
Teaching Social Studies to Primary II Pupils: The Place of Mother Tongue in Nigerian Schools

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ABSTRACT: *Language is human phenomenon that manifests itself in sounds and symbols. It is a basic factor in communication. The mother tongue is a language of the immediate environment where the child is born. It is the language of the child's parents. Children learn their mother tongue from baby hood. It is part of the child as he or she grows up. The use of mother tongue in the lower primary school classes enhances the continuity in the child's educational process. This paper seeks to examine the use of mother tongue as an option in the teaching of Social studies at this level, in contrast to what some teachers do, using English to teach the students especially in the cosmopolitan urban centers. The study revealed that Social studies taught using the mother tongue enhance pupils' grades in examination. Suggestion and recommendations were made.*

KEYWORDS: social studies, pupils, mother tongue

INTRODUCTION

In both nature and substance, social studies is an interdisciplinary field. As defined by Osakwe and Itedjere (2005), environmental studies focus on how people respond to and shape their surroundings. Therefore, the bulk of its material is drawn from fields like economics, geography, history, politics, sociology, anthropology, and psychology. Therefore, employing qualified Social studies teachers is crucial for effectively imparting knowledge of the subject. As a result, it is crucial that a Social Studies teacher demonstrate their expertise in the techniques they use in the classroom.

France, Germany, and the Netherlands are just a few of the European countries that have long adhered to the principle of providing primary education in the local language. Familugba (2020) argues that learning a foreign language as part of secondary and tertiary education should be encouraged because it has a favourable impact on students. There is widespread agreement that an indigenous language is the most effective medium of instruction, and Aturamu (2020) shares this view. According to Ologun (2021), it is crucial to a child's cognitive growth and no educational model can afford to ignore it.

Understanding social issues and working to address them are major goals of the social studies field. Despite the noble goals of Social Studies, the nation still faces daily struggles with crime,

moral decay, and insecurity. Every day, Nigerians seem to lose sight of the importance of citizenship and their national identity. The goals of Social studies curricula in Nigerian schools are at odds with the realities of the country, which include widespread insecurity, hydra-headed corruption, kid hooliganism, the promotion of mediocrity, and much more. So, what might it be? If teachers are responsible for delivering the curriculum, then it's possible that those hired to teach the topic lack the necessary expertise and experience. Teachers argue that their students' exposure to the subject matter through the medium of English is flawed, while stakeholders blame the teachers for using English to teach their students and the government for ignoring their calls to translate most of the Social Studies textbooks into Nigerian languages at that level. Teachers find it challenging to coin or borrow words from other languages, a practise that is popular throughout the world, even among English speakers, and complain about their incapacity to translate some words into the native language. The majority of Social Studies textbooks have not been translated into Nigerian languages, despite government efforts to do so.

Typically, children begin learning their mother tongue at an early age, with their immediate family serving as the primary socialisation and support system. As a result, Adu (1988) argued that using the mother tongue in the lower primary grades helps ensure that the child's education remains consistent from year to year. It facilitates improved communication and comprehension by allowing the pupils to easily follow the teacher and maximise his learning process (Ajibewa, 2021). However, when English is spoken at home, it disrupts the child's normal routine (Aturamu, 2020).

Since English was the language spoken by our colonial masters, it was studied extensively before being put to any other use. This was done so that the student may become fluent in the language and, by extension, the subject matter. The English language and other topics are now introduced and learned simultaneously in primary school, therefore this is no longer the case. For a child of, say, six or seven years of age, this makes the topic extremely challenging to understand. He doesn't appear to have a firm grasp on the material at hand.

Ajibewa (2021) argued that affluent, well-educated families in cosmopolitan urban regions are more likely to teach their children English at home since it is the language of communication in both the home and the local schools. Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those living in rural areas must have grown up in homes where the native language was used exclusively for communication. This explains why, when entering schools, such pupils consistently fall behind if English is the primary language of communication. If all types of children were taught English in primary schools, the issue of overgeneralization and overassumption would occur. When taught in the mother tongue, most children at this age learn more quickly. When English is used to teach, every lesson becomes an English lesson, which may be too difficult and taxing for young children who are accustomed to being taught and communicated with in the mother tongue of the parents. Teaching in a specific language is equivalent to teaching in that language.

Adu (1998) noted that when using English schools to teach social studies at such levels in English, the teacher often had to switch between teaching in English and interpreting in the mother tongue. It's unusual for him, and combined with other issues, including a lack of English proficiency, makes it tough for him to express himself clearly in English. You can only give what you have,

and Afolayan (2019) pointed out that many such teachers struggle with English language communication. Because of this, it is safe to assume that every average individual learns to speak his native language at least passably. As a result, it is reasonable to assume that any person who is fluent in a language and has received formal education will be capable of instructing others in a school setting. The English language is not like this at all!

Furthermore, Akinrodolu (2020) argued that most teachers lack specialised training in Social studies but in the various Social science subjects, leading them to have a negative attitude towards the teaching of Social studies out of fear for the extinction of the traditional subjects and a perception of Social studies as a threat to their established method of teaching. Their mission is already daunting enough without having to do it in a language with which they are not very familiar.

The level of involvement of the pupils in the learning process is directly correlated to the style of language used by the teacher. The ideal teacher is familiar with his pupils, their development, the threats they face, their specific requirements, and their abilities. He is focused on the end result of his work and takes the necessary steps to make it happen. The teacher can better define his or her approach to teaching based on these factors, increasing the likelihood of a successful outcome. According to Ajaja (2019), a teacher must be familiar with the teaching process, which includes selecting a topic and idea that will attract the pupils, figuring out how to set up the class, and choosing the appropriate language to encourage active learning.

Students who performed poorly when instructed in English improved when instructed in their mother tongue, according to Olanrewaju and Akinwumi (1988). When a youngster enters school and is immediately exposed to a foreign and unfamiliar language, it is the same as if we had taken him from his family and placed him in a strange environment, as pointed out by Olagoke (1979). As a result, he or she feels tongue-tied and inhibited since they don't grasp the majority of what is taught and can't articulate half of what they want to say. Since reference must be made to the local situation, which the Social Studies teacher typically does in the native language, the problem-solving approach makes teaching it in English challenging.

A child's education begins in kindergarten and lower primary school, laying the groundwork for the rest of their academic career. The structure built on top of a flawed foundation is doomed to fail. Therefore, it is essential that a solid base be established. In other words, a child's future academic and social success hinges on the content and method of instruction at this stage, as well as his level of assimilation. A spiral pattern is used to organise the ideas in the Social Studies curriculum for primary school. That is, the foundational ideas or subjects the child will study are determined and introduced to him in the first year. It is considered that it is simpler to learn and grasp new-sub concepts once a major concept has been mastered, and that these are only provided through cumulative knowledge.

Although there has been a shift towards using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools across Nigeria, this shift has occurred primarily in rural areas. From what I've seen, schools in more affluent and culturally diverse urban regions use only English Language Teaching (ELT) for all grades, beginning with crèche. Most modern Nigerian urban schools have not implemented the

recommendations made at the UNESCO Jos session in 1953. For a youngster who is already immersed in his native language, it was suggested that this be the medium of education. It was also suggested that in metropolitan areas, subjects might be taught in English from the start of school, while in rural regions, English could become the medium at the conclusion of the child's third year of learning.

The primary use of the English language in education was called into doubt by the Banjo report of 1961. The Nigerian government recognises the significance of language in education and, in an effort to preserve the culture of its people, has decided that, at the pre-primary and lower primary levels, the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction. It is recommended that English be utilised for instruction at the secondary and upper primary levels. Additionally, the government has encouraged pupils at this level to learn one of the three official languages of Nigeria in addition to their native tongue.

Whether it's the fault of the system, the teachers, or the stakeholders, the teacher suffers as their students grow up in Social Studies classes without really enjoying the subject, finding it difficult to understand, and not putting what they learn in class into practise in real-world situations. The goals of Social Studies are unimportant to the children, and they are unsure whether to condemn or praise Nigeria. Teachers are the backbone of the paradox of teaching and learning. In order to achieve the goals of Social Studies in Nigeria, which can be summed up as "Education for citizenship Education," it is necessary to eliminate practises that have negative effects on the teaching and learning process.

This study stresses the importance of using the Mother tongue to teach Social studies pupils because of the interdisciplinary composition of Social studies and also to confirm or refute earlier suggestions and recommendations of scholars of repute and conference respectively. This study is an attempt to provide answers to the questions above and also empirically verify the supremacy of using the mothers tongue to teach Social studies as compared to the English based medium of communication and the effects of this on achievement of pupils in primary two in schools in Ekiti state.

This study investigated the place of Mother Tongue in the teaching of Social studies to Primary two pupils in schools in Ekiti state Nigeria. A faulty foundation which comes with the introduction of Social studies being taught with English as medium of communication at this level has spelt doom not only to schools but also to the entire Nation. This method which comes with the information of social studies being taught with English as medium of communication with pupils who are used to communication in indigenous language or Mother tongue are caught in between having not being prepared for this. Using English as a means of communication is insensitive not only to the young impressionistic mind of the pupils but also to their abilities, need, aspirations interest, preference and values, killing pupils ideas and initiatives and inhibiting their efforts which may lead to systematic destruction of young minds and feelings. This study sought to find out if using the medium of Mother tongue can help the child to be participatory in the class and understand most of what is being said, and taught and is able to express what he wants to say at this age, active above all to lay a firm foundation for him as a responsible Nigerian child who would grow to become adult with problem solving skills in a complex Nigerian society.

Research Questions

Arising from the stated problem above, the following research questions were raised.

1. What is the level of the pupils' achievement in Social studies?
2. Will the use of the Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue treatment improve pupils' achievement in Social studies?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the pre-test means scores of three groups taught using Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue combined.
2. There is no significant difference between the pre-test means scores of male and female Pupils in the three groups taught using Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue combined.
3. There is no significant difference between the post-test means scores of male and female pupils in the three groups taught using Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue combined.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quasi -experimental design of three groups of pupils differentiated, on the basis of medium of communication. Three groups were used to measure the achievement grades of those taught using the Mother tongue, English, and a combination English and the Mother tongue. The achievement grades of pupils based on sex and retentive were also measured. The first group was taught using the mother tongue (A) second group taught with English (B) third group taught with English and Mother tongues. (C) This is in a class where the teacher performs the double task of teaching first in English and interpreting later in Mothers tongue. Medium of expression constituted the independent variable. The dependent variable were the scores of the pupils in the task namely the Social studies achievement test (SSAT) as well as the score from the retention test in examining the possible effect of independent variable on dependent variables. Intervening variable like sex was taken into consideration.

The population for this study consisted all the primary school pupils in public schools in Ekiti state. The sample for this study consisted of 90 pupils in the three schools chosen for the study. Each of the treatment groups had 30 pupils, each of schools had 30 students, each of the sexes 45 pupils and they were 90 pupils all together. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the three schools in three local government area of Ekiti state. Stratified random sampling techniques was also used to select the 30 pupils from each of the schools (15 boys and 15 girls). Purposive sampling was used to assign the groups into treatment mode of communication.

The instructional package used for the study consisted of nine lesson plans developed in selected areas of family, marriage and transportation. These are all core areas in the primary and pre-primary Social studies curriculum. The instructional package also made use of diagrams and pictures of large and small family size, pictures and diagrams of father, mother, boys and girls,

marriage types in the church mosques, traditional marriage, children of different ages and pictures and diagrams of cars, trains and beast of burden.

Content and construct validity procedure were employed for the two instrument. Experts in Social studies Education and Test and measurement were asked to estimate the content validity by comparing the test items with the three core areas specified for treatment and their suitability for the target population. They were also required to comment on the level of difficulty and language of the test items. Necessary amendments were made as suggested by them. The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test-retest method and a reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained which was adequate for the study. The hypotheses generated were tested using one way analysis of variance and co-variance. All the research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Question 1: What is the level of the pupils' achievement in Social studies?

To answer the question, pre-test measures in Social studies for the three groups, the groups taught using mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue treatment was computed as follows:

Treatment	No	Mean	SD	% of total sum
Mother tongue	30	12.65	1.70	50.6
English	30	12.82	1.80	51.5
English Mother Tongue	30	12.97	1.82	51.9

Question 2: Will the use of the Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue treatment improve pupil's achievement in Social studies?

To answer question, achievement mean scores of pupils taught using Mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue groups taught before and after the treatment were computed and compared

Treatment	No	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean & Gain
Mother tongue	30	12.85	1.70	24.17	3.48	67.4
English	30	12.82	1.83	6.68	5.88	29.8
English Mother Tongue	30	12.97	1.82	14.48	4.07	11.6

Testing Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference between the pre-test achievement mean scores of the three groups taught using mother tongue, English and English and Mother tongue combined. There were compared for statistic significance using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance as presented below.

Table 3: ANOVA: Summary of achievement of pupils mean scores in Social studies before treatment.

Source	SS	AF	MS	F cal	F table
Between Groups	3.078	2	1.53		
Within Groups	568.233	177	32.5	0.480	2.65
Total	571.311	179			

$P > 0.05$

Table 3: the table shows that f cal is 0.480 is less than f table of 2.65 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of the three groups above.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant difference between the pre-test achievement means scores of Male and Female pupils in the three groups.

These were compared for statistical significance using Analysis of variance ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. Table 4 below shows the result.

Table 4: ANOVA of Pre-test means scores of Social studies pupils by gender and treatment.

Source	SS	Df	Md	F cal	P	F tab
Corrected Model	8.644	6	1.7124	0.536	.749	2.26
Sex	3.756	1	3.726	1.163	.282	3.89
Group	3.778	2	1.539	0.477	.122	3/04
Sex & Group	1.811	2	1.986	0.287	.756	3.4
Error	561.667	174	3.228			
Corrected total	570.311	179				
Total	3016.4000	180				

$P > 0.05$

Table 4 shows that is no significant difference between the pretest mean scores of male and female students in the three groups (f 0.281, $P > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is accepted. The mean effect of gender (f 1.163, $P > 0.05$) and treatment $P = 0.477$, $P > 0.05$) on pretest mean scores of male and female pupils in social studies is not significant at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between Post- test achievement mean scores of the three groups.

To test the hypothesis, Post- test achievement mean scores of pupils in the three groups, Mother tongue, English, Mother tongue and English combined were computed and subsequently compared for statistical significance, using analysis of co-variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented below.

Table 5: ANOVA showing pupils achievement in social studies by treatment

Source	SS	DF	Md	F cal	P	F tab
Corrected Model	1393.588	3	464.329	21.879	.000	2.85
Co variance	1.444	1	1.444	0.068	.725	3.85
Group	1391.216	2	659.618	32.762	.000	3.04
Error	3736.896	176	21.232			
Corrected total	5130.444	179				
Total	59906.000	180				

$P > 0.05$

Table 5 above shows (that f_{cal} is 32,762 $p < 0.05$ is greater than $f_{table} = 3.04$ $p < 0.05$) The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the post- test achievement mean scores of the three groups.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings above, the pupils in the group taught by Mothers tongue for pre achievement mean scores of 12.5 while those taught by English and English and Mother tongue had 12.82 + 2 and 12.97 respectively. This implies that the level of achievement of pupils prior to treatment in Social studies is very low. That their mean score is close to one another shows that these groups are homogenous. At the end of the treatment, the post-test mean score and standard deviation of the three group shows that there was a significant difference between the pretest and posttest means score of those exposed to treatment using the Mother tongue 27.7, English 16.68, and Mother tongue and English combined 18.48.

The findings also revealed that those exposed to treatment using the mother tongue has the highest posttest achievement scores 27.7 followed by those taught using Mother tongue and English Mother tongue combined 18.84 , lastly by English 16.68. The observed difference could be attributed to the effect of treatment administered to the pupils as this shows the effectiveness of the treatment. The outstanding performance of the group taught using the Mother tongue corroborated the findings of the Fafunwa at el (1889) who regarded the teaching of the child using the mother tongue at that level as his fundamental right and thus the best medium of instruction. Ajibewa (2021) opined that no foreign language can take the place of indigenous language and so no system of education can afford to disregard it without serious detriment to the mental development of the child.

Adu (1998) who observed that all Social studies scheme of work for lower primary school contains concepts such as problems of living in the family, cultural problems, religious problems, transportation problems, marriage types, family and family types and all these[problems are easily visible to the pupils who experience them in the community they live. Therefore teaching them these concepts and problems in their mothers tongue will make the subject more real, enjoyable and easily comprehensible to them. It will also maximize classroom knowledge. Ajibewa (2020) opined using the mother tongue to teach Social studies will help the existing problems of dearth of books, instructional materials and teaching aids. Since the topic taught them are real life experiences to them, minimum usage of teaching aids would be required.

The study also showed that there is no significant difference between the pre-test mean scores of male and females pupils in the three groups. The Mean effect of gender on pretest mean scores of pupils in Social studies was not statistically significant. The reason for these are suggested by Famuyibo (2015) that sex difference may be because of the result of the sex role stereo type influences as one of the researches indicated that boys and girls performed equally well in complex task.

The study also showed that there is no significant difference between the post-test achievement mean score of male and female pupils in the group taught. This is in contrast to the mean difference in the pre-test achievement mean scores of pupils in Social studies by treatment. This finding reveals that the null hypothesis stating that male and female pupils have the same level of achievements is accepted. This confirms the wok of Ogunyemi (2018) whose work reveals that there is a statistical significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils of which is by treatment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that the level of pupils' achievement prior to treatment was low. Also those pupils taught using Mother tongue has the highest achievement mean scores, followed by those taught by English-Mother tongue. This means that the method of using the Mother tongue to teach pupils at this level is the best predictor of Social studies achievement. The study further reveals that both the Mother tongue and English and Mother tongue combined medium of communication and teaching will better enhance the teaching and subsequently better grades during examination, than the medium of communication and teaching using English only. Also gender has no significant effect on academic achievement of both male and female pupils in Social studies at this level of education.

Recommendations:

The medium of instruction in education in Nigerian is gradually changing and there is a growing acceptance of the use of mother tongue. As a result the following recommendations were made.

1. The learning of at least one Nigerian language (major) and another major language at the NCE and Degree level be made compulsory. Social studies and a major minor Nigerian language can be combined at the degree level.
2. Social studies syllabus and text books in indigenous languages using local examples should be produced
3. Teachers should be encouraged to prepare lesson notes using indigenous language
4. Teachers should be encouraged to use dual system that is using Mother tongue and possibly explaining with English for the benefit of non-indigenes
5. Government and stakeholders should be deeply committed to produce textbooks and workbooks characterized by local stories and examples, illustrative pictures, Social and cultural studies and those who can translate to other languages should be employed
6. The teachers and pupils must be able to communicate effectively with the language. In case the teacher is not from the geographical zone and hence language zone who would have come to the school as a result of transfer, the school head teacher should make arrangement for a specialist in the language of immediate environment where the school is located to teach the subject using the indigenous language.

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