

The Silent Child in an English Language Classroom: In Selected Secondary Schools in Ijebu-Mushin, Ogun State

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English language is a language of communication in Nigerian society. It is a language of medium instructions, as a lingual franca, useful in all facets of lives in Nigeria. English as a second language is useful between the encoder and decoders. It is a language meant for a medium of communication by instructors (teachers) in the school. English is a compulsory subject to be taken to qualify students to enter the universities, and to pass WASSCE, NECO, NABTEB and other public examinations. English carries our major instruments of communication in various ministries, parastatals, universities, business centre, cyber café, embassies, airports, seaports, and in our major highways. Without English language it would have been difficult for an average Nigerian to exist and interact with the rest outside world. The original owners of English language were the natives of Britain or united kingdom which comprises of Wales in Queen Elizabeth, domain, Scotland among the Scottish, North Ireland and among the English people of England. English language gradually became an international language through the act of colonization of British in an attempt to explore the whole world. All the English speaking countries should belong to the Anglophone countries of which Nigeria, Ghana, India, USA, Egypt, South Africa is member. As a result of this English language has gradually become a major language of instruction by all and sundry. Gradually, English has become a lingual Franca, a medium of communication to the rich and the poor, the affluence and downtrodders in our society. As a second language learner most Nigerian faces major problems in speaking and writing English language, because they could not speak and write like the Native speakers. Many of our indigenous languages has now being assimilated into the study of English language in our day to day activities. What are the factors affecting the poor performance of students in English in our major schools. We lay emphasis on students as learners in various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The scope of our topic is a wider one which does not restrict our studies to primary, nursery or secondary schools. In our discussion we are going to examine critically factors affecting the poor performance of students of English in various standard, and what are the causes responsible for their poor performance in various public examinations. Since examination is a yardstick or measure to be used in determining the level of students' performance, we are using to examine factors in English language in Nigerian schools.

Most of the factors ranged from sociological, psychological, environment, political, psychosocial influence of peer group in schools. The psycho-motor domain of students and response to the study of English language needs to be properly examined. We can also group them into various roles played by stakeholders, of Educators in our society such as teachers, parents, government, government policies on education, non-government policies on education, non-governmental organization, the societies in general, PTA associations and other bodies affiliated with education.

The sociological aspect of the factors reveal the truth nowadays that is no reading culture in our society among our youth. Indeed they are to be recognized in the society. The value of people towards reading is negative in the sense that many people believe that spending many years in the university, primary and secondary schools are waste of time some businessmen belief that at the end of the day, graduate may find himself in the unemployment market, looking for white collar jobs and if he could not get any resulted into armed robbery. Some even think that it is better to study courses that will make you to be on your own at the end of the day, people even think that English language is not necessary in their daily routine since they are able to communicate in pidgin

English. It is the value for money that is highly essential to people. Peoples attitude to reading culture is negative people don't read newspapers . Journal , Magazine which does not bring money to them. With these it discourages people to speak English language even in the public. People often embrace their mother tongue like Hausa, Yoruba, Igbos and other indigenous languages at the detriment sentiment English language. The environment is not even conducive to the study and learning of English language in the citadel of learning. In an environment which is full of kidnapping, and taken people as ransome for money, which they believe is a lucrative business, is better than studying. Even in the school environment there are no instructional materials that could aid the study of English language, no seasonal textbooks on English language, books in the library are now obsolete since there is no provision for New books in the library. The hostile environment of the school compound does not give adequate security for learning. In a society where there is no adequate security, which is full of kidnapping, bombing and killing of innocent souls in the street, churches, mosque, and everywhere, how do you expect effective learning to take place in an environment where there is no peace, but war, kidnapping, killing of innocent souls and bombing of schools, Suicide bombers barricade the whole arena of schools, this could not yield positive result to the study and learning of English. There are no libraries in most schools, formation of Press Club died, reading clubs, literary and debating society could not function very well. How do you expect students to communicate in English ,where local indigenous languages are being used sometimes to teach in schools? In some primary and nursery schools, a policy is on the pipeline to enforce the local language to teach all subjects in the school. How do you think this could be effective?

Psychologically, in schools children and students who are depressed, from broken homes, without money to eat, food, to buy books, to buy cloths for schools developed inferiority complex among peer groups. Statistics have shown that children of well to do in schools often excel very well than students from poor homes. Students from less economic status often dissociate himself from the rich ones, with signs of inferiority complex to borrow things from children of rich and affluence ones.

The psycho-social phobia of inferiority complex affects individual. It also affect children of low economic status in the school. Peer group influence could also affects the performances of students who study English language. In a situation whereby, a student is the only one having interest in reading novel, and other things while his friends have no interest in education and think they are making it though. This may create psychological depression for students and in the multitude to do evil.

Politically, the government policy, which is flexible often constantly review, through frequent changes of government with new Head of State or President of a country who does not belong to the same party with his predecessors may jeopardize the English learning. He may see nothing good in the policy of his predecessor.

Along the line, ethical diversity with problems may set in which may marred the development or continue with the old policy of education laid down by the former government to incumbent government in power. In as much as people believe that a Councilor, member of State, House of assembly, senators earned huge money, people may not have interest in education again instead they will lobby for political appointment, and shelf education because it does not give immediate money. People are looking for quick money nowadays.

The psycho-motor- domain of students may not be enough for him to study english language, which he thinks is hard to study. Students may be something creative like engineering work. Some even think that English is a borrowed language which is not compulsory with the syndrome that they are being influenced with the syndrome of know your local languages very well. Some school of

thought often put apportion blame on stakeholders in education such as parents, students, teacher, PTA, non- government organization, the governments, societies and hostile environment as factors that affect the performance of students in English language. Parents are to blame for their non-challant attitude towards the education of their children. They believe that everything is free, in this era of free educations parents could not buy books for their children. They hardly give their children money for food. They do not have cloth; sandals, textbooks, and other essential thing if they are even expecting government to pay WASSCE fees, NECO Examination school fees, and other Examination bodies, like JAMB. They are not ready to do anything for the betterment of their children education. We have illiterate parent who do not value education at all. They have the culture that education provide no Job for their children who they will be feeding, clothing and cared for after graduation . They believe in their parochial mind that unemployment problems will be there forever and education is a waste of time. They even encourage their children to learn one trade or the other.

Most of our students nowadays are not ready to learn. Some pretend as if they are coming to the schools with other motif Students should be encouraged to take education as priority. The counselor, I mean the guidance counselor should give seminal on career talk to students. Some students have no reading culture especially in the school. They could not be seen in the press club, readers club, literary and debating society club and cultural club. They are mostly triangular students who passed through the school without allowing the school to pass through them. Teachers also have their own share in the poor performance of students in English languages. Most of the teachers are not competent to teach English language in schools. There are no sufficient and adequate teachers to teach English in school. History, and other arts teachers were being recruited to teach English, where they do not have the accuracy, zeals, technical –know-how in the teaching of English . It is like putting the cart before the horse. Even those competent ones who are graduate of English could not teach some aspects of English satisfactorily and successfully. For instance most teachers of English often run away from teaching essays and letters, summary, and comprehension. Instead they spend all their time on lexis and structure some cannot even pronounced words in English correctly talkless of teaching oral English in schools. Lack of instructional materials, teaching aids, library, language laboratory, radio to practice pronunciation of words in English are not available in most of the secondary schools in Nigeria. This is a terrible situation. The human resources and personnel to teach English are not available . No lecturers to do research in English and the study of English as second language in Nigeria any more. People are looking for money in a cheaper way not ready to work for the money they are earning. Low productivity , laziness, ageing, lack of Zeal to teach coupled with other logistic factors often affect the performance of students in English in Nigeria. In addition the environmental condition of schools and colleges in Nigeria does not give adequate solution to the study of English when the result of WASCCE, NECO, NABTEB, JAMB come out every year, students failed en mass in English language. We were unable to identify reasons for this . we need to search our conscience as teachers and conclude that are we impacting knowledge to these pupils or damaging their lives gradually we need to examine ourselves since the only crime you can commit is to waste time of students we need to be up and doing in our work as teachers.

The acquisition of any language, foreign language like English need systematic learning, since it is continuous process, language is being learnt throughout our lives. You cannot learn any language in isolation. You have to communicate it with other people through the exchange maybe faulty and the learner could not master its rudiment very well. That is why it is difficult to learn language in isolation. If we compare to students who came from broken homes with students who are enjoying in the home, we are likely to come with the following hypothesis.

Students from broken homes	students whose parents are not From broken homes
<p>1. The feel very sad most of the time 2. They are not okay at routine 3. They often think 4. There is nobody to advise them 5. They look subjected at anytime 6. They look inferior to other students in the schools 7. They do not possess basic amenities like biro, text books in the home. 8. The guidance counselors here to take proper uniforming of such children Such students could not assimilate the learning of English in school Such students could not learn English effectively Such students could easily misbehave in the school Such students will not concentrate with his/her studies very well. Such student will lack good advise from home since there is no home support Teacher easily play the role of parent for such student from 8am- to 2pm in the school. Such students often listen to either good or bad advise. Such students continue to wish between good and bad dives. He will not concentrate with his studies. He joins bad company without even knowing. Such student move out with anybody so far he can satisfy him/her financially. Anybody that gives him/or her financial assistance through money, cloth, and give him three square meal in a day will be his step mother They often remain SILENT, sober, metally alert, and hooky since they don't have anybody to relate with such students cannot misbehave in schools The live in their own world.</p>	<p>Parents often play advisory role, which is enough for them They do not like subject instead They mixed with people at all time They often possess all basic amenities they need since parenting are there for them at home The parents give them all they want to learn effectively e.g dictionary and ipad They handily need the assistance of guidance counselors except on career chance. They easily assimilate the learning of English language in schools Such students learn English effectively at school since his parents is educated who often talk to him in English at home. The student will concentrate fully on his study and face his education squarely with ease. The advise given to him at home will have good and positive effect on him in the school, which often facilitate good learning Teacher is not necessarily invited to play the role of parent since parents are there for them at home. Such students will be able to sort out good advise from bad one and pick the correct one. Such students could not listen to bad advise. Such students is always settled for learning in the school. He will concentrate on his studies. He does not join bad company he knows the different between good and bad company He could not just move every for many days since parents are at home expecting him to come earlier. He needs no step mother or just everybody to give him constant financial assistance. They often relax, mixed wish people, feel at ease, respond to learning, develop in language acquisition at all times. Such students often feel happy with joy and with people, feel proud epicurean and often cough.</p>

Source: Field Survey 2012

This table is used to take sample of students from broken homes in at least five private secondary schools and 5 public schools, in Ife central local government of Osun state. Series of questions were asked from students from the broken homes. these are some of their responses.

Students from school A. private schools

I have nobody to relate with at home and this affect my education adversely because the role to be played by my mother is not there.”

I have no nobody to meet at home I remain lonely only to play with my sister.

There is nobody to advise either good or bad our dad comes in the night only to sleep without asking us what we study at home.

Students form school B private school

My step mother always beat me not give me food to eat, curse my mother often that, she left her husband unnecessarily and that we children are now suffering. She often said and that she could not take any additional responsibilities and referred to us as handbags. **Students from school C private schools**

Father often give us money , but we are not satisfy with all these. We need the affection of our mother who is not available to give us all necessary things we hear as other children get from their mothers. We are suffering

Students from school D private schools

The school becomes the home because home is not settle. There English , our father is a stark illiterate father and my step mother is like hell living with them.

Students from school private schools

I find it difficult to concentrate with the study of English in school . I don't have biro, English notes and my school Uniform is like a tattered kit, torn and no shoe to put. I am psychologically disturbed .

In some public school visited, in Ife central 5 schools were selected in secondary schools and in the course of my interview with students of broken homes and how it affects English acquisition in school these are their statements.

School A- public school

Students often complain that they could not acquire English learning from their teachers due to poor background, nobody to communicate the language with at home. My parent is an illiterate one who does not stay at home

SCHOOL B

Students complain of lack of textbooks in the school, teachers of English are not many. Teachers who specialize in history and government taught English in the school our teacher comes to class rarely.

SCHOOL C PUBLIC SCHOOL

My teacher only concentrate on lexis and structure, he did not give us essay, letter, summary and comprehension. He does not know how to teach oral English.

SCHOOL D PUBLIC SCHOOL

There is no communication skill between students and teacher. My mother have divorced my father since the age of 5 . I stay with my step mother, who is an illiterate one.

SCHOOL E- PUBLIC SCHOOL

At home, I don't read and communicate in English. I discuss with my father and my step mother always in Yoruba. My parent did not buy English textbooks for me. Father did not even ask about our performance in English at school. I have nobody to communicate with in English . I am always alone, I stay quietly in class quietly.

After compiling these speeches and analyse them critically , I think that the influencing of broken homes often affect most of these children , and it adversely affect their performances in the school.

RECOMMENDATION

Solutions – parents should avoid anything that can cause separation in the home for the sake of these children. If separation comes children education were mostly affected.

Where two elephants fight it is the grass that suffer. There should be harmony between husband and wife in the home, so as to care for the education of their children. Separation often lead to nobody to take care of children in the study of English languages. The harmony of parent is a success to every Child's education

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