

An Enquiry into the Deteriorating State of The Use of English Language in Secondary Schools: A Study of Selected Schools in Jos North L.G.A of Plateau State

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Abstract

This study looked at the factors responsible for the deteriorating state of the use of English language, problems and challenges of the use of English language within the Nigerian educational context. The data for the study were drawn from a questionnaire administered to teachers of English in selected schools within Jos North Local Government of Plateau State.

The study found that factors such as total absence of reading culture among students, parent's negative disposition to children's academic needs and unavailability of libraries and study facilities in schools

and at home are contributory factors for the deterioration in the use of English language. Based on the findings, it was concluded that some measure of attention should be given to sociolinguistic aspects of the language. The study recommended that language experts in collaboration with curriculum planners should strategize on how to improve the standard of the English language. Other issues to be considered are the need to recruit qualified teachers; cancellation examination magic centres and 'fat' salaries should be given to teachers so as to curb corruption and other indecent activities.

Introduction

English language is said to be the most widely used language among the over five thousand living languages in the world today; to many as mother tongue while to others as a second language. Today, all over the world there are more than 360 million native speakers of English language and it can also be said that between 400-800 million people in the world use English language as second language.

English language has many unique properties and it plays dual role in most known formal educational systems. Thus, it features on the one hand, as a subject on the school curriculum, and on the other hand, as the principal medium of education. Apart from English being taught as a subject in Nigeria schools, almost all other subjects are taught in English. Students therefore, are required to understand the content of the subject.

It is not an exaggeration to say that English language occupies a place of prominence in the world today. In Nigeria in particular, it is the

language of government, international relation, commerce, administration and education as well as the lingua franca for the entire nation. Being the language of education, it is used for classroom instruction from the primary school to tertiary institutions. It also occupies a pride of place in the educational curriculum because it is a compulsory subject at all levels in the educational system. Student needs a level of proficiency in English to enable them cope with the nature of studies that will confront them. These students' performance in the area of specialization is also greatly dependent on their ability to decode effectively the flow of information of the language they received either during classes or outside the classroom.

It is also believed that because of government's negligence over the educational sector, the learner's exposure to English in primary and secondary level still leaves the learner grossly incompetent in the use of English language for effective communication. Adeyanju stated that:

Most of the complaints against the falling standard in education hinge on;

students' lack of competence in English as a tool with which to acquire informational aspect of knowledge, the logical, critical

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mind to interpret facts and the ability to put down coherently and intelligently what they have read.

By implication, he is of the opinion that the falling standard of education (which is expressed in the fact that a good population of Nigeria secondary school leavers' and tertiary institution graduates cannot effectively communicate their ideas in a simple interaction) hinges on the fact that the students are not proficient in the use of English language. Richard opines that Language proficiency is a person's proficiency in using a language for a specific purpose and a proficiency test: gives a measure of the learner's knowledge at a particular moment which is used in deciding about his future performance, his suitability for further studies in the language or of subjects requiring the use of language or for certain types of employment.

The Deteriorating State of the Use of English Language in Nigeria Education System

The interest here, definitely, is not in the advocacy for grammatical permissiveness but rather, the recognition of the productive creativity of the emerging standard of English in Nigeria schools. The deteriorating standard of English language presents us with a decline, a halting gradation and luckily, not a free fall which would have recreated for the English language speaking world.

When we say the "deteriorating state of English", this suggests that what we are dealing with is a gradual but inexorably continuous slide in the standard of the English language.

Jowitt opines that "when people complain about falling standard of English language they are actually referring to falling performance and not the standard". This implies that one's inability to a set standard does not amount to a lowering of that standard but a reflection of the individual's difficulty to achieve the set goal. Jowitt notes that similar anxiety over falling standard "has for years been voiced by British teachers about their own students' performance..." if we say that the standard of the English Language is not dwindling or deteriorating or falling, how do we account for the centuries-old anxiety and daily criticism. Change is something that is constant. The dwindling standard of English language is as a

result of change in everything in the global world. Atchison reminds us of the inevitability of change and that "in a world where humans grow old, tad poles change into frogs, and milk turns into cheese, it would be strange if language alone remained unaltered". Change indeed, is constant and affects all things-language inclusive. It is therefore not strange that the standard of English language is prone to change. It can be said that, like all things, the language is responding to a universal law. When language is affected, attitudes harden and people hold tenaciously on their linguistic beliefs. Atchison estimated that:

Large numbers of intelligent people condemn and resent language change, regarding alterations as due to unnecessary laziness or ignorance. Letters are written to news papers and indigent articles are published, all deploring the fact that new words and new pronunciation are continually coming into existence.

This is just a foretaste of the umbrage expressed by many at the incipient, perhaps, insidious change they notice in English language. The resistant spirit has always been alive in all generations dating back to dim antiquity.

An ultimate reaction come from Ogden Nash who devoted a whole poetic stanza in his dirge appropriately entitled "lament for a Dying language" to mourn the changes taking place in English.

Coin brassy words at will, debase the
coinage; we are in an if-you cannot-lick-
them-join age,
Slovenliness provides its own excuse age,
Where usage overnight condones misuse
Farewell, farewell to my beloved language,
Once English, now a vice...

The commentators in the poem are inextricably yoked in their revulsion to change. They represent the centurion and gatekeepers of the status quo. Unfortunately for them, change is the only universal constant in human affairs.

Factors such as total absence of a reading culture among students, parents' negative disposition to children's academic need and

unavailability of libraries or study facilities in schools and at homes are contributory to the downward trend in the use of English. The claim that standard of English language is dwindling appears to be an international affliction reverberating from one English-speaking border post to another, native or foreign. Since this is an international concern, to make this judgment and who have done so, cannot all be wrong.

One can argue, with some justification that English has always been prone to variation as it freely adopts and adapts features of other languages it comes in contact with. It is this kind of internal momentum that lends to English the receptive dynamics for change be it positive or negative. Quirk acknowledged that:

Standard of acceptable speech will vary as they do in Britain itself. The language's assets may indeed be increased rather than diminished by wider use, overseas varieties of English may continue to contribute to the richness and resources of the language as a whole, as they have done in the past.

Those who are so embittered about the dwindling standard of English language also insist that the decline in the success rate in other subjects offered by students is traceable to the decline in the standard of English. This is arguable, but they have a point because all school subjects, except the indigenous languages, are taught in English. Obanya corroborates this view:

Lack of mastery of English also tends to make the mastery of other subjects which are taught in English difficult. He is convinced that the Nigerian child would perform better in school if the English language barrier to his understanding of other subject was removed.

At the inaugural conference of the Nigeria English Studies Association held in Jos in April 1966 proceedings of which were published in 1968, Adebisi Salami state with considerable conviction that:

It is common knowledge that the standard

of English in the country is steadily declining. This is a serious situation which calls for urgent and serious attention. The standard is declining in the elementary and secondary schools as well as in our post secondary institutions. Some university faculties, for instance, have relaxed their admission requirements simply because they are finding difficulties in obtaining enough fully qualified candidates without a pass in English are admitted; after three or four years most of them pass out of the university as graduates.

He believes that such candidates are put through a remedial programme in their first year at the university, but for several systemic and structural reasons, they are "never completely cured of their language deficiencies". It is from these stream of English language-deficient graduates that new teachers are recruited to teach English language and other school subjects to a new generation of learners. The new teachers, in turn, unabashedly, infect their wards with what we would refer to as an "English language Deficiency syndrome" (ELDS).

For a scholar like Jowitt who has also joined in the mantra of dwindling standard of English language, it is indeed a paradox that "through the general position of English in national life is perhaps stronger than it has even been, the quality of the English spoken and written by Nigerians is perceived by most Nigerians qualified to judge, to have been deteriorating over a period". This paradox is not only disturbing but poses a great challenge to teachers of English. No doubt, there are more Nigerians today who are exposed to English language in the numerous primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in the country. In spite of the large population undergoing one form of education or another in English and the paradoxical likelihood that more Nigerians today than ever before have benefitted, directly from native-speaking driven education, we are still confronted with declining competence in the language. With the number of people benefitting from education through the medium of English language, there is still no appreciable progress in the standard of English language in Nigeria.

Adejara regrets that "the nation's huge

investment in the English language appears not to be yielding any substantial dividends". His justification for this claim is anchored on the fact that "the percentage and quality of passes in the subject at primary and secondary school level are disconcertingly low nation-wide". To Oji "it is self evident truth that the standard of English in this country is at rock bottom, and cannot go any further". Call this "educated informal clairvoyance", the bottom line however, is that the point definitely been made is that all is not well with the standard of English in the Nigerian education.

Though many people would agree that there is an observable fall in the standard of education in Nigeria, most have believed that university education in Nigeria has fallen to an abysmally low level. As a matter of fact a World Bank study came up with a report that University education in Nigeria has degenerated in the past 15 to 16 years. The shocking news which was reported in one of the lead headlines in the Guardian, one of Nigeria's daily newspapers published on the 19th of February, 2001 read; World Bank report scores Nigerian graduates low". The Guardian Newspaper quoted the World Bank sponsored study that, Nigeria University graduates are poorly trained and unproductive on the job... Graduates skills have steadily deteriorated over the past decades".

According to the report, the poor performance of Nigeria graduates is particularly evident in two areas; poor mastery of English language and lack of requisite technical skills. It was ascertained in the report that the deficiencies in both vital areas make Nigerian graduates of the past 15 years unfit for the labour market and sometime the larger society.

The situation described for Nigeria is not too different from what existed in some part of the world. Similar concerns were expressed in the Philippines over the dwindling standard of English language. For instance, Sol Jose Vanzi, the chief news editor of Philippines Headline news online, on 23rd may 2006, reported that graduating high school students, who took an official achievement test in 2004-2005 performed abysmally in English language. The result showed that only 6 to 59 percent could read, speak and comprehend English sufficiently to deserve college placement. About 44.25 percent had no English skills whatsoever. This disturbing situation made a member of the

representative in the house of Assembly, Edwardo Gullas, sponsor a bill which sought to make English the medium of instruction at all levels of education in the Philippines. He said that if the dwindling standard of English remains unchecked, it "would eventually erode the competitiveness of the country's human resources, both here and abroad, in an increasingly globalized village".

Consequently, after the use of Malay in Malaysia as the medium of instruction in schools for nearly twenty years, the damage done and its consequences were more than apparent. Malaysia has now reverted to the use of English language as the medium of instruction in schools. This policy decision was made amidst "widespread concern over the perceived falling standard of English proficiency.

Problems and the Challenges of the Use of the English Language in Nigerian Educational Institutions

Though we may have indentified major areas of the decline and what we called the deteriorating state of English language, we may have also identified major areas of the decline in the University education; the actual problem may have its roots at the primary and secondary level. For it is at the primary and secondary schools that the potential undergraduate is given adequate foundation in the use of English. A mastery of written and spoken language is highly desirable, yet its teaching and learning was beset by a myriad of problems at the primary and secondary schools level.

There is no doubt that the English language teacher can be seen as a victim, a culprit, an accomplice, an adjudicator or a self- appointed grammar professor that has failed in his/her duties. The teacher; a product of the dwindling standard of English, is half-baked and cannot impact what he does not have. If he is well trained in the English language, he is still blameworthy for producing graduates majority of whom the society considers to be illiterates. This is the dilemma of the English language teacher at every level of the educational system.

When students are faced with these varieties of problems, there are bound to be failure. Etim in corroborating this view maintained that:

Fall in the standard of English in Nigeria is due to problems ranging from shortage of staff, lack of minimum facilities and necessary equipment necessary for maintenance of standards, to the unprecedented expansion at all levels of education which has not been matched with a corresponding increase in the number of qualified teachers.

In Bamisaiye's views, a teacher's class suffers a set back if his class is located near a source of constant distraction no matter how intellectually or psychologically such a teacher has prepared he cannot give his best. Also, if the basic facilities needed for teaching activity is lacking, teaching at the same suffers a setback.

In Nigeria today, schools are faced with the problems of lack of teaching materials such as classrooms, language laboratories, competent teachers to teach the speaking skills aspect of the English language.

The arguments is pushed further that the existing syllabuses are quite silent on the sociolinguistic aspects of English language use. Mohammed points out that:

Majority of the school text books inspired by the syllabus have remained structure based and target –language centered consequently widening the gap between communicative competence and educational performance.

Since the English teacher and the structure of the syllabuses are blamed for the poor performance in the subject and other school subjects, the seriousness and challenge of his/her role and responsibility in education becomes more acute. Adetugbo laments that the teaching of the language in Nigeria has up till now proceeded from the wrong assumption. To him, the resultant effect of this negative assumption is due to the fact that the emphasis is placed on the wrong things. He observed that both the different ministries of education and school bodies lack the clear cut language policy apart from preparing students for examination. In his views he says:

A correlative of this that any person who

has the Grade III or II teachers certificate or the school certificate is called upon to teach English in the primary schools, however, imperfect his competence in the language. Maybe, there is no uniformity as to when pupils in the primary school must first be introduced to English, the materials for English language instruction is not near the best that could be had and worse still, the teachers are usually ill equipped to teach the language (15).

Sofenwa has observed that the loss of prestige of English in the Nigerian society is the result of these factors:

- i. There are fewer native speakers or specialists with good models of Standard English.
- ii. There is national and cultural awareness for indigenous language to be used.
- iii. The students live more outside than inside the English class; learn English to satisfy his/her examiners.
- iv. The exposure of students and teachers to good models is limited.
- v. The media is a bad model. In discussing some of the problems of the Nigerian speakers of the English language, Smith comments that:

Yoruba speakers for example, experience difficulties in learning the international patterns of English, in acquiring an acceptable speech rhythm, in distinguishing between stressed and unstressed.

In his own opinion, all these difficulties are encountered not only by Yoruba speakers of the language but most Nigerians and it is due to the phonological systems or nature of English and most Nigerian languages. For instance, most Nigerian languages use tone to signal differences in word meanings for example:

In Hausa

Kàsà	-	down
Kásà	-	sand

English language is not a toned language. English is a stressed timed language while most Nigerian languages are not. It means that some syllables in an utterance are stressed more than the other. It is

generally untrue of Nigerian languages. For example, the word "water" has two syllables, the first syllable is stressed but the second one is said to be unstressed. But in Nigerian language for example the Igbo word 'èzíKhas two syllables and the two syllables are equally stressed. In other words, Nigerian languages are said to be syllable timed this means that all the syllables in an utterance are equally stressed while English is not. English has intonation that is the roots of the words are toned while Nigerian languages are not toned. Intonation means the fluctuation of pitch over an utterance (fluctuation means moving from one level to another). For example, the phrase "Good morning" any pattern of utterance can be taken but Nigerian languages have a fixed pattern. In English, CVC is a possible syllable structure for example, words like 'bad', 'but', etc. while in most Nigerian languages CVC is not a possible syllable structure. Most Nigerian languages are said to have CV for example in Yoruba the

cv cv cv-

phrase fo /mi/ lowo which means 'give me money' which means in most Nigerian languages it is not possible to have consonant sound at the end of a word. But Hausa is an exception in this cases; for example, zonan-meaning (come here), in yazo-cvc meaning (if he comes).

In Ikegulus views, inadequate attention and recognition are given to these variant forms which are genuine coinages resulting from a viable adaption of English in Nigeria. She asserts that in actual classroom practice, there is no clear cut distinction between deviations and deviants, teachers lump them together and treat both as errors. They however, tolerate most forms of deviations in speech while upholding that, written language be taught in the standard variety.

The most serious of these problems has to do with the quality of the teachers available for teaching the language; nearly all such teachers are 1.2 speakers who were being trained by 1.2 speakers. To make matters worse, most of these teachers have no training in proper linguistics and therefore are unable to understand and consequently devise effective pedagogical strategies for combating mostly, mother-tongue induced kind of learners' errors that re-occur in their students' written and oral performance.

To tackle the inherent problem identified, the conscientious English language teacher must re-strategize his approach and methodology in order to motivate and inspire the learner. He should redesign his teaching procedure to suit the needs of the Nigerian learner, in terms of the prescribed text, the curriculum content and teaching goals. The wide gulf between the target language milieu and the second language environment can be bridged or narrowed by the domestication of examples which reflect the socio-cultural context of the learners.

The Roles and place of English Language in Nigerian Education

The content of the new curriculum of English seems to be a departure from that of the past which was geared towards the passing of an examination than to the possession of good communication skills. This is because the spoken form of the English language is now accorded a recognized status unlike as it was in the old curriculum.

Ullman maintained that the scope of the English language syllabus today is quite rightly considered to be wider. This includes speech acts (illocutionary), notion, functions and discourse. To him, the expanded language syllabus is the type based on 'Allen model' in which three levels of language instruction are exhaustively discussed. These levels are intended to reconcile the structural and communicative aspect of second language and to prove a foundation for second language programme planning.

This model in Ullman's views demonstrates the complexity inherent in basing the content of the English language syllabus on sound and clearly defined principles aimed at achieving communication or mutual intelligibility in the second language. It could also serve as an excellent example of the kind of second language curriculum planning which tends to equate curriculum content language syllabus.

Oderinde as cited in Ubahakwe in his view, consider the position of spoken English; that is listening and speaking is changing and following a new dimension due to the following factors:

- i. Because there is the growing interest in language as a communicative instrument.
- ii. There was the realization that competence in a second language depends mainly on the

habitual manipulation of the sentence patterns of that language.

- iii. There was the awareness that, time spent on traditional grammar rules and analysis is time wasted because it was discovered that those who can use a language are unable to recite its rules and those who can recite its rules may be unable to use it.
- iv. There is the realization that spoken language (as opposed to written language) is deemed primary both in the historical development of the human race and in the development of the individual.
- v. There was the realization that language (i.e the process whereby the child's exposure to language is conscious and structured through language teaching) should be close to, although not necessarily identical with language acquisition, (i.e. the process whereby the child's exposure to language is natural and largely random).

Despite the re-structuring of the new curriculum and the emphasis placed on spoken English it records a poor performance each year at the senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE). In sharing this view, Boateng opined that despite the integration of spoken English at the junior secondary school level in Nigeria, no conscious efforts has been geared towards the effective and adequate teaching of the speaking skill. According to him:

The possibility at any rate exists that the alleged decline of good usage is traceable not to neglect of grammar... but an overdose of the wrong kind of grammar or at least grammar not suited to the characteristics of our language (25).

It is pertinent to note that the English class is probably not the place to teach linguistic as a subject in itself; rather students in the secondary schools can sometimes use the vocabulary of linguistics in discussing (1) the own linguistic competence and (2) their written and speech. Teachers, on one hand, need to have some understanding of recent development in linguistic research, since an understanding of this aspect can change the attitude they hold towards students and towards teaching

children about language. Knowledge of good grammar, on the other hand, performs a function of what it takes to produce good writing.

A good piece of writing needs not only be grammatical, but also interesting, convincing and intelligible to any individual. Students write poorly not because grammar is neglected but because stylistics is neglected. Organization, wordiness or diction vagueness and monotony are the province not to grammar but of style; and these are the fundamental elements that are neglected in the teaching process, particularly in the elementary and secondary schools.

The ability to write is a creative art just like any other arts, which must be learned. No matter how thoroughly our instructions of English grammar is, students will continue to write poorly unless they are taught among other things, the art of good writing.

Results

This aspect analyses and interprets the data on the deteriorating state of the English language among speakers of English in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau state. The data to be analysed are information gathered from teachers who served as respondents. The discussion that ensued is an attempt to interpret the empirical available data. It is from the interpretation that summary and conclusion, recommendation and suggestions will be drawn for the next analysis.

The basic educational qualifications of the teachers were collected. A total of 15 teachers of English were sampled from all the three schools, the following were the results of educational standing.

Qualification standing	Male	Female	Total	%
BA (Bachelor of Art)	2	2	4	28
B. ED (Bachelor of Education)	2	2	4	28
NCE	1	3	4	28
M.Ed (Masters of Education)	0	3	3	16

This was done to show the educational level (qualification) of the respondents so as to determine the level of credibility of their responses.

It was noted however, that all respondents were Nigerians with no native speakers of the language in these schools.

Factors Responsible for the Deteriorating State of the use of English Language in Schools

Questions 1 and 2 of the questionnaire covered issues on the factors responsible for the deteriorating state of the use of English language in elementary and secondary schools. The analyses of items in these questions are as follows.

- A. Distribution of scores of responses on “the total absence of the reading culture among students, parents, and teachers are responsible for deteriorating state of the use of English language in Nigeria” are as follows:

Responses	F	%	
Strongly agree	5	33	F = Frequency % = Percentage N = Total Number
Agree	8	60	
Strongly disagree	0	0	
Disagree	1	7	
N	15	100	Table 1.0

Table 1.0 shows the responses of the 15 respondents sampled of which 33 percent of the respondents strongly agree that the total absence of reading culture among students, parents, and teachers are responsible for the deteriorating state of use of English language in Nigeria, 60 percent agrees and 7 percents of the respondents disagree to this. This suggests that there are other possible factors also responsible for the falling standard of English language within Nigeria's elementary and secondary schools.

- B. The responses of teachers to the survey question; “what do you think are responsible or what are those factors responsible for the deteriorating state and poor performance of students in the use of English language” their responses are as follows:
1. Lack of resource materials
 2. Lack of well trained teachers
 3. Lack of seriousness of the students
 4. Lack of proper and adequate reading culture
 5. Lack of frequent training and workshop for teachers
 6. Poor attitude of parent towards the needs of providing adequate textbooks for their children.

7. Poor attitude of students towards the learning of language.

Instructional Issues and Problems

Data analysis on their part of the questionnaire summarizes the reasons why unqualified personnel teach English in schools, the unavailability of teaching aids lack of proper assessment procedures.

- C. “Give reasons why unqualified personnel are allowed to teach English in most elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria”. The responses of the teachers are as follows:

1. Limited number of qualified teachers
2. The Nigerian factors i.e. – tribal or religious sentiments or best still corruption within the school system.
3. Most schools want to pay less to their staff and therefore employ less qualified staff.

- D. Why do most teachers I elementary and secondary schools avoid using the appropriate methods and materials to teach English Language?

1. The appropriate materials are rarely there.
2. Laziness on the part of the teachers
3. Lack of proper training and workshops on the use of appropriate teaching methods.
4. Most teaching methods are archaic
5. Most teachers' think the appropriate methods are time demanding and therefore take an alternate easy way out.
6. Lack of proper supervision of teachers by the appropriate authorities to ensure the proper methods are employed in teaching the subject

Student' Attitude to the Language

Question 5 and 6 respectively in the questionnaires consist of items which try to find out the attitude of students toward the language and why they prefer to speak their native language or pidgin outside and within the school premises.

- E In this question teachers were asked to assess the general attitude of students to spoken English. The distribution of responses on the question “what do you think is the general attitude of students toward the acquisition of spoken English”? (positive, negative, indifferent) are tabulated as follows.

Responses	F	%
Positive	2	13
Negative	6	40
Indifferent	7	47
N	15	100

F = Frequency
% = Percentage
N = Total Number

Table 2.0

Table 2.0 shows the responses to the question on the general attitude of students toward the acquisition of spoken English, 13 percent of the respondents maintain that students attitude toward spoken English is positive, while 40 percent of the respondents feels students have negative attitude toward the acquisition of spoken English and 47 percent believe students have an indifferent attitude towards the acquisition of spoken English, a otherwise non-chalant attitude. The data show high rate of insufficient interest in the acquisition of spoken English. Although there is a 13 percent interest level; the percentage I quite low to sustain the overall idea of having the language properly spoken and if the percentage continues to drop there will also e graduate decline in the use and understanding of the language which may lead to a decline in education as a whole.

- F. Response on why do you think students prefer to speak their native languages in the school premises with their follow students and at home with either their parents and family members other than English.

The following are the responses given by the teachers

1. Negligence on the part of parents and school authority.
2. They are used to speaking their mother tongue and it is their first language (L1) and most students think in their mother tongue so the prefer to use it at all times and in all places so far they can get someone or people that understand the language.
3. Lack of interest and efficiency in English language resulting to a non desire to speak it.
4. Environmental factors are responsible for this i.e. the type of environment the individual live and the people these students associate with and this can also be regarded

as societal influence.

5. Fear of making mistake when speaking the language or fear of being corrected or made jest of by either peer group or other people.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis will be discussed under the following headings:

- 1) Factors responsible for the deteriorating state of the use of English language.
- 2) Unavailability of learning and teaching facilities.

Factors Responsible for the Deteriorating State of Use of English Language

This study agrees to the popular belief that most student attitude toward spoken English is usually non-chalant negative and indifferent as seen in Table 2.0. Also a poor reading culture among parents, students, and teacher is responsible for the deteriorating state of the use of English language as seen in table 1.0, on the other hand, the English teacher with no doubt can be seen as a victim or self-appointed grammar professor that has failed in his duties. Looking at this, the study showed that well trained teachers of English are also significantly insufficient in number for the geometrically expanding elementary and secondary schools in the country, as a result of this their impact is minimal by the negative influence of their counterparts who contribute to the decline in the standard of English. Too many of these unqualified personnel within the teaching profession use the academic system as a last resort a sort of spring board from where they move on to more alluring and lucrative jobs.

The study shows that the poor mastery of English language which is associated with the deteriorating state of the language tends to make the mastery of other subjects which are taught in English difficult; this is as a result of poor reading culture. With good reading culture, the Nigerian students would perform better in school because a written and spoken language is highly desirable yet it's teaching and learning is beset by a myriad of problems at the elementary and secondary school levels.

Unavailability of Learning and Teaching Facilities

The study discovered that a fall in the standard of

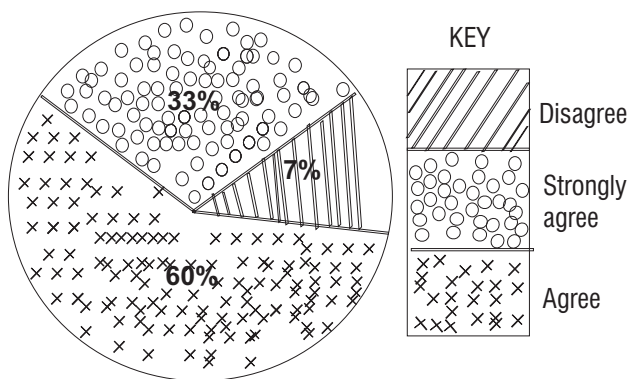
English in Nigeria is due to problems ranging from ill equipped teachers, lack of minimum facilities and necessary equipment, necessary for the maintenance of the standard, to the unprecedented expansion at all level of education which has not been matched with a corresponding increase in the number of qualified teacher.

The study also showed that most schools are faced with the problem of classrooms, where these classrooms exist or are located near a source of constant distraction which disturbs these students psychologically. Vital facilities are not provided to students to improve their spoken English and competent teachers to teach the speaking skill aspect of the English language are not often employed. The resultant effect of this negative side is that the performance of students in the language. It also shows that teachers do not know the clear cut distinction between deviations and deviants; instead teachers lump together and treat both as errors. The English language teacher's approach and methodology do not inspire or motivate these students as a result of the use of archaic method and materials.

The study show that the present restructuring of the curriculum of English is in concerned with the passing of an examination rather than the possession of good communication skills.

Overview of the Findings.

Overall, the following could be drawn from the survey.

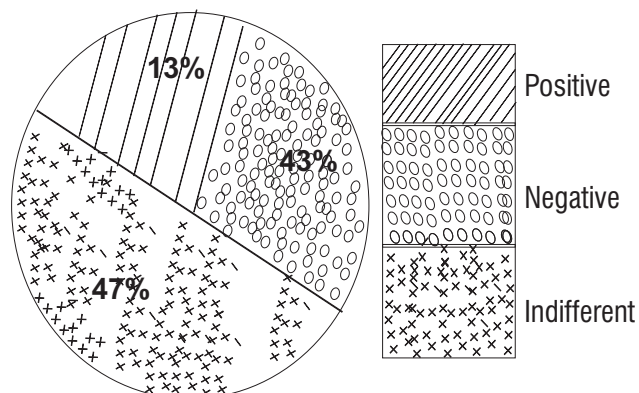


1 The chart above shows that lack of proper reading culture is responsible for the deteriorating state of the use of English language. This means only few students and teachers have good reading culture.

2. The factors responsible for the deteriorating state poor performance of student in English language can be summarized into 3 basic reasons;
 - a. Lack of proper teaching aids
 - b. Lack of properly trained staff
 - c. A weak foundational background and lack of seriousness on the part of student to learn.
3. Reasons why unqualified personnel are allowed to teach English in most schools; can be summarized into 2 basic reasons:
 - a. Shortage of qualified teachers
 - b. Schools employ unqualified personnel in order to pay less.
4. The researcher can gather from the overall that reasons why most teachers avoid the appropriate methods and materials are summarized into:
 - a. Most of the appropriate materials are rarely there.
 - b. Lack of supervision of teacher by either school authority or other bodies that are responsible to supervise.
 - c. Laziness among teachers and nonchalant attitude.

Chart 2

The attitude of students toward the acquisition of spoken English is negative and indifferent i.e.- an attitude of it-does-not matter- A of nonchalant attitude.



5 Student prefer speaking their native language in the school premises with their fellow student and at home with either their parent or family members the reasons can be summarize as follows:

- 1 Fear of making mistake
- 2 They are used to speaking their mother tongue

Summary

From the foregone investigation based on the varying suggestions, opinions, views or theories on the deteriorating state of the use of English language in elementary and secondary schools, the following factors have been established as responsible;

- i. The problems of ill-equipped schools.
- ii. Student's attitude toward the language
- iii. Unqualified personnel and attitude of teachers. This study reveals that apart from the factors or major factors there are other factors such as:
 - a. The re-structuring of the school curriculum.
 - b. Teachers avoid using the appropriate methodology and materials.

Conclusion/ Recommendations

Conclusively, since English is the language of instruction in our schools, the nation's national language and lingua franca, the language of government and administration, trade and commerce, science and technology, and a tool for which our international communication and relation are enhanced, its effective use and manipulation in every domain of its use, particularly by second language learners (L2) of the language is inevitable.

The study, has confirmed that the heterogeneity of the linguistics environment in which English functions in Nigeria has given rise to some language problems that have implication for ineffective learning in general and the mastery of the English language in particular. If the poor mastery and performance in English is to be checked and improved upon, then there is an obvious need to pay attention basic aspect of the language. Perhaps it will be more productive if units of learning are not only defined in grammatical term but be recognized as appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of forms.

Finally, more than before government must invest and give optimum attention to the development of both writing and spoken skills

among students since they both serve as bedrock for excellence at all level of formal education.

On this premise, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendation in order to improve the current status of the use of the English language. The teacher is required as a vital factor in the teaching process and as such to a great extent the success of his students should be his first target. Classroom size has been found to obstruct effective teaching of writing and speaking of the English language in public schools and most private schools. Teachers should consider large classes as a challenge and should make choices of appropriate teaching methods such as grouping and evaluation procedure.

The problem of competent teachers is one of the persistent problems facing the educational system in Nigeria. In view of this, teachers must be adequately trained to be competent enough to teach all aspects of English language. Teachers are also required to improve on their present state so as to enhance a corresponding improvement in the performance of the learners.

Learners should consider themselves to be the core of the teaching-learning process. They should endeavor to change their negative "it-does not matter" attitude toward learning of the language in order to further improve the acquisition of all the skills regarding the use of the language.

The findings in this study will be of great advantage to policy makers; they are therefore, required to take into consideration the re-current problems of the use of English language in our schools, particularly at the elementary and secondary school levels so that adequate provision can be made to provide facilities such as language laboratories, textbook, writing materials etc. when formulating policies.

Periodic training should be given to teachers through seminars, workshops, in-service training and conferences. This will update teachers' knowledge at improving English language instruction in schools.

To the curriculum planners, when planning the secondary school English curriculum should be strengthened to make it more learner-centered and communication oriented. Schools examination should be consistent with classroom goals and sociolinguistic realities. From the various problems

highlighted in this study, the researcher seeks to recommend to all tertiary institution that exports should be trained in the field of teaching English i.e. all faculties of Education in all the universities in the federation and colleges of Education should over- haul their programmes such that, they incorporate every aspect of the English language needed b learners into it.

School owners and principals should ensure that more times is allocated in the school timetable for teaching and writing if a stronger foundation for effective usage among students is to be built. Actual writing should not commence until learners have had adequate time to read, discuss topic in groups, generate and organize points, ask questions for clarification etc. this will ensure the identification of structured pattern peculiar to the use of English.

Government should provide enough funds for the procurement of adequate and appropriate instructional materials such as modern libraries, textbooks, audio-visual aids and educational toys to schools. Government should ensure that the utilization of such funds is appropriately monitored in order to avert its diversion in other invalid project. Government should provide adequate welfare to teachers since they are regarded as the vital factors in the teaching process.

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