



INFLUENCE OF IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT ON PUPILS' SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IREPODUN LGA KWARA STATE

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Abstract

One of the problems encountered by learners of English as second Language is pronunciation problem. Influence of Immediate Environment on Pupils' Speaking Skills in English Language in Primary Schools in Irepodun LGA Kwara State. Two research questions were raised to guide the research. A descriptive survey research design was adopted used for the study. The population for the study comprised of all the primary schools in Irepodun Local Government Area of kwara State, which was about one hundred and sixty-eight (168) as at the time of writing this project. The sample of 240 teachers randomly selected across Forty-Eight (48) primary schools that represent 30% of the total school population in Irepodun Local Government of Kwara State. The research instrument was a set of questionnaires titled the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils speaking skills in English (LEIQ) which was used to obtain information for the study, reliability level of the instrument was 0.76 which was arrived at with the use of Cronbach alpha. The data collected was analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings indicate that the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' pronunciation is positive (mean = 3.08, $p > 0.05$). it was concluded that the influence of the language of immediate environment on pupils speaking skills is positive in the study area. It was recommended that learners should be encouraged to listen more to people who are fluent in English Language, teachers should organize debate on regular bases where other learners can reasonably argue their points so that necessary corrections can be made on their spoken habit, practicing constant correction of their mistakes themselves among others.

Key words: English Language, Environment, Language, Pupils', Speaking skills, Teacher

Introduction

Human beings are social in nature, they express their feelings and emotions as they relate with one another. This is usually done verbally through the use of language. The term language can be defined as a system of sounds, written symbols, verbal or non-verbal used by a group of people in a geographic area, tribes or a country, with which they communicate with each other. Man has within his capacity as a higher animal, the capacity to acquire and make use of complex system of communication through inbuilt traits or wired brain (Nwaozor, 2015). Language can be in different forms which include spoken languages, computer languages, and sign Languages. There is an assumption that total number of the world language is between the range of five thousand (5,000) to seven thousand (7000) (Nwaozor, 2015).

The word first language of a child means the language of immediate environment and the mother tongue. It is the language which a Child learns first at the early stage of his/her life

(Nordiques, 2017). Mother tongue helps in the formulation of a social group; makes learning easy, serve as the best medium for acquiring knowledge, helps in the intellectual development of children; serves as instrument of creative expression, instrument of emotional development and child growth, as well as a source of original ideas, (Dusin, 2012). Considering how important is the language of immediate environment serves in the learning of a child, Amos Comenius (1592-1670) an early educator posited that language of the immediate environment should be the medium of instruction in the nursery and lower primary school because of its positive effects on children's learning and development. In support of the above view, other philosophers such as Maria Montessori (1870) and Johann Pestalozzi (1746) were of the opinion that the language of immediate environment of a child should be used as the language of instruction so that the child can have proper understanding of the content being taught to him/her. Ball (2014) observed that parents interest and zeal for child's enrollment is reducing on daily basis due to children's inability to endure the task of learning and early failure in school which can be attributed to the use of foreign language as the official language of instruction in schools.

Robert (2018) opined that language of immediate environment of a child is of paramount importance to learners, due to child ability to think and expresses herself better in her native language than in a foreign language. The child's natural language helps him to interact easily and this helps him or her to develop self-confidence and foster good social, mental and physical development as well as his prompt awareness of his identity. This identified awareness, can help in other aspects of development. The language of immediate environment of a child is of great value because through adequate knowledge of home language, they learn some technical skills that can help them in the acquisition of other languages; the acquired skills go alongside with them into formal school system. The concept learnt can be easily remembered and transferred to other languages, for instance, if a child has learnt how to guess the meaning of a word or infer the meaning by reading through the lines in the language of immediate environment, such skills are easily transferred when learning the new languages and it may be difficult to teach such abstract skills directly when learning the new language (Winters 2017).

According to Dushi (2012), the language of immediate environment is a child's immediate environment benefits children by helping them to have a better understanding of their lessons, they start school at an early age in life because they have better informed knowledge that can sustain them through life, they attend school regularly with less amount of drop out, when compared with those who receive instruction in foreign languages. Also, speaking skills is very important in daily activities of man. Researches have shown that pupils come across problems in the process of learning speaking in English Language. Latha (2012), opined that pupils need skills to have the understanding of how words are divided into morphemes and how sentences are stressed. He added that adequate knowledge of grammar would help proper structure of language skillfully, so as to bring about fluency. However, the word perception can be defined as the process of organizing and interpreting sensory stimuli in order vividly interact with the environment (William & Levita 2021). It can as well be described as the way an individual notice thing through sense of sight, hearing and natural enablement to understand or to notice things within a short time. It is personal manifestation of how an individual view the world that is determined by many sociocultural elements.

Worth (2019), argued that language of immediate environment reflects learners of English as second language (SL) Learners through incorrect pronunciation, wrong spellings, inappropriate words and sentence formation. Fear of mistakes becomes one of the crucial challenges for Learners who are reluctant to speak English in classrooms. (Robby, 2010) also added that learners who lack

confidence in themselves would suffer from communication apprehension. There are challenges which speaking skills pose in the way of second language learners. According to Mahripal (2014), learners of English language are affected with problems like phonology, syntax, vocabulary, semantics as well as morphology. Lather (2012), stated that a learner needs the skills of words and sentences to understand how words are divided into morphemes and how sentences are stressed and added that, an adequate knowledge of grammar will help effective language structure that will promote fluency. Some research works have been done by scholars on the language of immediate environment and speaking skills in English language. Such works includes the works of Elif (2017), carried out a study on mother tongue interference in second language learning and its influence on learners performance in four language skills. The research observed that mother tongue interference in all aspects of communication skills. Also, Rana Muhammad and Nadeen (2014), carried out research on the usefulness of the mother tongue in understanding English as second language among secondary school students who speak Punjabi and found out that mother tongue is not helpful in learning English as second language. Ozturk and Gurtyuz, (2012), in Turkey, also worked on the impact of gender on foreign language speaking skills, anxiety and motivation were discovered. It was found out that female students were more motivated than male students while learning speaking skills in English Language. They added that different strategies should be put in place to improve motivation of both male and female to decrease their anxiety level.

Podder (2011), worked on barriers and enablers for teachers accessing speaking skills at secondary school level in Bangladesh India and observed that among many other issues. Are curriculum and syllabus contradictory statement regarding listening and speaking skills practices and assessment, traditional teaching and assessment methods, lack of professional training and non-adequacy of speaking material. Boonkit (2010), studied how to enhance the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers and found that confidence in topic, creativity and speaking competence are the most important aspects of improvement when speaking to a large number of people. The studies reviewed were not done in Nigeria schools. Besides, many of the studies were based on two or more skills in learning English Language. While this study is focused on the influence which the native language would likely have on various aspects of speaking skills in English Language. This study, is on the of teacher on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils speaking in English Language.

Statement of the problem

Studies have shown that six to eight years of education in the language of immediate environment, is necessary to develop the level of literacy and verbal proficiency required for academic achievement in the school. A strong foundation in language allows them to transfer their understanding of the structure of a language. In spite of these benefits, pupils still experience problems in English speaking skills. Speaking is very common to man and one of skills that Learners must acquire effectively in order to use language successfully. Speaking skill as basic oral vocal expression among people in the community.

It is observed that, pupils in primary schools come across problems the moment they begin to learn speaking skills in English Language. Such problems include misuse of tenses, wrong intonation pattern, wrong words and sentence stress, inability to identify correct sound of English words, difficulties in oral fluency and reading fluency, inability to compose fluently, wrong use of words and wrong pronunciations, wrong spellings and bad rhymes of words, among others.

Therefore, in response to the above problems, there are several research studies by authors on speaking skills. These include the impact of gender on foreign language speaking skills, the barrier and enabler for teachers accessories speaking skills among secondary school level, how to enhance the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers, factors that cause anxiety for target language and the influence of mother tongue on speech production. These studies were not conducted in Nigeria and also, their focus was not specifically on the influence of immediate environment on pupils' speaking skills in English language in primary schools in Irepodun LGA Kwara State, which this study is purposely focused on. And to fill the gap.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the Study

1. What is the Teachers perception of the influence of language of immediate environment on pupil's pronunciation as speaking skill in English Language in Irepodun Local Government of Kwara State?
2. What is the teacher's perception of the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils grammar as speaking skill in English Language in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Materials and Methods

The study will adopt descriptive survey research design. This design will be used because it is best suited for data collection, organization presentation and for the purpose of describing occurrence of the event or phenomenon, within the local, all public and private primary school teacher in Irepodun local Government Area constituted the population for the study.

The sample used comprise of 250 respondents selected from the population. Sample of 240 teachers were randomly selected from 48 schools representing 30% of the total schools population of 168 primary schools in Irepodun Local Government Area of kwara state. Five teachers were taken as sample from each school, to make a total of two hundred and forty (240). 40 schools were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used for the collection of data was a relief design questionnaire which was validated by three experts in the department of ECC primary Education Kwara State University. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through Cronbach method within two weeks interval and the scores was correlation using person product Moment correlation of 0.76t to analyze at collected frequency count, percentage and mean thing statistical package for social science (SPSS).

Results

Research Question One

What is the teacher's perception on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' pronunciation in English Language in Irepodun Local Government of Kwara State?

Table 1: Teacher's perception on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' pronunciation in English Language

S/N	Teacher's perception	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' clarity of utterance	80 (33.3%)	110 (45.8%)	30 (12.5%)	20 (8.4%)	3.19
2	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' ability to unite sounds that distinguish a word from others	60 (25%)	120 (50%)	40 (16.6%)	20 (8.3%)	2.74
3	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' intonation pattern	60 (25%)	130 (54.2%)	40 (16.6%)	10 (4.2%)	3.18

Weighted Average

3.08

Table 1 shows teacher's perception on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' pronunciation as speaking skill in English language in Irepodun local government of Kwara state; teachers agreed that language of immediate environment has influence on pupils clarity of utterance. ($X=3.19$), the language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' ability to unite sounds that distinguish a word from others ($X=2.74$), the language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' rhythms of words ($X=3.18$), the language of immediate environment has influence on pupils intonation pattern (3.26). The weighted mean is 3.08 which is an indicator that teacher's perception is positive on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' pronunciation in English Language in Irepodun Local Government of Kwara State.

Research Question Two

What is the teacher's perception of the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' grammar in English in Irepodun Government Area of Kwara State?

Table 2: Frequency of the perception of teachers on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' grammar in English in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	Teacher's perception	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' correct use of tenses in English Language	60 (25%)	130 (54.1%)	39 (16.3%)	11 (4.6%)	3.11
2	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' knowledge of language rules	80 (33.3%)	110 (54.8%)	30 (12.5%)	20 (8.3%)	3.09
3	The language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' proper word formation	60 (25%)	130 (54.2%)	40 (16.6%)	10 (4.2%)	3.18
Weighted Average						3.13

Table 2 shows teachers perception on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' grammar in English in Irepodun Local Government of Kwara state; teachers agreed that language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' correct use of in English Language. (mean = 3.11), the language of immediate environment has influence on pupils Knowledge of language rules (mean = 3.09), the language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' proper word formation The weighted mean is 3.13 which is an indicator that on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupils' grammar in English in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, is positive.

Discussion of findings

Based on the findings, it was revealed that, teacher's perception is positive on the influence of language of immediate environment on pupil's pronunciation in English Language in IrepodunLocal Government of Kwara State. This is in line with worth (2019) who concluded in a study that language of immediate environment has influence on pupils' pronunciation.

The influence of language of immediate environment on pupil's grammar in English in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State is positive. This is support of winter (2017) who came to a conclusion that language of immediate environment has immense influence pupils' acquisition of grammar, this is also corroborated by Bang (205) that language of immediate environment has influence on Pupils grammar acquisition.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study. It was concluded that language of immediate environment has influence on pupils speaking and pronunciation in Irepodun local government area of kwara state.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made to enhance the proper speaking of English Language by learners in schools in the Local Government Area:

1. Teachers in the study area should encourage learners to speak English Language regularly and courageously to correct bad speaking habit.
2. Learners must concentrate on pronunciation and not writing alone to correct likely mistakes occurring as a result of the influence of the language of the immediate environment.

Conflicts of interest

None.

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