

Mother-Tongue Interference on English Language Pronunciation of Senior Primary School Pupils in Nigeria: Implications for Pedagogy

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Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 13:8 August 2013
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Abstract

This is a theoretical paper which highlights the interference of mother-tongue on the English pronunciation of senior primary school pupils in Nigeria. The Nigeria Policy on Education stipulates that it is at this level pupils encounter English as a medium of learning for the ‘first time’. Of each of the listed 521 local languages listed, each community has its own peculiar challenges in this aspect of second language learning. In this paper however, only four languages from the current figure were studied; these are Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Tiv. Attempt is made by studying some common errors of these set of second language learners from the languages stated, implications for pedagogy stressed and some steps of remedial drills suggested which can be of use to teachers of English language at the target level in correcting and possible reduction of the effects of mother-tongue interference.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is said to be the giant of Africa because of its dense population, vast land, economy, mineral and natural resources (crude oil, tin, coal, and cocoa), education, and so on. It is a federal constitutional republic comprising thirty-six states and one Federal Capital Territory – Abuja. The three largest and most influential ethnic groups are the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. At the last census in 2006 it was estimated that Nigeria’s population is about one hundred and fifty million (150million). There has been a rapid growth in the population from the last statistics of July 2012, estimated at 170,123,740 (CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, 2013). Nigeria was a pioneer in the movement for African independence. In the past centuries, its territory was home to a series of powerful and technically-advanced societies, renowned for their artistic, commercial, and political achievements. The official language of the country is English and covers almost all areas, e.g., education, government, commerce and industry, media and so on (Wikipedia, 2010).

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Of this population, it is assumed that 30 million are students. The country provides free, government-supported education, but attendance is not compulsory at any level, and certain groups, such as nomads and handicapped, are under-served. The education system consists of six years of primary, three years of junior secondary school (equivalent to the 7th, 8th and 9th Grade respectively), three years of senior secondary school (equivalent to 10th, 11th and 12th Grade) and four years of university education (6-3-3-4) (Wikipedia, 2010).

Literature Review

Language

We are in a world of language. Hardly will a moment pass in our lives without the use of language to communicate with each other. Whatever people do when they meet, whether they fight, play, share love, they have to talk. We talk to colleagues, friends, enemies, students, some form of language is definitely used. Every day of our lives we are not free from words as we talk face-to-face, telephone, in our dreams or even alone when there is no one to answer. Language is equally a medium of communication within the family and society. Every tongue expresses the culture of the society to the complete satisfaction of its members.

The language an individual speaks is for him or her, the most expressive and the most beautiful of all languages (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2007). Several psychological studies have been proved that language is not only a product of human life it is the prerequisite of it. Or in other words, human beings require a human relationship to survive (sample is the experiment by Friedrich the second of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250) in Wikipedia, 2009).

This is one basic reason why language is central to learning and life itself (Boyer, 1996). This may explain why it is said that the success of language education is generally the success of education. And it is equally true that educational failure is basically a linguistic failure. Language, therefore, is not just one of the subjects in the curriculum; it is the essential vehicle for learning all other subjects in Nigerian schools (Oyetunde, and Muodumogu, 1999).

Language Policy in Nigeria

It is a futile effort to talk about education without discussing its tool, which is language. Whether formal, non-formal or informal, education is imparted through the medium of language. In the formal educational system school subjects are coded via the means of language. Teachers teach through it, and pupils or students learn through it. Actually, language does not only serve as a medium of instruction in the school; it also exists as a subject taught through language.

Like most African countries, Nigeria is multilingual. There were about 400 languages—not dialects—and three of these languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, are spoken by about half of

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the population of the country. In addition, some fraction of the population is made up of other languages that are nevertheless able to speak at least one of the major languages as an additional language. The next in numbers and importance to the three major languages are about ten main languages that serve as the principal languages of some states. Such languages include Kanuri, Ibibio, Efik, Tiv, Ijaw, Edo, Fulfulde, Urhobo, Nupe, and Igala. We may as well conclude that there are three functional types of languages in Nigeria: major languages at national level, main languages at state level, and small-group languages that function mainly at the local level. English has come to stay in Nigeria as the official language and has even taken the place of the national languages (Bamgbose, 1994).

By 2005, however, the number of Nigerian local languages listed is 521. Of those, 510 are living languages, 2 are second language without mother-tongue speakers, and 9 are extinct (Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005). English is the medium of instruction after the first three years of the primary school straight into the tertiary institution. It is taught as a subject as well as using the language to teach all other school subjects. The three national languages are also taught according to regions in the junior secondary school, at the senior secondary students are expected to study one of the major languages as an elective. At the tertiary level however, students have the choice of studying any of the languages as a major (NPE, 2004).

The Place of English Language in Nigeria

The introduction of English was a product of evangelical expediency, in which missionaries passed the language baton to colonial administrators until English became the official language of the country. It is noted that even after political independence from the colonial masters, English still occupies pride of place in Nigeria, especially in the formal school system.

The fact that Nigeria is a multilingual country with many local languages stated above, with the constitution and National Policy on Education laying emphasis on three major Nigerian languages, the importance of English language in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized being the official language. It is the language of the mass media, judiciary, administration and commerce; it is the language of science and education. For example, it is extensively used in the electronic and print media, police administration, and in the armed forces, legislature and so on, and as a lingua franca in political mobilization, ethical orientation and population education. This confirms the entrenchment of English as a dominant language of Nigeria (Oluwole, 2008).

Amuseghan (2007) summed up the place of English language that for most learners, English is a second language. It becomes expedient to provide conducive environment for them at each educational level to make a way of improvement in the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). To determine the success or otherwise of the aims, goals, objectives,

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methods and materials of English curriculum, a study of the mass accumulation of the four skills as well as different levels (phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, lexis and semantics) is an evitable task. Most ESL curriculum reforms over the years have sought to balance between linguistic competence and communicative competence. Contrary to this expectation, communicative competence is lacking in most Nigerian school children.

A Restricted Code

Texts, methods and contents are some contributory factors. Amuseghan (2007) further made reference to Obanya (2002: 207) that the socio-linguistic realities, are however different in that English is really a restricted code language in the Nigerian setting, even in school premises. Therefore, the challenge posed in this situation has become one of the greatest areas of concern in our educational system in recent times, particularly in secondary and tertiary institutions, which witness remarkable decline in both communicative and linguistic competence of the learners of English. The situation at the secondary school level is that in which the motivation is to pass English and not to master it. However, in the real sense of communicative situation, the ability to understand a language and to produce it in actual communication is not the same as meeting a descriptive standard which examination-oriented English curriculum emphasizes. This is because actual language use involves many varieties of knowledge, which no one has ever attempted to squeeze into textbooks or grammars (Amuseghan, 2007).

Importance of English Language Acquisition as a Stepping Stone

The importance of English language acquisition as a stepping stone for proficiency in other school subjects cannot be overemphasized. The knowledge is important for educational, economical and national development (Oluwole, 2008). The importance has further been emphasized because, through the use of English language, improving communication among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria can be ensured. The need to improve the quality of spoken and written English language among school children is further emphasized (Salami, 2002 as cited in Oluwole, 2008).

One educational problem that has caught public interest recently is the poor achievement of students in public examination especially in subjects like Mathematics, English and science. This poor level of achievement maybe attributed to poor foundation at the primary level. Several research reports have supported the view that language inefficiency invariably leads to poor academic performance (Ayodele, 1988; Ivowi, Okebukola and Oladotun, 1992; Falayajo, 1997; Kolawole, 1998; kolawole and Dele 2002 cited in Oluwole, 2008).

Mother-tongue and Its Importance

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 13:8 August 2013

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Mother-tongue is the first language acquired by a child and it is successfully used for communication at that level. It is not the language of a child's mother as wrongly defined by some people, Mother in this context probably originated from the definition of mother as a source, or origin; as in mother-country or- land. It also describe as a first language (also native language, mother-tongue, arterial language, or L1) is the language a human being learns from birth. A person's first language is a basis for sociolinguistic identity. Language as a human institution presupposes communication. Individuals who are mute or deaf must learn how to speak by using sign language. One characteristic of language is finding names for objects and persons within the child's reach, so it is possible for a child to grasp, repeat and understand the world.

One's mother-tongue makes it possible for a child to take part in the knowledge of the social work. Another impact of the mother-tongue is that it brings about the reflection and learning of successful social patterns of acting and speaking. It is basically responsible for differentiating the linguistic competence of acting. But there are also many people who prefer to speak and communicate in their second language because their mother tongue might be very limited and does not provide a large number of words or expressions. Language is a medium of communication within the family and society. Every tongue expresses the culture of society to the complete satisfaction of its members. The language an individual speaks is for him or her most expressive and often the most beautiful of all languages (Wikipedia, 2009).

Mother-tongue is of immense importance to the educational foundation of learners. The Nigerian National Policy on Education stipulates that from Pre-Primary to the first three years of Primary education, mother-tongue should be the medium of communication or language of the immediate community (NPE, 2004). This is because the background experience is needed to make learning conducive for learners. Senadeera (2006) further supported with the reasons discussed below:

I. Communication

By participation in activities organized around the use of the mother-tongue, learners will acquire communication skills in the language that will enable them to widen their networks of interpersonal relations. It will enable the learners to use their mother-tongue to establish and maintain good relationships with family members (especially grandparents) and relatives.

II. Cultural Identity

Learners will develop an understanding of the culture of the mother-tongue language and they can use it as base for comparison with other cultures. They will thus develop an appreciation of the validity of different ways of perceiving and encoding experiences and of organizing interpersonal relations to reach a deeper appreciation of their own personal identity

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and values. Through mother-tongue children learn the everyday life patterns of their contemporary age-group, cultural traditional social conventions, historical roots, relationships with other cultures, cultural achievements, current events and regional and geographical concepts, historical evidence of civilization in different countries including their own. The children who have a cultural identity learn to stand the pressure from peer group of different cultures in schools, work places and society. This is further supported by other researchers that mother-tongue not only helps children to preserve and value their culture but to develop it lexically. According to these authors the use of English in the early primary school makes the average primary school child to be sufficiently in either mother- tongue or English.

These researchers believe that a citizen that is literate even only in the mother-tongue will be equipped to live in the fast changing world. So if permanent literacy is to be promoted in the primary schools, the use of the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction in schools should be encouraged (Akinbote and Ogunsanwo, 2003 as cited in Oluwole, 2008). The same author further highlighted the importance of the child's mother-tongue because it categorizes a large part of his environment, that is, it has names for most objects, actions, ideas, attributes and so on that are so important to him, as well as to any society. The mother-tongue is the child's environment and is the natural basis on which verbal skills can be built, children learn through communicating in a language, which they understood.

III. Cultural Heritage

Languages are a means of transmitting the cultural traditions of ethnic groups to the second and later generations. Therefore, by learning the mother-tongue it will prevent total disappearance of certain languages and cultures in the world. The children will gain knowledge and understanding of a range of subject matter related to their needs, interest and aspirations, as well as to other areas of their formal learning. The learning of mother tongue will provide an individual the right to study his/her mother-tongue and culture. This will also preserve family bonds and lessening of cultural conflicts between generations. Learning mother-tongue may be an avenue for occupation of translator, interpreter, or similar occupational pursuit, as well as useful in trade and commerce. Bilingualism assists the child's general intellectual and conceptual development as well.

Research has shown that children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother-tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. When quality time is spent with children telling stories or discussing issues with them in a way that develops their mother-tongue vocabulary and concepts, children come to school equipped to learn the school language and succeed educationally. Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages from the mother-tongue they have learned in the home to the school language (Cummins, 2003).

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To further strengthen this fact, Krashen (2004) stated that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the English language. For example, if a child has developed good reading skills in Korean, she/he is likely able to apply these skills when reading English. Your children will learn English much more effectively if they continue to develop their first language at the same time. Brown (2006) argues that using the mother-tongue, we have learned to think, learned to communicate and acquired an intuitive understanding of grammar. The mother-tongue opens the door not only to its own grammar, but to all grammars, in as much as it awakens the potential for universal grammar that lies within all of us...For this reason, the mother is the master key to foreign languages, the tool which gives us the fastest, surest, most precise, and most complete means of accessing a foreign language.

Mother-tongue Interference on English Language

Pronunciation

From the foregoing so far, the importance of mother-tongue in the learning of English cannot be overemphasized. Language is said to be universal so these issues are not peculiar to Nigerian context, it is therefore necessary to tackle the issue of interference to bring a free flow from mother-tongue to the learning of English among children.

Errors may occur due the fact that some of the English sounds are not found in their mother-tongue. It has rightly been observed that in the first language learning, the learner is highly motivated and is surrounded by a conducive linguistics environment, the kind that the second language lacks. This implies that though language learning is generally difficult, second language learning has greater problems which results in the greater number of errors in performance of second language users (Onuigbo, 1984 cited in Aladeyomi and Adetunde, 2007).

Bhelda (1999) opined that in as much as the second language learning environment encompasses everything the language learner hears and sees in the new language, the learner's goal is the mastery of the target language. The learner begins the learning task of learning a second language from point zero (or close to it) and, through the steady accumulation of the mastered entities of the target language, eventually amasses them in quantities sufficient to constitute a particular level of proficiency. L1 interference when speaking or writing in a second language is generally a lifelong experience which needs continues attention, sometimes even up to adulthood the lexical stress patterns of their mother-tongue in their second language (English) oral production, are not shaken off in spite of years of teaching and listening.

Interference can be identified according to regional variations in Nigeria, especially, in phonology and lexis. Certain pronunciations are identified with members of an ethnic group and when all the markers of the group's accents are present in a particular speaker, one can be fairly certain that the speaker in question is a member of that ethnic group by birth or upbringing, or

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both. So, it is easy to identify Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Hausa speakers, just a few out of about 400 languages in Nigeria (Idowu, 1999).

Onike (2009) posited that interference is a psycho-linguistic concept which is a reality in language learning. Errors in second language learning are partly attributable to interference. Theorists of interference believe that acquisition of the first language usually affects performance in subsequent language acquired. Interference as a linguistic problem is common in communities where second languages (usually the lingua franca) must be learnt. In other words, interference is a term which refers to a situation whereby two different languages overlap. Interference is either positive or negative transfer of the linguistic knowledge of a language into performance in the other. Negative transfer pertains to difficulties in using the target language which are mainly attributed to mother -tongue interference. Positive transfer however implies the ease or facilitation in learning the L 2 resulting from similarities between the L 1 and L 2.

Two types of interference can be distinguished.

The first type is the proactive interference. This is an interference phenomenon that helps in the acquisition of the target or subordinate language. For instance, the presence of certain consonants and vowels in Nigeria indigenous languages facilitate the acquisition of such similar sounds of the English language. Such sounds include bilabial plosive voiced /b/, voiceless alveolar plosive /t/, /d/ as well as short vowels such as /i/, /u/, and /e/.

The other type of interference is the retroactive type; this type retards the process of the acquisition of the target language. According to Bamgbose (1971), most of the phonetic characteristics in the English of Nigerians can be traced back to the transfer features from their local languages (see some examples below).

Yoruba

Yoruba people are one of the largest ethnic groups in West Africa. The majority of the Yoruba speak the language which is said to be a tonal language just like Igbo and Chinese. The Yoruba constitute 30 million individuals throughout West Africa and are found predominantly in Nigeria with approximately 21 percent of its total population.

Yoruba live in Western part of Nigeria, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Kwara, Kogi states as well as Edo. There are also substantial indigenous Yoruba in the Republic of Benin, Togo Jamaica, Brazil, Bahamas Ghana USA ,Guyana to mention a few (Wikipedia, 2009).

Phonetically sounds such as the voiced labiodentals /v/ and the voiceless fricative /f/ which are present in English but are absent in Yoruba for instance make it difficult for Yoruba to

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acquire the English sounds. Similarly, the lack of long vowels in Yoruba hinders the acquisition of long vowels in English by Yoruba English bilingual. It is difficult at times for these learners to distinguish between such words sit, /sIt/ and seat /si:t/. Also, there are some sounds in English language which the Yoruba Language does not have e.g. /z/ /tS/ sounds. The short voiceless bilabial plosive /p/, voiceless and voiced labiodentals fricative /f/ and /v/ and the long vowels /i:/, /u:/ and /o:/, etc., in Yoruba, for instance, makes it difficult for Yoruba English bilingual to acquire such sounds.

A Yoruba speaker is likely to pronounce Zoo as (Soo), while, champion and child are pronounced as /Shampion/ and /Saild/ because of the /z/ and /tS/ sounds. Thus, some Yoruba-English bilingual will produce pat' as /kpt/, fever' as /fifa/ and think' as /tink/. Also they generally nasalize English vowels, which are preceded by nasal consonants, for example, they pronounce /morin/ instead of /monig/ for the word 'morning' because of the absence of velar nasal voiced /g/. /feri/ instead of /veri/ for the word 'very' etc. All these according to (Idowu, 1999) are due to the fact that the phonemes /m/, /v/, /o/, /d/ etc are not present in Yoruba phonology; so they tend to replace these sounds with others that are near to them in Yoruba phonology.

Hausa

Hausa is the largest ethnic group in the Northern, Southeastern Niger of Nigeria with an approximate population of 15 million. They are surrounded by some neighboring peoples like Kanuri, Fulani, Akan, Songhai and Yoruba. There are also large numbers found in northern Ghana, Benin, Cameroon and smaller communities scattered throughout West Africa. They speak the Hausa language that belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language group found in Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Jigawa, Bauchi, Adamawa, states. Kano is considered the center of Hausa trade and culture (Online Nigeria, 2010).

Hausa speakers of English tend to replace bilabial voiceless stop /p/ with labiodentals fricatives voiceless /f/ and vice versa, for example, 'problem', 'pyramid', 'pot', 'paper', 'people' and so on. They tend to pronounce /frobblem/, /firamid/, /fot/, /fefa/, /fi:fl/. They also tend to insert a vowel between a syllable-final consonant and initial consonant of 'an' immediately following a syllable. For instance, /rezigineisn/ instead of /rezigneSn/ for the word 'resignation'. In the same way, Hausa speakers of English replace the interdental fricatives voiced and voiceless /θ/ and /ð/ alveolar voiced and voiceless with /s/ and /z/ when pronouncing words like, 'thin' 'the', 'these', 'that' as shown here, /sin/, /ze/, /zis/, /zat/ and they are also prone to interchanging the bilabial voiced /b/ and the labiodentals /v/ in words like 'ban' and 'boat' which they pronounce as follows 'van' and 'voat'

Igbo

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Igbo people, also referred to as Ibo, are an ethnic group living chiefly southeastern and south Nigeria. They are among the largest and most influential ethnic groups in Nigeria. Igbo is a tonal language, like Yoruba and Chinese. There are hundreds of different dialects and Igbo languages in the Igbo language, such as the Ikwerre and Ekpeye. The Igbo in Nigeria are found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Delta and Rivers States. The *CIA World Fact* book puts their population between 24 and 25 million. They are equally found in Diaspora in countries like Gabon, Canada, United Kingdom and United States (Wikipedia, 2009).

Igbo speakers of English, even some well-educated ones, tend to transfer vowel system of their language into English. They usually pronounce /folo/ for the word follow instead of /folw/ because of the sequence of /o/ and /o/ in two successive syllables is not permissible in Igbo. Some are fond of replacing the interdental fricative voiceless /θ/ as in ‘thin’, ‘think’ with alveolar voiceless /t/ ‘tin’, ‘tink’. Also, in a research carried by Aladeyomi and Adetunde, (2007) on Newscasters from the different zones in Nigeria, the Igbo speakers always substituted the vowel sound /e/ for /I/ words like, ‘presented’, ‘headed’ are pronounced as /prizentid/, /hedid/ instead of /prizented/, /heded/ and so on.

Tiv

The Tivs are an ethno-linguistic group in West Africa. They constitute approximately 2.5% of Nigeria’s total population. The Tiv traditional language is spoken by over six million people in Nigeria, with a few speakers in Cameroon. Most of the language’s Nigerian speakers are found in Benue State of Nigeria. The language is also wide spoken in the Nigerian States of Plateau, Taraba, Nasarawa as well as the FCT Abuja (Wikipedia, 2009).

Tivs are known for their inability to use the alveolar liquid (voiced), lateral /l/ and retroflex /r/ consonants when speaking English appropriately because these do not occur in their language, and these sounds are always presented in the reverse order interchangeably. For instance, ‘ruler, road, rubber, reach, radio’, and so on are pronounced thus, /lula/, /lod/, /loba/, /litS/, /ledio/.

Implications

The implications of English as a second language in Nigeria need to be highlighted. It should not be taken for granted that the teachers of English language are aware of their responsibilities in the teaching and learning of the subject as it relates to instructional goals.

The target of this paper is the senior primary school pupils because the National Policy on Education has clearly stated that from Kindergarten and first three years of primary education, mother tongue or language of the immediate community should be the medium of instruction. As already discussed in the foregoing, the use of English as the medium of instruction begins from

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the fourth year of primary through the tertiary level. The implementation of this section has been frustrated as only children who attend the Government public primary schools are subjected to this policy. Most elite parents take their wards to private school right from Kindergarten where instruction is English, of course proprietor cannot do otherwise since parents pay exorbitant fees.

The fact is that it is not the length of time one learns English but how well. The mistake is that it is assumed that every primary school teacher knows how to teach English well. But this is not always true: some primary school teachers have very poor spoken and written English. An approach that provides for specialist teachers of English alongside teachers for other subjects taught in the mother tongue has been shown to provide excellent results in terms of mastery of both English and the mother tongue (Bamgbose, 1994).

Of utmost importance is the fact that English needs to be taught and learned very well. According to Tiffen (1969, p.14 in Oyetunde and Muodumogu, 1999), "It is a question of ensuring that pupils have a complete mastery of the language, an ability to use it which is almost second to nature." It is important to point out that English is not the mother-tongue of any ethnic group in Nigeria, and this means that its teaching in schools is not a question of refining an already known language. Over 95% of Nigerian children depend on school to learn English. The great implication here is the need to give priority to the development of oral language competence.

The way English is taught in schools has come under criticism by some researchers. Ubahakwe (1991), Ohia (1997) and Duff (1997) cited in Oluwole (2008) had criticized the traditional teaching strategies used in English classrooms. Oglan (1997) cited in Oluwole (2008) had also criticized the domineering nature of traditional teaching strategy which renders learners passive in class. The latter therefore, recommended an activity classroom where learners especially at the primary level, can make learning a fun. This is actually in agreement with the current pedagogical issues being encouraged.

Remedial Drills

Remedial drills are discussed below in view of the fact that the senior primary pupils in Nigeria are supposed to be coming in contact with English language at a zero or near zero level. They are therefore, subject to make errors especially in their oral production of sounds, words, sentences and so on. According to the nature of the mother tongue interference in relation to the language in use in that particular environment, sample drills are suggested. In this study only four languages were sampled, that is, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Tiv. The focus here is to give pupils the ample opportunity to do the oral production of some difficult sounds in different ways.

I. Sounds in Isolation

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The teacher writes out the sounds on the blackboard or large cardboard paper and pastes it on the wall of the classroom. The teacher gives the pupils all assistance needed and opportunity to keep trying until the correction in their pronunciation of the sounds are made.

Examples:

Yoruba----- /f/ /v/ /i:/ /u:/ /o:/ /tS/ /S/ /z/ /s/ /p/ /0/ /g/ /p/
 Hausa----- /p/ /f/ /0/ /z/
 Igbo----- /oo/ /0/ /e/ /i/
 Tiv----- /l/ /r/

II. Words in Minimal Pairs

The teacher takes the drill a step higher by preparing sets of words in minimal pairs with the controversial sounds for pupils to carry out oral drills for as long as the difficulty is being experienced by them.

Examples:

Yoruba-- /f/ /v/	ferry-----very
/l/ /i:/	bid-----bead
/u/ /u:/	full-----fool
/o/ /o:/	bud-----board
/t/ /0/	tin-----thin
/g/ /n/	morning-----money
/tS/ /S/	chop-----shop
Hausa-- /p/ /f/	pat-----fat
/b/ /v/	ban-----van
/0/ /s/	thin-----sin

/d/ /z/ these-----zeal

Igbo-- /θ/ /t/ think-----tin

/d/ /d/ that-----dart

/e/ /I/ headed-----tidy

/o/ /oo/ flow-----follow

Tiv-- /r/ /l/ rubber-----lobby

Ran-----land

Leech-----reach

Loss-----Rose

III. Sounds in Sentences

The teacher writes several sentences with the identified sounds inclusive, pupils are also given opportunity to make sentences for future analysis. Pupils practice with or without teacher's assistance.

Examples:

Yoruba-- Bose was very lucky to get on the ferry today.

Mr. Daniel is bringing that money this morning.

I took some shirts to the church this afternoon.

Hausa-- I think that tin will be okay now.

The van carried the maize for storage in the ban.

Is it a sin to be thin?

Igbo-- The news reporter presented his written work in a tidy manner.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 13:8 August 2013

Judith Makse Patrick, Ph.D. Scholar, Professor Mingcai Sui, Ph.D., Banenat Didam, M.Ed.

Student and Theresa Stephen Gyang, Ph.D. Scholar

Mother-Tongue Interference on English Language Pronunciation of Senior Primary School Pupils in Nigeria: Implications for Pedagogy

The dart that tailor had sewn was wrong.

The flow of water the river follows the same pattern.

Tiv-- The nasty leech even reach the boy's eyes.

John found the rubber in the lobby.

Ladi is listening to her small radio.

IV. Sounds in Rhymes

For the sake of creativity and variety teacher make up rhymes with the different sounds in various positions. The idea here is not pecked on grammar but the ability to produce the difficult sounds simultaneously.

Examples:

Yoruba

Farmer found feeds in father Fabian's ferry father Fabian is ferrying the ferryboat to ferrymen to fetch fertilizer.

Hausa

Peacemakers pamper pacifiers who are pacesetters pacifiable to use paper as pad

Igbo

Floodwater follow floodway to the flowing river following it as it flows into flowing sea

Tiv

Welcome lobby lions who are strong rubber radio Makurdi calling as they run like rabbits to play football

V. Sounds in Passage

The teacher can compile various sentences pupils are produced into short passages which can be pasted in the News on the Board corner for subsequent class practices or individually.

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This is regardless of the relationship between the sentences, just for the fun of free participation in class activities.

Sample Passage:

Good morning Mr. John! This is going to be a very busy day because we have to raise the money to buy that van. The secretary will have to pick my child from school and take him to the zoo. I hope the messenger has handed in his resignation letter as discussed; he is too lazy to work in this office. Oh! Can you give me that ruler and the radio too? Tomorrow is Sunday; I will be in church the whole day.

Conclusion

Mother-tongue has been identified as a panacea for the acquisition of L2 in Nigeria, which for majority senior primary school pupils it is English language. Therefore, its importance should not be underestimated. This paper recommends that teachers of English language should be dedicated and patient in handling these children in developing their speaking skill as a foundation.

Teachers should make effort in designing children friendly activities in class as regards to remedial drills in correcting errors transferred from mother-tongue according to the need of the ethnic group of an environment. This is in line with what Oglan 1997 cited in Oluwole (2008) stressed that an activity classroom where learners especially at the primary school level, aiming to make learning fun should be encouraged.



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