STRATEGIES IN ORAL ENGLISH INSTRUCTION: A PEDAGOGICAL STUDY OF SOME GHANAIAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Research on English language instruction, particularly on oral English, is increasingly growing in Ghana and in many countries where the English language is not only used as an official language but also as a language for the medium of instruction and a subject of study in schools. This can perhaps be attributed to the global demand for and use of the English language despite the many difficulties in its instruction. The current study investigates the instructional strategies teachers of English in selected senior high schools in Ghana employ during oral English instruction. Utilizing a mixed-method approach with a convergent parallel design, the study collected data through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations involving 43 English teachers from five senior high schools. The findings reveal a predominant reliance on traditional and direct instructional strategies such as question-and-answer sessions and drills in lieu of more interactive and indirect methods like paired conversations, oral reports, debates, etc. Meanwhile, teachers attribute their instructional choices to large class sizes, teaching environment, instructional resources and the teacher's pedagogical skills. Based on these findings, The study concludes by advocating for the integration of a diverse range of instructional strategies, especially interactive and experiential strategies, to enhance student engagement and improve oral language competencies both inside and outside the classroom.

Keywords: oral English, strategies, instructional, pedagogical, mixed methods

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1. Introduction

Any form of learning strategy or technique that teachers employ to help learners achieve a better understanding of the instructional content is broadly categorised as an Instructional Strategy (IS). In the language teaching setting, these instructional strategies play a crucial role in promoting the proper acquisition of expected learning outcomes. Driscoll (2000) p. 344 maintains that the selection and use of appropriate strategies *"provide the conditions under which learning goals are most likely to be attained"*. Cognisant of its relevance in the teaching and learning process, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT), experts suggest a continuous integration of the teacher's commitment as a tool to connect to and draw a seamless relationship between abstract contents and real-life experiences that learners can easily relate to and make use of in their language learning journey. According to Glickman (1999), how learners are taught, their developmental level, and their interests far more supersede what content is primarily taught to the learners. As such, in a Task-Based Instruction (TBI), such as in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), various instructional strategies are contextualised to facilitate the learners' language learning objectives.

In its current context, English Language Teaching (ELT) and, in general, English as a Foreign Language Teaching (EFLT) appears more challenging than ever, simply due to the undeniable fact that the English language sits as the most used and most widespread language in the world (Crystal, 2006). Apart from this obvious truth, Seidlhofer (2004) notes that ELT is somehow controlled by native speakers, so much so that this "control" is noticed in the instructions of Englishes outside the inner circle. This "control" affects key pedagogical areas such as curriculum practices, instructional designs and strategies, assessment and evaluation methods, instructional materials, syllabus structure, etc. Without a doubt, ELT in Ghanaian schools has seen major strides in the areas of pedagogy and instruction following the growing demand for the use of English across almost, if not all, sectors of the Ghanaian economy and, by extension, the importance of intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability in spoken language across the world. While the numerous research studies in the instructional process have contributed greatly to the design, implementation, and instruction of English as a foreign language, the output of these investments in real-language communicative situations seems to be far from what many educators and researchers expect.

In particular, ELT in Ghanaian Senior High Schools demonstrates little information on oral English instruction and its relevance to Ghanaian speakers or learners of English. Instruction is mainly centred on improving the writing and reading skills of learners who neglect their oral language skills, sometimes completely ignoring the oral language skills as a necessity in everyday activities (Gubbins & Holt, 2002). In this regard, the teaching and learning of the English language, which includes the acquisition of the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (linguistic competence) and, to a larger extent, the pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence must properly be integrated into the acquisition process of the

learner. This integration is actualised using carefully selected instructional strategies in the teaching and learning process. Although each skill carries equal importance in the language acquisition process, research indicates (MacDonald, 2002; Owu-Ewie, 2019) that these skills do not develop at the same rate among the learners and that most learners who are noted to be competent in the English language, unfortunately, in most cases fail to express themselves effectively in public speaking and even fail to comprehend information from a listening source.

In Ghana, the ELT curriculum for senior high schools includes oral English content designed by the Ministry of Education and clearly outlines two major objectives: "*to enable learners to correctly articulate various English speech sounds, listen to and understand these speech sounds and to speak English as fluently as possible and make use of appropriate stress and intonation in their reading and speech*" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22). While the curriculum and the syllabus provide some conventional ways to ensuring that these set objectives are achieved, research indicates that other components of the teaching and learning process including the setting, methods and procedures, instructional materials, knowledge of subject matter etc. greatly affect expected outcomes. According to Burns (2003), one of the components to consider in the ELT process, particularly ELT as a foreign language, is the instructional strategies employed in the institutional process. Without the appropriate use of instructional strategies, these objectives may not be easily achieved. A conscious effort must be made to achieve them no matter how difficult. Wrembel (2002), therefore, suggests that successful oral language instruction includes the selection and appropriate use of instructional strategies aimed at developing students' intelligibility, communicability and confidence outside the classroom. Given the fact that the teaching and learning process encompasses the strategies or techniques teachers employ to achieve effective outcomes, this study seeks to investigate the instructional strategies used in the teaching and learning of oral English in selected senior high schools in Ghana. It seeks to address the research question:

- What are the various instructional strategies employed in the teaching of oral English?

2. Literature Review

The study is premised on Adam Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977). This theory, originally theorized in 1963 and revised in 1977, asserts that new behaviours can be acquired by observing, practising, and imitating or simply by experiencing actual learning outcomes. It adds that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. This is relevant because the instructional process does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it occurs in specific contexts where the environment plays a key role in the acquisition and development of knowledge (Hoffman, 1993). This theory captures the variables of appropriate teaching strategies for the development of oral language skills. Some studies (Newman & Newman, 2007; Muro

& Jeffrey, 2008) confirm that many behaviours are learned through observation, imitation, and generally by experiencing actual events. Thus, the instructional process must be modelled toward maintaining students' attention, retention, reproduction and recognition of the instructional content.

According to Jenkins (2007), the English language, from merely a paltry language, has grown to be a formidable lingua franca that plays a crucial role in education systems worldwide, especially in multilingual contexts. In Ghana, the English language serves as a linguistic resource for cross-ethnic communicative situations and doubles as the language of instruction and interaction in Ghanaian schools, and government business. This linguistic situation dates to the establishment of schools by foreign missionaries, which aimed to educate the local populace as well as to facilitate the operations of its former colonizers (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). Beyond its linguistic relevance to the Ghanaian context, the English language is also a mandatory subject of study in the Ghanaian school curriculum. Where learners are expected to develop both linguistic and communicative competence for academic success and effective communication in broader social contexts (Barker, 2009)

Historically, English has served as the lingua franca, facilitating communication among the diverse linguistic groups in Ghana as well as in international communications (Anyidoho & Kropp-Dakubu, 2008). Although competence levels vary, English remains an essential skill, especially in urban areas where it increasingly functions as a home language for many growing Ghanaian children. Data from the 2021 population and housing census corroborates this, showing that 44.7% of Ghanaians over six years old are literate in only English. Notwithstanding the constant influx, English in Ghana has evolved and has maintained specific norms, including its unique linguistic and cultural characteristics of Ghana, thus influencing vocabulary, idiomatic usage, and pronunciation, among other aspects (Darko, 2006). While there have been consistent arguments for or against the use of the English language as the language of instruction in schools, particularly at basic schools, the general experience has been that many public and private schools in Ghana admonish the use of English for instruction and communication among pupils.

Following Ghana's independence in 1957, there have been consistent arguments for or against the use of the English language as the language of instruction in schools, particularly in basic schools. This linguistic argument spanned over a period with constant changes between the use of the English language or some selected local languages in the formative stages of education. However, in September 2002, an English-only policy was used as the medium of instruction across the country. The policy made the English language a mandatory language of instruction, with the Ghanaian language studied as a compulsory subject by all learners (Ameyaw-Ekumfi, 2002). Among other things, the policy specified that the English language must be used as the language of instruction from primary one through university and that the indigenous languages are to be used as the mediums of instruction where the composition of the classes was linguistically homogenous. Although this policy seemed to have served its purpose, it

was criticized for being a potential setback to the development of education; hence, it was replaced by a bilingual-related policy design by the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) in 2006.

Currently, Ghana's language policy mandates the use of the child's first language or L1 as the language of instruction from kindergarten through Grade 3, with English used as the language of instruction thereafter. Studies show that although this policy is what is expected, the reality of the linguistic situation within the various schools differs because most schools use and introduce the English language to pupils as early as kindergarten (Adika, 2012; Awedoba, 2009; Davis & Agbenyega, 2012). The works of these researchers further highlight the preference for and use of English as an instructional language as well as the commitments that educational authorities put in to ensure its adherence. What is certain, however, is that the English language plays a crucial role, and its relevance in Ghana's linguistic space cannot be overemphasized.

2.1 Instructional Strategies in ELT

According to Driscoll (2000, p. 344), instructional strategies serve as the pathways through which specific learning outcomes are achieved. They form part of the teaching and learning process and generally help to accomplish tasks or meet educational goals. Instructional strategies can: motivate students and help them focus their attention, organize information for understanding and remembering, as well as monitor and assess learning. Within the instructional process, several strategies could be used to achieve the best learning and behavioural outcomes. These instructional strategies can be categorised based on some instructional factors viz a viz what teachers intend to communicate to learners. Glikman (1999), therefore, proposes five categories of instructional strategies used throughout all levels of education. The categories: direct, indirect, interactive, independent and experiential have different instructional strategies that can be used to facilitate instructional delivery. Figure 1 shows the categories of instructional strategies as proposed by Glikman (1999).

Figure 1: Categories of Instructional Strategies

Glickman (1999) opines that direct strategies are predominantly teacher-centred and are among the most commonly used. It includes methods such as lectures, didactic questioning, explicit teaching, practice and drills, and demonstrations. They effectively provide information or develop step-by-step skills and actively engage students in knowledge construction, particularly in the upper grades (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). In contrast, indirect strategies primarily focus on the student. It encourages students to participate actively in observing, investigating, drawing conclusions from data, and developing hypotheses. It capitalises on students' curiosity and interest, frequently encouraging them to generate alternatives or solve problems. Although the two strategies can complement each other, Indirect instruction is more adaptable in that it allows students to explore different options and reduces the anxiety associated with giving incorrect answers.

There is also the Interactive Category, which is heavily reliant on participatory discussion and sharing. These allow learners to "*react to the ideas, experience, insights, and knowledge of the teacher or peer learners and to generate alternative ways of thinking and feeling*" (Seaman & Fellenz, 1999, p. 119). In this category, teachers utilize strategies to teach students how to develop social skills and abilities, organize their thoughts, and develop rational arguments. Whole-class discussions, small-group discussions or projects, or student pairs or triads collaborating on assignments are major activities in this category. The teacher must outline the topic, the amount of discussion time, and the composition and size of the groups to achieve effective learning outcomes. Afandi (2018) reports that very few teachers employ groupings and close discussions in their lesson delivery, particularly for large classes.

Experiential Category emphasises the process of learning rather than the product. Here, learning occurs when learners engage in an activity, critically reflect on the activity to clarify, draw useful insights from such analysis, and apply it in new situations. When language learning is experiential, learners are given a semblance of a natural language acquisition environment where opportunities are created for them to use language in real-life situations, thereby enhancing the learners' communicative competencies (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Regardless of the possible constraints: concerns about student safety, space, and a lack of available time, the benefits of exploring and implementing strategies in this category in the ELT classrooms outweigh the extra effort this strategy may necessitate. Experiential learning, therefore, significantly improves understanding and retention over methods that rely solely on listening, reading, or even viewing (McNeil & Wiles, 1990).

In the view of Brown (2000), teaching environments that employ experiential instructional strategies automatically lead learners to develop independent strategies towards their language learning. He adds that these strategies are specifically designed to foster individual student initiative, self-repair opportunities, and self-improvement. A good integration of carefully selected instructional strategies guarantees teachers' ability to provide the best language learning opportunities for learners and consequently improve their communicative competence. Glikman (1999) summarises these five

instructional categories and the various instructional strategies that are usually applied in a simple interrelated diagram as shown in Figure 2.
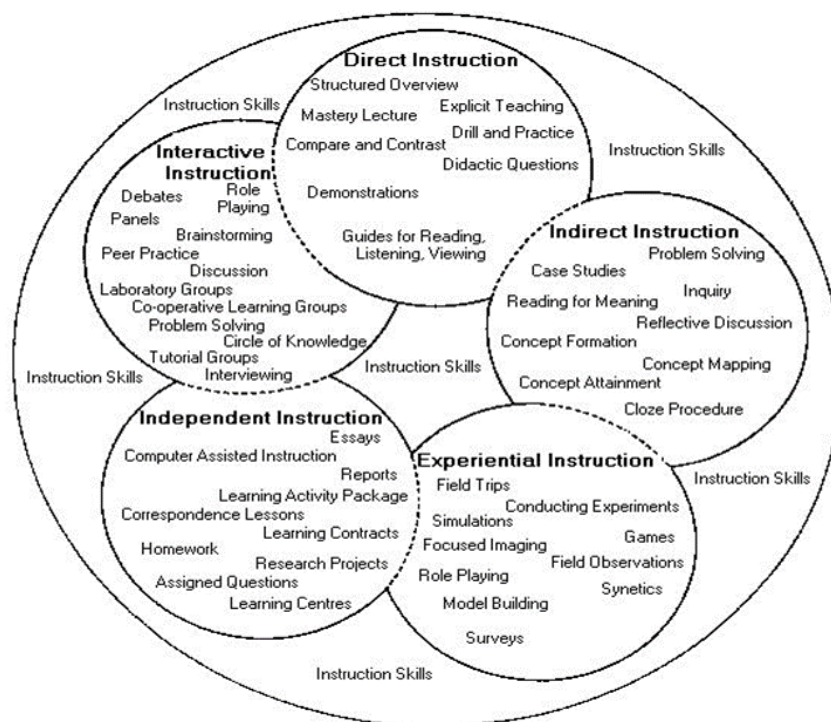

Figure 2: Instructional Strategies

Since the goal of ESL / EFL teachers is intelligibility and communicative competence among learners, using the best and most timely instructional strategies contributes greatly to the overall language teaching method goals: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the Integrated Skills Approach (ISA), that drive ELT instruction.

3. Materials and Methodology

In this study, a Convergent parallel design is employed to drive the expected goals. This design allows or gives room for the researchers to collect both quantitative and qualitative data using different instruments, which are later analysed together to provide a comprehensive discussion of the research findings. In this design, the information collected from both qualitative and quantitative sources is integrated into the general discussion and analysis of the research findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). A set of questionnaires and interviews primarily served as tools for collecting data for the study. The stimuli were presented in carefully semi-structured interview questions and questionnaires aimed at gathering the needed information for the study. Beyond these two, a planned classroom observation was carried out on all 43 participants. Their instructional materials were also observed to gather additional data for the study.

Forty-three (43) teachers, comprising twenty-five (25) males and eighteen (18) females, were used as the sample participants for the study. The sample size was limited to teachers who have received their teaching licenses and have been teaching the English language for more than 6 months within their respective schools. This included teachers who had prior training in teaching from a recognised teacher training institution in Ghana. All the participants were English language teachers from five government senior high schools in the Awutu Senya District. The mean age for the participants is 32 years. Each participant had at least a Bachelor of Education degree and had been teaching for more than 5 years. No participant reported a physical or mental disability.

Participants were first sensitized about the study before consenting to the consent forms. Each participant responded to the questionnaires within a given time frame and was provided with resources that helped explain portions of the questionnaire that required further understanding. They were also allowed to ask questions at any point in time and as many times as needed. Twenty-three (23) participants were later conveniently sampled for focus group interviews. The interview sessions were conducted in three separate sessions, with each session comprising not more than eight (8) participants. This was done to avoid longer sessions and reduce the number of participants per session. The data gathered from the questionnaire was coded and analysed through SPSS. Standard deviations and mean values were calculated to get an accurate reflection of the quantitative data, while the qualitative data collected from the interviews were thematically analysed. The results from both analyses are discussed side by side.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Instructional Strategies Used by Teachers

Effective teaching strategies are crucial for improving student learning outcomes and creating an engaging educational atmosphere. Knowing the many teaching pedagogies that teachers use in their instructional process can in a lot of ways, help identify areas that require improvement and best practices. This section presents a detailed analysis of the instructional strategies used by teachers based on data collected through surveys, interviews, and classroom observations. The objective of this analysis is to identify the most frequently used and effective instructional strategies and to evaluate their effectiveness in promoting student engagement and comprehension of oral language. The data encompasses various teaching methods, including traditional approaches such as direct instruction techniques, as well as more interactive strategies like group discussions, role-playing, and the use of multimedia resources. In looking at and analysing the results gathered from the participants as responses to the major research question for the study, it is relevant to acknowledge the different research cues that elicited specific responses and how these cues collectively represent the findings gathered from the study. Three prompts were used to gather information on teachers' choices of instructional strategies.

4.1.1 Teachers' Views on Suggested Instructional Strategies Used in Oral English Lessons

The first prompt sought to gather teachers' views on some known instructional strategies typically used during oral English instruction. These views were sampled from existing literature on oral language instruction, teaching syllabi, and course textbooks.

Table 1 summarises the teachers' views on some suggested instructional strategies used in oral English lessons.

Table 1: Teachers' Views on Suggested Instructional Strategies Used in Oral English Lessons

SN	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Reading aloud is a good strategy in teaching oral English	43	1.32	3.425
2	Scripted conversation enhances learners' interest in oral English	43	1.73	.843
3	Dramatization or role play is the best strategy	43	1.90	.785
4	Model speaking arouses learners' interest in learning oral English	43	1.83	1.124
5	Discussion should be encouraged to teach oral English	43	1.92	1.045
6	Use of question and answer	43	1.63	.901

From Table 1 a, "Use of question and answer" strategy receives the lowest mean score (1.32) and a standard deviation of 0.324, indicating a high level of agreement and consistency among respondents that this is a relatively known strategy. Other statements, 2 and 6 "Model speaking arouses learners' interest" and "Reading aloud", also show strong agreement, with mean scores of 1.73 and 1.63, respectively. As gathered from the observation, Teachers of English view these activities as engaging and involving, allowing teachers to interact more with the learners. While the responses generally acknowledge the effectiveness of some instructional strategies, some teachers, however, expressed the seeming difficulties that come with executing such strategies, particularly using model speaking as a teaching strategy.

As maintained by Morley (1991), teachers are the best facilitators in the language-learning classroom. Hence, their communication skills communicate a lot to the learners. The high agreement on the effectiveness of the question and answer and model speaking techniques, therefore, suggests the teachers' likeness to interactive engagement through questioning and the active use of language in the classroom, which are essential for language acquisition. This prompt as indicated serves as a template for establishing the actual teaching strategies that teachers use in their oral English lessons; hence, some responses from the interview sessions provide some context for the outcome of the data gathered from the question.

Extracts 1 and 2 represent the responses from some teachers responding to the question *What are your views on the use of instructional strategies?*

> *"I think the use of question and answer is often better and easier, and almost every language teacher uses it at some point. Even though most of us use it, we do not think of it as an instructional strategy. It helps me to get the students to focus and contribute to the lesson. I also think the other strategies or techniques are useful too. I use some of them and*

believe others do so sometimes. I guess I just try my best to present the lesson well enough to make the students feel involved and talk as much as possible." (R1TF3)

"I think that for most of us, we do not think about the use of instructional strategies. When we do, it is usually a questions and answers technique. It is so unconscious that we hardly think about it before using it. I would say it is the default strategy for most of us." (R1TM1)

Extracts 1 and 2 provide a good context for the teachers' responses to the first prompt. R1TF3 acknowledges the use of question and answer as an instructional strategy and makes personal references to specific situations where the strategy helps achieve an instructional objective. A similar response is given by R1TM, further expanding the idea of teachers' unconsciousness of the use of effective instructional strategies in their teaching lessons.

4.1.2 Instructional Strategies Mostly Used by Teachers during Oral English Lessons

Nuan (2006) suggests that oral English lessons are expected to be active, lively, and full of opportunities for learners to use language. It is not supposed to be robotic, tensed or even so calculated. As such, lessons in this aspect of language learning require carefully selected strategies that meet the specific language needs of the learners. Prompt 2 presents information on some IS that teachers believe they mostly use in their oral language lessons. The goal of this prompt was to allow teachers to freely select from a list of many instructional strategies that they typically use in their classroom situations, as well as to indicate by writing if their preferred strategy is not already listed.

The responses provided in Table 2 represent the data collected from teachers as regards their preferred instructional strategies.

Table 2: Instructional Strategies Mostly Used by Teachers

SN	Instructional Strategy	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Drills (mechanical and communicative)	43	**1.73**	**.358**
2	Oral report	43	**1.26**	**.414**
3	Roleplay/dramatization	43	**1.23**	**.427**
4	Model speaking	43	**1.28**	**.454**
5	Discussion	43	**1.33**	.474
6	Question and answer	43	**1.74**	.489
7	Paired conversation	43	1.31	.412
8	Use of poems/recitals	43	1.07	.394
9	Debates	43	1.37	.533

The descriptive statistics from the teachers' responses show that drills, oral reports and model speaking strategies are the most used and preferred IS for teachers during oral English lessons. These strategies have high mean Scores with low standard deviation, indicating a relatively higher rate of selection or preference for them. The low variability rate in responses, in total, reflects the teachers' broad consensus that these strategies are

mostly used for oral language instruction. Traditionally, drills are associated with accuracy and facilitate proficiency, competence, and confidence among learners (Alali & Schmitt, 2012). They are noted to be effective instructional strategies in the language teaching classroom, particularly during pronunciation and speaking lessons (Owu-Ewie, 2019). An observational study conducted by the researchers witnessed many series of drills in some classrooms as teachers sought to help learners acquire specific oral skills. Responses on Discussions, Question and Answer, and Debates show higher standard deviations, suggesting mixed opinions among respondents about their preference for these strategies, although used in some situations when required to foster understanding. Interview responses to the same prompt further revealed the situational choices of these instructional strategies according to each teacher's understanding of oral English skills as well as the specific objectives of their lessons. A female teacher responding to an interview question *Which instructional strategies do you mostly use during oral English lessons?* had this to say:

> *"I think I use question and answer more often because I'm able to get the class to focus and contribute to the lesson. I may use drills also, especially when it comes to the pronunciation of certain words and the use of specific sounds. Like us, our students have different first languages so it is not easy for some of them to get the concepts we present in oral English, you know.. using drills somehow gets them to say them better. Sometimes, the students even laugh when I say a word or use a phrase that differs from how they do."* (RTF3)

Other strategies like role play, Paired Conversation and the Use of Poems/Recitals, and debates have lower mean scores and a collectively lower standard deviation, showing teachers do not consider these as strategies they use mostly during the instructional process. According to Glukman (1999), instructional strategies such as Paired Conversations and debates fall under the interactive category, and they are heavily reliant on participant discussion and knowledge-sharing as well as enough preparation and organisation. However, as has been reported, these strategies are not often used, perhaps due to some factors that teachers often complain about as contributing to their instructional choices: class size, number of periods, logistics, teachers' pedagogical skills, time timetable constraints, etc. A study by Seidu A., *et al.* (2008), revealed that the large number of students in many classrooms contributes to some students' failure in the English language paper of their WASSCE exams. The report further adds that due to the large class sizes, teachers find it difficult to properly access students using the appropriate teaching techniques. These concerns, regardless of how subtle they may be, have implications for learning outcomes and linguistic competencies. Another male teacher responding to the same question also remarked:

> *"I'd say drills, question and answer and sometimes role play. When I really plan my oral English lessons, I am able to chip in some of these strategies but these days everything*

happens so fast that I hardly use other strategies apart from drills and question and answer." (R1TM2)

The inferences gathered from these interviews suggest that not only are the teachers aware of these strategies, but they generally find it easy to use specific teaching strategies, particularly those that do not require extensive preparation or resources. This simplicity makes it a default choice, especially in spontaneous teaching scenarios. It also suggests teachers' awareness and acknowledgement of the usefulness of other instructional strategies, even if they are not as frequently employed as drills, questions and answers.

4.1.3 Efficient and Effective Instructional Strategies

Prompt 3 sought to gather information from teachers on the most effective and efficient instructional strategies they use during oral English lessons. The researchers assumed that given other circumstances, teachers were confident of their instructional choices as being effective in helping them achieve their instructional goals. The responses gathered from this prompt aimed to confirm or otherwise what they have already indicated in prompts 1 and 2, respectively. In order of importance, teachers were asked to outline the instructional strategies they deemed effective and efficient in the instructional process of oral English lessons. Table 3 presents the results of the questionnaire.

Table 3: Teachers' Responses on Effective and Efficient Instructional Strategies

Strategy	Frequency	Number
Question and Answer	37	43
Drills	28	43
Discussions	25	43
Roleplay	22	43
Oral reports	18	43
Model speaking	13	43
Paired conversations	9	43

From Table 3, question and answer, drills and discussion received a relatively higher response. The high-frequency output for question and answer indicates that teachers find this strategy highly effective for engaging students in oral English lessons. Teachers also consider repetitive practice through drills to be an effective method for reinforcing language skills. Drills, both mechanical and communicative, help in the memorization and internalization of language patterns. The discussion strategy, although it has not been so prevalent thus far, appears to be a strategy teachers believe to be effective. As an instructional strategy, discussions promote critical thinking and allow students to express their ideas and opinions in English. The use of discussions helps in developing conversational skills and fluency, making it a preferred strategy for many teachers. The interactive nature of discussion, therefore, facilitates better comprehension and active participation, which are crucial in language learning. Responses from the interview on

this prompt further buttress the results provided above. Teacher 4, a female respondent, remarked:

"My oral English lessons are not complete without drills... actually, I believe it's very effective and I do like it and use it a lot along with questions and answers. Occasionally, we do some role play, but these days, there is a lot to do and cover from the syllabus before the term ends and ultimately before my students get to write their final exams, so I do not do that much of it even though I may want to."

As noted by Teacher 4, drills as well as question and answer strategies, effectively contribute to lesson delivery in oral English lessons, particularly given the constraints teachers have and what is expected of them. Teacher 2, a male respondent, also commented:

"The most effective strategies for me are question and answers… obviously, drills and maybe discussion. I think the others require more planning… and I don't think the period is enough for all of that. Maybe when there is time, the others could be used effectively as well."

Contrary to the responses provided on prompt 2, where teachers indicated model speaking as a strategy they mostly use, it appears to have been unpreferred based on its effectiveness and efficiency in the context of the teachers' teaching experiences, hence receiving a much lower frequency as compared to drills, discussions and questions and answer strategies. Model speaking involves teachers demonstrating appropriate (almost native-like) language usage, which students then emulate. Although this method is beneficial for providing clear examples of pronunciation, intonation, and sentence structures, most teachers do not feel confident enough to use model speaking. As observed from the study, this stems from the fear of making errors and having students ridicule or tag them with certain terms. Similarly, paired conversations and role play are seen as a not-so-effective strategy given the situational and teaching context in which most of the teachers operate. While both strategies support the development of conversational skills and language use in a more dynamic and realistic context, teachers rate them as not so effective primarily because their teaching environments, coupled with other constraints, make such strategies difficult to implement.

5. Conclusion

This study reviews instructional strategies in oral English teaching, drawing significantly from comprehensive analysis within some selected Ghanaian senior high schools. The discussion thus far has shown that among the many instructional strategies that could be used to facilitate oral English instruction, the question-and-answer strategy and drills are the most common instructional strategies used by English teachers within the study area

to teach oral English lessons. This finding, although positive, presupposes that as far as the use of instructional strategies is concerned, there is a lack of variety and creativity among the teachers as teachers rely mostly on direct instructional strategies. The data further reveals that teachers employed either only the question-and-answer strategy or a combination of the question-and-answer strategy and drills, discussion and sometimes model speaking, while strategies like role play, paired conversation, and oral reports, among others, are noted as not generally effective based on situational limitations that characterise teachers instructional processes hence their heavy reliance on direct instructional strategies at the expense of an eclectic: direct, indirect, interactive and experiential strategies. Notwithstanding these findings, the teachers recognise and agree to the relevance of and the use of diverse instructional strategies in their oral English lesson delivery. The fact however remains that Oral English instruction in Ghanaian schools is one of the aspects, if not the aspect, that has been worked on the least in terms of research and empirical studies. Even though this aspect drives all other aspects of language teaching and, by extension, the teaching of other subjects, lacunas in the literature remain and therefore call for urgent attention. Given the linguistic diversity and the essential role English plays in academic and professional settings, effective instructional strategies are paramount in the instructional process.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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