

Influence of Students Social Classroom Interactions on their Learning Outcomes in English language in Ekiti State Senior Secondary schools, Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated the Influence of students' social classroom interactions on their learning Outcomes in English language in Ekiti State Senior Secondary schools, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey design. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the required number of respondents for the study. The population consisted of SS2 students in senior secondary schools in the state. A total sample of 137 students was used as study sample. Three instruments were developed, pilot tested and validated by the researcher and adopted in collecting data for the study: Students Social Classroom Interaction Questionnaire (SCSIQ) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.72, Student English Language Attitude Scale (SELAS) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.67 and Students English Language Motivation Scale (SELMS) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.65. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression at $p < 0.05$. Findings shows that there exists a positive social classroom interaction among senior secondary school students in Ekiti State; there is a negative relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' attitude to English language; there is a positive relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' motivation in English language and that students' motivation in English language had a significant positive relationship with student attitude towards the subject. Furthermore, the study showed that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had a significant influence on their attitude towards English language but not significant on their motivation in the subject. It is recommended that if Ekiti State education stakeholders intend to vigorously improve motivation in English language among students, particularly in secondary schools, social interaction in students' classrooms should be encouraged.*

Keywords: *Social interaction, Motivation, Attitude, Secondary school, English language.*

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I. Introduction

English Language is a vital and compulsory subject that is taught in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions of learning. It is a foremost means of communication and language in most countries of the world; especially the English speaking ones such as Nigeria. The essence of proper teaching and learning of the subject in schools is very paramount as it is the language used internationally, for business, for entertainment, for ease of travels and it is the media language. For the subject to be properly taught by the teacher and understood the by learners, students should possess and maintain the right social interactive environment. Students often do not learn in isolation but rather prefer to do so in the presence of many of their peers. According to Juvonen and Murdock (1995), Students pursue both social and academic goals in the classroom. Social interaction encourages students to think, read, conclude, summarize, question; are able to achieve more, faster, and more accurately (Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011). A student's popularity among peers is considered to be one of the indicators of their successful integration into school life. Encouraging students to positively relate socially with one another may enhance their academic cooperation and performance. This in more ways than one, improves the social standing and interactions among these students and could also foster students learning outcome in the subject.

Social classroom interaction as is a meaningful channel of communication among learners. Socially interactive learners are engaged learners (Vacca et al., 2011). Routman (2005) contends that students learn more when they are able to talk to one another and be actively involved in the learning process. Vacca and Vacca (2002) contend that there is need to shift the burden of learning from the teachers' shoulders to students'. Wilkinson, Soter, and Murphy (2010) restated that there is need for a gradual release of responsibility for control of the discussion from teacher to students. A way for students to shoulder the responsibility for learning

is for them to be the readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and thinkers in the classroom through active engagement in classroom social interaction with others (Alvermann & Phelps, 2005; Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, 2011). Similarly, Wilkinson et al. (2010) posited that talking offers students a means to combine their intellectual resources to collectively make sense of experience and to solve problems. Also, Ketch (2005) affirms that conversation helps individuals make sense of their world. It helps to build empathy, understanding, respect for different opinions and ownership of the learning process. Peer interaction promotes positive relationships among students and encourages the development of student learning communities (Callahan, 2008). Ezewu (1983) is of the opinion that for social interaction to be effective in any social system (the school, in this case) it should consist of the following interrelated features: interrelation should be purposeful in the sense that it should be directed towards the attainment of a goal clearly recognized and accepted by each of the interacting member; It should be interpersonal in the sense that on the part of its members there is a conscious awareness of the existence of each other; It should be reflective in the sense that it involves a critical appraisal of the situation that happens to arise; an individual can develop within himself an awareness of the consequences of belonging to a group that can affect, influence or alter his attitude to himself and to others and interaction can be historical in the sense that every individual develops to a greater or lesser degree the awareness of a recent or more remote past, which, when consciously experienced, affects individual interaction in the present. Olalejan (2016) believed that a child who is not brilliant enough may do better if he is accepted by a group that is inclined to study. It has been observed that a child learns more easily within his peer group. Where he is wrong, he prefers to be corrected by a member of his peer group than by the teacher. In support of this view, Olalejan (2016) stressed that the school must therefore use peer group energies to promote rather than impede good learning. It is therefore necessary to let students realize the reason why they have to be careful in choosing their friends so that their attitudes toward learning would be improved as the peer group they belong can have effect on their learning negatively and positively.

There is an acknowledgment that students need both the cognitive skill and the motivational will to do well in school (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Motivation is a significant factor which influences language learners' success or failure in learning English language. Motivation to language learning is a complex set of variables including effort; desire to achieve goals, and attitudes toward the learning of the language (Gardner, 2007). Cook (2001) summarizes that "according to Gardner, integrativeness and attitudes lead to motivation; motivation and aptitude lead to success. According to Pourhosein, Leong, and Saburi (2012), the success of any action is dependent on the extent to which persons try to get their goal, along with their desire to do so. Generally people refer to this psychological factor –the impulse that generates the action –as motivation. It is a motive force that arouses, incites, or stimulates action. Motivation is an important factor in specifying the readiness of learners to communicate. Motivation is a key component of a model of English language learning (Spolsky, 2000).

Students' learning outcome does increase when they possess a positive attitudes and high motivation. Students' ability to learn a second language can be influenced by their attitudes towards the target language, the target language speakers and their culture, the social value of learning the second language, and also the students' attitudes towards themselves as members of their own culture (Ellis 1994). As Brown (2000) pointed out, attitudes are cognitive and affective; that is, they are related to thoughts as well as to feelings and emotions; as it directs how student approach learning. Additionally, English teachers should know that students possess both positive and negative attitudes in varying degrees towards learning and that these attitudes can be better off when students are given the opportunity to maximally socialize among themselves (Brown, 2000). Whatever motivates students, it seems clear that a positive attitude towards the English language and students interacting socially among themselves is important.

Statement of the Problem

The seeming decline in students' motivation and attitude towards learning English language is worrisome; this is evident from their performance in both school based and external examinations. Efforts by concerned stakeholders in curbing this abnormally seem to have yielded little or no progress as students continue to underperform and the said subject. Hence, this study assessed the influence of students' classroom social interactions on their learning Outcomes (motivation and attitude) in English language

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of students' classroom interaction in secondary schools in Ekiti State?
2. Is there a relationship between students' social interaction in class, their motivation and attitude in English language?
3. What is the extent to which students' gender and number of friends they keep in class influences their motivation and attitude in English language?

II. Methodology

The study is a non experimental design of the survey research type. The research type was employed because the researcher had no direct control of the dependent and the independent variables as they had already occurred.

The population for the study comprised of senior secondary school two students (SS2) in public schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The public secondary schools were chosen to ensure homogeneity of the sample with respect to curriculum content used in teaching and school type. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in selecting the required number of respondents for the study. First, a senatorial district was purposively selected from the three in the State. A local government area was randomly selected from the senatorial district. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 public secondary schools from the study area. In each school selected, simple random sampling was used to select an SS2 intact class. Where only one arm existed, the affected arm was automatically adopted for the study. The student of these selected classes automatically qualified to participate. In all, 137 students in the selected schools constituted the study sample.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were developed, pilot tested and validated by the researcher and adopted in collecting data for the study: Students Social Classroom Interaction Questionnaire (SCSIQ) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.72, Student English Language Attitude Scale (SELAS) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.67 and Students English Language Motivation Scale (SELMS) with Kudar-Richardson KR-20 reliability coefficient index of 0.65.

The Students Social Classroom Interaction Questionnaire (SCSIQ) consisted of two sections (A & B). Section A contained the demographic data of the students such as gender and Number of friends the students have in class. The section B had eleven items that measured social classroom interactions among students. These items were placed on dichotomous Likert Scale of Agree (2), and Disagree (1). Student English Language Attitude Scale (SELAS) which contained twelve questions designed to ascertain students' attitude towards English Language. These items were also placed on dichotomous Likert Scale of True of me (2), and Not true of me (1). Students English Language Motivation Scale (SELMS) consisted of ten items that measured students' motivation in English language. The items were placed on dichotomous Likert Scale of Agree (2), and Disagree (1). Three undergraduate students of my department were trained by the researcher within three days as research assistants on the study logistics. The researcher and the research assistants administered the instruments to the students in the sampled schools. Data were collected for a week. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages, Mean and Standard Deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and ANOVA) at 0.5% level of significance.

III. Results

Research Questions 1: What is the nature of students' classroom interaction in secondary schools in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Students' Social Classroom Interaction

S/N	STATEMENTS	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	I hate English language classes because I have no friend in my class	9 (6)	128 (94)	1.58	0.66	Positive
2.	My friends mock at me whenever I answer questions in English classes	35(25)	102 (75)	1.96	0.91	Positive
3.	The reason I scored very low in my English language tests is because I have many friends	14 (10)	123 (90)	1.63	0.71	Positive
4.	I hate my English teacher because my friend made me to	21 (15)	116 (85)	1.59	0.87	Positive
5.	I will study English Language in the University because many of my friends want to do so	34 (25)	103 (75)	2.02	0.99	Positive
6.	I don't have interest in English language because no one talks to me in class.	15 (11)	122 (89)	1.57	0.78	Positive
7.	I hope for a lasting friendship with my classmates as it has helped my performance in English language.	92 (67)	45 (33)	2.72	0.98	Positive
8.	My friends ignore me whenever I bring my problems to them on English language	29 (21)	108(79)	1.88	0.89	Positive
9.	I love reading English language texts because my classmates do same in class	75(55)	65(45)	2.43	1.01	Positive
10.	Whenever we are having English language, my classmates and I fight each other	26 (19)	111 (81)	1.76	0.93	Positive
11	The good rapport between my classmates and I is the reason we love English language	114 (83)	23 (17)	3.17	0.85	Positive

***Weighted Mean = 2.03**

Table 1 shows the nature of secondary school students’ social interactions in their classrooms and schools. As evident from the table, 9 (6%) of the students agreed that they hate English language classes because they have no friends in their classes while 128 (94%) disagreed to the statement; 35 (25%) of the students agreed that their friends mock at them whenever they answer questions in an English class while 102 (75%) disagreed with the statement; 14 (10%) agreed to that the reason they scored very low in their English language text scores was because they have many friends while 123 (90%) disagreed with the statement; 21(15%) of the student agreed that they hate their English teachers because their friends made them to while 116 (85%) disagreed with the statement; 34 (25%) of the students agreed that they will study English Language in the University because many of my friends want to do so while 103 (75%) disagreed with the statement; 15 (11%) of the students agreed that they don’t have interest in English language because none talks to them in class while 122 (89%) disagreed with the statement; 92 (67%) of the students agreed that they hope for a lasting friendship with their classmates as it had helped their performance in English language while 45 (33%) disagreed with the statement; 29 (21%) of the students agreed that their friends ignore them whenever they bring their problems to them on English language while 108 (79%) disagreed with the statement; 75 (55%) of the students agreed that they love reading English language texts because their classmates do same in class while 65 (45%) disagreed with the statement; 26 (19%) of the students agreed that whenever they are having English language in class, their classmates fights each other while 111 (81%) disagreed with the statement and 114 (83%) of the students agreed that the good rapport between them and their classmates is the reason they love English language while 23 (17%) disagreed with the statement.

The mean values for the statements are: 1.58, 1.96, 1.63, 1.59, 2.02, 1.57, 2.72, 1.88, 2.43, 1.76 and 3.17 respectively. Based on the value of the weighted average (2.03 out of the 3.17 maximum value obtainable) which is more than the 1.50 that the study accepts as a value that represents positive students social classroom interaction, it can therefore be inferred that there exist a positive social classroom interaction among senior secondary school students in Ekiti state.

Research Questions 2: Is there a relationship between students’ social interaction in class, their motivation and attitude in English language?

TABLE 2: Relationship between students’ social interaction in class, their motivation and attitude in English language

Variables	Students’ Social classroom Interaction	Students’ Attitude to English Language	Students’ Motivation in English Language
Student Social classroom Interaction	1	-.087	.047
Students’ Attitude to English Language	-.087	1	.343**
Students’ Motivation in English Language	.047	.343**	1
	.311	.311	.586

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ** denotes significant at p<0.05 level of significance

Table 2 shows that there is a negative relationship between students’ social classroom Interaction and students’ attitude to English language (r = -.087). This implies that when social classroom interaction increases among students, their attitude to English language decreases and vice versa. There is also a positive relationship between students’ social classroom Interaction and students’ motivation in English language (r = .047). This implies that when social classroom interaction increases among students, their motivation in English language increases and vice versa. Moreover, students motivation in English language have a significant positive relationship with student attitude towards the subject. This implies that an increase in students motivation in English language do lead to a corresponding increase in students attitude in the subject.

Research Questions 3: What is the extent to which students’ gender and number of friends they keep in class influences their motivation and attitude in English language?

Table 3a: Model Summary and ANOVA for Students' Gender, Number of friends they have in class and their attitude towards English language

R	= 0.29				
R Square	= 0.08				
Adjusted R Square	= 0.07				
Std Error of the Estimate	= 5.19				
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	332.179	2	166.089	6.162	.003*
Residual	3612.026	134	26.955		
Total	3944.204	136			

***Significant at p< 0.05**

Table 3a shows that students' gender and the number of friends they have in their classes in predicting students attitude towards English language yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) = 0.29, a coefficient of determination (R²) = 0.08 and Adjusted R square (R_{adj}) = 0.07. This revealed that the predictor variables jointly explained about 8% of the variance in student attitude towards English language. In other words, 8% of the variance in the change in students' attitude towards English language can be explained by students gender and the number of friends they have in class while the remaining 92% is due to other factors and residuals not included in this study. Moreover, the table shows that students gender and the number of friends they have in class have a significant influence on their attitude towards English language (F_(2, 134) = 6.162; p<0.05).

Table 3b: Model Summary and ANOVA for Students' Gender, Number of friends they have in class and their Motivation in English language

R	= 0.098				
R Square	= 0.010				
Adjusted R Square	= -.005				
Std Error of the Estimate	= 3.795				
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.750	2	9.375	.651	.523
Residual	1929.498	134	14.399		
Total	1948.248	136			

***Significant at p< 0.05**

Table 3b shows that students' gender and the number of friends they have in their classes in predicting students attitude towards English language yielded a coefficient of multiple regression (R) = 0.098, a coefficient of determination (R²) = 0.01 and Adjusted R square (R_{adj}) = -.005. This revealed that the predictor variables jointly explained about 1% of the variance in student motivation in English language. In other words, 1% of the variance in the change in students' motivation in English language can be explained by students gender and the number of friends they have in class while the remaining 99% is due to other factors and residuals not included in this study. Moreover, the table shows that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had no significant influence on their motivation in English language (F_(2, 134) = 0.651; p>0.05).

IV. Discussion of Findings

The study has shown that there exists a positive social classroom interaction among senior secondary school students in Ekiti State. It did show that there is a negative relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' attitude to English language; there is a positive relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' motivation in English language and that students' motivation in English language had a significant positive relationship with student attitude towards the subject. Furthermore, the study showed that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had a significant influence on their attitude towards English language and that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had no significant influence on their motivation in English language. These findings is supported by those of Juvonen and Murdock (1995) who restated that students pursue both social and academic goals in the classrooms; Saracaloğlu (2000) and Atlı (2008) who reaffirmed that gender has a significant impact on students attitude; Cook (2001) reaffirmed that attitude lead to motivation which is in tandem with the finding of this study that students' motivation in English language had a significant positive relationship with student attitude towards the subject. The finding of the study is in contrast with the finding of Brown (2000) that social interactions among students can affect their attitude in both positive and negative way.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the Influence of Students Classroom Social Interactions on their Learning Outcomes in English language in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings showed that there exists a positive social classroom interaction among senior secondary school students in Ekiti State; there is a negative relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' attitude to English language; there is a positive relationship between students' social classroom Interaction and students' motivation in English language and that students' motivation in English language had a significant positive relationship with student attitude towards the subject. Furthermore, the study showed that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had a significant influence on their attitude towards English language and that students gender and the number of friends they have in class had no significant influence on their motivation in English language. Hence, it is recommended that if Ekiti State education stakeholders intend to vigorously improve motivation in English language among students, particularly in secondary schools, social interaction in students' classrooms should be encouraged.

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