

Pedagogy Of English As A Second Language Learning In Promoting National Development

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Abstract

This study examined Pedagogy of English as a second Language Learning in promoting national development. The study adopted behaviourist theory which was propounded by Thorndike and expanded by Skinner. For the behaviourists, learning situations stand out symbolically as $S > R$ bond in which the stimuli (B) external to the learner compels a response R , which could carry positive or negative changes. The study was carried out at the National Open University of Nigeria, Abakaliki Study Centre, Ebonyi State. A simple survey method was used to get response from the language instructors and undergraduate students from the school. A total number of one hundred questionnaires were administered and collated. The results show that majority of the respondents affirm the items presented in the data as appropriate pedagogical tools that would enhance English as a second language in promoting national development.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Second Language, Language learning, Promotion, National Development.

Date of Submission: 01-03-2026

Date of Acceptance: 11-03-2026

I. Introduction

Pedagogy in language learning entails the process of teaching and learning of a foreign or second language for the purpose of national development. Nwokwu (2021) refers the pedagogy as the study of the art of language process and techniques for the purpose of understanding the mechanics of the language concerned. In language pedagogy as a science of language learning, it equips the learners with the skills required for better proficiency in manipulating language art.

The linguists have defined language learning from different perspectives. Otagburuagu *et al* (2021) define language learning as a process by means of which people develop changes in their language behaviour, improve their performance in their use of the target language, recognize their views and perceptions about the language and its culture, discover and utilize the communicative potentials of the language and acquire more knowledge about the different levels of linguistic organization of the language.

Azikiwe (1998) sees language learning as a process of learning a skill. According to the scholar, to learn a language is to acquire skills which can be put correctly into use according to the needs without much hesitation. Language learning, therefore, is a complex process especially when that language is a second one to the learner. Otagburuagu *et al* (2013) describe language learning as a process that involves learning new ways of thinking and behaviour, and also learning to live in the culture of the language that is being learnt. It is also concerned about developing new linguistic and communicative competence.

Language learning can be formal or informal. Thus, informal language learning takes place when an individual for some personal reasons hires a tutor, a native speaker or someone who is proficient in a language to give him instructions in the use of that language. In this case, there may be no formal classroom and no definite syllabus to be followed. The purpose could be to meet the immediate communicative needs of the learner. On the other hand, formal language learning is formally done in school setting where learners made use of formal classroom, syllabus, instructional materials aimed at meeting the language policy initiative of the country.

Brown (1987) identifies the three forms of the second language learning process to include.

1. The language learner who spearhead the language learning process and situations.
2. The language learning process which involves the opportunities provided for the learner to participate in real language behaviour in the major language skills such as the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
3. The language learning situations which also involve the physical condition in which the language learning activities take place like the classroom, the language laboratory, the library to mention but a few.

The language learner is concerned about the age and maturation of the learner; learners family and environmental background. These variables help to shape and determine the cognitive development of the learner. Nwokwu (2021) posits that second language has become synonymous to development. This is because the appropriate language learning techniques foster learners' interest in acquiring the skills required in understanding the second language concerned.

On the other hand, development is perceived as the socio-cultural, political, economic and spiritual well being of a society. In a clear term, development is a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, acceleration of growth, reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. Emeka (2015) advocates that English as a second language in Nigeria should be used as national integration as this policy would promote state building in a continent notorious for life with political instability and economic throwback. Abah (2020) sees development as a multidimensional process the one that changes the economy, policy and society of the country in which it occurs. Development in this context of study is the utilization appropriate pedagogy that would enhance national cohesion. Thus, if the idea of sustainable development is to create a system that is sustainable, then English as a second language learning becomes a key factor to unending development in Nigeria in the area of education, economic empowerment and national unity.

Theoretical Framework

The language learning theory which was very popular in 1940s and 1950s is stimulus response theory. The theory was consistent with BF Skinner's idea of S-R stimulus response psychology. According to the skinner he believes that verbal learning could be described as operant conditioning. He sees language learning as sophisticated response system that humans acquire through automatic conditioning process. Chomsky (1972) supported the behaviourist process by likening the mind to "a tabula rasa". It is based on this association between environment stimuli and response that conveys negative or positive change.

The behaviourist theory which resulted from this postulation which test learning to the establishment of links between; sense impression and external stimuli "saw learning as a matter of trial and error in which such factors as motivation and reward were indispensable determinant. Otagburuagu (1997) citing lighthouse and Spada (1993) observe that language development is described as the acquisition of a set of habits; it is assumed that a person learning a second language starts off with habits associated with the first language and these habits interfere with those needed for second language learning.

According to Otagburuagu (1997), behaviourism brought about other significant insights into language teaching and learning. He posited that it made attention to be focused on language programmes which sought to align teaching goals with the learner's perceptual field. He further states that behaviourism helped to popularize the use of repetition, pattern practice and drills as useful techniques in 12 teaching and learning.

Impediments of English Language Learning to National Development

There is no doubt that the use of English serves as a bridge language for inter-ethnic communication and an official language for politics, religion and education. Otagburuagu (1997) however, pointed out that the ethnocentric disposition of the Nigerian people, the ever-present political rivalry among the various linguistic groups and the concomitant phobia for political domination by one major linguistic group or another have combined to make English language an elusive enterprise.

In terms of the pedagogy of English language learning Nwokwu (2021) posits that expressive language difficulties which results in some learners who have problems with the muscular movement needed to form words. They may have trouble in producing or drilling certain words. This expressive language difficulty can affect their abilities to put words in the right order in a sentence or even relate stories with the events in the right sequence. Eyisi (2020) identified another one as receptive language difficulty. She emphasizes that some learners of English as second language have problems with the way they hear and process the language. This poor reception can impact negatively on the learner's ability to understand what others are saying and respond appropriately. Thus, learners with hearing impairment have a physical barrier to understanding English language as a second language.

Another impediments worthy to state is pragmatic learning difficulties. Eyisi (2020) explains that the learners can hear what is being said but they do not understand the meaning. They may know how to use social language but lack initiative understanding of social cues and convention. This leads to what is referred to as

interpreting figurative language which include the use of Irony, humour, metaphor, apostrophy, allusion euphemism and others. This particular obstacle in lack of knowledge of literary devices can affect both the expressive and receptive aspect of language learning.

Strategies and Techniques in improving English language teaching and learning in our school system.

English language occupies a vintage position in every human society. For effective teaching and learning of the language, Otagburuagu *et al* (2021) identify the following strategies and techniques which could be incorporated more into practice by teachers to improve language learning in our school system.

- (i) The learners should be provided more time to connect to what has been asked and provide all the students with the opportunity to think and answer.
- (ii) The teacher needs to consider the ways that they speak to students and try to repeat key points or instructions, paraphrase, and use of clear and visual aids.
- (iii) If a student makes an error when speaking, the teacher should provide the correct model without overtly drawing attention to the error.
- (iv) Tutors should try to ask more open ended questions to their students and directing these questions to specific individuals to ensure effective participation.
- (v) There should be an increase in verbal interaction between the teachers and learners especially in English language learning situations.

These strategies are necessary in English language learning because as a second language in Nigeria, it enables people to establish and maintain social relationships with other people from other diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Positive Effects of English Language Teaching and Learning to National Development

Ashworth (1990) outlines the following benefits which a nation can derive from language learning and teaching:

- (i) National unity
- (ii) Ability to govern through one or more commonly understood languages.
- (iii) Ability to offer services to its citizens in the language they understand
- (iv) Production of citizenry that will be able to work in two or more languages.
- (v) Access to recent findings of Science and technology published in the target language.
- (vi) Ability to compete in international trade markets in the target language.
- (vii) Ability to engage in dialogue with other nations in the language that has been taught to be citizens.

In the same vein, Otagburuagu *et al* (2021) state several ways in which English language teaching and learning can promote national development. This includes:

- (i) Production of citizens who can serve in the public service effectively in the language medium they have learned.
- (ii) Ability to interact across cultural borders in the language learned.
- (iii) It helps to create in the citizens the ability to engage in both national and international trade using the medium of language learnt.
- (iv) It helps to promote the production of textbooks and reading materials in the language learnt.
- (v) Promotes governance and political socialization in the citizenry who are literate in the language learned.
- (vi) Enhances inter-ethnic communication and co-operation by producing citizens who can understand and use the language of other ethnic groups.
- (vii) Possesses the potential for helping to promote diplomacy international relations, peace and unity.
- (viii) Promote national unity by minimizing barriers posed by multilingualism in the society as no society can grow or develop without unity.
- (ix) Create an avenue for the maintenance of minority languages and cultures and the preservation of values and customs in a country.
- (x) Helps to promote the national economy. Thus it can generate employment for the citizenry.

Since language vis-à-vis English language is considered as a child of necessity that brings about mutual intelligibility among the people in a speech community, it implies that it is an indispensable tool in every human society. Akindele and Adegbite (1992) assert that the quality of a nation's education could considerably be determined by the quality of language which it adopts. Language adopted, should be well taught to meet the demand of the learners for the national development.

II. Methodology

This paper used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in processing the data. However, since the research is conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively, it states the findings in the form of numbers before providing conclusions. This approach is used to strengthen the interpretation of the data. The study was carried out at the National Open University of Nigeria, Abakaliki Study Centre, Ebonyi State. The study targeted one hundred (100) respondents comprising 20 instructors and 80 under-graduate students drawn from the faculty of Arts of the University. The data for the study was generated through questionnaires which were administered to the respondents. A hundred questionnaires were prepared, printed and distributed to the respondents who filled and returned them at the spot.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In order to determine the degree of agreement to each questionnaire, the following items were adopted: SA-Strongly Agreed, A-Agreed, D-Disagree, SD- Strongly disagree. A simple percentage method was used in computing the data.

Research Question One

How can English language learning enhances national development?

Table 1

English language learning can enhance national development through the following ways:

S/NO	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
i.	Innovation in teaching	20	20	40	20
ii.	Use of artificial intelligence	30	40	20	10
iii.	Internet enhancement facility	30	40	20	10
iv.	Media sensitization	40	40	10	10
v.	Social advocacy	40	40	10	10
vi.	Revision of national curriculum	50	40	5	5
vii.	Seminars and workshops	40	50	5	5
viii.	Pedagogical applications	40	40	10	10
ix.	Use of native speakers	10	10	50	30
x.	Government policy thrust	40	40	10	10
	Total	340	360	180	120
			700	300	
	Percentage		70%	30%	

The data shows that an average of 70 respondents representing 70% agreed with the items listed as the ways English can enhance national development, while an average of 30 respondents representing 30% do not agree with the items presented. Otagburuagu (2021) rightly affirm that these issues raised can facilitate national development as he contends that English language as a world language provides various avenues for global communication, diplomatic relations, and human development. In this era of information communication and technology drive, language learning especially ending language has become an indispensable tool to achieve a national cohesion.

Research Question Two

What are the impediments to English language learning in our tertiary institution.

Table 2

The impediments to English language learning include but not limited to the following:

S/NO	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
i.	Lack of policy thrust	40	40	10	10
ii.	Inadequate learning facilities	50	40	5	5
iii.	Unethical practice	40	30	20	10
iv.	Mother tongue interference	50	40	5	5
v.	Language disorder	30	30	20	20
vi.	Peer group influence	40	40	10	10
vii.	Influence of other languages	30	30	20	20
viii.	Intuitive understanding of social use	40	40	10	10
ix.	Lack of in-service training for teachers	40	30	20	10
x.	No periodical seminars and workshop.	40	40	10	10
	Total	400	360	130	110
			760	240	
	Percentage		76%	24%	

Based on responses, 76 respondents representing 76% strongly agreed with the items presented as the impediments to English language teaching and learning in our tertiary institutions of learning while an average of 24 respondents representing 24% disagreed with the items. Gbenedio and Anene Boyle (2004) assert that besides these factors, issues like large class sizes, the inadequate time devoted to English language use, the kind of models the learner encounter in the media, textbooks, and learner's laissez-faire attitude contribute to impediments to English language learning. It is crystal clear that the above factors adversely affect English language teaching and learning in our school especially at the tertiary level.

Research Question Three

What are the measures needed to be adopted in order to promote English language learning in our schools?

Table 3

S/NO	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
i.	Government should strengthen language policy	40	40	10	10
ii.	Urgent need to revise national curriculum on language learning	50	30	10	10
iii.	Provision of language laboratories in our tertiary institutions	60	40	-	-
iv.	Sponsorship of language related programmes	50	40	10	-
v.	Training on Artificial intelligence	60	40	-	-
vi.	In-service training of teachers	50	30	10	10
vii.	Media sensitization	40	40	10	10
viii.	Subsidize educational materials	50	30	15	5
ix.	Convocation of national conference on English language learning	40	30	25	5
x.	Grants for research on English language teaching and learning	60	40	-	-
	Total	500	360	90	50
			860	140	
	Percentage		86%	14%	

In table 3, the figures show that 86 respondents representing 86% agreed that the items are measures which can be deployed to promote English language teaching and learning in our schools especially in the tertiary level of education. 114 respondents representing 14% do not support the proposed items. Otagburuagu (2021) affirms that because of the cardinal role of English language in national building especially in the area of information, expression, instruction, any measures(s) adopted to strengthen the learning of English language in our tertiary institutions of learning will no doubt promote national development. Suffice to say, the English in Nigeria has utilitarian value for the average user because it enjoys special recognition as a second language in Nigeria.

III. Summary And Conclusion

Pedagogy of English as a second language learning is the main crux of this research work. It explores language learning processes, the behaviourist school, impediments of language learning to national development, position effects of English language learning and the best practices that would enhance language learning in promoting national cohesion. The study aims at finding out some appropriate pedagogical tools that would enhance the teaching and learning of English language in our tertiary institutions of learning. Based on the survey and responses, the items presented on the table would definitely serve as pedagogical tools that would salvage the learning of English as a second language in our school system.

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