

# Influence of Mother Tongue in the Teaching and Learning of English Language in Selected Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

Olu Oyewole Ph.D

Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

## Abstract

The rate of failure recorded every year in most external examination constitutes a major concern to the education sector. Every year government recruits more teachers into the system, capacity of various kinds are conducted at all time, yet the failure rate continues to increase. On this basis this study investigate influencing mother tongue on students in teaching and learning of English language in Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted, 100 secondary school teachers were randomly selected from secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria, to complete the self-designed instrument constructed for data collection in this study. The study employed frequency counts, percentages and chi-square statistical tools for the analysis of the collected data. The findings show that mother tongue interference has impact on the writing and spoken of English language among secondary school students. Another finding shows that, mother tongue hinder effective communication among students in class. It also shows that, Mother tongue influence students' academic performance. Lastly, mother tongue hinders students from mastering the grammar of other languages. This study however concluded that, interference of Mother tongue on Secondary School Students' of Yoruba language or other languages competence cannot be overemphasized.

**Keywords:** Mother Tongue, Teaching and Learning, English Language, Secondary Schools.

## Introduction

Language is a means of communication and it contributes in no small measure to national building and development. It provides us with not only just a mode of interaction, but also with a capacity of representation. Everybody knows that language concerns the everyday lives of people their social interaction, economic, political and developmental situation.

Language is a socio cultural phenomena on which has the characteristic role of communication as well as being an index of group's identity. For language to be functional, it has to perform a communicative role. According to Farinde and Ojo (2001), they cited Gimson, stating that: language is a system of conventional vocal symbol used for communication by a whole community.

Language is characterised by a set of vocal sounds which can be decoded. According to Akindele (1999) stated that, language is a system of symbol or vocal system by which human being communicate experience. Language helps human beings to express their feeling and thought to one another. According to Gimson (2000) "language is the institute whereby humans communicate and interact with one another by means of habitually used oral-auditory arbitrary symbols".

Language issues is therefore very important and sensitive because it touches the identity and ego of members of the community and thus posses' problem. According to Ojo (2005) in introduction to socio-linguistics citing Gumperz (1968) defines speech community thus. "Speech community can be defined as most groups of any performance, be they small bands bound by face to face contact, modern nations divisible into smaller sub-regions even occupational association or neighbourhood gangs". Also citing Olumuyiwa (1997) defines a speech community thus. "Speech community can be defined as a group of people or individual using then same language or linguistic signal".

The Nigeria speech community is made up of many ethnic groups. The ethnic have various local languages, which serve restricted local need. The languages are mutually unintelligible. Multilingual speech community is a community where here or more languages are in use. Nigeria is an example of such with more than 250 ethnic group with a conservative estimate of 400 languages (Olagoke 1981 and Aziza 1998) it is therefore a multilingual and multicultural speech community whereby diverse languages and culture complete.

It is also a community where apart from indigenous languages foreign languages also compete with other languages and culture. Within Nigeria a multilingual community, a child first acquires the four basic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Mother tongue which could also be referred to as first language is the first language a person picked up in is early childhood. A first language does not mean first in the sequential sense of term but as other meanings. Similarly, the term "mother tongue" does not mean a mothers tongue or language. The term L1 and MT are interchangeable.

Farinde and Ojo (2001) opined that, the first language (L1) or the mother tongue MT is the first language

(L1) or the mother tongue is the first language a person pick up in his childhood. It is not learned but acquired. It is a language that encodes early concepts of the child. It is a language that fully identifies with personal or native culture of a multilingual person.

Mother tongue is a language in which a multilingual person conducts his everyday activities in which he has the greatest linguistic facilities or initiative knowledge. It is the language in which for the effectiveness of its functions required the learner knowledge of all four basic skill of learning i.e. speaking, reading and writing.

Mother tongue is defined as the language that person, or that a person speaks best, and so is often the basic for socio-linguistics identity. Also it is the language which a group of people considered inhabiting, and which eventually becomes their natural instrument of thought and communication. Such views are but merely reflections of the different methodological shift in English language teaching which have brought new and different outlooks in the role of mother tongue.

The importance of English language acquisition as a stepping stone for proficiency. In other school subject cannot be over emphasized. The knowledge is important for educational, economic and national development of a country. Also English language as a school subject derives its importance from its utilitarian value to the larger society. English language is part of communicating administration and commerce. Salami (2002), greatly emphasized the importance of the use of language in strengthen communication among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. He further highlighted the need for improving the quality of spoken and written English among school children.

However, one of the current educational problems of public interest in Nigeria is that of poor level of achievement especially in public examinations. This problem of under achievement among school students' has persisted in much subject area, such as English, Mathematics, Yoruba and science.

This poor level of achievement in many subject areas can be link to poor foundation in English language at primary school level, and there are several research reports that support the view that language inefficiency leads to poor academic performance.

Many language teachers have not come closer to the pupils or students so that when such student makes mistake or find it difficult in learning English language they could easily identify where the problem of the students come from and how to correct and make the student understand the second language better. By understanding or learning or hearing the mother tongue of the student it would make them to aim to fashion out method, suitable for the student to learn the second language.

In order for the student to speak fluently or write correct and convincing English, teacher has to set standards for the students so that they would be able to have competent use of the language. One way of setting such standard is for the teacher to make a particular accent of English language e.g. Received Personification (R.P) examines the significant of phonetic contract within the accent and find out whether any of the sound involved are not present in the language by his students.

If some sounds are not present, the contract involving the difficulties when learning English language, so as far as mother tongue and the target are concerned units of sound in target language can be difficult to master because they are not in mother tongue. The essence of a particular sound in the mother tongue constitutes the difference between the mother tongue and English as second language.

However, it will be of great importance if there should be a review in language policy on education which should contain recommendations that will make students to have enough exposure to the subject quite early from the primary school irrespective of the advantage of mother tongue. Some notable scholars suggested that "teaching and learning of English language should be more practice in our secondary schools and the number of years of study and teaching period should be increased". Teachers of English language should endeavour to always bring the reality to the classroom when teaching through the aids of instructional materials and their methodologies. All materials for learning English language subjects should be supplied. By so doing this, problem of woeful result during examination will be fully overcome, because it is when firm decisions foundation in English language is being laid that a better performance will show case.

However, Akinbote, Olusegun and Iruogbe (2003), had a different view on the use of English language in the early years of primary and lower secondary school. Both of them were of the opinion that mother tongues really help teacher and students in the process of teaching and learning, not only also to preserve and value their culture but also to develop it lexically. According to these two authors, the use of English language in the early primary and junior secondary schools will give the average primary and lower secondary school children the opportunity to be sufficiently literate in both the mother tongue and other languages and that, at all level children will have mental translation of all concept presented in English language to their mother tongue so as to gain more meaning of the concept presented.

At this time it is very imperative to see whether mother tongue has bearing on the English language usage among the secondary school students. It is also vital to draw attention to be presence of the problems, and on the basis of what will be find out, recommendations could be done to reduce them if they cannot be totally eradicated.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is very true that identification and isolation of problems implies that they are partly solved. For this reasons, the researcher will carry out a survey in order to look into the impact of mother tongue on the performance of students in English language with reference to some selected secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

One cannot but believe that students face a lot of problems in schools and at home. Some of the problems in schools are largely caused by few in-equipped teachers who lacks interest for the profession due to lack of motivation and encouragement owing strongly to the fact that they are human beings who will always like to be motivated in diverse ways as the case maybe.

Among the problems is teacher's poor ability in teaching methodology. Most teachers do not follow the teaching of English language in the appropriate order. Those four basic skills of language are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These steps are either presented in a wrong sequence or everything lumped together.

### **Purpose of the study**

In the study of influencing mother tongue on students in teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools in Ondo State. The paper attempts to specifically look at the following:

- ⇒ The ways and how English language is being taught in secondary schools in Ondo State.
- ⇒ Lack of man power and text books.
- ⇒ Inadequate library facilities.
- ⇒ Unwillingness on the part of the students to learn.

### **Research questions**

Answers will be provided to the following research questions that were put forward by the researcher so as to carry out the study effectively.

1. Does mother tongue interference have impart on the writing and spoken of English language in secondary schools in Ondo State?
2. Does mother tongue hinder effective communication among students in class?
3. Does mother tongue influence students' academic performance?
4. Does mother tongue hinder students from mastering the grammar of other languages?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Importance of English language**

The importance of English language as a school subject derives mainly from its utilitarian value to the larger Nigeria society. English is the official language of administrating and commerce in Nigeria. Had emphasized the importance of the use of English language in improving communication among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. In addition, the importance of English language acquisition as a stepping stone for proficiency in in school subjects cannot be overemphasised.

Language plays different and important roles in education of any country, this suggests that behind any learning process, language is always involved. It will be no exaggeration to that, without language objective, knowledge is almost impossible. Language question becomes crucial to any education policy that deserves to be taken seriously.

It is with the context that we should see the education in mother tongue and second language are very important. According to Sharman (1957) no language can take place of native tongue and no system of education can afford to disregard the native tongue without detriment to the mental development of the child such an unassailable premise must have promoted the birth of the controversial mother tongue education doctrine propounded by some experts in education in Nigeria.

The federal government of Nigeria was aware of the unspeakable danger inherent in the allowing of the foreign language to take place of the mother tongue. Hence in the national policy on education (1977), curriculum activities were prescribed in order to achieve the general objectives of education.

#### **Historical background of mother tongue in Nigeria education**

The vast majority of Nigerian language were not put into writing until the 18<sup>th</sup> century and earlier studies on these languages were carried out by missionaries from Europe, whose aims were to translate religious materials into some African languages and design school books as painted out by Hair (1960).

Between 1817, 1845 Hanna Killham suggested that Africa should read and write their own languages. She was one of the earliest Europeans to collect African language materials on which to base school books. She proposed a linguistic institute to be established in England, where selected Africans could study their languages develop a writing system for them and prepare translations of religious materials.

### **Notions of mother tongue in Nigeria education**

This is a language a child first came in contact with in life. It is the language of the immediate environment. Some scholars claim that, it is acquired and not learnt. It is the language that one grows up with, Ajulo (2008). When Chomsky theorized on the innate capacity of human to acquire language like English or a foreign one, depending on which the child is exposed to early in life.

This implies that in Nigeria, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Efik, Tiv, etc... are majority tongue but English or Arabic could be a mother tongue (MT) for a Nigerian speaker whose father is a Yoruba, if either of the foreign languages was what he/she was exposed to.

In teaching and learning process in Nigeria, the mother tongue of the child is of great importance. Its categories a large part of the child's environment that is it has names for most of the object, action, ideas, attributes that are so important to him as well as to any given society. Realizing the importance of mother tongue in Nigeria education.

Mother tongue in Nigeria education was encouraged for many reasons as stressed by scholars, such as Fafunwa who explained that a child learns best in his mother and that is natural to him as mother's milk, therefore, it would not be astonishing that the mother tongue should be encouraged in young people at the primary school level. He explained further that, the mother tongue is a way of promoting our culture and if a subject like English is made compulsory at the primary school level, pupils will recognised its importance and will lead to understanding of English language.

### **Significance of mother tongue**

The first language of a child is part of his personal, social and cultural identity. Another impact of the first language is that, it brings about reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking. It is basically responsible for differentiating the linguistic competence of acting.

To a person, his mother tongue is a "blessing in disguise" it is not merely a timetable subject in his education but is forced upon him from all sides. It is learned by both the conscious and unconscious methods. The conscious supplement and regulate the knowledge gained by hearing. The mother tongue is an indispensable instrument for the development of the intellectual, moral and physical aspect of education. In addition, it is a way through and by which other subject can be tackled, understood and communicated.

Clarity of thought and expression is only possible when one has certain command over the mother tongue. Weakness in any other subject means weakness in that particular subject only, but weakness in mother tongue means the paralysis of all thought and the power of expression. Deep insight, fresh discoveries, appreciation and expansion of ideas area only possible when one understand the subject through the help and understanding of mother tongue.

### **Controversy over choice/ negative attitude towards mother tongue.**

The use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in education as generated a serious controversy in Nigeria. Some assume that, it is not practical and anti-nationalistic and divertive. They lose their contention on social-political factors. For instance, the linguistics tell s us that we have (300) different languages (excluding dialect) in Nigeria, and that if each linguistic groups insist on giving educational instruction in their mother tongue, the objective of primary education in Nigeria will become unattainable.

According to Gimson (2000), who argues that in a country like Nigeria, the mother tongue education is hardly feasible in real term, if pursued to its logical conclusion, he says further that, the mother tongue proposal may even destroy some of the principles the country should cherish.

One of the earliest scholars of language education Lade (1957) asked the question whether the danger envisage would not be there without the policy advocated was the Nigeria civil was caused by the use of Nigeria language, rather than another, as a medium of instruction. Ologunde himself now said, as long as many Nigeria languages are not deemed out of existence, dangers of some sort will exist, particularly as self-centred politicians will always be there to fan the flame of sectionalism. He now concluded that an adequate overall national language educational policy seems to be the only answer.

Another area of contention is the area of educational sector. One of the assumptions are made by mother tongue crusaders is that, a child learns better or more easily when instruction is given out in his mother tongue. According to Oladipo (1990), "it is undeniable for instance that there is no surer way to an adequate understanding of the nature of a thing or process than through the medium of language whose syntactic and semantic requirement are adequately understood". Since most of our children are brought up in environment where mother tongue is the predominant means of communication, then, it is only logical that they are inducted into the world a society through the agency of such language.

It is also true that education depends specifically on language, and also determines the constant of education. Therefore, if the second language is used as a medium of instruction, there is danger of cultural deprivation. However Ogunba (2001), says, "assumption that a child learns better or easily when instructions is given out in

is mother tongue can only be true in a basically monolingual environment ". Our argument now is that, in an environment where there are competing languages, (for instance Nigeria), it may be difficult in the mother tongue than the so-called foreign tongue. Mother tongue does not make it necessarily easier to grasp. He also talk about the problem of adjustment from mother tongue to English at the secondary school level, even though Fafunwa believes that the use of mother tongue in primary education would make Nigeria genuinely bilingual as they would become thoroughly proficient in both mother tongue and English language and it will pave way for better results.

The anti- mother tongue crusader points out the disadvantages of using mother tongues, for instance, they believe that it will fail in area of science related subjects with technical term. And because the books on science related subjects with technical term. And because the books on science are written by foreign authors, they may be difficult to interpret. However, Fafunwa (1989), now assures that the necessary books and teaching aids can be publish in Nigeria languages in subject like Mathematics, Science, Agriculture and science to suit our need.

Furthermore, in negative views towards mother tongue, most factors discussed earlier may be regarded as beyond the control of speakers of language; the question of attitude is squarely within the power of those who own the language. One would have expected speakers of an African language to be proud of their language, but quite often, one encounter negative altitude.

The most common of such altitude is that the elite who refer education in the imported language for their children. Taking their cues from elites, it is not surprising that parents belonging to lower social groups also want similar education for their children. For instance, in Nigeria, it is amazing to find the large number of English medium private nursery and primary schools offering education to young children. Patronage of such schools comes not only from well-to-do parents, but also from lowly paid blue collar workers, who believes that they are making a great sacrifice for their children's future, Bamgbose (2011).

Another type of negative altitude is that exhibiting by speakers of minority language. While linguistics readily object to the marginalization of such languages and advocated roles for them in certain domains. It is not unseal to find speakers of minority languages denigrating their own languages, and preferring to them some major languages of the country or an improved official languages. Pretty much the same altitude exist for endangered languages. The point must be made that, unless speakers of minority and endangered languages takes pride in their own language and show a definite desire to preserve them, no amount of external engineering can ensure any status and viable roles for them.

### **Mother tongue interference and its effects on English language pronunciation**

As observed by Akindele and Adegbite (2002), the learning of language involves a complete set of interwoven features, almost all of which have implication for the several problems associated with the learning of English as a subject in Nigeria.

One major problem which many are quick to point out is the problem of interference. Interference is a linguistic phenomenon whereby the features of one language (those of the L1) are transferred into the target language or (L2) second language.

Interference hinders many learners in their effort to master the grammar of English language. At the level of phonology, for instance, many learners find it a hard task learning the prosody of English language, in the area of grammar, the syntactic pattern and structures of English language post a great difficult to learner. Example of phonological interference includes the pronunciation of English language word utterances with the tonal pattern of Nigeria languages such as Igbo, instead of the usual English stress associated with particular syllable (Fafunwa Macaulay and Soyinka, 1989). Furthermore, there are other problems such as inadequate exposure to English learning and the need for language acquisition. Some of the effect of mother tongue interference in English language pronunciation are phonetics, articulator phonetics, acoustic and auditory phonetics.

### **Phonetics**

Basically, the interference of mother tongue in learning English is down to three basic concepts of phonetics. These concepts are articulator, acoustic and auditory phonetics.

### **Articulatory phonetics**

This concept is all about how sounds are produced by speakers. The production of speech sounds depends on vocal tract and articulatory capacities of speaker. In other words, how a speaker produces the sounds in his mother tongue will interfere with the sounds that are produced in Yoruba. Some languages for instance, produce clicking sounds and the rest of the world is almost incapable of producing.

### **Articulatory and auditory phonetics**

These are about the reception, perception and mechanism such as pitch, harmonics and amplitude of sounds. This is why it is important to hear words, rather than trying to learn from written context only.

### **Influence of mother tongue on second language vocabulary acquisition and use**

As a learning process, transfer supports the learner's selection and remodeling of imputed structure as the learner progresses in the development of his inter language knowledge. As a production process, transfer is involved in the learner's retrieval of this knowledge and in his effort to bridge linguistically these gaps in his knowledge which cannot be side-stepped by avoidance.

### **How language differs**

It is quite an illusion to think as even illiterate people sometimes do, that meanings are the same in all languages that language differs only in the form used for those meanings (Lado, 1957).

The word contains too much things for us to have one word for each: we economize by using words in more than one sense, leaving context to disambiguate. Unfortunately, different languages parcel up meaning into words in different ways, and so a word in language "A" may have various equivalents in language "B" depending on exactly what is meant. There are several typical patterns of relationship between words in different languages.

### **Teaching and learning of English language in schools**

In any institute of learning where indiscipline is highly pronounced, effective teaching and learning cannot take place and this will go a long way in deciding the performance of these students during examination. The following point will help the students to know the necessities of learning English language with all seriousness in school and the points will gear the student minds so as to develop interest in the course under study. The following points are discussed:

- a. Distribution.
- b. Communication.
- c. News or information.

### **Distribution**

English is the most widely spoken language in the world, apart from the distribution of native speakers. There are over 400 million native speakers worldwide and there are 600 million speakers of English as a second language. 900 million people using English to communicate in one way or the other out of the total world population of about 6.7 billion people, it is only 15% of the total population that uses native language to communicate. Though, the importance of English language is not in the number of speakers, but language is spoken all over the world.

### **Communication**

To enable students to be able to communicate with their peers within and outside the country without any form of errors, there is need for proper teaching of English language. Also, to afford students to be able to use all interacting sites that are online with great ease on their part, communication is important. To enable students to acquire knowledge and skills, abilities in teaching English language whenever they find themselves in teaching line (Hanna, 1998).

### **News or information**

To acquaint students with the knowledge of English both in the area of grammar and semantics because many of them may find themselves becoming news casters in the media houses, and as English is the language which news is being mostly casted, it will not pose a threat for them. Also English language will also be useful in the area of reading dailies as they are mostly written in Yoruba language (Olagoke, 1981).

### **Inadequate**

A library can be seen as the store house of knowledge. It renders great service to the society. It plays a very important role in promoting the progress of knowledge. The school library provides information and ideas that are fundamental to successful function in today's information and knowledge driving society. Going to library in schools will make significant differences to students' learning outcome.

Everyone knows that a student from a school with appropriate library materials will perform very well in any aspect of English language courses or even other courses than those from schools that have no library materials. This is because students with well equipped materials that will help in complementary their teacher's work in the classroom, especially, those that are not lazy. According to Green (1977), who said that "the function of textbooks are to provide in readily accessible form, the body of knowledge which is required by students in relation to a particular subject". Green further comments on the importance of the library stating a library is essential for effective learning of English language. And to buttress what Green said, library surely helps students with problems and difficulties which cannot be solved by the help of usual textbooks arises especially in more advanced words, are being found in more elaborate textbooks in the library. Also, students reaching advanced level

have to consult books as references, so as to give more insight to whatever might have being taught in the class.

In addition to it, teacher is an infallible guide, so references to textbooks aside those used in the classroom is sometimes required as it will be a long way in interpreting some ideas, and this will have a great impact on student's results. Furthermore, if the relation of English language with other field of learning and social affairs is to show and explore as they should be, library resources are necessary (Ross, 2000).

In conclusion, some of our parents are not well educated and they did not know the value of the courses their children offers in school, so this make some of them to take their children with levity. Most parent are poor to the extent that they could not even afford some textbooks for their children not to talk of dictionaries and some relevant materials because they are expensive

### Research Method

The nature of the study is survey research. It is designed to know the impact of mother tongue on students and how it affects their academic performance. The method would enable the investigator to use questionnaire to collect and collate vital information on the relevance of mother tongue on the academic performance of English language students.

### Population

The target population of this study includes JSS 1 to SSS 3 students of English language from the selected secondary schools in Ondo State of Nigeria.

### Sample

The research made use of simple technique in choosing groups of students in the study. The division of this population into groups, which are more reliable to represent the whole population, simple sample ensures the adequacy probability that every subject has the equal chances of being selected in all. A total of 120 students were involved through the administration of questionnaires.

### Instrument

The instrument used for the data collection is structured questionnaire, every item/statement in the questionnaire has two options which are: Yes ( ) and No ( ), both options are scored equally. The questions consisted of 16 item scored on a- 4 point Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree are allocated 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positive attitudes and 1, 2, 3 and 4 for negative attitudes.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was carried out through the use of questionnaire and tabulated all information in order to facilitate an easy analysis. The research questions raised for research study were tested and analysed by using frequency counts and chi-square percentage, for the analysis of the data.

**Research question 1:** Does mother tongue interference have impart on the writing and spoken English language among secondary school students?

Table 1: Chi square summary on statement regarding how mother tongue interference have impart on the writing an spoken English language among secondary school students

Questions	Response			Mean	df	X2	P	
	F	SA/A	D/S D					Total
Mother tongue can alter the way student read and speak English	F	89	11	100	2.96	3	28.232	.013
Student can be greatly affected if they use English language to explain some concept in the subject itself and not in their mother tongue	F	81	19	100	3.54			
	%	81.0	19.0	100.0				
Permission to mother tongue in teaching an affect other languages especially in English language	F	37	63	100	3.53			
	%	37.0	63.0	100.0				
Student can adapt to the teaching and learning environment without the use of mother tongue	F	51	49	100	2.72			
	%	51.0	49.0	100.0				

Table 1 shows that (89%) agreed that Mother tongue can alter the way student read and speak Yoruba. 81%agreed that student can be greatly affected if they use Yoruba language to explain some concept in the subject itself and not in their mother tongue. 37% concur that Permission to mother tongue in teaching can affect languages especially in English language. 51% agreed that student can adapt to the teaching and learning environment without the use of mother tongue ( $X^2 = 28.232$  and  $p=.013$ ).

**Research question 2:** Does mother tongue hinder effective communication among students in class?

**Table 2: Chi square summary on statement regarding how mother tongue hinder effective communication among students in class**

Questions	Response				Mean	df	X <sup>2</sup>	P
		SA/A A	D/S D	Total				
At times in a rural environment student find it difficult to understand some subjects without the use of mother tongue	F	71	29	100	2.87			
	%	71.0	29.0	100.0				
It is necessary for a teacher to use student mother tongue for effective communication to take place	F	66	34	100	3.35			
	%	66.0	34.0	100.0				
Student who lived in an area where they have no standard academic resource can have problems with those that have	F	94	6	100	2.97			
	%	94.0	6.0	100.0				
The use of mother tongue in school as a means of effective communication can be corrected and student will adapt to it	F	72	28	100	2.27	3	13.022	.004
	%	72.0	28.0	100.0				

Table 2: shows that (71%) agreed that at times in a rural environment student find it difficult to understand some subjects without the use of mother tongue.

29% agreed that it is necessary for a teacher to use students' mother tongue for effective communication to take place. 94% concur that student who lived in area where they have no standard academic resource can have problems with those that have. 72% agreed that the use of mother tongue in school as a means of effective communication can be corrected and student will adapt to it ( $X^2=13.022$  and  $p=.004$ ).

**Research Question 3: Does mother tongue influence students' academic performance?**

**Table 3: Chi square summary on statement regarding mother tongue influences student's performance**

Questions	Response				Mean	df		
		Yes	No	Total				
Students always have good grade in a subject that teachers use mother tongue to teach me	F	61	39	100	2.87			
	%	61.0	39.0	100.0				
The school rules does not permit frequent use of mother tongue in teaching	F	80	20	100	3.35			
	%	80.0	20.0	100.0				
Aside Yoruba language, we are not permitted to speak any other language except English.	F	65	35	100	2.97			
	%	65.0	35.0	100.0				
Explanation of subject concept in mother tongue brings about proper understanding and assimilation	F	54	46	100	2.70	4	8.236	.000
	%	54.0	46.0	100.0				

Table 3 shows that (61%) agreed that students always have good grade in an subject that teachers use mother tongue to teach me. 80% agreed that the school rules does not permit frequent use of mother tongue in teaching. 65% concur that aside Yoruba language, we are not permitted to speak any other language except English. 54% agreed that explanation of subject concept in mother tongue brings about proper understanding and assimilation ( $X^2=8.236$  and  $p=.004$ ).

**Research question 4: Does mother tongue hinder students from mastering the grammar of other languages?**

**Table 4: Chi square summary on statement regarding how mother tongue hinder students from mastering the grammar of other languages?**

Questions	Response				Mean	Df	X <sup>2</sup>	P
		S/A A	D/S D	Total				
The student use of mother tongue can affect other grammar languages	F	61	39	100	2.87			
	%	61.0	39.0	100.0				
Student who is addicted to the use of mother tongue may likely have problem to construct a simple sentence in English language	F	60	40	100	3.35			
	%	60.0	40.0	100.0				
It is better for schools to inculcate into student the school rules of language to be used right from their kindergarten, nursery, primary to university level	F	67	33	100	2.97			
	%	67.0	33.0	100.0				
Mother tongue is a reflection of what is a reflection of what has been instilled in a child from childhood or from his/her school	F	65	35	100	2.70	3	11.855	.010
	%	65.0	35.0	100.0				

Table 4 shows that (61%) agreed that the student use of mother tongue can affect grammar languages. 60%

agreed that student who is addicted to the use of mother tongue may likely have problem to construct a simple sentence in English language. 67% concur that it is better for schools to inculcate into student the school rules of language to be used right from their kindergarten, nursery, primary, to university level. 65% agreed that mother tongue is a reflection of what has been instilled in a child from childhood or from his/her school ( $X^2 = 11.855$  and  $p = .010$ ).

### Discussion of findings

The first research question shows that, mother tongue interference have impart on the writing and spoken English language among secondary school students. This is evidence in the results in table 1, it shows that, mother tongue alter the way students read and speak English. This is in line with the report of Sharman (1957) who noted that, no language can take the place of native tongue and no system of education can afford to disregard the native language without detriment to the mental development of the child. Such an unassailable premise.

The second research question reveals that, mother tongue hinder effective communication among students in class. This is evidence in the results in table 2, which states that, At times in rural environment students find it difficult to understand some subject without the use of mother tongue. This finding is in line with the report of Ogunba (2001) who argues that in a country like Nigeria, the mother tongue education is hardly feasible in real term, if pursued to its logical conclusion, he says further that, the mother tongue proposal may even destroy some of the principles the country should cherish.

The third finding shows that mother tongue influence students' academic performance. This is evidence in the result stated in students always have good grade in a subject that teachers use mother tongue to teach me. This corroborate the findings of Oladipo (1990), who stated that, 'it is undeniable for instance that there is no surer way to an adequate understanding of the nature of a thing or process than through the medium of a language whose syntactic and semantic requirements are adequately understood'.

The fourth finding shows that, mother tongue hinder students form mastering the grammar of other languages. This finding is in line with the finding of "carless (2008) who claimed that, students-working in group do not have to speak Yoruba all the time. Use of mother tongue relates to learners identity. Negative impact of mother tongue uses is that, too much reliance on the (LI) may undermine the interaction in English.

### Conclusion

Interference of Mother tongue on secondary school students' English language competence cannot be overemphasized English language being the first official language for the English people in Nigeria. However, during the process of studying it the interference of the first and original tongue interference of the first and original tongue language from birth cannot be stopped. In fact some that have mastered it, there accent still reflect when communicating.

However, this study concluded that, mother tongue interference have impact on the writing and spoken English language among secondary school students. Another finding shows that mother tongue hinders effective communication among students in class as well as mastery the English language.

### Recommendation

On the basis of the findings the following issue should be considered on improving on the influence of mother tongue in the teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools:

- Students should be oriented on the importance of maintaining mother in learning like China, Germany etc...
- Parents should be encouraged to help in promoting first and second languages
- Principal and school management should try to introduce the use of mother tongue in school to aid preservation of other languages.
- Policy makers should make plans that will favour the use of Nigeria languages for teaching and learning in our secondary schools.

### References

- Adebite and Akindele (2005). The sociology and politics of English language in Nigeria, Ife OAU press.
- Ajulo, O.J. (2008). The influence of two Languages of instruction on students' level of cognitive achievement in science. *Journal of research in science teaching*. Vol.17, No. 49, 283-287.
- Akindele, E. N. (1999): Nigerian Language policy: Perspective and Prospective. In; *Fafunwa Foundation Internet Journal of Education*. 1998.
- Akinbote, Rufus Olusegun and V.I. Irogbo, (2003). "Effect of three modes of Teaching Reading on Primary School Pupils Achievement in English Comprehension". *Evaluation Research*, 1(3): 38-45
- Aziza J.A.F. (1998): Educational Research Project (1970-1976), Ibadan, University Press Limited.

- Bamgbose, A. (2011) *Language and the Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Carless, A. (2008): The effect of a mother tongue Yoruba on academic achievement of primary five pupils of the six year Yoruba primary project. June 1978. Evolution University of Ife, Ile-Ife.
- Fafunwa, A., Macauley, J. & Soyinka, (eds) (1989) *Education in Mother Tongue*. The Ife Primary Education Research Project (1970-1978). Ibadan: University Press.
- Farinde and Ojo (2001). *An overview of Educational Issues in Nigeria: Thoughts and Reflections*.
- Gimson, B. (ed) (2000) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 14<sup>th</sup> ed. Dallas: SIL International. [www.ethnologue.com/web.asp](http://www.ethnologue.com/web.asp)
- Green, A.O. (1997): *Teaching Physics in Yoruba. An innovative Strategy to Enhance Students' Achievement in Olarewaju*, A.O. (ed) *Proceedings of Ajumogobia Memorial Conference* 246-251.
- Hair B. (2010). *Use of mother tongue vital, studies show*. The Nation Bangkok Published on November, 15, 2010.
- Hanna K. (1998). *The Six-Year Primary Project in Nigeria*. In Bamgbose, A. (ed.) *Mother Tongue Educational: The West African Experience*. London: UNESCO, Hodder & Stoughton Educational.
- Lado, R. (1957). *Linguistics across cultures. Applied linguistics for language teachers*. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.
- Mattioli, O. (2004). *Parents' Characteristics and Attitudes towards the Use of Mother-Tongue as a medium of Instruction in Primary Education*. *The Beagle* 1, (1&2), 40-45
- National Policy on Education (1977). Abuja, Nigeria.
- Ogunba T. (2001). *Homework made and Parental Involvement in Homework as Determinants of Primary School Pupils Learning Outcomes in Ibadan North*, Ibadan. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Teachers Education, University of Ibadan. XIX + 313pp.
- Ojo, J.K. (2005). *Students' problems in English reading comprehension (ECR): some observations and research findings*. *Nigeria Journal of Educational Studies and Research (NJESR)*, 5 (1); 25-29.
- Oladipo, A. (1990). *Trends in the Performance of Students in Yoruba Language at SSCE Unpublished M.Ed. project*, Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan.
- Olagoke, A. (1981). "The co-existence of English and Nigerian Language".
- Ross, D. (2000). *English Language Teaching: An Integrated Approach*. Ibadan Spectrum Books Limited. The impact of mother tongues on students'
- Sharman, D. (1957). *English Language Teaching: An Integrated Approach*. Ibadan Spectrum Books Limited.