

Social Stratification and the Challenges of Second Language Acquisition: A Case Study of Selected Yoruba-English Bilinguals in Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There is sufficient evidence that linguistic, social and psychological system variables are important in second language acquisition. This study examined the contribution of a selection of these components and characteristics to second language acquisition, specifically, the linkages between social structure (particularly the degree of socialisation) and second language acquisition experiences of Nigerian children. An important feature of the language situation in Nigeria is that the differences in the experiences and exposure of children to the second language acquisition process tend to be closely related to their parents' economic status, educational level of attainment and socio-cultural characteristics. To this end, a hypothesis was postulated and tested using data collected from 123 students of some selected secondary schools in Ogun State, Southwestern Nigeria through a language background questionnaire, proficiency test and the academic reports of the students. The results indicated that children of the elite parents have advantage with respect to language proficiency over children of non-elite parents. In the light of this sociolinguistic insight, a comprehensive appraisal of the national educational policy and the introduction of remedial language programmes to improve the language proficiency are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

This is an exploration of class-related socialization factors and processes and some aspects and implications of bilingualism in Nigeria. The study of bilinguals (multilinguals) in communities where bilingualism (multilingualism) is the norm, and communication regularly takes place in two or more languages, has received a