Barriers to Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the barriers to students' performance in indigenous languages in senior secondary schools in Lagos State. It investigated different barriers- globalization and home background as factors that hinder the effective teaching and learning of indigenous languages-Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in Lagos State public schools. The research was carried out in three randomly selected public senior secondary schools in Ojo Local Government. The participants were drawn from these schools through random sampling technique. A total of nine (9) indigenous language teachers and 150 students who offer Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba were randomly selected for this study. Two instruments were administered and three research questions were answered. For analysis, the descriptive and inferential statistics were used to determine the composite and relative contribution of the barriers to students'performance in indigenous languages. The study discussed the result of findings ranging from the significant relationship, to the most potent barrier and composite contribution of the barriers and students' performance in indigenous languages. The study concluded on some recommendations and implication of the study which could help to ameliorate the observed wide spread apathy towards indigenous languages in Lagos State schools.

Keywords: Globalisation, Indigenous Languages, Policy Somersault, Ameliorate.

Introduction

Language has received numerous definitions from scholars around the world. These scholars define language based on perceptions and descriptions. The sociological theorists believed that the need for communication among people brought about language while the natural sound source philosophers posit that language came as a result of sounds that come around man. It was noted by them that man must have imitated the sounds around him. Also, in physiological adaptation theory, language was traced to physical attribute of man like the shape of the human lips, teeth, larynx and brain. It was emphasized that these physical attributes are adapted for speech production and no animal share such features.

However, the concept of language has been aptly captured in different works of renowned scholars like; Jespersen (1933), Okebukola (2019), Kolawole(2019), Makinde, Adetokun and Abbass (2020) etc. Their definitions have featured in various peer-reviewed journals and articles with focus on language as a means of communication, language as a habit formed, language as dynamic, language as one dimensional, language as regular and irregular, and language as conventional.

In this study, researchers are not going to further define language rather describe it from already existing definitions. This is aimed at not complicating the already over flogged concept. One can describe language structurally as an articulated system of signs, primarily realized in the medium of speech. Also as a means of communication and expression of ideas. According to the 7th edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, languages are words and the method of combining them for the expression of thought. Jespersen (1933) states that language is nothing but a set of human habit, the purpose of which is to give expression to thought and feelings and especially to impact them to others. From all these definitions, one can easily describe language as expression of thought or ideas. Language is the combination of words. This means that language consists of words and sentences. That is to say that it is a means of expressing ideas by the means of speech sound.

Indigenous language is the language of interaction among Nigerians before the arrival of the colonialists. And a means to a meaningful education. (Babs Fafunwa,1989; Makinde, Adetokun and Abbass 2020). It is a universal truth that a child learns best in his or her Mother Tongue because the language is as natural to the child as the mother's milk. Also, it helps to achieve the end-product of education which is to make an individual an *Omoluabi.* (Awoniyi 1978)

Indigenous languages in Nigeria over the years have been adequately studied before today. In Lewis, Gary and Charles (2013) cited in Makinde and Pemede (2019), Nigeria has 527 languages including English and French which serve as the first and second official languages respectively. In Makinde, Adetokun and Abbass' (2020) account, the number of indigenous languages is 521. This number includes 510 living languages, two second languages without native speakers and 9 extinct languages.

Emenanjo (1990) noted that language situation in Nigeria is as complex as the Nigerian nation. He reveals that Nigeria has over 400 indigenous languages including English, Classical Arabic, Kiswahili, French, Portuguese, German and Russian. With regards to the indigenous languages; their exact number is intimidating and unknown but even their classifications is problematic if one is to use them in education, especially in formal education. Emenanjo (1990) further posited that many classifications of Nigeria languages exist, each one relevant and useful for the purpose desired. He points out that Nigerian languages are classified into the developed, the developing and the undeveloped languages. These classifications are formed considering the number of speakers, readiness for literacy, status in education and current use as a desired second language.

In these study, the developed languages are our central focus. They are those languages with stable orthographies, standard written forms, large bodies of written materials, stabilized counting systems, and large populations of speakers who are both native speakers and those who have acquired them as necessary second languages in their work-a-day lives. They are said to be large group languages and major languages. Bamgbose (cited in Emenanjo's (1990) says that these languages are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba which are estimated to be spoken

either as native or second languages by about 60% - 70% of the population.

The importance of indigenous languages in education cannot be underrated. This should suffice, considering the National Policy on Education, (NPE, 2014), pages 11-12, 'that in pursuance of the primary education objectives, the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject'.

Fafunwa and his team also embarked on the Ife Primary Education Project between 1970 and 1978 with the aim to develop primary education curriculum with a strong surrender value; since primary education is terminal for many Nigerian children, to develop materials with appropriate methodology for teaching the prepared curriculum effectively, to use Yoruba language as the medium of instruction throughout, in order to demonstrate that the primary instruction, when given in the child mother tongue rather than in second or foreign language is more effective and meaningful, to teach the English language effectively as a second language throughout the six years of primary education,.

The Rivers Readers Project is another remarkable work done in order to improve the process of teaching and learning indigenous languages. The project was embarked upon as to produce readers and supporting materials for primary school use, in as many as possible of the local languages of the Rivers State so that children can learn to read first in their own language before going on to English.

Despites all these academic efforts in emphasizing the importance of indigenous languages and in improving the process of teaching them in Nigerian schools, quite a number of researchers have reported that different factors mitigate against the smooth learning of indigenous languages. For example, the West African Examination Council (WAEC, 2017) online examiners' reports from 2010-2015 revealed that students' performance in Yoruba is relatively poor. These situations were attributed to their carelessness as regards the use of standard Yoruba.

Likewise, Onwuka (2012) reports in her work that Igbo language students from 2000 to 2009 get worse results in their senior secondary school certificate examinations. In the data she collected, out of 517 students that wrote the exam in four senior secondary school in the area she carried out her study, 14 candidate passed with distinction, 54 passed with credit, 167 got ordinary passes, 262 failed woefully while 11 candidates had their results seized.

As a result of these poor performance of students in indigenous languages, languages educators have researched factors that could have led to poor performance of students in indigenous languages. The variables studied were; teacher job satisfaction, teacher attitude, teacher content knowledge, teacher competence, school type, school location, school material resources availability, parental subject perception, lack of language laboratories, students attitude, poor background in indigenous language by students etc. (Ekeke2020; Adetokun 2018; Adeyinka A.A 2019; Abijo J.A and Oyekanmi J.O 2017and Adeyinka, A.A., 2016).

In previous existing study like that of Bamgbose (1983), six types of barriers to indigenous languages have been identified. These barriers are;

1. Socio-historical
2. Linguistic and pedagogical barriers
3. Economic barriers
4. Theoretical barriers
5. Attitudinal barriers
6. Political attitudinal barriers

In contrast to the previous studies, this study investigates globalization, in terms of technology and home background as factors that hinder the teaching and learning of indigenous languages-Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba in Lagos State public schools. Omokhodion and Pemede (2010) defined globalization as the revolutionary advances in information technology through it communication dimension which is fast bringing the vast diverse countries into a truly global village. It has caused an international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspect of culture.

The effects of globalization on indigenous languages cannot be ignored as Makinde (2006) took a critical look at the threat of globalization on national life of Nigeria. In his submission, he notes that globalization has caused the world developed languages to dominate small languages and the possibility of many Nigerian indigenous languages going into extinction cannot be ruled out unless practical steps are taken to arrest the imbalance. Omokhodion and Pemede (2010) also noted that globalization particularly in the educational sector has allowed English to edge out many local languages in Nigeria. Adetokun (2014) reveals that students' familiarity with technology and different networks where they are exposed to English is absolutely killing their interest in the study of indigenous languages which later affects their performance in the languages.

Ekeke (2020) as well regards the inability to express scientifically and technological terminologies in indigenous languages as another means by which globalization has hindered the teaching and learning of indigenous languages. He concludes that desktop, Iphone and Ipad do not have indigenous language equivalent hence, translation of such electronic digital devices from English to indigenous language is another problem facing the teaching and learning of language. But Ugwu (2020) put is that that globalization is one of the factors that could make speakers to stick to a given language or learn it.

Another variable of interest in this study is the home background. Fehintola and Olaogun (2010) stated that the home produces the earliest and most direct influence on child's educational development. The home is an agent of socialization, which lays the moral, spiritual and intellectual foundation on which the child is to build later. They note that unless the child's early experience at home is of the right types, he/she starts life at great disadvantages. Home has been a major factor that hinders the teaching and learning of indigenous languages.

The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO, 2014) blamed parents for contributing to the woes of mother tongue. The organisation wonders why parents of the same language group should always speak English to their children. NICO reveals further that the situation is made worse when parents belong to different language groups desist from speaking indigenous language to their children.

Paul (cited in Adetokun 2014) advised that parents need to talk to their children in their native language which in turn will foster children's success at school. Okafor (n.i.d.) writes that some parents do not support their children to study indigenous languages in schools. Most of them are protective and authoritative. Thereby, hindering their children's freedom of doing what they like even when it is necessary. Onwuka (2012) also put the blame on parents. She says that parents too contribute to enhance the negative reaction of their children towards the use of indigenous languages.

It is worthy to know that various researchers have worked rigorously in investigating the barriers that affect students learning outcomes in English, Mathematics and Social Studies. This study, therefore, attempts to close the gap by bringing Yoruba studies into same limelight.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the numerous importance of indigenous languages in the school curriculum and the society at large, there is still a general outcry among stakeholders in Nigeria today about the level of poor performance of students in them. Likewise, previous works have focused attentions on historical development, cultural and the socio-linguistics studies of indigenous languages with little or no attention given to barriers to students' performance in indigenous languages. Much as the situations described here cause concern, it is not yet known why some students fail to attain the standard expected of them. The researchers would therefore like to investigate the barriers to students' performance in indigenous language in some selected senior secondary schools in Lagos state.

Significance of the Study

This study would serve as a vital tool in enabling educational administrators to proffer workable solutions to the current condition of indigenous languages in the classroom and creating a conducive environment for indigenous languages. Also, it could help or provide teachers and students with better solutions to the problems they encounter daily as far as their indigenous languages are concerned. It would serve as a remedial tool for fostering the use of indigenous languages in our homes as language of instruction and communication.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What relationship exists between the barriers (globalization and home background) and students' performance in indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba)?
2. What are the composite and relative contributions of the independent variables (globalization and home background) to students' performance in indigenous languages?
3. What relationship exist between teachers of indigenous language, home background and students' performance in indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba)

Scope of the Study

This study was carried out in senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State. The targeted population was Senior Secondary School indigenous language teachers and students who the research assumed to have been teaching indigenous language in the selected schools and to have been studying indigenous languages as one of their school subjects.

Research Instruments (Validity & Reliability)

Two instruments used for data collection in this study were:

Student's Questionnaire on Barriers to Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages (SQBPIL)

Teacher's Questionnaire on Barriers to Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages (TQBSPIL)

These instruments were self-designed by the researchers. They aimed to determine whether globalization are home are barriers to performance of student in indigenous languages. There were sections A and B in each of the instrument. Each one consisted 20 items, to which response is pre-structured using the modified Likert scale Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

The instruments were face and content validated by experts in Language Education, evaluation and measurement.. They were trial-tested on a sample of 5 teachers and 20 students in a school outside the area of this study. The reliability index showed 0.734 and 0.98 having used Cronbach Alpha reliability method.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, mean, percentage and standard deviation. In addition, inferential statistics were used to determine the composite and relative effects of the dependent variables and independent variables. The result interpreted at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research question 1: What relationship exists among the independent variables (globalization and home background) and students' performance in indigenous languages?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship between Independent Variables and Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages

Variables	Performance	Globalization	Home Background
Performance	1		
Globalization	0.632** 0.000	1	
Home Background	0.268** 0.000	0.180** 0.004	1
Mean	60.7	61.7	60.3
STD.D	9.95	9.56	6.63

* denotes significant at $p<0.05$

Table 1 showed that there was a positive, high significant relationship between globalization ($r = 0.632$; $p<0.05$) and students' performance in indigenous languages. That is, globalization was related to students' performance in indigenous languages. Also, there was a positive, low significant relationship between home background ($r = 0.268$ $p<0.05$) and students' performance in indigenous languages. This means that home background is related to students' performance in indigenous languages. This implied that globalization and home background must be enhanced to improve students' performance in indigenous languages.

Research question 2: What are the composite contributions of the independent variables (globalization and home background) to students' performance in indigenous languages?

Table 2: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis on Composite Contribution of Independent Variables to Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significant
Regression Residual Total	10160.710 14137.683 24298.394	2 246 248	5080.355 57.470	88.4	.000*
R = 0.647 R Square = 0.418 Adjusted R Square = 0.413 Std. Error of the Estimate = 7.581					

Research question 3: What are the relative contributions of the independent variables (globalization and home background) to students' performance in indigenous languages?

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Showing Relative Contribution of Independent Variables on Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficient**	**Rank**	**T**	**Sig.**
	Beta	**Std. Error**	**Beta (β)**			
(Constant)	7.818	4.998			1.564	0.119
Globalization	0.662	0.051	0.598	1st	12.1	0.000*
Home Background	6.017	0.074	0.160	2nd	3.24	0.001*

Table 2 above indicated that the composite contribution of the independent variables (globalization and home background) to the barrier of students' performance in indigenous languages was significant ($F_{(2,246)} = 88.4$; Adj $R^2 = 0.413$; $p<0.05$). This implied that when globalization and home background variables were taken together, they jointly contribute to students' performance in indigenous languages. Table 2 revealed a multiple regression coefficient ($R = 0.418$), which means that globalization and home background have a joint positive relationship with students' performance in indigenous languages. This implied that globalization and home background are positively and significantly related to students' performance in indigenous languages. It further revealed a multiple regression adjusted ($R^2 = 0.413$). This implied that 41.3% difference in students' performance in

indigenous languages was as the result of the joint contribution of globalization and home background while the remaining 58.7% may be due to other factors and residuals not under investigation in this model.

Furthermore, Table 3 shows that the relative contribution of globalization ($\beta = 0.598$; $t = 12.1$; $p<0.05$) to students' performance in indigenous languages was significant. This indicated that globalization is a barrier to students' performance in indigenous languages. The relative contribution of home background ($\beta = 0.160$; $t = 3.24$; $p<0.05$) to students' performance in indigenous languages was significant. This indicated that home background predicts students' performance in indigenous languages.

Research question 3: What relationship exists between teachers of indigenous language, home background and students' performance in indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba)

Table 4: Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship between teachers of indigenous language, home background and Students' Performance in Indigenous Languages

Variables	Performance	Teachers of indigenous language	Home Background
Performance	1		
Teachers of indigenous language	0.523** 0.000	1	
Home Background	0.204** 0.001	0.232** 0.000	1
Mean	60.66	60.9	62.9
STD.D	9.95	10.72	10.95

* denotes significant at $p<0.05$

Table 4 shows that there was a positive, high significant relationship between teachers of indigenous language ($r = 0.523$; $p<0.05$) and students' performance in indigenous languages. This means that teacher is related to the barriers to students' performance in indigenous languages. This implied that teachers must be enhanced to improve students' performance in indigenous languages.

Discussion of Findings

The findings above supported Makinde's (2006) notion that globalization has caused the world developed languages to dominate small languages and the possibility of many Nigerian indigenous languages going into extinction cannot be ruled out unless practical steps are taken to arrest the imbalance. They were also in line with Adetokun's (2014) position that students' familiarity with technology and different networks where they are exposed to English is absolutely killing their interest in the study of indigenous languages which later affects their performance in the indigenous languages. The result further justified Ekeke (2020), who noted that globalization has hindered the teaching and learning of indigenous languages.

However, the result negates Ugwu's (2020) assertion that globalization is one of the factors that could make speakers to stick to a given language or learn it.

Also, from the results gathered, one would concur with Onwuka (2012) and The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO, 2014) who put the blame on parents that they contribute to the negative reaction of their children towards indigenous language. Okafor's (n.i.d.) position that some parents do not support their children to study indigenous languages in schools was as well made relevant considering the result of our findings. Paul's (cited in Adetokun 2014) advice that what parents need to do with their children is to talk to them in their native language which in turn will foster children's success at school is very much in line with the outcome of our findings in this study.

It is so glaring from the findings that globalization and home background are barriers to the performance of students in indigenous languages.

Recommendations and Implications of the Study

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Indigenous languages should be distinguished and taught by those who have advanced knowledge in them. Reason being that, teacher's knowledge in the subject could add to the success or lead to failure of students either in external or internal examination.
2. Parents should endeavour to speak indigenous language to their children at home so as to arouse their interest in the study of the language in school.
3. Quality assurance in Ministries of Education should appropriately monitor the implementation of the teaching and learning of the indigenous languages.
4. More support should be given by organizations, associations, non-governmental agencies, towards the teaching and learning of indigenous languages
5. Motivation: owing to the importance of the use of indigenous languages in the classroom, adequate and relevant incentives, scholarship should be awarded to students who perform excellently in these languages.

Conclusion

The study revealed that globalization is related

to students' performance in indigenous languages while there is a positive, low significant relationship between home background and students' performance in indigenous languages. As a result, it obvious that globalization and home and background must be enhanced to improve students' performance in indigenous languages.

In the study, when globalization and home background variables were taken together, they jointly contribute to students' performance in indigenous languages. This connotes that globalization, home background have a joint positive relationship with students' performance in indigenous languages.

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