



The Influence of Mother Tongue in Teaching English Language: Its Implications on Students Performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State

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ABSTRACT

The paper is aimed at determining the influence of mother tongue in teaching English language: its implications on student performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State. The design was essentially a Survey research design, two research questions guided the study and a proportionate random sampling method was used for identifying the sample of respondents for this study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Three experts validated the questionnaire. For its reliability Cronbach-alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained, Using test-retest method. Mean was used for answering the research questions. The study revealed that mother tongue of a child affects the learning of English language either positively or negatively. However, mother tongue interference has impact on the writing and spoken English language among school students. Also mother tongue hinders effective communication among students in class as well as mastery the English language. It was therefore recommended that parents should be encouraged to help in promoting first and second language, policy makers should make plans that will favour the use of Nigeria languages for teaching and learning in secondary schools and the authorities' concerned should provide instructional materials for teaching and learning English language.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is more than an instrument for conveying of ideas. It is an instrument for working upon the feeling of others and for self-expression. Thus the means of communication in teaching and learning process actively influences the opportunities and possibilities of acquiring knowledge (Prince, 2018). Language is a hallmark of a group of people community or society. It is the most basic and most valuable possession of man for with language man has the capacity for dealing with changes in his life. Language is the life blood of a people's culture, through language norms and cultures are kept alive and handed down to economic and social affairs of a nation, organized and circulated through written or oral language. In learning process, language is the basic tools in disseminating knowledge (Umar, 2015).

Mother tongue is important for learners in order to develop self confidence in his new social relationship (School), to grow culturally in his new environment to become part of his new community (Timothy, 2013). The learning of English language in school is influenced by the mother tongue either negatively or positively. Labou (2011) stated that new language such as English language suffer from interferences from the vernacular (mother tongue), more importantly, accepting the new values and its symbols. For example a Hausa child learning English is sometimes met with stiff resistance because that will implies accepting the western culture. Therefore, language issue is very important and sensitive because it touches the identity and ego of members of the community and thus poses' problem.



The mother tongue is the first language a person picks up in his childhood. It is not learned but acquired. It is a language that encodes early concepts of the child. It is a language that fully identifies with personal or native culture of a multilingual person. Mother tongue is a language in which a multilingual person conducts his everyday activities in which he has the greatest linguistic facilities or initiative knowledge. It is the language in which for the effectiveness of its functions required the learner knowledge of all four basic skills of learning i.e. speaking, reading and writing (Ojo, 2021). Mother tongue is defined as the language that person, or that a person speaks best, and so is often the basis for socio-linguistics identity. Also it is the language which a group of people considered inhabiting, and which eventually becomes their natural instrument of thought and communication. Such views are but merely reflections of the different methodological shifts in English language teaching/learning which have brought new and different outlooks in the role of mother tongue.

However, one of the current educational problems of public interest in Nigeria is that of poor level of achievement especially in public examinations. This problem of underachievement among school students has persisted in much subject area, such as English language. By understanding or learning or hearing the mother tongue of the student it would make teachers to fashion out methods suitable for the student to learn the second language. In order for the student to speak fluently or write correct and convincing English, teacher has to set standards for the students so that they would be able to have competent use of the language (Musa, 2016). At this time, it is imperative to see whether mother tongue has bearing on the English language usage among the students. It is also vital to draw attention to the presence of the problems and on this note this study is set to determine the influence of mother tongue in teaching English language: its implications on student performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State.

Statement of the Problem

In education, mother tongue and second language are very important as no language can take place of native tongue and no system of education can afford to disregard the native tongue without detriment to the mental development of the child. In teaching and learning process, the mother tongue of the child is of great importance. Its categories a large part of the child's environment that is it has names for most of the objects, actions, ideas, attributes that are so important to him as well as to any given society. Realizing the importance of mother tongue such as child learns best in his mother and that is natural to him as mother's milk, therefore, it would not be astonishing that the mother tongue should be encouraged in young people at certain levels of education.

In addition, the role of the English language in the context of Nigerian multilingualism is that of mediation. An adequate knowledge is an indispensable requirement for anyone to rise above or like in any wider context or community than the village. Brown (2013) opined that English is a second language to the majority of the populace. Nigerians generally use their first language (mother tongue) at home and use English in official contexts, since English is not used everywhere in Nigeria but in official context and also in the classroom during learning, the mother tongue that is spoken most often at home, with peer group in the society tend to affect the effective teaching and learning of English language (Brown, 2013). The problem faced by Nigerian learners of English speech revolves around mother tongue interference which manifests in wrong stress placement and in consonant and vowel substitution hence this study set to determine the influence of mother tongue in teaching English language: its implications on student performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State.

Research Questions

The following questions are posed to guide the study;

1. What is the influence of mother tongue in teaching English language in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State?



2. What is the influence of mother tongue on students' academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State?

relevancy, clearly stated objectives, appropriateness, brief, unambiguous and suitable for eliciting the desired response from the respondents for the study. The reliability of the instrument was also determined. The distribution of copies of the questionnaire and collection of data were carried out by the researcher with the help of four (2) research assistants. Descriptive statistics was used for analyzing the data for the study. Mean (calculated mean) statistics was used for analyzing the questionnaire generated from the research questions using a predetermined cut-off point of 2.50.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design and the area of the study was Bauchi State of Nigeria. The population of the study consists of (400) and a proportionate random sampling method was used for identifying the sample of respondents for this study. The instrument used for this study was validated by three experts. The items were tested for

Table 1: Influence of Mother Tongue in Teaching English Language

S/No.	Statement	Mean	Remark
1.	Mother tongue is a means of communication	3.50	Agreed
2.	Mother tongue is mode of interaction in teaching and learning process	3.45	Agreed
3.	Mother tongue contributes to development of English language	3.34	Agreed
4.	Mother tongue has the characteristic role of communication as well as being an index of group's identity	3.53	Agreed
5.	Mother tongue is a language of symbol or vocal system by which human being communicate experience	3.56	Agreed
6.	Mother tongue is a language in which a multilingual person conducts his everyday actives including teaching and learning process	3.66	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 1 point out 6 items as the influence of mother tongue in teaching English language in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State. The finding shows that the respondents

agreed on all the items based on the mean score. Also the respondents are close on their responses based on the mean range of 3.34 – 3.66.

Table 2: Influence of Mother Tongue on Students' Academic Performance

S/No.	Statement	Mean	Remark
1.	Explanation of subject concept in mother tongue brings about proper understanding and assimilation	3.67	Agreed
2.	Students always have good grade in a subject that teachers use in mother tongue	3.31	Agreed
3.	Mother tongue is a reflection of what is a reflection of what has been instilled in a child from childhood or from his/her school	3.62	Agreed
4.	The student use of mother tongue can affect other grammar languages	3.14	Agreed
5.	Student who is addicted to the use of mother tongue may likely have problem to construct a simple sentence in English language	3.82	Agreed
6.	It is better for schools to inculcate into student the school rules of language to be used right from their kindergarten, nursery, primary to university level	3.27	Agreed

Source: Field survey, 2022



Table 2 point out 6 items as influence of mother tongue on students' academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State. The finding shows that the respondents agreed on all the items based on the mean score. Also the respondents are close on their responses based on the mean range of 3.14 – 3.82.

CONCLUSION

The mother tongue of a child affects the learning of English language either positively or negatively. However, mother tongue interference has impact on the writing and spoken English language among school students. Also mother tongue hinders effective communication among students in class as well as mastery the English language.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

This study makes the following recommendations based on its findings;

1. Parents should be encouraged to help in promoting first and second languages
2. Policy makers should make plans that will favour the use of Nigeria languages for teaching and learning in secondary schools.
3. Teachers should create a favorable environment for the learning of English language.
4. Both teachers and parents should encourage healthy interaction of their pupils with their mates or peer in English language.
5. The authorities' concerned should provide instructional materials for teaching and learning English language.