Increasing Adult English Language Learners English Vocabulary

Using Traditional Phonics Instruction

Supplemented With the Supra-Segmental Teaching Strategy

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Jack McPherson

Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of

Master of Education

Specialization in Bilingual Education

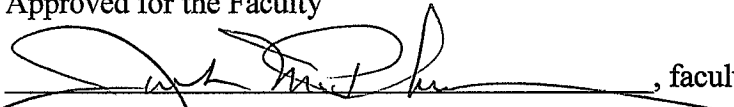Consuelo Isabel Alvarado de Hernandez

Summer 2008

FACULTY APPROVAL

Increasing Adult English Language Learners English Vocabulary

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Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to supplement a traditional ESL curriculum with non-traditional, Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, and to discern whether the intervention of this strategy significantly increased the vocabulary of the AELL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which information and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusions and recommendations were formulated. Analysis of data obtained supported the hypothesis that supplementing traditional phonics instruction with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, increased the English vocabulary of participating AELL's.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

As cited in an article entitled "Immigrants in America: Who are They, and Why do They Come?" by Alfred (2001, p.2-5), Immigrants make up the largest percentage of language learners in the United States. In a Census Bureau report from March, 2002, indicated immigrants from Latin America made up 52% of the immigrant population entering the United States. The land of milk and honey was abundant in providing opportunities that lead to financial and emotional success. The quantity and quality of possessions determined one's ability to recognize and seize an opportunity when it presented itself. Many immigrants have left their homelands in search of better living conditions. These are people who left their home countries which did not provide adequately for their families. As a result, the greatest obstacle they have faced in this country was the fact that they were immigrants.

The governments of those countries in large part failed to provide the most basic of human needs for its citizens. The cold hard fact was that success and security could not be obtained in their homeland. Hopefully, success and security would be obtained in a new land with a new culture and a new language. In time, the arrivals learned the lay of the new land, the parameters of the culture and the do's and don'ts of the new country. However, language remained a barrier and success continued to elude the immigrant. Research and experience have shown that the children of immigrants will have more success in overcoming the language barrier than their parents.

Adult English Language Learners (AELL) have encountered increased difficulty in learning a second language (Friederici, Steinhauer, Pfeifer, 1999, p. 529-534). These students have shared their reservations and criticism of various English as a Second language (ESL) programs provided throughout the Yakima Valley. A majority of these programs expected a lengthy commitment to attend class regularly, and to study and complete homework assignments routinely. Adult Early Language Learners especially noted that there were not enough hours in the day and evening to keep up with such a work load. The desire to learn was undermined with constant television news broadcasts damning the presence of immigrants in the United States. The threat of families being separated loomed over any impending success. Another stressor was the face to face confrontations with co-workers and the general public that was frustrated by the immigrant presence. As a result, motive was diminished to become one with the American melting pot.

Statement of the Problem

Adult English Language Learners have experienced distinct issues learning a second language as compared to children learning a second language. The lower Yakima Valley has become home for many AELL who worked in the agriculture industry. Working conditions for this population have been harsh, wages too low, and benefits minimal.

The AELL sought a short–cut to learning a work vocabulary which would expedite employment in an industry with improved pay, working conditions and benefits. Other interventions were also needed for AELL to successfully learn a second language. Could the student learn enough vocabulary to seek gainful employment? Could the adult

learner overcome the obstacles, triumph over the stressors in their lives , and successfully increase the English word vocabulary essential for obtaining employment without the use of an interpreter or translator?

Phrased as a question, the problem which represented the focus of the present study may be stated as follows: To what extent did supplementing the non-traditional Supra-Segmental teaching strategy into a traditional ESL curriculum increase the vocabulary of participating AELL?

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to supplement a traditional ESL curriculum with non-traditional, Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, and to discern whether the intervention of this strategy significantly increased the vocabulary of the AELL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which information and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Delimitations

The study compared two groups of monolingual Spanish speaking adults. A control group was instructed using a traditional ESL curriculum. An experimental group was instructed using the traditional ESL curriculum augmented with Supra-Segmental strategies. The student sample was comprised of a total of twenty-four students whose educational background was varied. Some participants spoke no English whereas others had only minimal English language proficiency. The English language of the majority of students was approximately 50 words. The older students, twenty five years of age and

above, had zero to six years of education. The younger students, from sixteen to twenty-five years of age had one to eight years of elementary education. The study was conducted from January, 2005, through March, 2005. Students met twice a week for two hours at St. Aloysius Catholic Parish Hall in Toppenish, Washington. The instructor (Connie Hernandez) was a graduate student that had no previous training in teaching ESL.

Assumptions

The assumption was made that the most appropriate instrumental materials needed for the study would include items taken from Kindergarten and 1st grade curricula. Supplemental worksheets and study aids were obtained from ESL workbooks. It was further assumed the successful AELL would be supported by family and friends, would routinely complete all homework assignments, and would practice and verbalize English language and acquire skills outside the classroom.

Hypothesis

Supplementing traditional phonics instruction with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies will increase the English vocabulary of participating AELL.

Significance of the Project

The study served to provide evidence supporting the Supra-Segmental instructional strategy, a non-traditional teaching strategy designed to increase the English vocabulary significantly in three months. It was believed this intervention would enable the AELL to go out into the workforce independent of an interpreter or translator, to obtain and complete a job application, and to participate in a job interview and gain successful employment.

Procedure

The present study was initiated in 2005. The researcher (Connie Hernandez) was invited by the pastor at St. Aloysius Parish in Toppenish to instruct 24 Hispanic immigrants in ESL. Accordingly, in January, 2005, the researcher administered a pre-test to all participants to determine their level of English language proficiency at that time. Following the pre-test, AELL's were organized into two groups as follows:

Control Group (X): Twelve AELL were provided traditional phonics instruction intended to develop English vocabulary.

Treatment Group (Y): Twelve AELL were provided traditional phonics instruction supplemented with Supra-Segmental strategies intended to develop English vocabulary.

Both groups learned the English alphabet in combination with traditional phonics lessons. Homework was assigned to both groups along with worksheets to practice writing the alphabet and vocabulary words to learn to recognize blends of letters and sounds.

The treatment group received traditional phonics instruction supplemented with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies. Extra time was spent annunciating letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Using Supra-Segmental strategies, the instructor overly emphasized each letter and sound as they were studied using pitch, tone, and rhythm. The instructor also had students feel their mouth and throat when pronouncing letters and sounds. In addition, students were asked to look at themselves in mirrors while pronouncing letters and sounds. In April, 2005, the researcher administered a posttest to both groups to determine progress made in English language proficiency.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of the present study have been defined as follows:

Descriptive Research. Research that determines and describes the way things are. This approach involves collecting numerical data to test hypotheses or to answer questions about the current subject of study.

Lateralization. Refers to the two hemispheres of the brain that cease to work together at full capacity.

Monolingual. An individual who speaks only one language.

Supra-Segmental. A strategy for teaching AELL that focuses and emphasizes sound pitch, intonation, rhythm, and stress and voice intonation.

Acronyms

AELL. Adult English Language Learner

ESL. English as a second language

S-S. Supra-Segmental

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

<u>Introduction</u>

The review of literature and research summarized in Chapter 2 was organized to

address:

- Immigrant Adult English Language Learners (AELL) and Second Language

  Learning.

- Making a Case for Supra-Segmental Teaching.

- Summary.

Data current primarily within the last five years were identified through an online

computerized literature search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC),

the internet, and Proquest. A hand-search of selected research materials was also

conducted.

<u>Immigrant AELL and Second Language Learning</u>

The majority of AELL in the United States has been comprised of immigrants

who have come voluntarily or forcefully because of socio-economic reasons, or for

political and religious beliefs. These immigrants are laborers, professionals, entrepreneurs,

refugees and those seeking asylum. Their contributions to the community have been vast

and their differences have enriched, upheld and enforced the panoply of cultures and

language in the American melting pot (Alfred, 2001, p. 2-5).

Adult language learners in America have represented immigrants largely from

Latin America, including Mexico, South America, Cuba, and the Caribbean, El Salvador.

From Asia, immigrant nations included the Philippines, India, Vietnam, and Korea.

Reasons for the flood of immigrants entering the United States varied. Most immigrants who arrived on our soil came seeking a better life for their families. Others were forced to leave their homeland because of religious or political beliefs. There was a theory that immigrants do not come to the United States because they believed there was little or no hope they would ever reach, nor would they ever attain what their co-patriots had achieved in their lifetime. Immigrants believed that in spite of all their efforts and endeavors, these would never be sufficient to gain the degree of success as their fellow citizens enjoyed (Alfred, 2001, p. 2-5).

Shelton (nd) investigated various characteristics of adult language learners. The cerebral function of AELL involves adult factors which cause lateralization. Lateralization was defined as the two hemispheres of the brain when ceasing to work at full capacity. Shelton suggested the right hemisphere performed most of the brain's basic functions. As a result of this research, interventions were explored which were found to assist AELL in learning a second language. One of these interventions was the Supra-Segmental method based on the use of pitch, intonation, rhythm, stress and voice intonation.

In a study conducted by (Friederici et al., 1999) entitled "Critical Period Hypothesis," lateralization of the brain in adults and the Supra-Segmental strategy for teaching adults a second language was investigated. These authorities stated: "The acquisition of certain basic cognitive functions seem to depend on appropriate intervals called critical periods" (p. 529).

According to Taylor (2006), age was not to be thought of or referred to as a handicap for adult learners. There was evidence of other interventions helpful to adult

learning but not unique to any particular age group. Said Taylor: "Adult-literacy researchers recently arrived at a common language and understanding of literacy as a social practice" (p.500). As explained by Taylor, one common view of literacy has taken into consideration the adult's cultural practices, local literacies, and historical qualities of a particular community. As stated by August (2006), "Learning to read in a second language is different from learning to read for the first time" (p.245). Research conducted by Friederici et al. explored the differences between adults learning a second language and children when learning a second language. Adults learn differently than children, particularly when learning a second language. Different approaches are needed to deliver instruction. An adult must be taught as a whole, not just the cerebral portion of his/her being, but to their sense of values, their culture and even their native language. These authorities contended that adult language learners encountered more problems learning a second language because the critical period for obtaining language had passed. The "critical period" referred to the function of the left hemisphere of the brain which was concerned with language. Over time, lateralization occurs when the left hemisphere of the brain becomes less effective, less efficient, and slower. Still AELL's could learn a second language if grammatical rules could be formulated syntactically. The goal of this research was to help language learners speak the second language proficiently.

Making a Case for Supra-Segmental Teaching.

The Supra-Segmental (S-S) teaching strategy used to instruct secondary language learners, also termed Prosodic Features in Phonics, utilizes functional speech features and properties utterances including touch, stress, tone, length, intonation and word juncture that accompanies or is added over consonants and vowels; these features are not limited

to single sounds but often extend over syllables, words or phrases. The (S-S) instructional approach has been further detailed in the following statement.

> Vowels and consonants can be considered to be the segments of which speed is composed. Together they form syllables, which in turn make up utterances. Superimposed on the syllables there are other features that are known as suprasegmentals. These include variations in stress (accent) and pitch (tone and intonation). Variations in length are also usually considered to be suprasegmental features, although they can affect single segments as well as whole syllables. All of the suprasegmental features are characterized by the fact that they must be described in relation to other items in the same utterance. It is the relative values are never linguistically important, although they may be of importance about the age and sex of the speaker, his emotional state, and his attitude (http://www.britannica.com/eb/aricle-69026/phonetics).

Valdez-Zontec (2007) described teaching adults as a challenge and delight. Adults can be intelligent, curious and usually highly motivated as noted by their presence in classrooms. Grown-up learning has often been problem-centered in nature. Learning was a means to an end. Common characteristics shared by adult and AELL learners indicated adults learned better when they were able to relate subject matter to some aspect of their lives, family, jobs, community and social responsibilities. Adults including AELL have also faced barriers such as fear of change, unrealistic goals, low self-esteem, and health impairments. Adults and AELL both needed relevant information according to their needs and situations, including information that was immediate and helpful. Adults responded better to learning when the new knowledge was presented through a variety of

teaching methods. Information was also understood and retained when experience was associated with different sensories. Adults learned best when they became involved in the learning activities.

The Supra-Segmental approach to teaching a second language to adults has addressed the needs of AELL. Suprasegmental features such as pitch, tone, rhythm and stress are applicable paralinguistically in that they communicate the age and or sex of a speaker, their emotional state and mind-set (http://www.britannica.com/eb/aricle-69026/phonetics).

Summary

The review of selected literature presented in Chapter 2 supported the following research themes:

1. Although AELL's learn differently than children when learning a second language, they can nevertheless learn a second language if grammatical rules are formulated syntactically.

2. The Supra-Segmental teaching strategy used to instruct second language learners utilizes functional speech features such as: stress, tone, or word junctures that accompany or are added over consonants and vowels; these features are not linked to single sounds but often extend over syllables, words or phrases.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and the Treatment of Data

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to supplement a traditional

ESL curriculum with non-traditional, Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, and to discern

whether the intervention of this strategy significantly increased the vocabulary of the

AELL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted.

Additionally pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which information

and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusions and recommendations were

formulated.

Chapter 3 contains a description of the methodology employed in the study. The

researcher included information about the participants, instruments and designs used,

procedures and treatment of the data, and a summary.

<u>Methodology</u>

The present descriptive research study involved collecting numerical data to test

the hypothesis and to answer related questions. The descriptive study utilized a student

questionnaire and an oral examination to analyze data needed to determine any

significant improvement in written and oral English language acquisition by participating

students. Pre and posttest results were measured using a rating scale based on student

written and oral ability in the English language.

Participants

The study compared two groups of monolingual Spanish speaking adults. A control group was instructed using a traditional ESL curriculum. An experimental group was instructed using the traditional ESL curriculum augmented with Supra-Segmental strategies. The student sample was comprised of a total of twenty-four students whose educational background was varied. Some participants spoke no English whereas others had only minimal English language proficiency. The English language of the majority of students was approximately 50 words. The older students, twenty five years of age and above, had zero to six years of education. The younger students, from sixteen to twenty-five years of age had one to eight years of elementary education. The study was conducted from January, 2005, through March, 2005. Students met twice a week for two hours at St. Aloysius Catholic Parish Hall in Toppenish, Washington. The instructor (Connie Hernandez) was a graduate student that had no previous training in teaching ESL.

Instruments

Data gathering instruments used in the study were developed by the researcher for pre and posttests to measure student's English written and oral skills. The student questionnaire (APPENDIX) was comprised of five questions written in Spanish and English with the option of responding orally, written, or both. Exam questions were focused on learning topics correlating with employment search skills.

Design

The researcher organized participants into control and treatment groups, as follows:

Control Group (X): Twelve AELL were provided traditional phonics instruction intended to develop English vocabulary.

Treatment Group (Y): Twelve AELL were provided traditional phonics instruction supplemented with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies intended to develop English vocabulary.

Both groups learned the English alphabet in combination with traditional phonics lessons. Homework was assigned to both groups along with worksheets to practice writing the alphabet and vocabulary words to learn to recognize blends of letters and sounds.

The treatment group received traditional phonics instruction supplemented with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies. Extra time was spent annunciating letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Using the Supra-Segmental strategy the instructor overly emphasized each letter and sound as they were studied using pitch, tone, and rhythm. The instructor also had students feel their mouth and throat when pronouncing letters and sounds. In addition, students were asked to look at themselves in mirrors while pronouncing letters and sounds.

The ESL curriculum utilized in the study was designed around the skills and vocabulary needed to conduct a successful job search, which included completing a job application and participating in mock job interviews. Instruction was designed to familiarize the student with the job interview process and to comprehend and complete a job application accurately. Written and oral pre and posttests were administered throughout February and March, 2005. Pre- and posttest results were then compared to

determine if significant improvement in English oral and written language proficiency had occurred.

Procedure

The present descriptive research study evolved in several stages as detailed below:

1. During January 2005, the researcher was invited by the pastor of the St. Aloysius Church in Toppenish, Washington to instruct adult, mono-lingual Spanish-Speakers in ESL.

2. During January 2005, the instructor (Connie Hernandez) began organizing control and treatment groups included in the study. At this time, a pre-test intended to assess English language proficiency was administered to all participants.

3. The instructor provided both control and treatment groups with traditional phonics instruction. Homework was assigned to both groups to practice writing the alphabet and vocabulary words.

4. The treatment group received traditional phonics instruction supplemented with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies.

5. In April 2005, both control and treatment groups were administered a posttest. Pre- and posttest scores for both groups were then compared according to the participant's ability to comprehend the questions and to respond.

6. During the Spring of 2005, the researcher concluded the study at which time essential baseline data were obtained and analyzed, and related conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Treatment of the Data

Data obtained for purposes of analysis included pre- and posttest scores to measure the ability of the adult participant's use of English written and oral language. These data were then used to draw inferences regarding student progress and to formulate related conclusions and recommendations.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided a description of the research methodology employed in the study, participants, instruments used, research design, and procedure utilized. Details concerning treatment of the data obtained and analyzed were also presented.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The present descriptive research study supplemented a traditional ESL curriculum

with non-traditional Supra-Segmental teaching strategies to increase the English language

vocabulary of participating Adult English Language Learners (AELL). Instructional

activities allowed students to use their native language and culture (i.e., Hispanic) to

improve written and oral English language acquisition. Pre- and posttests were

administered to obtain data from which inferences and generalizations were drawn and

from which recommendations and conclusions were formulated.

Description of the Environment

The study was conducted from January–March 2005, at the St. Aloysius Parish

Hall in Toppenish, Washington. The study included 24 adult, monolingual Spanish

speakers, parishioners of St. Aloysius Church. The students were of Hispanic

backgrounds and came from Mexico.

Hypothesis

Supplementing traditional phonics instruction with Supra-Segmental teaching

strategies will increase the English vocabulary of participating AELL.

Results of the study

Tables 1-5 have provided a summary of pre- and posttest scores for control (X)

and treatment (Y) groups. The Tables have been organized around the five (5) questions

asked of participants.

Table 1:   A Comparison of Pre- and Posttest Results.

Question 1.   Can you write or say the 26 letters of the English alphabet?

Students Number	Write/Say	
	Pre-test	Posttest
1.	2	3
2.	18	22
3.	14	16
4.	10	13
5.	10	13
6.	18	22
7.	8	9
8.	20	23
9.	12	15
10.	19	20
11.	18	18
12.	9	9
Total	**158**	**183**
13.	8	15
14.	11	14
15.	12	20
16.	14	18
17.	20	25
18.	14	20
19.	22	26
20.	19	25
21.	15	19
22.	10	13
23.	26	26
24.	24	26
Total	**195**	**247**

Students 1- 12   Control Group X – RED
Students 13 – 24 Treatment group Y-BLACK
Possible Points 26

Table 2:   A Comparison of Pre-and Posttest Results.

Question 2.   Can you write or say the words for the numbers

1-10 in English?

Student Number	Write /Say	
	Pre-test	Posttest
1.	2	4
2.	6	8
3.	4	6
4.	0	0
5.	1	1
6.	3	4
7.	0	0
8.	3	5
9.	3	3
10.	1	2
11.	2	2
12.	0	3
Total	25	17
13.	0	2
14.	0	2
15.	0	4
16.	1	2
17.	1	3
18.	0	3
19.	4	6
20.	0	7
21.	4	4
22.	0	0
23.	1	4
24.	6	8
Total	17	45

Students 1-12   Control Group X -RED
Students 13–24 Treatment Group Y-BLACK
Possible Points 10

Table 3:   A Comparison of Pre- and Posttest Results.

Question 3. Can you write or say what the word "references" means in English?

Students Number	Write or Say	
	Pre-test	Posttest
1.	0	1
2.	3	3
3.	0	2
4.	0	0
5.	0	0
6.	1	3
7.	0	0
8.	0	0
9.	0	0
10.	0	0
11.	0	0
12.	0	0
Total	4	9
13.	0	1
14.	0	1
15.	0	1
16.	0	0
17.	0	2
18.	0	2
19.	0	3
20.	0	2
21.	0	2
22.	0	0
23.	0	0
24.	1	3
Total	1	17

Students 1-12   Control Group X – RED
Students 13– 24 Treatment Group Y-BLACK
Possible Points 3

Table 4:   A Comparison of Pre- and Posttest Results.

Question 4. Can you write or say what the words "employment history"
means in English?

Students Number	Write or Say	
	Pre-test	Posttest
1.	0	1
2.	1.5	3
3.	0	0
4.	0	0
5.	0	0
6.	0	1
7.	0	0
8.	0	0
9.	0	0
10.	0	1
11.	0	0
12.	0	0
Total	1.5	6
13.	0	1
14.	0	0
15.	0	0
16.	0	1
17.	0	1
18.	0	0
19.	0	0
20.	0	1
21.	0	0
22.	0	0
23.	0	0
24.	0	1
Total	0	5

Students 1-12   Control Group X – RED
Students 13–24 Treatment Group Y-BLACK
Possible Points 3

Table 5:   **A Comparison of Pre- and Posttest Results.**

Question 5.   **Can you write or say what the phrase "describe your strengths and weakness" means in English?**

Students Number	Write or Say	
	Pre-test	Posttest
1.	0	1
2.	1.5	2
3.	0	1
4.	0	0
5.	0	0
6.	0	0
7.	0	0
8.	0	0
9.	0	0
10.	0	0
11.	0	0
12.	0	0
Total	1.5	4
13.	0	1
14.	0	1
15.	0	0
16.	0	0
17.	0	1
18.	0	0
19.	0	0
20.	0	1
21.	0	1
22.	0	0
23.	0	0
24.	0	1
Total	0	6

Students 1- 12   Control Group X – RED
Students 13 – 24   Treatment Group Y-BLACK
Possible Points 3

As shown in tables 1-5, responses to each question were as follows:

Question 1: Can you write or say the 26 letters of the English alphabet?

(26 possible points)

Pre-test (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 158
Pre-test (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 195

Posttest (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 183
Posttest (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 247

Question 2: Can you write or say the words for the numbers 1-10?

(10 possible points)

Pre-test (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 25
Pre-test (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 17

Posttest (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 38
Posttest (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 45

Question 3: Can you write or say what the word "references," mean in English?

(3 possible points)

Pre-test (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 4
Pre-test (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 1

Posttest (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 9
Posttest (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 17

Question 4: Can you write or say what the phrase "employment history" means, in

English?

(3 possible points)

Pre-test (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 1.5
Pre-test (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 0

Posttest (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 6
Posttest (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 5

Question 5: Can you say or write what the phrase "describe your strengths and

weaknesses" in English?

(3 possible points)

Pre-test (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 1.5
Pre-test (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 0

Posttest (Control Group X, Students 1-12)
Total Points, 4
Posttest (Treatment Group Y, Students 13-24)
Total Points, 6

Tables 6 and 7 have provided a bar-graph comparison of pre- and posttest results

of Control and Treatment group scores in response to the five questions asked of
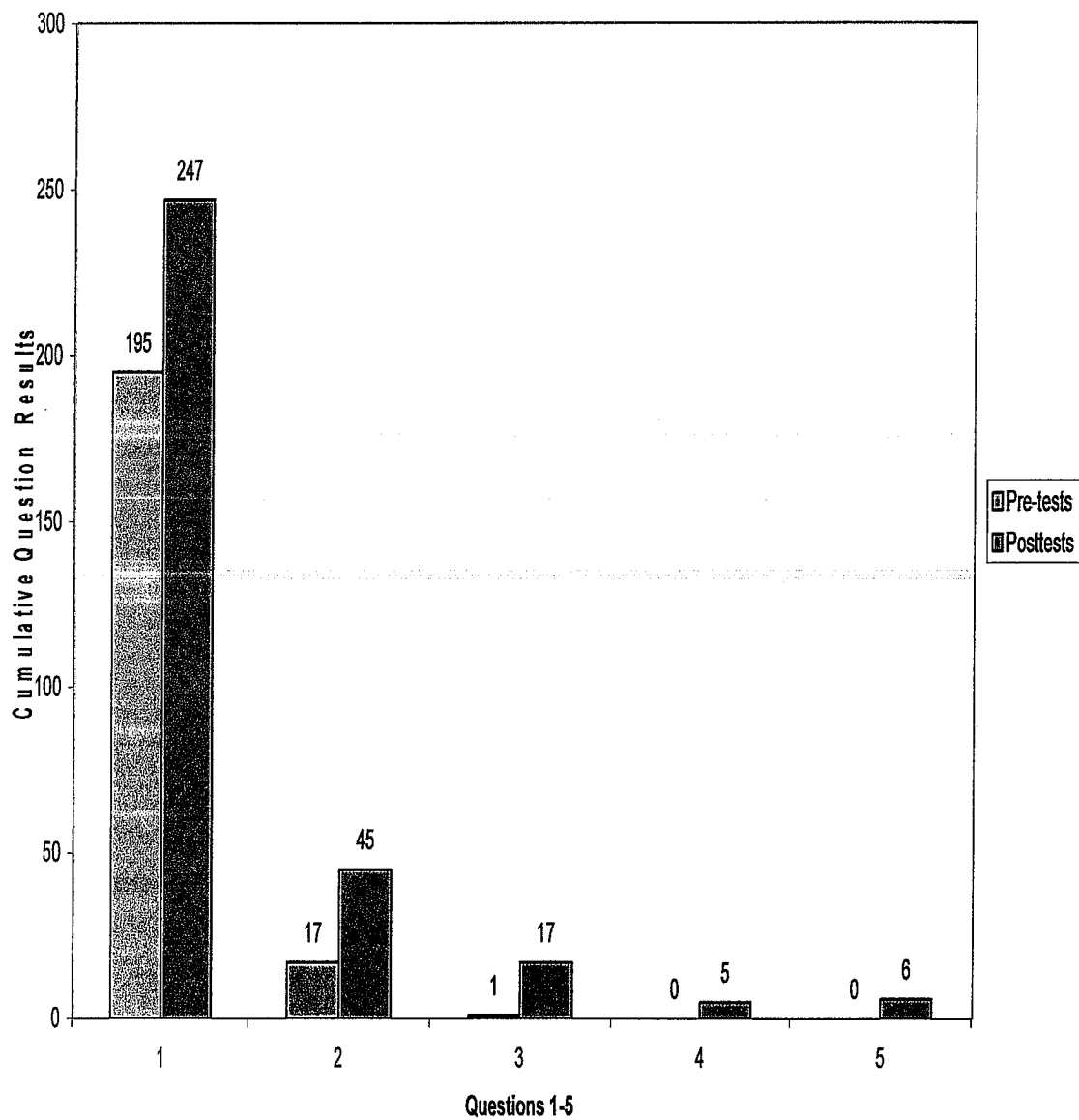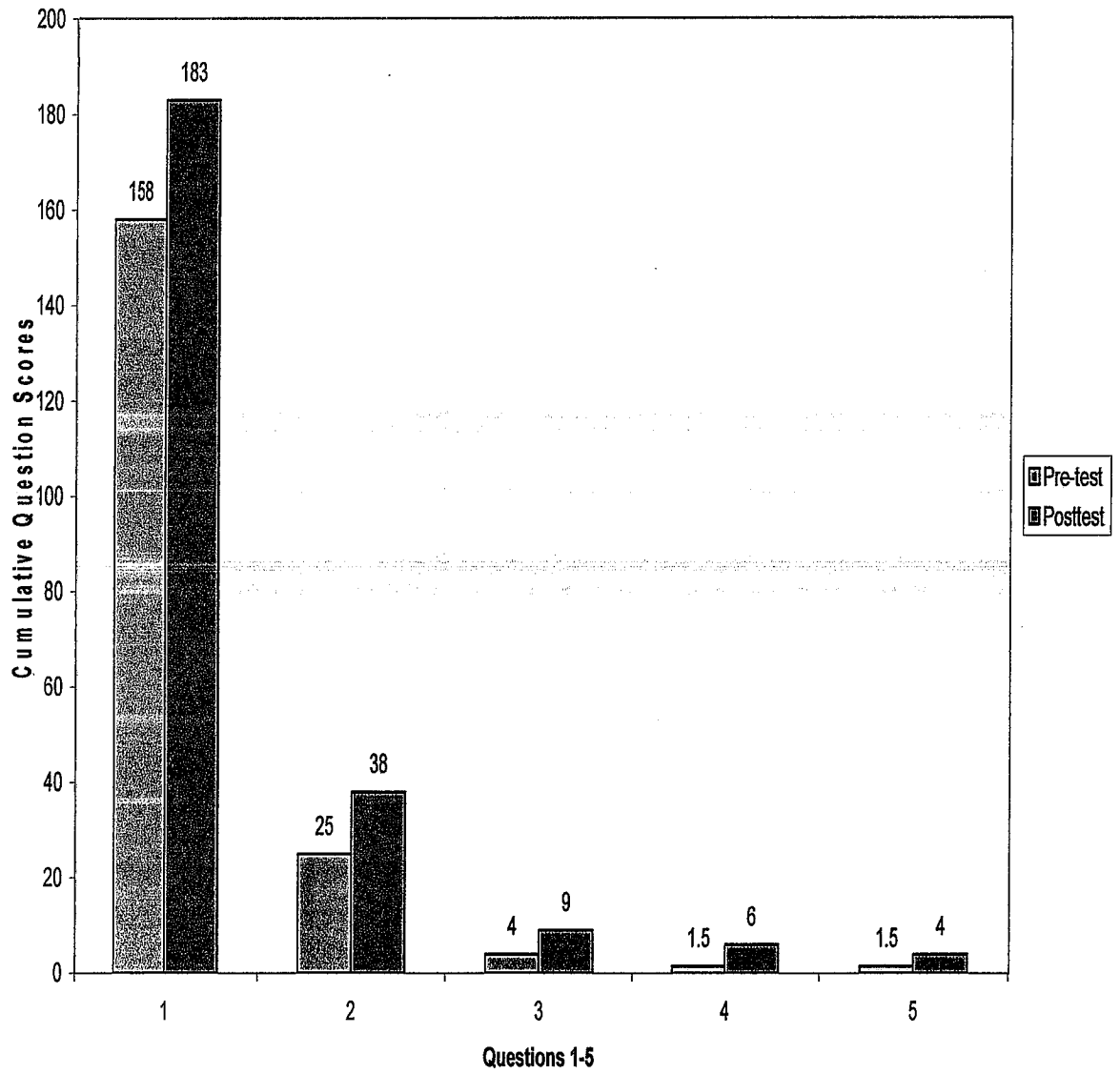
participants.

Table 6

Treatment Group Y Cumulative Results for the Questions

Table 7

Control Group X Cumulative Results, Questions 1- 5

Findings

An analysis of data presented in Tables 1-5 has provided a persuasive argument from which the researcher may conclude that the hypothesis has been supported. A comparison of pre- and posttest **total points** results indicated that in response to 4 of 5 questions asked, Treatment Group Y students outperformed Control Group X students. Accordingly, after receiving English language instruction supplemented with the Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, Treatment Group (Y) students demonstrated greater improvement than Control Group (X) students in the following four areas:

-26 letters of the alphabet.

-writing or saying numbers 1-10.

-Defining word "references" in English.

-Describing "employment history" in English.

In only one area, "describing work history," did Control Group students record total posttest scores higher than Treatment Group students, and then only by a total score of 6-5.

Discussion

The researcher's efforts dedicated to educating participants in English language usage, to assist them in finding better employment and an improved life style were rewarded. The challenges involved in teaching non-English speaking students, although great, were offset by the student's progress.

Summary

The analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 supported the hypothesis that supplementing traditional phonics instruction with the Supra-Segmental teaching strategies increased the English vocabulary of participating AELL's. Additionally, Chapter 4 provided an overview of the environment, hypothesis, results, findings, discussion, and a summary.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this descriptive research study was to supplement a traditional ESL curriculum with non-traditional, Supra-Segmental teaching strategies, and to discern whether the intervention of this strategy significantly increased the vocabulary of the AELL. To accomplish this purpose, a review of selected literature was conducted. Additionally pre and posttests were administered to obtain data from which information and generalizations were drawn, and from which conclusions and recommendations were formulated.

Conclusions

From the review of selected literature presented in chapter 2 and the analysis of data in chapter 4, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Although AELL's learn differently than children when learning a second language, they can nevertheless learn a second language if grammatical rules are formulated syntactically.

2. The Supra-Segmental teaching strategy used to instruct second language learners utilizes functional speech features such as: stress, tone, or word junctures that accompany or are added over consonants and vowels; these features are not linked to single sounds but often extend over syllables, words, or phrases.

3. The analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 supported the hypothesis that supplementing traditional phonics instruction with Supra-Segmental teaching strategies increased the English vocabulary of participating AELL's.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions cited above, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. To assist AELL's in learning a 2nd language, instruction should focus on grammatical rules which are formed syntactically.

2. When instructing English language learners Supra-Segmental strategies should be used to supplement functional speech features such as: stress, tone, or word junctures that accompany consonants and vowels.

3. School district personnel seeking information related to increasing AELL English vocabulary may wish to utilize information contained in this study or, they may wish to undertake further study more suited to their unique needs.

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