

# The Impact of Globalisation on the Oral and Written Communication of Students in the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (Funaab)

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## ABSTRACT

Globalisation has become a compelling force dragging nations into the mainstream global system. It has led to an integration of cultures, economies, markets, political systems and technologies among nations today. Any nation operating outside the global system willy-nilly does so at its own peril. Among the impacts of globalisation on African nations, nay Nigeria, are the impetus towards Westernisation and Anglicisation. English has become the lingua franca or official language spoken for business, governance and education. However, it is yet to be seen how globalisation can facilitate the effective oral and written communication of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Literature abounds that raises doubts and complaints about the inability of Nigerian students and graduates to effectively engage in oral and written communication. This puts a threatening pall on the educational system and as a consequence makes it difficult for many Nigerian students facing this weakness to compete favourably as global citizens. It is therefore germane to look at the gains of globalisation and harness them in favour of enhancing the oral and written communication of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In this study, questionnaire forms were administered to all the academic staff of the Department of Communication and General Studies and to 80 randomly selected final year students belonging to 4 colleges at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB) out of which 53 were retrieved to examine whether or not globalisation has helped to improve their oral and written communication, identify the challenges they face in their quest to engage in effective oral and written communication and suggest solutions that can address these challenges and enhance their communication proficiency.

**Keywords:** Globalisation; oral communication; written communication; English language; tertiary institution

## Introduction

Globalisation has begun to increasingly shrink communities, nation-states and regions in the world today. The world has become a small community interlinked by powerful forces and institutions such as information and communication technologies and multinational and supranational organisations. To successfully and effectively participate in this ever-changing and competitive world, nations as well as organisations have to reconsider their own roles and reposition themselves so as to operate securely and productively in the present global configuration (Li and Hart-Rawung, 2008). As Imhonopi and Urim (2010) contend, the transformation of the present era of human existence, which is characterised by the twin concepts of globalisation and information economy, is both sweeping and total in many dimensions. For them, globalisation has introduced overt changes into the modern society, impacting every sphere of life including social, economic, political, technological, educational and cultural processes and institutions and affecting nearly all of the world's people, creating tremendous challenges and opportunities in its wake. Widespread educational reforms, including in English language education, are also taking place in many countries all over the world as a result of the essential and urgent requirement to operate successfully in the global marketplace. Thus, educational reforms in the area of language education, the English language in particular, are being witnessed in almost all non-English-speaking nations at all levels of education: primary, secondary and tertiary (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Roberts & Tuleja, 2008). Maurais and Morris (2003) interpret the present status quo in favour of the English language such that countries throughout the world are beginning to see English as a basic educational requirement for all rather than simply as a desirable accomplishment for some.

However, there seems to be the dominance of a monolingual culture in the world today favouring the ascendancy of the English language and creating an inequality whereby native speakers are better positioned to out-compete non-native speakers within the present globalised arrangement. Consequently, there is a growing concern among non-native speakers whether in Africa, Asia or Eastern Europe to develop a culture of attaining proficiency in speaking and writing English (Bodunde and Akeredolu-Ale, 2010; Hui, 2001; Samuel and Bakar,

2006; Sin, 2005; Yai, 2009) so that their countries and citizens can continue to enjoy relevance and competitiveness in the present global community.

Specifically, Nigerian undergraduates and graduates have not fared well in the area of proficiency of speaking and writing the English language. Citing a 2001 World Bank Report, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2010), lamented the fallen standards of education in Nigeria, especially in the area of graduate education. According to the report, the graduate skills in the country have continued on a downward spiral leading to poor performance and incompetence on the job. The report particularly observed that shortcomings were in oral and written communication and applied technical skills. Bodunde and Akeredolu-Ale (2010) in their study of the communicative competence of undergraduate science students at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, also lend credence to the fact that despite the existence of communication skills courses in the institution, many of the students were still grossly deficient in English language and this lack of proficiency contributed to the low level of comprehension and performance of students in their studies.

The question then is, if globalisation is all that pervasive and ubiquitous, and has continued to influence and redefine the nature and character of institutions in the society including education, has globalisation helped in improving the oral and written communication of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria? If not, what are the challenges making it impossible for students in tertiary institutions in the country to be positively influenced in their oral and written communication and how can these challenges be resolved? These are the questions that this study seeks to answer with particular reference to undergraduate students at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

The word “globalisation” first appeared in 1980s; however, its concept could date back to several decades or even centuries ago when the Spanish, Englishmen and the Dutch established trade empires which generated the immigration of large scale resources and peoples from many satellite states to Western countries (Imhonopi and Urim, 2010; Olutayo and Omobowale, 2007; Song, 2009). After the Second World War, the determination of Western countries to consolidate international relationship became the foundation of current globalisation. This was followed up by the collapse of communism and protectionism, stimulating the free flow of capital and paving a road for the appearance of cross national companies. Globalisation also has been promoted by the internet and the Western media (Hjarvard, 2003) and rapidly developing information and communication industry (Imhonopi, 2009). As Song (2009) observed, the marching of national culture to the world stage is a main reflection of cultural globalisation. Thus, the best and gem of national cultures are marching towards world stage and are appreciated and recognised by people of the whole world. Gradually, the present globalisation movement has sought and secured the promotion of linguistic homogeneity such that the global society now speaks and thinks in terms of global English or “globish” (Samassekou, 2009), while 50% of the world’s 7,000 languages may suffer linguistic genocide if the trend is not reversed (Matsuura, 2009). Thus, as the world tightly embraces the Anglo-Americanisation of the world’s cultures, customs and language, English language has become, as Samassekou puts it, the dominant simplistic vehicular language for communication, business and education in the global society today.

### **The Globalisation of English Language**

As Hjarvard (2003) pontificated, over the past two or three decades, English has come to occupy a singular position among languages. What was previously only one among several dominant European languages, on a par with French or Spanish, is today a *world language*, the language people use whenever they wish to communicate with others outside their own linguistic community. He goes further to argue that English has become the lingua franca of the global network: where the TCP/IP protocol secures technical communication between computers via the internet, English is the “protocol” for oral and written communication across national frontiers. Meanwhile, as the English language has continued to enjoy unique ascendancy, the status of the other principal languages has changed. Even though they are spoken by more people today than ever before, they have been demoted or degraded in relation to English. Today, French, Spanish, Arabic, German, Russian, etc., more or less have the status of regional or national languages that can be used beyond their national frontiers. But, they are losing their currency as the language of international communication, formal and informal: both in political and commercial contexts and in intercultural exchanges, as bridges between people who cross cultural frontiers or who like to enrich their lives with media products from abroad. For Green (2011), the English language has been in widespread use around the world for well over a century, starting with the days of the British Empire, and continuing as the United States became a political and cultural superpower. With the recent increased pace of globalisation, and the resulting profound changes in the kinds of connections that exist between nations and peoples in

different parts of the world, English has become even more of a world language. He argues that globalisation pushes forward global English hegemony. This position had been assented to by McKay (2002) who had argued that factors such as colonialism, speaker migration, and new technology had greatly contributed to making English an international language and were the major reasons for the initial spread of English. However, for Crystal (1997), other reasons for the spread of the English language include that it has become the language of international relations, having been made official language in approximately 85 per cent of the 12,500 international organisations listed in 1995-1996 Union of International Associations' Yearbook; it is the language of the press, advertising and broadcasting; it is the medium through which motion pictures are propagated; popular music of pop groups are written and performed in English; international travel and tourism are conducted in English with the United States emerging as the global leader in world's tourism earning and spending; more books are published in English than in any other language; about 80% of modern communications are electronically stored in English; and finally English plays a significant role in higher education in many countries. Emphasising the continuous dominance of the English language, Graddol (2001) has predicted that no other language will appear within the next fifty years to replace English as the global lingua franca. Thus, for a country like Nigeria to matter in the present English language-dominated global environment, undergraduates and graduates of its tertiary institutions must develop proficiency in their oral and written communication to be able to compete effectively and favourably.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory adopted to explain the functional relevance of English language in the global, national, institutional and individual fronts is the functionalist theory which was propounded by Emile Durkheim (1858 – 1917) and later developed by other notable sociologists. Functionalism is the oldest, and still the dominant, theoretical perspective in sociology and many other social sciences. This perspective is built upon twin emphases: application of the scientific method to the objective social world and use of an analogy between the individual organism and society. The emphasis on scientific method leads to the assertion that one can study the social world in the same ways as one studies the physical world. The second emphasis, on the organic unity of society, leads functionalists to speculate about needs which must be met for a social system to exist, as well as the ways in which social institutions satisfy those needs. A functionalist might argue, for instance, that every society will have a religion, because religious institutions have certain functions which contribute to the survival of the social system as a whole, just as the organs of the body have functions which are necessary for the body's survival. Since language has been regarded as one significant differentiator of man as a socio-cultural being from other animal species, its function enables the seamless functioning of the human society. This is the view of Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2010) when they asserted that language was the vehicle of social interaction and that human beings needed effective language to function properly in the work place, effectively engage in social interaction, and indeed, achieve functional literacy. Therefore, a person is only functionally literate when he has acquired the knowledge and skills in reading and writing which enable him to engage effectively in all those activities in which literacy is normally assumed in his/her group culture. For instance, English language has emerged as an international language spoken in different nations of the earth and used for communication, business, international relations and diplomacy, sports, music, fashion, technology, scientific discoveries and education, inter alia. Without English language as a unifying factor in global integration, the world may experience grave difficulties and challenges in communication and in creating shared understanding. English language has crumbled the language barriers that existed in a multi-lingual society like Nigeria, aiding communication and interactions at various levels. Without the English language, the Nigerian society would be dysfunctional. At the institutional level, English language is used at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB) for easy communication between and among students and their lecturers and is used for writing and passing exams. Individual undergraduate students are admitted into this university because they had a credit pass in English language and will excel in the university only if they are able to express themselves intelligibly in English. Thus, the functional relevance of the English language at the global, national, institutional and individual levels cannot be denied. Consequently, no efforts or investment is too large for undergraduate students to develop competence and proficiency in speaking and writing the English language.

### **Objectives of the study**

Generally, the main objective of this research is to examine whether or not globalisation has helped to improve the oral and written communication among undergraduate students at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta. Specifically, other objectives include to appraise the place of English language in the global arena, to identify the challenges faced by these students in their quest to engage in effective oral and written communication and to suggest solutions that can address these challenges and enhance the communication of undergraduate students at FUNAAB.

### **Research Design**

In this research, the authors have employed survey method to examine whether or not globalisation has helped to improve the oral and written communication among undergraduate students at FUNAAB, the challenges and way forward. In addition, secondary data were instrumental in appraising the place of the English language in the present global economy and places a need on Nigerian undergraduates to be competent and skilled at the rules of English grammar so they can favourably compete and be relevant in the present global configuration.

### **Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

The Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta is a science-based university which has a rough estimation of about 10,000 student population. However, the Use of English is a compulsory General Studies (GNS) course which every student is expected to register, sit for and pass at their 100 and 200 levels. Since there was no way we could have studied the large population of students because of cost and limited time, final year students of selected colleges and departments were involved in the study. This was because majority of them might have passed their various GNS courses and have spent a good number of years at FUNAAB. Hence, a multi-stage sampling technique was used. The first stage involved the identification of the eight colleges in the university which included College of Animal Science and Livestock Production (COLANIM), College of Plant Science and Crop Production (COLPLANT), College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development (COLAMRUD), College of Environmental Resources Management (COLERM), College of Engineering (COLENG), College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC), College of Natural Sciences (COLNAS) and College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET). The second stage involved the selection of four colleges from the existing eight colleges which included College of Plant Science and Crop Production, College of Engineering, College of Natural Sciences and College of Agricultural Management and Rural Development. The third stage involved the selection of two departments each from the four colleges selected. These departments were as follows: Department of Crop Protection and Department of Horticulture; Department of Civil Engineering and Department of Mechanical Engineering; Department of Biochemistry and Department of Physics; Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management and Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development. Meanwhile eighty questionnaire forms were randomly distributed among the final year students in the eight selected departments, ten questionnaire forms for each department. Out of these, fifty-three questionnaire forms were retrieved and found to have been properly filled by the respondents (students) for analysis.

On the other hand, apart from the students, fourteen questionnaire forms were also administered to all the fourteen academic staff of the Department of Communication and General Studies who are saddled with the responsibility of teaching The Use of English and other related courses. The researchers needed their opinions and perceptions with regard to the subject matter of the study. Out of the fourteen administered questionnaires, eleven were retrieved and used for analysis.

### **Instrument of Data Collection**

One major research instrument was used to collect quantitative data for the study which was questionnaire. However, the secondary data were obtained mainly through internet and online resources such as e-journals, e-reports and online publications.

### **Method of Data Processing and Analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using the simple percentages, while materials sourced from online sources were sorted and analysed through content analysis.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (Final Year Students)**

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Colleges	COLPLANT	13	25.0
	COLENG	14	26.0
	COLNAS	12	23.0
	COLAMRUD	14	26.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Respondents' Sex	Male	37	69.0
	Female	16	31.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Respondents' Age	15 – 19	15	28.0
	20 – 25	30	57.0
	26 – 30	8	15.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Secondary Schools Attended	Private	19	36.0
	Public	34	64.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>
Ethnic Background	Yoruba	53	100.0
	Hausa	Nil	-
	Igbo	Nil	-
	Others	Nil	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Study (2011)

From Table 1, 25% of the respondents participated from COLPLANT, 26% from COLENG, 23% from COLNAS and 26% from COLAMRUD. While 69% of the respondents were of the male gender, 31% were female students. Majority of the students (57%) were between the age of 20 – 25, while 15% were between 26 – 30 and 28% were between 15 – 19. The age bracket justified that the final year students were involved in the research. Many of the respondents (64%) commented that they were products of the public school system as against a smaller number (36%) that were products of private schools. The poor state of public education in the country and the lack of adequate funding may explain the reason for the poor performances and competence of products of public schools as attested to in the research by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2010) where the research carried out on 3,000 students across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria revealed that because the products of public schools learn under a harsh environment, which is often rowdy, congested and noisy, this situation contributes to their poor performances in oral and written communication. In two other reports, the woeful results of secondary school pupils who are potential products for tertiary education were highlighted (Another round of mass failure, 2011; Asaolu, 2010) buttressing the fallen standard of education in many public educational institutions in Nigeria. Concerning the ethnic background of respondents, all the respondents were of the Yoruba ethnic extraction. This may be as a result of the location in the heart of South-west dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group.

From Table 2, in response to the statement on the impact of globalisation in different areas in society, particularly as it relates to the oral and written English of FUNAAB students, majority (57% strongly agreed, 36% agreed) that globalisation had had a far-reaching impact on society in different areas such as health, banking, commerce, agriculture, education, language and communication, among others. On the impact of globalisation on language learning, majority of the students (64%) were of the opinion that globalisation had impacted on their oral and written English. This may be as a result of the exposure of these students to modern ICT tools like CDs, VCDs, the internet, computer and other online resources, which have given them unfettered access to current information on the development of their oral and written communication. This is in agreement with the submission of Imhonopi and Urim (2011) where they argued that ICTs could enhance language teaching and learning. Similarly, the students were in the majority (70%) on the opinion that globalisation and ICTs now help them to engage in effective oral and written communication. In addition, respondents felt they were not doing badly in the area of oral and written communication as 57% of them indicated, while only 15% were not persuaded that their colleagues' spoken and written English was encouraging. However, a majority of the respondents strongly disagreed (51%) with the statement that students obeyed the rules of English grammar. In spite of the fact that majority believed that their colleagues did not obey the rules of grammar, many of the respondents (72%) still felt the present level of their spoken and written English could make them competitive in the global arena.



**Table 2 Students' Opinion on Globalisation, Oral And Written Communication Of Students In FUNAAB**

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Globalisation has impacted different areas in the society such as health, banking, commerce, agriculture, education, language and communication.	Strongly Agree	30	57.0	57.0
	Agree	19	36.0	93.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	7.0	100.0
	Disagree	-	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Globalisation has helped the language learning of students such that they can engage in effective oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	11	21.0	21.0
	Agree	34	64.0	85.0
	Strongly Disagree	4	7.5	92.5
	Disagree	4	7.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Tertiary students now engage in effective oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	8	15.0	15.0
	Agree	37	70.0	85.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	15.0	100.0
	Disagree	-	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Your assessment of students' spoken and written English is encouraging.	Strongly Agree	11	21.0	21.0
	Agree	30	57.0	78.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	15.0	93.0
	Disagree	4	7.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Students obey the rules of English grammar in their oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	-	-	-
	Agree	23	43.0	43.0
	Strongly Disagree	27	51.0	51.0
	Disagree	3	6.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The present level of Students' spoken and written English can make them competitive in the global arena.	Strongly Agree	4	7.0	7.0
	Agree	38	72.0	79.0
	Strongly Disagree	8	15.0	94.0
	Disagree	3	6.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Study (2011)

**Table 3 Students' Opinion on Their Oral And Written Communication Challenges And Solutions**

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The challenges students face regarding effective communication include the following:	Lack of interest	9	17.0	17.0
	Poor reading culture	24	45.0	62.0
	Laziness	18	34.0	96.0
	Lack of priority	2	4.0	100.0
	Preference for the local dialect	-	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The solutions to solving students' oral and written communication challenges include the following:	Development of interest	5	9.0	9.0
	Development of reading habit	15	28.0	37.0
	Being mindful of the rules of English grammar	3	6.0	43.0
	Self-development	17	32.0	75.0
	Commitment to speaking the language often	10	19.0	94.0
	Modelling good speakers and writers of the English language	3	6.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Study (2011)

From Table 3, majority of the respondents (45%) believed that the number one challenge of their colleagues regarding their spoken and written English was attributable to poor reading culture, followed by laziness (34%), lack of interest in developing themselves and lack of making a commitment to effective oral and written communication a priority (4%). According to the respondents, to solve students' oral and written communication challenges, there is the need for self-development (32%), followed by development of reading habit (28%), commitment to speaking of the language often (19%), development of interest (9%) and modelling of good speakers and writers of the English language.

**Table 4 Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Teachers)**

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
	COLAMRUD (Communication and General Studies)	11	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Respondents' Sex	Male	5	46.0
	Female	6	54.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Respondents' Age	36 – 40	1	9.0
	41 and above	10	91.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Qualifications	MSc	3	27.0
	PhD	8	73.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Ethnic Background	Yoruba	8	73.0
	Hausa	-	-
	Igbo	2	18.0
	Others	1	9.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study (2011)

From Table 4, fifty-four per cent of the respondents were females, while 46% were male lecturers. Most of the respondents (91%) were 41 and above in the age bracket. Majority (73%) of the respondents were PhD holders, while 27% are yet to obtain their PhDs. Similarly, majority (73%) were from the Yoruba ethnic group, while the rest (18%) and (9%) were from Igbo and other ethnic groups respectively.

**Table 5 Teachers' Opinion on Globalisation, Oral And Written Communication Of Students In FUNAAB**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Globalisation has impacted different areas in the society such as health, banking, commerce, agriculture, education, language and communication.	Strongly Agree	8	73.0	73.0
	Agree	3	27.0	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	-	-	
	Disagree	-	-	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Globalisation has helped the language learning of students such that they can engage in effective oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	-	-	-
	Agree	3	27.0	27.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	46.0	73.0
	Disagree	3	27.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Tertiary students now engage in effective oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	2	15.0	15.0
	Agree	4	43.0	58.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	15.0	73.0
	Disagree	3	27.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Your assessment of students' spoken and written English is encouraging.	Strongly Agree	-	-	-
	Agree	2	18.0	18.0
	Strongly Disagree	3	27.0	45.0
	Disagree	6	55.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Students obey the rules of English grammar in their oral and written communication.	Strongly Agree	-	-	-
	Agree	1	9.0	9.0
	Strongly Disagree	5	45.5	54.5
	Disagree	5	45.5	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
<b>Statement</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
The present level of Students' spoken and written English can make them competitive in the global arena.	Strongly Agree	-	-	-
	Agree	5	46.0	46.0
	Strongly Disagree	3	27.0	73.0
	Disagree	3	27.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Study (2011)

From Table 5, majority of the respondents (73%) were of the opinion that globalisation had impacted society in different palpable ways. However, majority of the respondents (46%) strongly disagreed with the notion that globalisation had helped the language learning of students in the area of effective oral and written communication. This agrees with the findings made by Her (2007) in her doctoral thesis where she argued that



globalisation alone could not impact the oral and written communication of tertiary students because such factors as attitude, motivation and willingness to commit to self-development were important considerations in determining the improvement of students' oral and written communication. In other words, until students are committed to reading, investing their time in learning the rules of English grammar and applying themselves to these rules and hard work, globalisation may not be able to make any appreciable impact on their communication competence. Nevertheless, on the issue that tertiary students now engage in effective oral and written communication, many respondents were divided on this. While a simple majority (43%) agreed to the statement and 15% strongly agreed, 27% disagreed and 15% strongly disagreed with the statement. Meanwhile, a large proportion of the respondents were of the opinion in their assessment that students' spoken and written English was not encouraging. This is in line with existing findings that the oral and written communication of Nigerian undergraduates and graduates were poor and substandard (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu, 2010; Bodunde and Akeredolu-Ale, 2010; Her, 2007; Igwe, 2011). The combined percentages of those who strongly disagreed and those who simply disagreed with the view that their students did not obey the rules of English grammar were 91%. This shows unanimity of opinion on the issue and supports the position of such scholars as Bodunde and Akeredolu-Ale (2010) that obeying the rules of grammar by tertiary students will, among other factors, help them improve their oral and written communication skills. However, some of the respondents (46%) still felt that their students could still compete in the global market in spite of their shortcomings. Nevertheless, the combined percentages of those who strongly disagreed and those who simply disagreed (i.e. 54%) still contended that their students could not compete in the global arena with the present level of spoken and written communication.

**Table 6 Teachers' Opinion on Students' Oral And Written Communication Challenges And Solutions**

Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The challenges students face regarding effective communication include the following:	Lack of interest	1	9.0	9.0
	Poor reading culture	3	27.0	36.0
	Laziness	2	19.0	55.0
	Lack of priority	1	9.0	64.0
	Preference for the local dialect	1	9.0	73.0
	All of the above	3	27.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Statement	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
The solutions to solving students' oral and written communication challenges include the following:	Development of interest	1	9.0	9.0
	Development of reading habit	2	18.0	27.0
	Being mindful of the rules of English grammar	2	18.0	45.0
	Self-development	1	9.0	54.0
	Commitment to speaking the language often	1	9.0	63.0
	Modelling good speakers and writers of the English language	1	9.0	72.0
	All of the above	3	28	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Field Study (2011)

In Table 6, many of the respondents identified poor reading culture (27%) as one of the challenges facing students' oral and written communication, followed by laziness (9%), lack of priority (9%) and preference for the local dialect (9%). However, some of the respondents (27%) believed all the afore-mentioned factors were challenges facing students' spoken and written English. Concerning the solutions to addressing these challenges, 18% felt the development of a reading culture will assist their students to remedy their poor oral and written communication, followed by 18% who felt students should be mindful of the rules of English grammar, while the rest (9%) respectively advocated for development of interest, commitment to speaking the language often and modelling of good speakers and writers as the panacea for arresting students' poor oral and written communication. Nevertheless, 28% of the respondents believed that the points raised were all important and should be considered as real solutions to tackling students' lack of incompetence in their spoken and written

communication. Concerning the reading culture of students, Igwe (2007) and Sisulu (2004), argue that reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning and that becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. For them, reading is not just for school but for life and that reading in all its variety is vital to being better informed, having a better understanding of ourselves and others as well as others. They believe that reading makes a man to be a thoughtful and constructive contributor to a democratic and cohesive society and to national development.

### **Summary**

This research has examined the impact of globalisation on the oral and written communication competence among undergraduate students at FUNAAB. The study also investigated the place of the English language in the present global configuration as the dominant language of communication used for international relations and diplomacy, business, music, technology, education, sports, stock market, scientific discoveries, inter alia. The research has identified the challenges tertiary students at FUNAAB are faced with regarding their oral and written communication. These challenges include poor reading culture, lack of interest in studying the language, laziness, lack of priority and preference for the local dialect. Lastly, the study has identified solutions that could address the problems encountered by students in their bid to gain competence in oral and written communication. These solutions are that students must develop interest in mastering the English language, develop a culture of reading, are to be mindful of the rules of grammar, are to commit to self-development programmes in this regard, and are to model good speakers and writers of the language.

### **Recommendations**

This study recommends the following:

- There is need for greater funding of education and provision of infrastructure like power supply, furniture, functional Public Address (PA) systems, lecture theatres and generally creating a friendly and motivating study environment for teachers/students to read, learn, study and engage in robust research;
- There is need for increased acquisition of modern ICTs to aid English language teachers to offer more learning options to their students and reach many more students with diverse learning styles e.g. visual, audio, audio-visual and kinaesthetic learning styles;
- A culture of large classes of students should be discouraged, while more English language teachers should be employed and more lecture theatres built to accommodate many more students;
- Students should be encouraged to engage in more writing and speaking projects where points and perhaps other rewards are awarded them for their performances. In fact, projects should be put together for students to enhance the four important skills in effective communication which are reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- Importantly, the assessment of General Studies (GNS) courses, particularly the Use of English language, should not be done based on multiple choices or fill in the gaps but should also include essays and formal reports with the purpose to develop the writing skills of students.

### **Conclusion**

Just as many writers have observed, the dominance and hegemony of the English language has come to stay and for a very long time. It is almost suicidal, whether on a global, national, institutional or individual plane, as the functionalist theory postulates, for any form of shared meaning, understanding, cooperation and collaboration to take place without acquiring some level of competence in oral and written communication in the English language as far as the present global arena is concerned. It therefore behoves undergraduate students at FUNAAB to become committed to the learning of the subject and to invest their time and resources improving their oral and written communication. While the present level of students' competence may aid their survivability in the global marketplace, however, to gain and sustain the required competitive edge, these students must go a step further in polishing their oral and written communication skills. That is only when they can be confident to be regarded as global citizens of a globalised world. Consequently, without developing competence in their oral and written communication, FUNAAB undergraduates are not likely to maximise their academic opportunities while on campus and after graduation may limit their chances for personal and career growth and development.

### Limitation of the Study

This research is limited by the following factors: the study of one university, time constraints which made it difficult to increase the sample population and the fact that the study only covered a public university. Perhaps, if the study included a private university and had been extensive, the results might have been different. Thus, there is still room for further research regarding the linkage of globalisation and its impact on oral and written communication of tertiary students in an emerging economy like Nigeria.

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