCTION ON ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

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ABSTRACT

The study attempted to examine and if televised mode of instruction helped students outperform in the National English Examinations than did non-televised mode of instruction in four target schools. The samples were 815 students from two televised and two non-televised high schools that are found in four different districts. The achievement test scores of the 2008 Grade Ten National English Examination of the schools were used to compare the results of the students. Interview and textbook analysis were used to collect data for the study pertaining to the way language tasks are designed in the English textbook. The National English language test scores of the sample students were analysed in SPSS version 16.0 and independent samples test score was computed. The study showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the achievement test scores of the Grade Ten National English Examination of televised and non-televised students of the target schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Televised instruction can add a new dimension to a language classroom and promote active learning among students provided that it is properly planned and wisely used. Research findings by (Brinton, 1991) shows the importance of televised instruction in motivating students by bringing real- life experiences to the

classroom and presenting language items in communicative situation. Television can be used effectively as a motivational tool (Willis (1995); and learners tend to find television an attractive way of learning something as it has a capacity of offering visual and audio clues to meaning (Tomalin, 1989). This enables the learner to hear and see the language used in a Natural context. Hence, it brings real life experience to the classroom overcoming the barriers in time and space. As Willis (1995) says, time and space can be collapsed so that events can be captured and relayed as they happen.

Taking these pedagogical advantages into account, the Ministry of Education of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia has launched a new Educational Satellite Television Programme in the country so as to foster the teaching/learning process. English is one of the subjects that is being taught through this mode of presentation.

Therefore, it would be wise to assess whether or not the programme has brought about a significant contribution in the teaching/learning process. This is because in language classes, the audio-visual presentation by itself is unlikely to create favourable conditions for active teaching/learning to take place. As some scholars suggest it can have its own limitations as well. TV reduces the learner to only a passive viewer unless it is

organized in an interactive way. When used passively, without interaction, its instructional effectiveness can be limited (Willis 1995). Hence, another equally important point worth keeping in mind is that hearing, seeing and understanding language items are just one aspect of language learning. These steps should necessarily be followed by communicative activities. *“Language learners can benefit from being told and understanding facts about the language only up to a point: ultimately they have to acquire an intuitive ... And such knowledge is normally brought about through consolidation of learning through practice”* (Ur, 1996:19). Intensive practice, then, is a requisite for cultivating proficiency in learning a foreign language. To achieve this goal, therefore, it would be pedagogically appropriate to provide a variety of tasks that integrate different macro-skills together in language teaching/learning. Equally important here is the fact that more meaningful tasks require learners to analyze and process language more deeply, which helps them to commit information to long term memory. Similarly, any classroom activity should involve learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1989).

Objective of the study

To the researchers' knowledge, the success of the programme in general and the effectiveness of the mode of instruction in nurturing students' English language skills in particular may not be assessed yet. Thus, it would be imperative to investigate whether or not it really helped the televised students achieve better results as compared to the non-televised students who are supposedly attending “traditional and obsolete mode of instruction” as declared by the document *‘Educational*

Satellite Television Programmes – Condensed Teacher’s Guide’ issued by MoE (1996). The research tried to answer the following research question: Therefore, do televised English lessons possess such qualities? If yes, do televised students (students who attended the televised schools’ English classes) achieve better scores than do the non-televised students (students who attended the non-televised English classes) in the Grade Ten National English Examinations?

To achieve the objective of the study, the following null and alternative hypotheses have been formulated. The key hypothesis of this study was:

H₁ : There is significant difference in the achievement test scores of the Grade 10 National English Examination between students who attend televised English classes and those students who do not attend televised English classes. This will be tested against the alternative:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the achievement test scores of the Grade 10 National English Examination between students who attend televised English lessons and those students who do not attend televised English classes.

Limitations of the study

The study didn’t incorporate as many schools as possible. Thus, the findings may not be adequate to make generalizations at the national context.

METHODOLOGY

Study design

To study the impact of different teaching models (televised and non-televised) on the achievement test scores of students, a comparative cross sectional study design was adopted.

Sample size and sampling technique

Four high schools that employ different modes of instruction (two that make use of televised mode of instruction and two others which do not) were included in the study. Bilida High School in Mana district and Limmu Shai High School in Gomma district were non-televised schools. Serbo and Seka High Schools in Limu and Seka districts respectively were televised schools. Other schools in larger cities as compared to these target ones are not incorporated in the study for fear that the students in these cities are likely to get additional tutorial classes which could have a bearing on their achievement test result.

To determine the sample size, visits were made to the respective schools and the sampling frame was organized. After identifying the total number of the students who sat for the Grade Ten National Examination in 2008 in the four high schools, the researcher decided to take 50% of them. The greater the sample size, the smaller the standard error; as the greater the sample size, the close your sample is to the actual population itself (Trochim, 2002). Therefore, the sample size for this study was 815 (631 televised and 184 non-televised) students.

Systematic random sampling was employed to identify the study subjects. The list of the 2008 Grade Ten National Examination records of students in each

target school was made available. Thus, lots were drawn between even and odd numbers and even number was picked, and all even numbered students of the target schools were taken as samples. Hence, the 2008 Grade Ten National English Examination test scores of the sampled students of the target schools were collected and analyzed in two groups - televised and non-televised.

Data collection instruments

The students' scores of the National English Examination were collected from records. To triangulate the findings, the researcher interviewed two randomly selected teachers from each school and analyzed the student's textbook as well. The researcher tried to explore the way the English language tasks/exercises were designed by analyzing the Grade Ten English textbook. Similarly, the focus of

the interview was to know whether the language tasks/exercises were organized in a fragmented manner that fail to give a more coherent and interrelated ideas or in a

more integrated manner interwoven into a coherent text that demand more extended communicative activities.

Data analysis

The test scores of both groups were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. The results of the interview and the textbook analysis were also discussed along with the results of the independent samples test.

Ethical Clearance

A letter was issued to each school about the research and consent was secured.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The samples were 184 students from two non-televised high schools and 631 students from two televised high schools. The National English language test scores of these students were analysed in SPSS 16.0 version. Independent samples test was computed to find out whether there is a statistically significant difference between the English test scores of the two groups or not.

Table 1. The Result of the Independent Samples Test

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
grades	Equal variances assumed	.354	.552	.446	813	.656	.02753	.06179	-.09375	.14880
	Equal variances not assumed			.438	290.394	.662	.02753	.06289	-.09626	.15131

Three conclusions can be drawn from the Independent Samples Test

1. The calculated F-value (.354) is not large enough and it indicates that there is no difference in the two groups. If it were large, we could say there is difference.
2. The t-calculated (empirical value) is also small (.446). This indicates that there is no significant difference.
3. The confidence interval of the difference is between (- .09375 and .14880). This interval contains 0 which is an indication of no statistically significant difference between the test scores of the two groups.
4. P-value should be smaller than the conventional α - value which is 5% to reject the hypotheses. "Researchers use the convention that a probability of 5% is small enough to be a useful cut of point for us to reject the null hypothesis." (Dancey & Reidy, 2002:134). In this result, however, the p-value is larger than $\alpha = 0.05$, that is, $0.552 > 0.05$. Therefore, we accept the H_o . This means, there is no statistically significant difference between the test scores of the two groups.

To conclude, the results of the independent samples test show that there is no statistically significant difference between the National English language test scores of the students who attended televised instruction and those who attended non-televised instruction in the target schools. In addition to this, the overall performance of the students in both programmes (televised and non-televised) was mere satisfactory. In fact, it is only 52.3% of the televised and 50.54% of the non-televised students who scored pass grades in the 2008 National English Examination in the schools. Therefore, in neither of the

programmes did the students score above average in the subject.

What could be the possible reason for such results? The results of the interview as well as the textbook analysis indicated some possible reasons. One possible reason is the way the English language tasks/activities are designed in the grade 10 English textbook which is the primary course book for all schools (both televised and non-televised). The classroom teachers of the televised schools asserted that the televised programme largely depends on the textbook.

The interviewees of the televised as well as the non-televised schools confirmed that the activities/exercises that the book presents are usually made up of phrases, clauses and or fragments of sentences which have no semantic relationship to one another. The textbook analysis also proved that the vocabulary exercises are designed at a phrase and or clause level in the Grade Ten English textbook. Almost all the vocabulary exercises discussed in the textbook were matching exercises which are mainly composed of discrete phrases and clauses that do not relate to one another in meaning. The case is similar in the grammar exercises where students are required to provide the correct form of the word at a word or phrase level. Sometimes, they are expected to provide only suffixes or prefixes. This can be witnessed by examining the way the exercises are designed in the student's textbook.

It is only in the writing and speaking sections that students are expected to produce more extended responses using few sentences. Nevertheless, the activities are neither related to the grammar activities which take the lion's share in the textbook nor to the vocabulary exercises covered in

the unit. Therefore, the students were not frequently required even to write complete sentences using the new words or the grammatical forms they learnt. The results of the interview as well as the textbook analysis indicated that the activities largely focus on receptive skills – listening and reading. Thus, the exercises are not demanding by nature in that they rarely demand students to write/produce tasks like short messages, stories, personal experiences, etc using the language items they learnt. Language teaching materials may offer the opportunity for developing ‘problem-solving’ abilities, by avoiding an emphasis on closed, item-level exercises and instead by providing ‘whole tasks’ which require learners to consider a number of factors at the same time (Little John and Windeatt, in Johnson, 1989).

In general, the interviewees as well as the textbook analysis confirmed that most of the exercises are gap filling (at word or phrase level), guessing or matching exercises that can scarcely help the students consolidate their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and background knowledge into a more extended and coherent level. Students ought to use the language items they learnt to convey a message in a form of a dialogue, to share their personal experience, to express their feelings, etc. be it orally or in a form of a piece of writing. Whatever techniques we employ to teach language items, these steps need to go further into an extended communicative activity. As Harmer (1991) suggests, instructional conditions should be arranged to provide opportunities for a maximum amount of processing of the language items students learnt. Students should be required to manipulate the language items in varied and rich ways. Incorporating language items in a variety of tasks would offer students ample exposure in using the language; and this in turn

would promote their retention. Acknowledging the importance of engaging students in extended communicative tasks, empirical research points out that the more students are involved in a series of language tasks/activities that integrate different skills, the better the retention/the better the learning (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001).

In sum, the organization of the exercises in the Grade Ten English Textbook needs to be revisited so as to provide fertile ground for students to use the language items they learnt in more extended communicative activities. That is, it needs to engage students at large in activities that require those language items for exchanging information or expressing personal feelings, opinions, etc.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

1. The overall performance of the students in both programmes of the target schools (televised or non-televised) was very low. It was only 52.3% of the televised and 50.54% of the non-televised students who scored pass grades in the 2008 National English Examination in the schools. Therefore, in neither of the programmes did the students score above average in the subject.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the test scores of the two groups of the target schools in the 2008 Secondary School Leaving English Examination.
3. Much emphasis is given to closed, item-level exercises in the Grade Ten English Textbook which is the common course book for both televised and non-

televised programmes. Most of the exercises are gap filling (at word or phrase level) and matching exercises that scarcely help the students consolidate their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar and background knowledge into a more extended and coherent level. Thus, almost all the vocabulary and grammar exercises are developed in a disintegrated manner in that they rarely demand students to write/produce more communicative tasks like short messages, stories, personal experiences, etc using the language items they learnt. In addition to this, the English language activities largely focus on receptive skills – listening and reading. Students were largely involved in listening and reading activities.

4. Therefore, televised instruction hardly helped the students achieve better grades than the non-televised students of the target schools in the Grade Ten National English Examination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. So as to address English language teaching/learning intensively, more comprehensive and extended activities that actively engage students in producing meaningful tasks need to be incorporated in the televised English lessons.
2. Meaningful practice is the other critical success factor in language learning/teaching. Thus, students ought to use the language items they learnt to convey a message in a form of a dialogue, to share their personal experience, to express their feelings, etc. be it orally or in a form of a piece of writing. Whatever techniques we employ to teach language items, these steps need to go further into an extended communicative activity. Students should

be given ample time to process the language items in varied and rich ways

3. The Grade Ten English language tasks/exercises need to be designed in such a way that they actively engage students in generating more communicative activities and practicing the language items more intensively. This in turn would help students to retain better and build their proficiency in the language. Engaging learners in communicative tasks, therefore, would enable them to consolidate their learning in a greater depth. More meaningful tasks require learners to analyze and process language more deeply, which helps them to commit the information to long term memory.
4. Secondary school teachers need to develop skill of designing supplementary exercises. To help them acquire this skill, courses like Syllabus Design and Materials Development should be given to language majoring students at our universities.

In sum, the language teaching/learning tasks/activities of televised programme as well as the Grade Ten English Textbook need to be revisited thoroughly paying adequate emphasis to productive skills. Thus, the language teaching materials need to offer ‘**whole tasks**’ that facilitate more communicative and problem solving activities.

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