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## ASSESSMENT OF THE LISTENING -ATTENTION SKILLS OF NURSERY SCHOOL PUPILS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The study assessed the level of listening skills and the influence of demographic variables on listening-attention skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State. The study adopted a survey research design. The study utilized 120 nursery school pupils. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. From the three senatorial districts in Osun State, two local government areas were selected from each senatorial district using simple random sampling technique totaling 6 local government areas. From each of the selected local government areas, two schools were selected, making 12 schools in Osun State. From each of the schools, five pupils were selected from nursery one and nursery two using purposive sampling technique because of their ages (age 4–6 years) levels are still within the range of developing listening-attention skills. One instrument entitled, Listening and Attention Achievement Test was used. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A provided demographic characteristics information of the respondent while section B consisted of two comprehension passages which was read to the pupils by the researcher and thereafter pupils were asked questions under each comprehension passages to test their level of listening skills. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and analysis of variance to examine the influence of pupil's demographic information on their listening-attention skill. Results showed that there exists a high level of listening skills among nursery school pupils in Osun State as shown by 73.3% of the respondents and that the age of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill showed by F-value of (0.899 at df (3),  $p > 0.05$ ). Also, sex of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill showed by the F-value of 2.250 at df (1),  $p > 0.05$ . It was recommended that Pupils should be exposed to more songs, stories, and reading activities both at school and home at an early stage to develop aural attention-listening skills.*

**Keyword:** Listening-Attention Skills, Nursery School Pupils, Pupil's demographic variable, Osun State.

### Introduction

Listening skill, is regarded as the first skill a child encounters in life. It is also considered as the foundation on which other skills rest (Jerlin, 2017). It is a process of structuring sounds and speech in the

mind as a result of the hearing, focusing the attention and understanding (Mone, 2009). Listening is the process of focusing all attention on a source of sound to hear and pick the information that the sound brings. Caspersz (2013) defined listening as a conscious process that requires people to be mentally attentive. Attention refers to the amount of dedication of an individual to a particular task for a period of time, usually on the scale of minutes (Sarter, et al., 2001).

Listening-Attention skills is an active process which, involves cognitive, emotional and psychologically activities of the recipients (Karadüz, 2010 & Cramer, 2004). In other word, listening-attention skill is the ability to listen and focus on specific sound and tasks. Listening-attention form the foundation for the development of language and literacy skills. Good attentive listening skills enable children to learn new skills including how to use language. Listening-attention skills are developed in stages as children's communication skills develops. Babies commence sensitivity to sound when they are still in the womb (Healy 1999). At early childhood, they develop the ability to listen and move their attention but within a short time, that is, they are easily distracted and as they grow, they develop the ability to listen and pay attention between two activities or two speakers, then, focusing on many things or to integrate their attention skill in busy environment (Cooper, Moodley & Reynall 1978). In other word, age is an important variable of listening as a child develop, he/she acquires differential listening experience and gain more wider general knowledge (Halone, Cunconan, Coakley & Wolyin 1998). According to Phillip, Lowe, Lurito, Dzemidzic and Mathews (2001) revealed in their study that, genetic make of male and female bring some differences in attention style and cognitive processing style to the communicative interaction. Male tend to hear fact while female pay more attention to mood of the communication (Booth-Butterfield 1984).

Attentive-listening skills can lead to improved self-efficacy. In other words, pupils who develop better listening skill are more likely to feel confident, comfortable and prepared to succeed in school (Wolyin & Andrew, 2009). It helps to teach pupils how to communicate their ideas. This is because pupils who listen pick up more knowledge which will reflect on their thinking critically about their response before responding. It helps to improved problem solving

skills in pupils. Listening-attention skills is the key to learning and pupil's achievements (Mackay, 1997, Ozdemir, 1987). It helps to build stronger relationship between the teachers and pupils by making them feel valued (Blader & Burris 2003, Detert & Berries 2007).

Attentive-listening helps to receive information, understanding and learn things faster in a social environment. According to Social constructivism theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978), children's interaction within the sociocultural environment makes them to develop more sophisticated and effective mental function. He emphasized that learning occurs through active involvement of a learners. He referred to attention, sensation, perception and memory as elementary of mental functions. Attention which is an elementary mental function determine level of active participation of a child and the new knowledge gain by the in-classroom interaction.

Studies have established that poor listening skills in children are not only precursors to poor academic performance but also to poor social skills exhibition. Difficulties with attention and listening skills will affect pupils understanding of information and can also be a problem for all areas of learning. Also, studies have revealed children are poor listeners because they do not sufficiently receive listening education in their classrooms and do not make sufficient exercises for the development of listening skill. Children with low level of listening-attention skills find it difficult to learn to do their work and behave inappropriately in the classroom. Pupils with strong listening-attention skills acquired and retain more information and are less likely to feel unprepared and frustrated in class. It is necessary to analyze children's listening skill before starting the process of learning to read and write (Florit, Roch, Altoe, & Levorato, 2009). For a teacher to provide the necessary support with the activities that can improve listening-attention skills of pupils in his or her class

must know the level of listening skill level of the pupils (Robinshaw, 2007, Jalongo 2010).

Research have revealed that studies on listening-attention skills and the extent to which of demographic variables can influence listening-attention skills of nursery school pupils have not been adequately examine especially in Nigeria.

**Research Objectives**

The objective of the study are to:

- i) determine the listening-attention skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State; and
- ii) examine the influence of pupil's age and gender on listening-attention skills in Osun State.

**Research Questions**

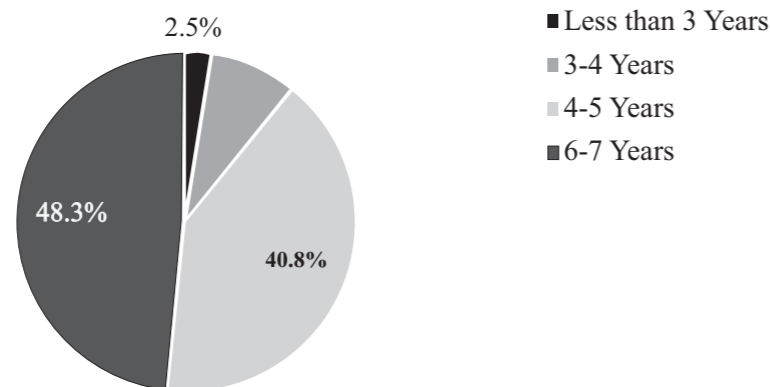
- i) What is the level of listening skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State?
- ii) What is the influence of age and gender on listening skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State?

**Method**

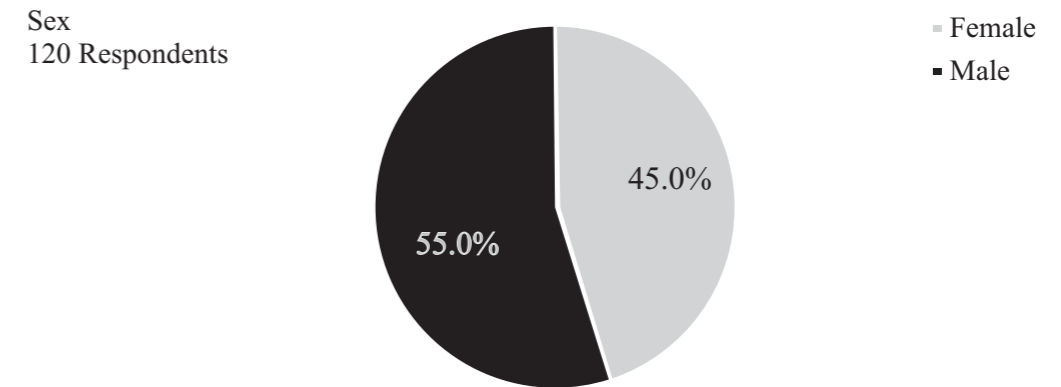
The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study utilized 120 nursery school pupils. Multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. From the three senatorial districts in Osun State, two local government areas were selected from each senatorial district using simple random sampling technique totaling 6 local government areas. From each of the selected local government areas, two schools were selected, making 12 schools in Osun State. From each of the schools, five pupils each were selected from nursery one and nursery two using purposive sampling technique because of their age (age 4 – 6 years) levels are still within the range of developing listening-attention skills. Data collected were analyzed using percentages and analysis of variance.

**Demographic Variables**

Age  
120 Respondents



**Fig.1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age**  
Fig. 1 showed that 48.3% of the respondents between 3-4 years of age, 8.3% of the respondents were between 4-5 years of age, followed by 40.8% who were less than 3 years of age



**Fig.2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by sex**  
Fig. 2 showed that 55.0% of the respondents were males while 45.0% were females.

between 4-5 years of age, 8.3% of the respondents were between 3-4 years, while only 2.5% were less than 3 years of age

**Research Question One:** What is the level of listening skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State?

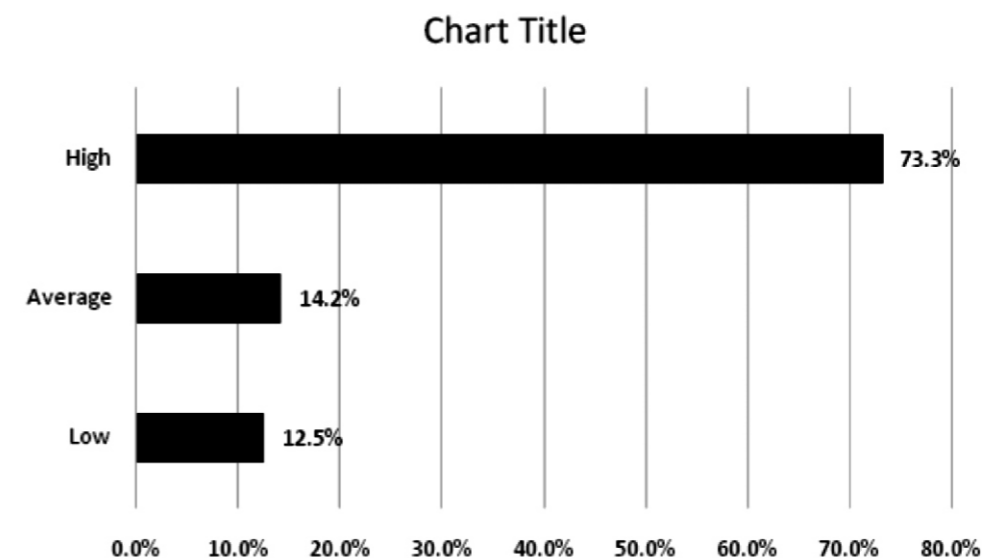
To assess the listening skills, the Listening and Attention skills test were administered to the

respondents. From a maximum total obtainable score of 12. The highest-class score was 12 while the lowest class score for the respondents was 2. The study revealed a mean class score of 8.52 after the test scores were marked. Thereafter, scores between 0-3 were marked low level of listening skills, scripts between 4-7 were termed average level of listening skills while scores above 7 were termed high level of thinking skills.

**Table 1: Listening Skills of nursery school pupils in Osun state**

| Listening Skills Level | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Low                    | 15        | 12.5       |
| Average                | 17        | 14.2       |
| High                   | 88        | 73.3       |
| Total                  | 120       | 100.0      |

Minimum Score = 2.00, Maximum Score = 12.00, Mean Score = 8.52



**Figure 3: Bar Chart of Listening Skills among Respondents in the Study Area**

The analysis of the listening skills in table 1 and figure 3 shows that 12.5% of the respondents have a low level of listening skills, 14.2% have an average level of listening skills while 73.35 have a high level of listening skills. This shows that there exists a high level of listening skills among Nursery school pupils in Osun State. The bar chart representation is presented in Figure 3 below.

**Research Question Two:** What is the influence of age and gender on listening-attention skills of nursery school pupils in Osun State?

To answer this question, the measure on pupils' listening-attention skills and the demographic variables (age and gender) of the respondents were subject to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), using each of the demographic variables as the independent variables, while the listening-attention skills measure served as the dependent variable. The results were shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

**Table 2: Influence of Age on Listening-Attention Skills of Nursery School Pupils in Osun State**

| Age                | N          | Mean          | Std. Deviation | t | df    | Sig.  |
|--------------------|------------|---------------|----------------|---|-------|-------|
| Less than 3 Yearas | 03         | 9.3333        | 3.05505        | 3 | 0.899 | 0.444 |
| 3-4 Years          | 10         | 7.8000        | 2.74064        |   |       |       |
| 4-5 Years          | 49         | 8.2857        | 2.82843        |   |       |       |
| 6-7 Years          | 58         | 8.9483        | 2.59840        |   |       |       |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>120</b> | <b>8.5917</b> | <b>2.71162</b> |   |       |       |

Table 2 shows the ANOVA results of the influence of age on listening-attention skill of Osun State nursery school pupils. On the table, the F-value showed 0.899

at df (3),  $p > 0.05$ . This implies that the age of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill.

**Table 3: Influence of Sex on Listening-Attention Skills of Nursery School Pupils in Osun State**

| Sex    | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation | t      | df  | Sig.  |
|--------|----|--------|----------------|--------|-----|-------|
| Male   | 66 | 8.2576 | 8.2576         | -1.500 | 118 | 0.136 |
| Female | 54 | 9.0000 | 9.0000         |        |     |       |

Table 3 shows the t-test results of the influence of sex on listening-attention skill of Osun State nursery school pupils. On the table, the t-value showed -1.500 at df (118),  $p > 0.05$ . This implies that these x of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill.

pupils were exposed to. Thus, appropriate teaching with the right teaching methods invariably lead to increased listening skills and sustained attention among elementary school pupils (Gulec & Durmus, 2015).

**Discussion of Findings**

Research question one was raised to examine the level of listening skills among nursery school pupils in Osun State. Result showed that majority of the respondents (73.3%) had high level of listening skills, 14.2% had average listening skills level, while 12.5% had low level of listening skills. This result is consistent with that of Gulec and Durmus (2015) who conducted a study on listening skills among pupils in Turkey. The result showed that pupils' listening skills was on the high side. Also, in another study conducted by Bello (2018) among pupils in Abuja Nigeria, the findings showed that majority of pupils exhibited high level of listening skills. This however was as a result of appropriate teaching and experiments in which the

The result from research question two which examined the influence of demographic characteristics on listening skills of nursery school pupils showed that the age of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill. This result is consisted with Neslihan and Seeker (2020) who conducted a study on pre-school children's listening skills according to some variable in Uşak and Eskişehir city centers, showed that there was no significant difference on listening comprehension according to the gender of children birth order, school attendance time, number of siblings, the education level and professions of the parents. Also, in the study of Celikbas (2010) on relationship between the use of listening strategies and listening comprehension, it was revealed that there was no significant difference on listening

comprehension according to the gender of children and the education level of mothers.

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In contrast, Fayyaz and Kamal (2014) in their studies on the role of gender, age, and geographical locality in metacognitive listening skills of English as a foreign language in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Its results showed that gender and age have a significant influence on listening skill of learners but gender was the most significant factor by reveling that women preformed more than men in metacognitive listening skills. According Owolewa (2017) in his study on influence of attitude and gender on listening comprehension of senior secondary school student in Ondo State, Nigeria, revealed that female students had a higher listening comprehension than male students.

**Conclusion**

From the results of this study, it is concluded that there exists a high level of listening skills among Nursery school pupils. Age and gender of the pupils had no significant influence on their listening-attention skill of nursery school pupils in Osun State.

**Recommendations**

It was recommended that; teachers should spend more time interacting with pupils in the classroom. Different activities that will enhance interaction between pupils in a classroom should be given to pupils in classroom activities. Pupils should be exposed to more songs, stories, and reading activities both at school and home at an early stage to develop aural attention. Teachers should encourage interaction among pupils in their classrooms. Activities fostering collaboration among small groups of pupils should be given regularly.

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