

Language Attitude and Speaking Efficiency of the Ìgbò Second Language (L₂) Learners on Acculturation Programme at the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN)

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Abstract

This study assessed the language attitude and the speaking efficiency of the Ìgbò second language learners on acculturation programme at NINLAN, Aba. It identified the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students on acculturation programme. It also compared the *Mean* speaking achievement scores between the Ìgbò L₂ learners with integrative and instrumental attitudes as well as the *Mean* achievement scores between the Ìgbò L₂ male and female students. A sample size of 68 participants was drawn by purposive sampling technique from about 100 students on the programme. The instruments used for data collection were researcher- designed language attitudes questionnaire (LAQ) and Speaking Efficiency Test (SETs). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of *Simple Percentages*, *Mean* and *Standard Deviation* for research questions while hypotheses were tested using *T-Test* analysis. The results showed that neither attitude nor sex influenced the speaking efficiency of the Ìgbò L₂ students. The paper concludes by recommending that the Ìgbò second language learners should develop sound and critical attitudes towards the target language and culture. Also, the male Ìgbò L₂ learners should do away with the stereotype that language study is a career for the females. For those who learn a second language for academic purposes like the Ìgbò L₂ students, a combination of integrative and instrumental attitudes would produce greater results.

1. Introduction

The European Missionaries made early discoveries that an African child was best taught in his mother tongue. This fact was reinforced by the discoveries and reports of the Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1922 (Osokoya, 1987:65). However, it took several decades for Nigerian elites to shake off the fallacy that it was more prestigious to train Nigerian

children in English than in their mother tongues especially as Nigeria, by virtue of colonization is an Anglo-phone nation. The European and the Phelps-Stokes' discoveries were only translated into reality in 1977. The Government of Nigeria recognized the importance of language in the educational process, in fostering national unity and cultural integration. Government made language stipulations as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1977, revised 1981, 2004, 2013).

The language policies of the NPE gave birth to language education in Nigerian education system. The NPE provides for mother tongue (MT) or language of the immediate community (LIC) medium of Instruction at the first three years of primary education. At this stage also, both the MT/LIC and English are taught as school subjects. The NPE stipulates for English medium of instruction from Primary four. Government also has chosen Hausa, Ìgbò and Yorùbá to be national languages. In giving reality to government's intentions to bridge linguistic and cultural gap, government made the second indigenous language policy which stipulates that "at the Junior secondary, a child learns one national indigenous language in addition to his/her mother tongue; subject to availability of teachers" (NPE, 2004:17). It is against this backdrop that government sought ways to resolve the teacher challenge and so established the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) Aba, primarily to produce Nigerian languages' teachers at first and second languages levels. Corroborating the efforts of NINLAN, the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), the regulatory body for Colleges of Education in Nigeria, mounted second indigenous language programme for the three national languages to produce NCE teachers of these languages who would teach the languages in the absence of trained native speakers. So, Hausa, Ìgbò and Yorùbá are taught as second indigenous Language in about sixteen Colleges of Education in Nigeria. For the NCE second language (L₂) learners, the NCCE stipulates a minimum of twelve weeks acculturation programme at designated centers of acculturation. The acculturation programme is a minimum requirement for graduation in the NCE L₂ programme. The designated acculturation centers are: NINLAN, Aba for Ìgbò L₂, Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo for Yorùbá L₂ and Federal College of Education, Kano for Hausa L₂.

Second language is any language learned after the first language or mother tongue. The term second language is used to describe any language whose acquisition starts after early childhood (including what may be the third or subsequent languages learned). The language to be learned is usually referred to as target language or L₂ compared to the first language L₁. (Krashen, 1982). Krashen distinguishes between second language learning and second language acquisition. The former, he describes as, 'a conscious learning of a language through formal instruction, where learners engage in formal study to acquire knowledge of the target language's grammar, knowing the rule and being able to talk about them while the latter he sees as a subconscious process where people acquire language by speaking the language naturally in daily interaction with others who speak their native

language, just the way a child learns a language. The NCE Ìgbò L₂ students fit into the conscious learners of the L₂.

Attitude has been defined by Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, (2000), 'as the opinions and feelings that one usually has about something or towards someone'. It is also seen as 'the way one behaves towards a particular situation'. Attitude has been further viewed as a person's inclination to respond favourably or otherwise with respect to an object. Affective factors have usually been acknowledged to play an important role in second language learning ie speed of learning and eventually second language achievement. Among the affective factors mentioned are attitude, motivation and personality, (Krashen 1982, Krashen 1988 in paula 2006).

Renzo (1982), states that attitude is a motivational factor generated by context and that motivation and attitude play an important role in all situations which are not natural, such as learning a second language or foreign language. People have attitudes, feelings or beliefs about language in general, their language and the language of other people. People may feel low about an unwritten language as though it is not a real language; feel shame when other people hear their language. People may uphold the stereotype that they can only know, study and use one language apparently the national language which they consider the best language for expressing patriotism, language of public administration, the one that will offer job opportunities and the best chance of improving one's or the children's future. Attitude is a construct. It therefore cannot be observed directly but are demonstrated through actual behavior such as liking for the language, speakers of the language and the culture of the owners of the language. Language attitude can also be demonstrated through how people treat speakers of other languages such as avoidance or acceptance, people's desire to or not to learn another language, convergence and divergence dispositions towards one's speech to mention but a few.

Language attitudinal studies help in identifying how people of one language group views the personal character and the social status of speakers of the another language as well as how they form associations about other languages. Some language attitudes studies are confined to attitudes towards the language itself but Fasold (1984) opines that the concept of language attitude should be broadened to cover attitudes towards speakers of a particular language. According to him attitudes are crucial to language growth, decay, restoration or destruction. The status and the importance of a language in the society and within an individual derives mainly from adopted or learnt attitudes. Baker (1988) elucidates that attitudes are learned predispositions, not inherited and are likely to be relatively stable with the tendency to persist. He stressed that attitudes can be affected by experience. Attitudes are also important variable in bilingualism and multilingualism. Attitudes are complex constructs with positive and negative feelings attached especially in language learning. Spolsky (1990) explains that, 'attitude does not have direct influence on learning, but lead to motivation which does'. Therefore, attitude relates to achievement

through motivation, that is, the learner's positive attitude leads to the development of high motivation, which correlates with proficiency. Hence, attitude and motivation are simultaneously studied, (Paula, 2006).

Motivation is defined as, 'those factors that energize behaviour and give it direction'. When studying language attitudes, the notion of motives is crucial. Although, several types of motivation have been identified but Gardner and Lambert in Paula (2006) identified two basic motives. They draw distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation presupposes a positive attitude towards the speakers and the culture whereas instrumental motivation is related to practical considerations (such as, get a job, pass an examination) which stimulate the learner's activity. If L₂ learning is instrumental, the knowledge in a language is considered as a passport to prestige and success. Conversely, if a learner wishes to identify with the target community, to learn the target language and the culture of the speakers of that language in order to be able to become a member of the group, the motivation is integrative. In a nutshell, integrative attitude is an attitude which is characterized with some desire and behaviours of the learners to integrate themselves with the language being learned. Learners with this attitude not only learn a language and become proficient in it, but also wish to know, imitate, or adapt themselves to the culture related to the (native) speakers of the language. While instrumental attitude is identified when the learners learn a language in order to fulfill only material needs, but have no need of being part of the culture related to the language. Students who are less motivated in practicing the language outside the classroom are often less interested in understanding the culture of the native speakers of the language. Vistawide's (2004), list of some instrumental purposes of L₂ and foreign language learning address the following:

1. increase global understanding;
2. improve employment potential;
3. increase native language ability;
4. sharpen cognitive and life skills;
5. improve chances of entry into college or graduate school;
6. appreciate international (national) literature, music and films;
7. make travel more feasible and enjoyable;
8. expand study outside one's community options;
9. increase understanding of oneself and one's own culture;
10. make lifelong friends.

Also, community attitudes towards the language being learned can have a profound impact on Second language learning. Where the community has broadly negative view of the target language and its speakers or a negative view of its relation to them, learning of such language is typically much more difficult. Again, attitude of parents towards language study can affect L₂ learning among learners. Since attitude cannot be measured directly, the

assessment of language attitudes requires asking such questions not only about language but about other aspects of life. The following attitudinal information was sought from the participants:

1. I love Ìgbò people ()
2. I am interested in Ìgbò culture ()
3. I love Ìgbò language ()
4. I want to speak more languages than one/mine.
5. I want to understand and appreciate my own culture better ()
6. I want to understand the world around me ()
7. To make more friends and connections ()
8. I want to increase my native language ability ()
9. It is the only means I could gain admission ()
10. My parents urged me to ()
11. There is employment opportunity for L2 students ()
12. For political reason ()
13. For business//economic reason ()

Language attitudes of male and female Ìgbò second language learners were also studied because sex has been seen as a factor in second or foreign language learning. Many studies on the influence of sex in language learning are often centered on the attitudes of males and females towards language learning. Studies by Burstall, (1975) show that females manifest integrative reasons for studying foreign languages while males' motives are usually of instrumental nature, for example, they choose a foreign language because they need 'a subject to fill in the timetable', (Powell and Littlewood 1983) or because of the grades obtained in former years, (Palacio Martinez 1994). Krashen, (1988) asserts that integrative motivation produces achievement quite effectively. In his words; 'it is a stronger predictor of achievement than the instrumental motivation. Spolsky, (1990) goes even further to note that the positive effects of integrative motivation on the learning of second language are illustrated in girls' development of a native-like pronunciation and semantic system'.

Dornyer and Clement's (2001) confirm the existence of marked sex differences where girls scored higher on most attitudinal and motivational measures. Their study revealed that girls have more positive attitude and are more motivated. Also surveys conducted by Pritchard (1987), Powell and Littlewood, (1983) and Powell and Batters (1985) agree in showing that in contrast with boys, girls are more favourably inclined not only to the language, but also to the speakers and the culture. Paula and others generally concluded that girls' favourable attitude and high motivation are determining variables in their success (Paula 2006).

Furthermore, society's demands may also account for females' success in Foreign language learning. Although seemingly unpopular, some of the claims made as regards 'males' and 'females' social domains still hold true at least in great Britain and Spain and of course in Nigeria. It cannot be denied that the division between females' and males' activities exists with females still holding a prominent position in the domestic sphere. It is also true that in spite of the progress made towards equal job opportunities and salaries, since early childhood males and females are prepared to assume different occupational expectations and different relations to power. Francis, (2000) recognizes that gender dichotomy is still evident in future job choices, with girls "tending to opt for 'artistic' or 'caring' professions, and boys opting for occupations that were scientific, technical or business oriented". One influence of society's rules and expectations on girls' speech behavior and employment prospects is the fact that girls opt for foreign languages in their studies in their belief that the languages will be useful to them in order to get a job. This belief is connected with the sex stereotyping of jobs in society.

Concerning 'males and 'females' expected roles and behaviour, Kramarae, (1981) points out that according to the sex-role differentiation hypothesis, 'males specialize in instrumental or task behaviours, and females specialize in expressive or social activities', for which on the other hand, they seem neurologically, better prepared. Holmes, (1992) puts forward the theory that females are appointed to 'the role of modeling correct behaviour in the community'. Kramarae and Holmes theories can be combined in the suggestion that females' modeling role is carried out through a series of tasks involving verbal interaction in private contexts, such as that of child rearing. In other words, both society and home encourage females to care about language because it is a requirement for their future roles as mothers and emotional supporters in the family circle.

Females' communicative skills are therefore enhanced because of their expected patterns of interaction. It can be posited therefore that it is markedly due to the society's role division that girls develop a liking for languages. This lends credence to Paula's (2006) findings that "the number of females taking language courses and public examinations in languages is significantly higher than the number of males". Pritchard, (1987) remarks that parent's assessment also reproduces society's occupational expectations, so that females receive "more overt encouragement to learn languages than males. Francis, (2000) pointed out that the discrimination that females and males experienced in the educational system in the 70s and 80s explained the low achievement of females at Mathematics and science in compulsory education. This formal education reduced females' self-confidence and persuaded them 'subtly or openly' that traditionally subjects like the 'hard' sciences and mathematics are masculine and not for them. For this reason Kramarae, (1981) alludes to the possible role of educational systems on females' linguistic proficiency, suggesting that, 'the school systems in the United States and Great Britain expect females to develop better reading and writing skills..., to be correct in their writing and speaking; and that expectation might enable females have a positive approach

to some aspects of language learning'. Therefore, education could be inducing females to develop positive attitude towards language learning in order to satisfy society's expectation.

Palacios, (1994 in Paula 2006) concludes that 'females' apparently superior verbal skills increase their interest in listening and reading comprehension tasks and in general, in those tasks involving linguistic interaction. By contrast, males' superior capacity to deal with form, distance and 'space' relationships (that is visual-mental manipulations) could explain their preferences for maps and machine instructions. The differences between the males and females' emotional, psychological and social dispositions can possibly mar or favour their progress in language activities and learning.

It is speculated that the Ìgbò L₂ students' attitude towards the Ìgbò language, the speakers and owners of the language and the culture of the Ìgbò would influence their development of communicative competence in the target language. Hence this study assessed the language attitude and the speaking efficiency of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students on Acculturation Programme at NINLAN. The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives;

1. To identify the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners on Acculturation?
2. To Compare the mean speaking achievement scores of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners with integrative and instrumental language attitude;
3. To determine the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students?
4. To compare the mean speaking achievement scores between the male and female NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners on acculturation.

Based on the objectives stated above, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners on Acculturation?
2. What is the mean difference in the speaking achievement scores between the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitude?
3. What are the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students?
4. What is the mean difference in the speaking achievement scores between the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students on acculturation?

In the light of the above research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement score of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitudes.
2. There is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement scores of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students on acculturation Programme.

2. Methods

The design was casual comparative design. This was adopted to enable comparison of the mean speaking achievement of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners with integrative and instrumental attitudes as well as the mean speaking achievement of the male and female students.

Respondents are sample of 68 students drawn by purposive sampling technique from a population of 100 Ìgbò L₂ students from the different Colleges of Education that participated in NINLAN's Acculturation Programme in the year 2014. NINLAN is the accredited center for Ìgbò Acculturation (immersion) programme).

Two instruments were used for data collection. One was a researcher designed questionnaire for eliciting the participants' demographic and attitudinal information titled Language Attitude Questionnaire (LAQ). The other was a researcher designed Speaking Efficiency Test (SETs). The speaking test consisting five tasks were presented to the respondents. Task 1 required the respondents to do a personal introduction i.e. detailed introduction of oneself in Ìgbò. Task 2 required the respondents to greet at different occasions/situations, viz: greet someone in the morning, greet the sick, one working, the bereaved, one travelling; Task3 required the respondents to express illness to the doctor using different parts of the body. Task 4 took the respondents to the restaurant scenario where they ordered in Ìgbò any kind of food of their choice. Task 5 required the respondents to say what was done in Ìgbò (actions/activities included (eating, clapping, reading, sweeping and laughing). Each task attracted 20 marks (100% for the speaking test). Rating of the participants was based on: comprehension/appropriate interpretation of the task, spontaneous response to task, correct pronunciation/near native speakers' intonation, fluency and appropriate use of the language. The five tasks presented in the speaking test assessed the students' ability to use Ìgbò language to perform communicative functions in different real life contexts and situations.

The LAQ consists of 13-item attitudinal checklist (a-m). Items (a-h) contain traits for integrative attitude while (i-m) are for instrumental attitude. Although, there were cases of combination of the two attitudes from the respondents, those who ticked more from (a-h) were grouped under integrative attitude while those while the others were grouped under instrumental attitude. The speaking test was conducted by the researcher and was tape-recorded. The test took place in NINLAN, Aba. It was conducted on one on one basis. Some of the scenarios were artificially created in the researcher's office/ classroom. It took four days to complete the exercise.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Research questions 1 and 3 were answered by simple percentage while 2 and 4 were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation.

3. Analysis

In this section, data would be presented, analyzed and results discussed.

3.1 Research Question 1

What are the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners on Acculturation?

This research question is answered using simple percentage as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 showing percentage analysis of the language attitudes of the Ìgbò L₂ students

N	Integrative attitude	Instrumental attitude
68	48 (71%)	20 (29 %)

Table 1 above shows that 48 constituting 71 % of the Ìgbò L₂ students have integrative attitude while 20 constituting 29 % possess instrumental attitude.

3.2 Research Question 2

What is the mean difference in the speaking achievement scores between the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitudes?

This research question was answered with the mean and standard deviation scores of the students in the speaking test as shown on table 2.

Table 2: Showing Mean and Standard Deviation Difference between the Speaking Performance of Ìgbò L₂ Students with Integrative and Instrumental language attitudes.

Language Attitudes	N	\bar{X}	SD
Integrative	48	56.31	18.94
Instrumental	20	48.15	20.06

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation difference in the speaking performance of Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental attitudes. The mean scores and standard deviation (\bar{X} = 56.31, SD = 18.944), (\bar{X} = 48.15, SD = 20.066) respectively indicated that students with integrative attitudes achieved higher mean score in the speaking test than students who had instrumental attitudes. The mean difference is 8.16 which is quite high.

3.3 Research Question 3

What are the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students?

Table 3 - Percentage analysis of language attitudes of male and female students.

Gender	Integrative attitude	Instrumental attitude
Male	18 (37%)	12 (60%)
Female	30 (63%)	8 (40%)
N	48	20

Table 3 shows that 30 (63%) of the students with integrative attitude were females while 18 (37%) are males. On the other hand, out of the 20 students with instrumental attitude, 12 (60%) are males while 8 (40%) are females.

3.4.1 Research Question 4.

What is the mean difference in the speaking achievement scores between the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students on acculturation?

Table 4 - Mean and Standard Deviation Difference in the performance of Ìgbò L₂ Male and Female Students in the Speaking Test.

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD
Male	30	54.63	17.94
Female	38	52.29	21.24

Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation difference in the performance of Ìgbò L₂ male and female students in speaking test. Male students performed slightly better than the females in the speaking test. The males' mean and standard deviation was (\bar{X} = 54.63, SD = 17.940), while that of the female students was (\bar{X} = 52.29, SD = 21.240). The mean difference is 2.34 which is low and negligible. In order to ascertain the level of significance obtained from tables 2 and 4, the following hypotheses were tested;

3.5 Hypothesis 1

There is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement score of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitudes. This hypothesis was tested using t-test analysis as shown on Table 5.

Table 5: T-test analysis of the difference in the speaking achievement of Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitudes.

Language attitude	N	\bar{X}	SD	Tcal	tcrit		Df	Alpha level	Result
Integrative	48	56.31	18.94	1.59	2.00		66	0.05	Not Significant
Instrumental	20	48.15	20.06						

Table 5 indicated that the calculated t value of 1.59 is less than the critical t value of 2.00 at 66 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ students with integrative and instrumental language attitudes is retained.

3.6 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement scores of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students on acculturation Programme.

Table 6: T-test analysis of the mean difference between the speaking achievements of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students.

Sex	N	\bar{X}	SD	Tcal	tcrit	df	Alpha level	Result
Males	30	54.63	17.94	0.48	2.00	66	0.05	Not Significant
Females	38	52.29	21.24					

Table 6 above revealed that the calculated t value of 0.48 is less than the critical t of 2.00 at 66 degree of freedom. Hence, the decision to accept the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant mean difference between the speaking achievement of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ male and female students on acculturation programme.

4. Discussion

The purpose of the study was to assess the language attitude and the speaking efficiency of the NCE Ìgbò L₂ learners on Acculturation programme. From the results, greater percentage of the students possessed integrative language attitude. Results in table 2 show a higher mean score for students with integrative language attitude. This is expected in this study because a greater percentage of the students showed integrative attitude which Krashen, (1988) says is a stronger predictor of achievement than the instrumental attitude. However, the t- test analysis in table 5 indicated no statistical significant difference between the mean speaking achievements of the two groups. The closest explanation to this result is the possibility that the Ìgbò L₂ students got their orientations right; that they

would only pass NCE very well and proceed to further studies if they did well in the L₂ programme.

Furthermore, the result in table 3 shows that more female students have integrative attitude than male counterparts. Surprisingly, results from table 4 show that the male students achieved a higher mean score than the female. However, the t-test analysis on table 6 indicated no statistical significant difference between the speaking efficiency of the NCE Ìgbò male and female students. This implies that the difference noticed on table 4 occurred by chance. This result is a radical deviation from findings of other studies in the literature which revealed that girls have more positive attitude and are more motivated and therefore achieved linguistic supremacy over their male counterparts (Ekstrand 2008, Dale 1976).

5. Conclusion

This study identified the language attitudes of the NCE Ìgbò second language students on acculturation programme at NINLAN, ABA. More students were identified to have integrative attitude than instrumental attitude. The comparison of the Mean speaking achievement scores between the Ìgbò L₂ learners with integrative and instrumental attitudes showed no significant statistical difference between the two groups. Also, a comparison of the Mean achievement scores between the Ìgbò L₂ male and female students showed no statistical significant difference in the performance of the two groups even though more females have integrative attitude than the males. Overall results showed that neither language attitudes nor gender affected the speaking efficiency of the students.

6. Recommendations

Despite the findings of this study, it is important for L₂ learners to have a sound and critical attitude towards the language, the native speakers and the culture of the target language. Attitude is everything. A positive attitude yields a positive result. If the Ìgbò second language learners develop favourable attitude towards the target language, its speakers and the culture, they would show good interest and put effort that is high enough to allow them develop near native speakers' competence in speaking the target language.

Furthermore, gender is certainly not a barrier in second language learning. It is important that the Ìgbò second language learners discard the long standing stereotype that language study is a career for the females. Anybody with the right attitude towards the target language, its speakers and the culture irrespective of the gender will certainly attain high proficiency in the language. For those who learn a second language for academic purposes like the Ìgbò L₂ students, a combination of integrative and instrumental attitudes would produce greater results.

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