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## CONTENTS

1.	<b>Effect of Multimodal Assessment Packages on Senior Secondary School Students' English Listening Proficiency in Ibadan Metropolis Oyo State, Nigeria.</b> <i>Abijo, J. A. Ph.D and Sukurat Olabisi Yusuf</i>	1
2.	<b>Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Basic Four Yoruba Speaking Students in French Numbers and Arithmetic</b> <i>Adedoyin Abisola Bukola and David Kolawole Ayinde</i>	11
3.	<b>Mechanical Competence and Language Effectiveness of Text and Students' Achievement in English Reading Comprehension among Public Senior Secondary Students', Ogun State.</b> <i>Adejumobi, Hannah Olapeju and Fakeye, David O.</i>	20
4.	<b>Mother Tongue Education: An Aid to Influencing Teaching of English Language in Basic Schools in Nigeria.</b> <i>Adeniran, Florence Iyabo, Ph.D</i>	32
5.	<b>Effectiveness of Expository, Graphic and Narrative Advance Organisers in Improving Students' English Language Writing Skills in Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria</b> <i>Adeyemo Oluwaseun O., Awopetu Emmanuel O. and Akande Iyabode D.</i>	42
6.	<b>Students' Attitude to Literary Text Utilisation and Achievement in Prose Literature-in-English</b> <i>Yetunde Aduragbemi Oduwole, Ph.D and Joy Anthony, Ph.D</i>	53
7.	<b>Differential Achievement of Students in Yoruba Language Based on Teachers' Teaching Experience and Professional Qualifications in Ilesa Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria</b> <i>E. A. Aduroja and A. A. Adeyinka</i>	63
8.	<b>Students' Perception of Teachers' Competence and their Attitude towards Learning English Language in West Kombo Region, the Gambia</b> <i>Akanbi Omobolaji Olufunmilola, Ina Grant Sagnia Phebian and Michael Hamadi Secka</i>	73
9.	<b>Mnemonics Teaching Strategies and Junior Secondary School Students' Achievement in French Vocabulary in Ijebu-North Local Government Area of Ogun State</b> <i>Adedoyin, Abisola Bukola, Iteogu, Odizuru Ph.D, Ayinde, David Kolawole and Ogunde, Adebola Oluwabukumi</i>	85
10.	<b>Phonological Errors of Pupils in Oral Reading Literacy</b> <i>Wusu J. Apari Ph.D</i>	94
11.	<b>Transmitting Yoruba Cultural Heritage through Oral Tradition: A Case Study of Egungun Eḷeḡe Songs</b> <i>Atolagbe Alice Abiodun and Prof. Adagbada Olufadekemi</i>	104
12.	<b>Linguistic, Social, Psychological and Pedagogical Determinants of Second/Foreign Language Acquisition- Blindspots in ESL/EFL Instruction</b> <i>Ayankajo, Fatimah Adewumi, Ph.D</i>	113
13.	<b>Perceived Role of Female Parents' Psycho-Demographic Variables on Children's Communicative Competence</b> <i>Ayinde David Kolawole, Omotosho Segun and Prof. S. A. O. Oladunjoye</i>	118
14.	<b>Agbeyewo Lilo Afihan Ere Onitan lati ko Aṣa ati Iṣe ninu Eto Korikulọṣomu Ede Yoruba</b> <i>Ayodele, Christiana Ayo Ph.D</i>	126
15.	<b>English Language Teachers' Perception of Teaching and Teaching Skills in Senior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria</b> <i>Prof. D. O. Fakeye and A. S. Olaniyan, Ph.D</i>	138
16.	<b>Blind Spots in the Teaching of Poetry in Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan North Local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria.</b> <i>Bassey M. Arit Ph.D and Ilesanmi Yemisi Ph.D</i>	149
17.	<b>Relevance of Reading Club in Boosting Students' Performance in Literature in English: Students and Teachers' Perception</b> <i>Omonike Rashidat Bateye, Ph.D, Sheriff Olamide Olatunji, Ph.D and Bunni Miracle Olorunsola</i>	160
18.	<b>Revisiting Children's Literature and Orature in Nigeria: Addressing Perceived Moral Disruptions in The Digital Age</b> <i>Olu-Dukiya, Damilola Aboosedo and Oguntunji, Abidemi Emman</i>	168
19.	<b>Blind Spots in the Teaching and Learning of Yoruba Orature: An Example of Teacher Resource Improvisation</b> <i>Adeola, R. Adetunji, Ph.D</i>	178
20.	<b>Principals' Perspectives on Teachers' Creativity in English Language Classroom: A Blind Spot in English Language Education in Nigeria</b> <i>Prof. D. O. Fakeye and Evelyn I. Atiyede, Ph.D</i>	189

# Effect of Multimodal Assessment Packages on Senior Secondary School Students' English Listening Proficiency in Ibadan Metropolis Oyo State, Nigeria.

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## Abstract

The study determined the effect of curriculum-based multimodal technique on the listening skills proficiency among secondary school students in Ibadan metropolis. The quasi experimental design was adopted for this study. The instruments were Oral-based tests with reliability co-efficient of 0.89, Paper-based tests with reliability co-efficient of 0.70. A total of 200 students were randomly selected from public and private schools in Ibadan metropolis and were examined. Half of the students (100) are from public-based secondary schools while the remaining 50% (100) are from private schools. Analysis of variance was used in analysing the main and interaction effects of the data collected. The results revealed that there was no significant different in the overall listening skill proficiency of the students based on either of the school or test type. However, there exists a strong interaction between these independent variables. Students from public schools performed better in Oral-based test (ORT), while private school students tends to have better performance in paper-based tests (PBT). The public school students with a mean performance score of 79.38% performed better than the private school students ( $\bar{x} = 78.5\%$ ) in term of the overall average in the conducted tests. Based on the findings, the new (ORT) technique of assessing listening skill should be adopted by teachers and all public examining bodies in Nigeria in assessing students listening proficiency

**Key words:** Listening proficiency, Multimodal assessment, Testing package, Oral-based test, Paper-based tests

## Introduction

Language is incredibly essential to individuals as it serves as the fundamental means of communication and for achieving social order in society (Coskun and Uzunyol Kopru, 2021). Through language, we express our feelings and thoughts and even ask questions. That is, language is the major vehicle of human communication. Long before the postmodernists began to question the importance of language, the dominance of language in human history was undeniable. Language serves as a vehicle of interaction and an instrument of communication in political and social policy, while it has always had an added cultural role as a weapon of the dominant ideology. That is, learning a language involves more than just reaching out to people; it is also about maintaining a range

of social bonds, a common sense of values, and collective awareness. In addition, language is a powerful tool of control used by the colonial powers (Danladi, 2013).

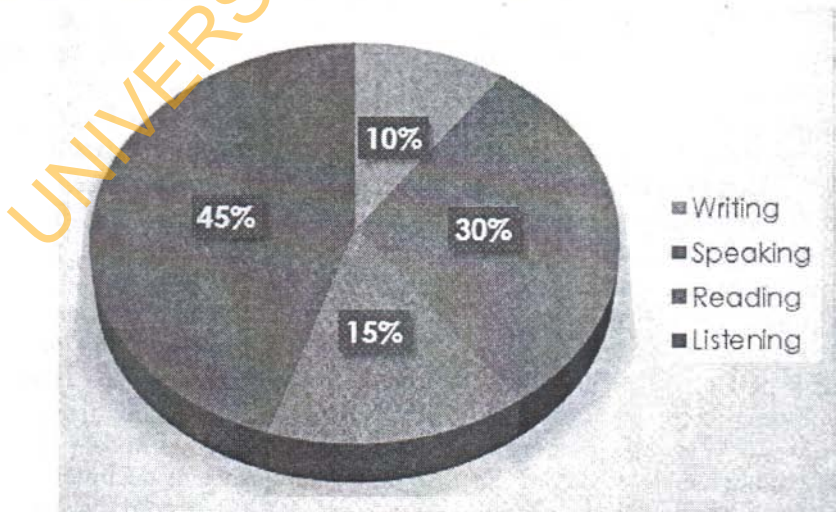
In Nigeria, so many languages exist both foreign and local (within ethnic groups and tribes). Some of these local languages are similarly taught and assessed in our schools but the English language remains the language of instruction in the classroom because it is evidently the most colonial legacy of the British colonial masters who also brought Western education with them to Nigeria. It is also the only linguistic binding factor for all ethnic groups (Owolewa and Oyewole, 2017). Aside from being the medium of instruction in schools, English is widely practiced and occupies a prominent function both at the workplace and together

with the three crucial indigenous languages as well. The implication of Nigeria's complex language situation, due to the multiplicity of its indigenous dialects, is the lack of established effective communication between ethnic groups, which serves as the foundation not only for bigotry and hatred but also for resorting to the use of English as the dominant official language. It also means that selecting any of the three major indigenous languages as a national language will almost probably lead to disintegration or negative feelings. This has therefore shaped the vital character and role of English as a unifying compass in Nigeria (Danladi, 2013).

One would think, by now, that one of our indigenous languages would have been adopted for teaching and assessment purposes in the nation's education sector, given that, according to Fafunwa (1988:395), "the child learns better in his mother tongue and that his mother tongue is as natural to him as his mother's milk" (Mishina and Iskandar, 2019). Nonetheless, the English language remains a core subject that requires a credit pass to forge ahead into higher institutions of learning in the country. The study of this language is therefore pursued with much vigor by all despite being the country's second language.

The study of the English language has come to stay in our educational attainment, hence, the need to be proficient in its understanding. Joseph and Joshua (2010) added that the government having recognized the importance of the English language for enhancing educational attainment as well as for improving communication competence and the ability of citizens has made it a core and compulsory subject for all in Nigerian schools. A complete study of the language, therefore, requires developing good mastery of the four basic components of the language. These are: listening, Speaking, reading, and writing.

These four components work hand in hand, none of them can operate in isolation. For an individual to be proficient in a language (whether local or indigenous), one must listen to conversations and dialogues before attempting to speak, so also to develop the ability to read before eventually writing. Based on findings from previous studies, including those on language acquisition skills, it has been established that language proficiency is acquired through writing (10%), reading (15%), speaking (30%), and listening (45%) while we communicate, see Figure 1.1.



**Figure 1:** English language acquisition skills (Coskun and Uzunyol Koprü, 2021)

Listening skills, being the most prominent, are taught because they are very important parts of being able to use the English language to communicate. Listening accounts for half of verbal activity and is essential in educational, professional, social, and personal circumstances. It is also an extremely complex activity that necessitates a wide range of knowledge and processes that interact with one another (Nemtchinova, 2013). Listening to other speakers not only helps the students develop their pronunciation and fluency in English but is also crucial to the development of one's speaking skills. Listening has been posited to have a greater influence on the maturation process since it is the first comprehension skill. It is a combination of two tasks: paying attention to auditory signals and processing mental information (sound) for suitable meaning (Iliyas and Abdulmalik, 2017). Listening strategies are classified into three types based on the level of processing: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and social/affective strategies. Thinking about the learning process, planning for learning, monitoring the learning task, and evaluating how well one has learnt are all examples of meta-cognitive methods. Meanwhile, cognitive strategies involve interacting with the content to be learned, manipulating the material mentally or physically, or using a specific technique for a learning activity. Furthermore, interacting with another person's control to assist learning or using emotional learning tasks are examples of social and affective methods (Osa-Omoregie and Musa, 2017).

Also, based on the Schema theory of information processing, listening can be grouped into three major sets, namely: bottom-top, top-bottom, and interactive processing. Bottom-up processing is the type of processing that is begun by new information. The incoming input is processed with the decoding of phonemes, and each

phoneme is joined as minimal meaningful units to form words. Words are linked to form phrases, and phrases to sentences to conduct meaningful vocal and written compositions. This complex process culminates in meaning-formation. On the other hand, top-down processing is a concept in which listeners listen to incoming information holistically to capture the substance of the oral text rather than focusing on every single detail in the text. Listeners use top-down processing to reconstruct what the Speakers mean in their utterances by drawing high-level schemata. Lastly, the interactive process combines both bottom-up and top-down processing. Unlike the widely held belief in the literature on the magnitude of the effect of top-down processing on listening comprehension, listeners can overcome weaknesses in both bottom-up and top-down processing through interactive processing (Irgin, 2021).

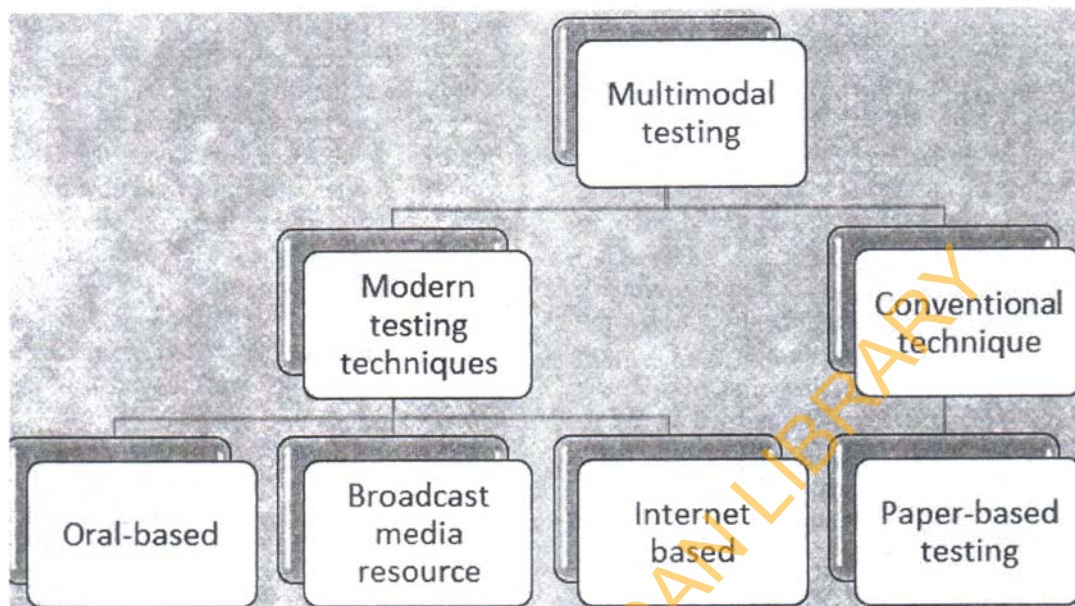
The importance of listening skills in the classroom and everyday life cannot be overstated. Listening skills are as vital as speaking abilities since communication cannot occur without the development of both. Furthermore, listening skills are critical in the learning process because they enable students to accomplish successful and effective communication through acquiring knowledge and insights (Ngwoke, 2022). Sadly, listening is the most difficult skill to assess in students in comparison to any other language skill. It entails an oral input in which pupils must listen to and transmit the knowledge in their heads via auditory insight. The material is presented as spoken text, so students must use their best efforts to recognize the information or passage from what they hear, as opposed to written text, where students may read the entire passage in written form. Listening evaluation necessitates the understanding of both the concept and the ability being evaluated, as well as the test task format used to assess the ability (Rohaniyah and Nasrullah, 2021).

In Nigeria, several authors have identified a lack of in-depth teaching, teachers' poor educational background, and poor attitude on the part of students, as well as poor assessment technique by the examining bodies as the major factors contributing to the low performance of students (including listening and other aspects of English language studies) in the various secondary school leaving examinations. While conscious efforts have been directed toward the efficient teaching of listening skills in Nigeria, the studies promoting effective assessment of listening skills are still lacking in literature (Olusegun and Oyewole, 2017; Osa-Omoregie and Musa, 2017; Owolewa, 2017). For the above reasons, listening skills as one of the four basic components of the language need a full-fledged assessment if our secondary school leavers will be equivalent to their counterparts in other parts of the world where proficiency in the English language matters.

The need for proper assessment of listening skills cannot, therefore, be overemphasized. That is, the use of sound symbols alone as it is presently used is not enough to assess a candidate's ability to listen, understand, comprehend, and interpret spoken conversations in order to respond appropriately. Thus, reality must set in during assessment if not from junior secondary schools, then in senior secondary schools. Consequently, doing this will enable Nigeria secondary school leavers to become acquainted with the proper way of assessing listening skills as it is conducted by English language proficiency examining bodies such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEFL (Test of English as a

foreign language), and others. Thus, making them qualify to compete with their counterparts outside Nigeria.

As previously stated, numerous researches have been conducted on the aspect of efficient teaching of listening skills within and outside Nigeria. But, to the best of my knowledge, no research has focused mainly on the roles of multimodal (traditional and novel) techniques that are applicable in ascertaining the listening skills proficiency among secondary school leavers in Nigeria with a specific target on the secondary school leaving examinations such as WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB. While the traditional mode of assessing listening skills proficiency is based on paper-based technique, the current approaches (modern testing techniques), as depicted in Figure 1.2, however, involve the use of techniques that either allow the learners to be tested through the aid of several technological media such as radio, DVD, video, computer, internet-based recordings or listen to a speaker (Onyebuchi and Ibrahim, 2017). The use of these technologies enables the students to recognize and get accustomed to the pronunciation style of the speakers (British or American), improves listening comprehension, and allows the teacher to save time and energy while preparing the assessment plans. However, the speed of the speech, the accent, pronunciation, and insufficient vocabulary on the part of students could pose major limitations towards achieving the effective evaluation of listening skills (Nasrullah, 2021).



**Figure 2:** Multimodal testing techniques (Onyebuchi and Ibrahim, 2017).

Previous studies have elaborated more on the influences of the students' and teachers' involvement in ensuring effective learning of listening skills among junior and secondary students in Nigeria. Nicholas, (2022) analyzed the listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students in Abeokuta, Nigeria. The authors observed a high level of listening comprehension performance among the students; however, it was noted that the students' subject combination is a major factor in their performance at the discriminative, informative, and critical levels. Also, using the Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire (LCSQ) by Oxford University, Osa-Omoregie and Musa (2017) tested the listening comprehension strategies among junior secondary school students in Edo state and concluded that the overall use of these strategies is low in comparison with the indicated average. Excelling in the use of these strategies has long been identified as a prominent way of improving the learning of listening skills.

The importance of improving listening skills through the use of a multimodal approach was addressed by Onyebuchi and Ibrahim (2017). The authors adopted the Listening Level Test (LLT) as an instrument to ascertain the objectives of the study. Results from the study indicated that listening proficiency is greatly enhanced due to the promotion of cognitive gain and arousal of interest among the students. To Owolewa (2017), the author believes that listening comprehension among secondary school students is chiefly influenced by the attitude and gender of the students; and thus recommended conscious effort from the teachers to encourage effective listening. The same conclusion was affirmed by Owolewa and Oyewole (2017), who further analyzed the relationship between attitude and different learning strategies, using tools such as the Listening Attitude Questionnaire (LAQ), Teachers' Instructional Guide on listening Strategies' instructions; Teachers Instructional Guide on Modified Conventional Strategy and Evaluation sheet

for Assessing Teachers' Performance on the use of the Strategies (ESAT).

In addition, the influence of teachers in the effective learning of listening skills cannot be over-emphasized. Teachers of English Listening Knowledge Test (TELKT) and Teachers' Extent of Teaching Listening Comprehension Questionnaire (TETLCQ) are tools utilized by Iliyas and Abdulmalik (2019) to assess the relationship between the teachers' knowledge depth and the listening comprehension among the students, it was observed that the teaching quality of listening skills is very poor. According to Regina and Obianuju (2019), this can be rightly attributed to the inefficient communication skills among the teachers and the outdated teaching methods. Using several prominent tools, several authors think that the use of multimedia teaching aids, exposing teachers to the current trend in teaching listening skills and the improvement of the curriculum by the curriculum planners and developers are the needed recommendations to achieve a higher proficiency in listening skills (Bello, 2018; Felicia and Ujunwa, 2019).

From the foregoing, it is evident that the challenges and the prospects of improving listening skills among secondary school students via efficient teaching have been explicitly studied and reported. However, the lack of studies focusing on assessing the impacts of listening proficiency testing techniques is glaring, leaving a significant knowledge gap that forms the basis for this study. In the research of Mosquera and Castillo (2019), it has been proposed that the design of evaluation procedures for any of the different aspects of the English language should uphold the principles of practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, justice, democracy, and feedback. Practicality emphasizes rapid test development, convenience of administration, and a simple grading system. Reliability involves test consistency, whereas validity considers the

relevance and significance of interpretations based on test results. Furthermore, justice captures the suitability of the test for all test takers, while authenticity is based on the proximity of the test's lexical and semantic settings to what the student would do with the language outside of the classroom context. In addition, democracy in test evaluation is concerned with safeguarding the interests of all test takers; and finally, feedback ensures that students receive succinct descriptions of their performance as well as critical and engaging comments.

It is from the above submissions that the purpose of this research remains essential/imperative. Also, since previous studies on listening skills majorly focused on teaching and learning listening skills in the classroom, it will therefore be essential to examine its proper way of assessment as well.

#### **Statements of Problem**

The relevance of listening skills in English language proficiency cannot be underrated. This is because the ability to be a good listener goes a long way as to what the respondent will be responding to. The response can then be in either spoken or written form. Good listening skills enable/enhance proper understanding. That is, it is what you hear and understand that you can respond accurately to. Unfortunately, listening skills of all four components of the English language are under-assessed by our S.S.C.E awarding bodies.

For instance, in Nigeria, focusing on WAEC, NECO, and NABTEB examinations, written sound symbols are commonly used with word options accompanying them, among which there is a key. This is not assessing /testing the candidates' listening ability in reality. Also, in testing topics like stress and intonation patterns, candidates are at the mercy of memorizing the prefixes and suffixes attached to a root word to be able to identify 'nonconformists' among the options

provided, thus assessing guessing ability and not the true ability of the candidate.

Numerous researches have been conducted on the aspect of efficient teaching of listening skills within and outside Nigeria. Also, previous studies have emphasized more on the influences of the students' and teachers' involvement in ensuring effective learning of listening skills among junior and secondary students in Nigeria. For instance, the analysis of the listening comprehension performance of senior secondary students in Abeokuta, Nigeria. Also, using the Listening Comprehension Strategy Questionnaire (LCSQ) by Oxford University, Osa-Omoregie and Musa (2017) tested the listening comprehension strategies among junior secondary school students in Edo state and concluded that the overall use of these strategies is low in comparison with the indicated average. Excelling in the use of these strategies has long been identified as a prominent way of improving the learning of listening skills.

This study, therefore, sees the need for assessing listening skills efficiently and practically, among school leavers, through the adoption of a curriculum-based multimodal strategy as against the use of the current traditional approach which is adopted and promoted by the S.S.C.E awarding public examination bodies. Hence, this study aims to assess the true ability of the students' listening proficiency as against the conventional method of assessing their guessing abilities through multimodal techniques (oral and paper-based assessment) on Senior Secondary School students listening proficiency in Ibadan.

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in English listening skills.
2. There is no significant main effect of school type on students' achievement in English listening skills.
3. There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on students' achievement in English listening skills.

**Methodology**

The quasi-experimental design was adopted for this study, to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the dependent and independent variables. A total of four secondary schools were randomly selected from Ibadan metropolis. Two schools were assigned to each treatment group. A total number of two hundred (200) students were randomly selected from public and private school in Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State. 50% of the students (100) are from public-based secondary schools while the remaining 50% (100) are from private schools Two instruments guided the study namely Oral-based test with reliability co-efficient of 0.89 and Paper-based tests with reliability co-efficient of 0.70

Data collected were analysed using a two way analysis of variance for the main and interaction effect of the studied variables.

**Results**

**Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in English Listening skills

**Table 1:** Result of the two-way ANOVA

Source	DF	SSE	MSE	F	P
School Type	1	41.41	41.41	0.88	0.349
Exam Type	1	15.12	15.12	0.32	0.571
School Type*Exam Type	1	496.12	496.12	10.54	0.001
Error	196	9223.22	47.06		
Total	199	9775.88			

A two-way analysis of variance was conducted to ascertain the effects of the assessment techniques (PBT = control and ORT = treatment) on the overall listening skills proficiency from both schools. The assessment results showed that private school students performed exceptionally well in the PBT with a mean score of 78.08% and a standard deviation of 5.8%. On the other hand, the public school students outperformed in the ORT (mean score = 80.68%, SD = 5.8) with scores that varies from 68-91%. Comparing the mean and standard deviation of the public school performance, it can be observed that they performed better in ORT than in PBT. The observed p-value for the test type main effect is 0.571, which is greater than the chosen significance level of 5%. The observed high p-value falls in the acceptable region of the null hypothesis. This implies that there is enough statistical evidence to support the fact that there is no statistically significant difference between the performances of students in the two assessment techniques of listening skills from both schools. Hence, it can be concluded that, regardless of the type of techniques for assessing listening skills, the performances of the students from both schools are not significantly different from one another. Though the students are more conversant with the PBT; their performance is not surprising. However, the outstanding performance of the students in ORT is largely attributed to excellent tutoring by the respective teachers who ensure that the students become familiar with the new assessment technique.

### **Hypothesis 2**

**There is no significant main effect of school type on students' achievement in English listening skills**

The result reveals that the public school students ( $\bar{x} = 78.45\%$ ) in terms of the overall average in the conducted tests. From the

foregoing, a two-way ANOVA was used to compare the effects of the school type on students' listening skills proficiency. From the table above, the p-value obtained for the main effect of school type is 34.9%. This p-value is much greater than the chosen significance level of 5%. This high probability implies that there is enough statistical evidence to accept the null hypothesis which connotes that there was no significant difference between the school types on the overall listening skill proficiency of the students in both tests. Hence, it can be concluded that the performances from both public and private schools in Ibadan metropolis are not significantly different from one another. These students are secondary school leavers who are in the process of writing their external examinations at this stage. It is therefore not surprising that students from both schools performed excellently and equally well.

### **Hypothesis 3**

**There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on students' achievement in English Listening skills**

In order to answer the third research question of this study, a two-way analysis of variance was similarly conducted as shown in the table 1 above to evaluate the interaction effect between the two independent variables. The observed p-value at a significance level of 0.05 is 0.001. Contrary to the results of the variables' main effects, this low p-value suggests that there is enough statistical evidence to not accept the null hypothesis at a significance level of 5%. This implies that an interaction effect exists between the independent variables. Hence, it can be concluded that the independent variables have a composite effect on the performances of the students. From the results, public school students tend to perform better in ORT as compared with PBT; the reverse was observed with students from private schools. The notion that public school students tend to

perform better in ORT than those from private schools could not be expressly established due to the low sample size used in this study. However, this interaction effect might be a result of the peculiarities of the teachers involved. Teachers in public schools are most times highly experienced with many years of teaching their subject areas which might have affected their way of imparting new techniques to the students.

### Conclusion

It could therefore be concluded from the findings that the main effects of listening assessment techniques and school types on listening proficiency among students in Ibadan metropolis are insignificant. The students from both schools performed excellently well in both achievement tests. Although, there is not much gap in the significant levels of the independent variables. The revealed interaction effect affirmed that the type of school could influence the performance of students in the conventional and the modern approach of testing listening skills proficiency. The oral-based technique captured the real-life experiences that the students have during the teaching of listening skills in the classroom. That is, there is a direct and live auditory pronunciation of words, phrases, and sentences during assessment which makes it more real and enhances the attention of the students.

### Recommendations

1. Listening comprehension, which has been expressly stated in the NERDC curriculum, should be revived and properly assessed using the oral-based technique.
2. The school management should create an enabling environment (if not a language laboratory, then a noise-free classroom) that supports oral-auditory communication processes.
3. Examining bodies in Nigeria should fully embrace and adopt the Oral-based technique in assessing students' true abilities in English listening proficiency.
4. Training programs on oral-based assessment technique should be organized for English Language teaching staff in schools, students, school management, and staff of examining bodies.

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