

Language pedagogical cheers in tertiary institutions and its gloom on indigenous languages in Nigeria

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Abstract: The strength of English language usage among Nigerians who speak Yoruba, Igbo, Ikwere, Hausa, and Gwari was contrastively studied in the University of Ibadan, Imo State University, Rivers State University, Sokoto State University, and the University of Abuja (representing the zones in Nigeria). The research adopted descriptive survey design and three research questions were formulated for a guide with a population of 19,532 respondents and a sample size of 8,800 selected through purposive procedure, using Language Pedagogical Cheers in Tertiary Institutions and its Gloom on Indigenous Languages (LAPECTIGLOOM) with four-point modified Likert scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree, which was validated by experts in language studies, and measurement and evaluation from Federal College of Education (Tech.) Omoku is the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument utilized the test-retest reliability technique, and a correlation coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the research questions, using SPSS version 20. The result of the study indicated that the English language is shifting the linguistic empathy of Nigerian bilinguals from the indigenous languages by modifications to achieve nativisation and acculturation to Nigerian concepts. The outcome shows that these modifications have challenged the prominence of indigenous languages as an L1, leading to a gradual loss of indigenous language relevance in Nigeria. The researcher, therefore, made recommendations on government policies, preservation force, and localization of discourses.

Keywords: English, Indigenous, Languages, Locations, Tertiary, Institutions

1. Introduction

Language pedagogical cheers in tertiary institutions and its gloom on indigenous languages in Nigeria studied the use of the English language amidst existing indigenous languages over the Centuries and how these collisions have affected the indigenous language use of students. The emergence of the English through the early Christian Missionaries and subsequent foreign traders was initially regarded as a foreign language amidst over 540 indigenous languages in Nigeria, but became a Target Language (TL) when the Federal Government declared it an official language and subsequently, the language of Education, trade and legislation (UNESCO, 2006; Opara and Njemanze, 2010; Gilbert, 2019).

The official recognition and classification of the British standard of English by the Federal Government gave the nation a lot of linguistic advantages among the comity of nations in bilateral

discourses. As it were, this lingual applause of the English became prominent in the institutions of learning with a view that the knowledge of English is termed educated, civilized, and enlightened. Having this view in mind, the English language became a course of study at all levels of the education curriculum in Nigeria. Furthermore, the situation metamorphosed to a rule that requires the pupil to score a good grade in the English language examination before they could be given admission into the secondary school and subsequently into the tertiary institutions (Seleh & Ngharen, 2023).

As a language of education, English has been the language used for teaching and learning of different subjects of study, hence pedagogical cheers. Subsequently, the language (English) has also introduced new forms and varieties in social media. As the growth of usage of English expands among learners in the tertiary institutions via school discourses, leading to a noticeable drifting and neglect of the potencies of indigenous language usage (Amadi, 2023). The drifting from the indigenous language usage could be of varying degrees depending on the factors utilized in the assessment at different locations.

2. Statement of the problem

The utilization of English as a language of education, commerce, legislation, and entertainment in different higher institutions has enjoyed pedagogical cheers over the years and more conspicuously in recent times. Linguistic scholars of different ages have given reasons for language drifting, shift, and extinction, ranging from dominant culture and language from the Western world, low interest of indigenes in the development of their local languages, and imposition of language status by the government, among others. In Nigeria, the widespread use of the English language, parents' inability to pass their language and culture to their children, in addition to the country's rapid modernization and urbanization, has assisted in the degeneration of citizens from the use of their indigenous languages. This research, therefore, utilizes the under-listed objectives to explore available information on the type and degree of challenges affecting the indigenous languages as a result of the use of English in selected tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

2.1. Objectives of the study

The main objectives of this study are to:

- i. Investigate the type of pedagogical cheers of the English in tertiary institutions.
- ii. Identify the challenges of indigenous languages amidst English language pedagogical cheers.
- iii. state the mean level of gloominess on the different indigenous languages.

2.2. Research questions

1. What are the pedagogical cheers on the use of the English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
2. In what ways have the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages?
3. At what mean level has the gloominess influenced indigenous languages in the different institutions in Nigeria?

2.3. Significance of the study

The study has social and academic significance. Socially, the study will expose the strength of indigenous languages and their utilization among indigenes in Nigeria. Academically, the study will showcase the level of English language usage in the general education of Nigerians. Its findings will provide guides on how to preserve and prevent indigenous languages from extinction.

2.4. Scope of the study

Specifically, the study is restricted to students of specific selected educational institutions in the West, East, South, North and Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, namely: University of Ibadan, situate geographically at **Latitude:**7.3912° N and **Longitude:**3.9167° E (Western Nigeria), Imo State University, situate geographically at **Latitude:**5.5037° N and **Longitude:**7.0438° E (Eastern Nigeria), Rivers State University, situate geographically at **Latitude:**4.9069° N and **Longitude:**6.9170° E (Southern Nigeria), Sokoto State University, situate geographically at **Latitude:**12.9410° N and **Longitude:**5.1986° E (Northern Nigeria) and University of Abuja, situate geographically at **Latitude:**8.9512° N and **Longitude:**7.0722° E (the Centre of Nigeria).

3. Literature review

Reviews are done to ascertain the extent of scholarship in a given pedagogical domain. As a result, language-related issues in tertiary institutions and the challenges facing indigenous languages in Nigeria have been investigated severally in different academic publications as an indication that there are still some untold issues in the Nigerian language system. In their publication, Taiwo and Van Pinxteren (2023) aver that the most ethnolinguistic diverse nation in the world is Nigeria. They argue that Nigeria provides a case study for issues relating to indigenous languages in tertiary education delivery. They further deliberated on the restrictions to what the educational system in Nigeria can accomplish by the use of English as the medium of instruction. The study measured the complicated linguistic maquillage of Nigeria and outlines a number of ideologies that could assist the reintroduction of Nigerian native languages into higher education.

Until the reintroduction and implementation of Nigerian's use of native languages in higher education, it is obvious that from when Britain became colonial ruler in parts of the world, English became the language of instruction/education till date: English based education is considered globalized system of learning as the English has become a guiding language for people studying French, German, Spanish, Arabic and indigenous languages in Nigeria and parts of the world. In addition, internet sources opined that English is the most prevalent language for learning in 116 out of 194 nations, followed by French (35/194), Spanish (32/194), German (9/194) while Swedish, Italian, and Turkish have a three-way tie of 1/194 each. English-based education (a system of learning that is guided by an English language curriculum or that uses English as a language of instruction) exists in circular, religious, and professional academies across the continents of the world.

In the promotion of languages that are indigenous among Nigerians, Benson, Anyalebechi and Ariole (2017) found some eminent restrictive challenges, which include non-expertise in indigenous language usage, insufficient paperwork on indigenous languages, and the preference for the English language. Their findings show that the sustainability of indigenous languages from extinction depends on the promotion of the indigenous languages from the home base, the formation of Centers for the Development of Native Languages in Nigeria, writing books on contemporary issues in indigenous languages, translating literary works in indigenous languages to audio, and the inclusion of indigenous languages in general courses in schools' curriculum.

Indeed, prior to the absorption of the geo-political space currently known as Nigeria, there was already a multi-lingual situation of over 540 indigenous languages. However, the arrival and acceptance of the English was with the intention of unity, development of Nigeria as a nation, and globalization. To achieve this intention, in addition to the post-colonial experience, Nigeria adopted English as an official language for education, legislation, and commerce, among others. Over the years, the English language in Nigeria has been pluralized to regions (Pidgin English and Creoles) in what is currently referred to as Port Harcourt Pidgin, Warri Pidgin, Kano Pidgin, Aba Pidgin, among others, and their standardized form known as Naijá, in addition to the fast-growing global social-media language forms of English.

In this societal lingual situation, Amadi (2023) observed that when an urgent need for quick communication among young people in Nigeria arises, they quickly move to a new trend in the use of English by subjecting the language to several mutilations and changes to suit their purpose, giving birth to what is now known as Englishes. She further held that the new trends of English are used in social media platforms and spread across other platforms. The scholar argues that it is usually

difficult in research to do a wide sampling of data for the analysis of the new trend English developed as a result of the social, cultural, and linguistic influences from all quarters. The new trend in English, she said, is an embodiment of some new characteristics, such as high-pitched pronunciation, lots of abbreviations, and shortening of words.

Notably, this development has affected the speaking and writing situation of the standard of English (British) approved for education in Nigeria. Commenting on this ugly development, Prof. Christian Anieke of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, told newsmen (Nigerian Punch Newspaper of 3rd December, 2022) that making speech and writing in English is a major challenge to many Nigerian graduates. This is as a result of their much concentration on the New Trend Social Media Englishes.

Furthermore, the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in 2006, predicted the extinction of the Igbo language in the next 50 years, following the influence of English among Igbo language users. Similarly, a prediction was also made in the year 2018, holding that a set of Nigerian indigenous languages is likely to go extinct in a few years if proactive measures are not taken. The proactive measures (I guess) are the linguistic efforts done by scholars over the years that have sustained the Igbo language. Again, Afolabi, Olubusola, in his work on Nigerian languages going extinct in the year 2003, held that language is a significant feature of every culture that affords a sole capability for interconnectivity, building relationships, and community intimacy. Adding that, if a language goes extinction, its culture and community togetherness also risks extinction.

This regrettable linguistic situation in Nigeria exists in different states and geopolitical locations of the nation, thereby bringing the research to the borders of thought on language pedagogical cheers in tertiary institutions and its gloom on indigenous languages in Nigeria. This identified vacuum is what the current reality intends to fill.

4. Methodology

In academic research, the technique of derivation is usually explained. The techniques, according to Ndiyo, (2005) and Osuji (2012) cited in Gilbert (2021), range from the research design, population of study, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, and methods of data analysis.

Research design:

This study utilized the descriptive survey research design. According to Babbie (2021), survey design aids the examination of hundreds and even thousands of respondents and permits evaluation of complex propositions, and lends itself to many variables that can be measured and administered electronically.

Population of the study

The population of this study consists, first of all, of second language users of English (bilinguals) of nineteen thousand, five hundred and thirty two (19,532) students derived through the random sampling of five (5) different institutions of learning (mentioned in the scope of study). During the time of this research, the University of Ibadan had a population of 41,269 students, Imo State University had 16,000 students, Rivers State University had 20,000 students, Sokoto State University had 8,000 students, and the University of Abuja had over 30,000 students. The five Universities have a similar nature (Universities located in the state capitals) with specific indigenous languages (Yoruba, Igbo, Ikwere, Hausa, and Gwari) as the languages of their immediate environments (henceforth, LOIE). The choice of the five institutions from the numerous learning institutions in Nigeria is to reflect the geopolitical zones of the country.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents

S/No	Institution	Geopolitical Location	Num. of students	25%	LOIE	Number of Respondents
1.	University of Ibadan	West	41,269	1,032	Yoruba	1,032
2.	Imo State University	East	16,000	4,000	Igbo	4,000
3.	Rivers State University	South	20,000	5,000	Ikwere	5,000
4.	Sokoto State University	North	8,000	2,000	Hausa	2,000
5.	University of Abuja	Centre	30,000	7,500	Gwari	7,500
	Total					19,532

Source: (HODs Office of the schools of 2024-2025 academic session)

Sample size and sampling technique:

The sampling size of the study was eight thousand, eight hundred (8,800), which were respondents selected from the five Universities (made up of both male and female). This random sampling technique of bilingual respondents was selected from the schools to represent the entire population.

Instrument for data collection:

The sources used to gather information in this study are two: the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is a constructed questionnaire entitled Language Pedagogical Cheers in Tertiary Institutions and its Gloom on Indigenous Languages 'LAPECTIGLOOM' (Appendix A) which contain sixteen items used for the collation of information on 'four point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD) basis in addition to other vital information got from various publications and documents of many organizations and scholars that relate to this subject under investigation. Eight thousand, eight hundred (8,800) copies of the questionnaire instrument were retrieved and used for the study.

5. Data analysis

The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were utilized for the analysis of the data. The mean of the questionnaire items was calculated and interpreted based on the arithmetical real limit of numbers as presented below.

$$\text{With the formula} = \bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

The sum of points was calculated as:

$$\frac{4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

For the investigation questions, therefore, mean scores of between 3.50 – 4.00 were regarded as Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 were regarded as Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 were regarded as Disagree (D), while mean scores of between 1.00 – 1.49 will be treated as Strongly Disagree (SD).

The discussion and findings made use of the questionnaire (LAPECTIGLOOM) instrument to gather information that provided answers to the research questions, as follows:

Research question 1: What are the pedagogical cheers on the use of the English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Table 2: A table showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of pedagogical cheers on the use of the English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions N= 8,800

S/N	Items	X ₁	SD	Decision
1.	The use of English language enhances students' comprehension during lectures.	3.55	0.73	SA
2.	English language facilitates better academic communication between lecturers and students.	3.9	0.89	SA
3.	Students perform better in examinations when taught in English language.	3.80	0.72	SA
4.	The use of English promotes access to academic textbooks and global learning materials.	3.36	0.66	SA
5.	English language helps students participate more confidently in class discussions.	3.7	0.63	SA
6.	The use of English improves students' academic writing and research skills.	3.40	0.55	A
7.	English language instruction prepares students for international academic and professional opportunities.	3.68	0.61	SA
8.	The use of English language helps unify students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.	3.65	0.64	SA
Grand mean		3.6	0.6	SA

Source: field Survey, 2025

Items 1-8 of the respondent gave a mean score of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.6. From the indication, the respondents agreed that English is the language utilized for teaching and learning and for other communication purposes in all the institutions investigated.

Research question 2: In what ways have the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages?

Table 3: A table showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of ways the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages N=8,800

S/N	Items	X ₁	SD	Decision
9.	The use of English language in schools discourages students from learning their indigenous languages.	3.15	0.73	A
10.	Indigenous languages are gradually losing relevance in academic discourse due to the dominance of English.	2.9	0.59	A
11.	Students are less proficient in their mother tongues because of the focus on English in formal education.	2.6	0.42	A
12.	Indigenous languages are not encouraged or supported within the curriculum of tertiary institutions.	2.8	0.57	A
13.	English language is seen as more prestigious than indigenous languages in academic settings.	2.7	0.55	A
14.	The dominance of English language limits the development of indigenous language literature and scholarship.	2.9	0.65	A
15.	Lecturers rarely use indigenous languages, even when all students share the same local language.	2.9	0.61	A
16.	Tertiary education in English has contributed to the erosion of cultural identity among students.	2.7	0.34	A
Grand mean		2.8	0.78	A

Source: field Survey, 2025

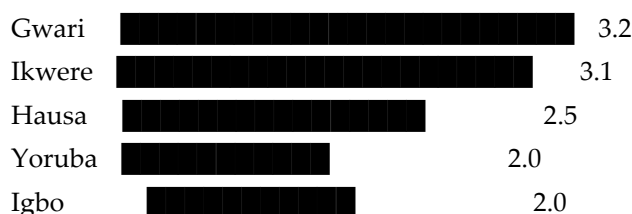
Items 9-16 were used to collate the answer, which shows the ways in which the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages among students in selected Universities in Nigeria.

Research question 3: At what mean level has the gloominess influenced indigenous languages in the different institutions in Nigeria?

Using items 3, 9, and 10 in Table 3, the **mean differences in the perceived gloominess** of the indigenous languages and the languages of the immediate environment of the tested institutions based on a **4.0 scale rating** are presented in **chart format**:

Language	Institution	Mean Rating (4.0 Scale)	Gloominess Level
Yoruba	University of Ibadan	2.0	Moderate
Igbo	Imo State University	2.0	Moderate
Ikwere	Rivers State University	3.1	High
Hausa	Sokoto State University	2.5	Moderately High
Gwari	FCT Abuja	3.2	Very High

Scale chart:



6. Data findings and discussion

The discussion and findings made use of questions one, two, and three alongside the data gathered from LAPECTIGLOOM (the questionnaire) to guide the following:

Research question 1: What are the pedagogical cheers on the use of the English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

From the respondents' responses in Table 2, the results revealed that English is the language utilized for teaching and learning and for other communication purposes in all the institutions investigated. These findings are related to the study of UNESCO (2006) and Afolabi (2023). UNESCO's concentration was on the Igbo language as risking extinction in the next fifty (50) years, but the current reality (utilizing Yoruba, Igbo, Ikwere, Hausa and Gwari languages) has shown that the issue of language endangerment and possible extinction stretches across Nigeria, due to the influence of the language of contemporary education (the English) in tertiary institutions. To Afolabi (2023), language is an important aspect of every culture and provides the sole capability to communicate. It follows that the loss of any language leads to the loss of its given culture: in this case, the English language is shifting the linguistic empathy of Nigerian bilinguals from their indigenous languages.

Research question 2: In what ways have the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages?

From the respondents' responses in Table 3, the respondents stated that the use of the English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages among

students in selected Universities in Nigeria. These findings are related to the study of Jowitt (1991) and Udofot (2003) cited in Opara and Njemanze (2010), which states that the English language in Nigeria has gone through modifications to achieve nativisation and acculturation for Nigerian concepts and modes of interaction. These modifications of the English to achieve nativisation and acculturation of Nigerian concepts have challenged the prominence of indigenous languages as an L1, because a greater number of Nigerian bilinguals (especially those in the tertiary institutions) learn their native language as an L2.

Research Question 3: At what mean level has the gloominess influenced indigenous languages in the different institutions in Nigeria?

From the respondents' responses in Table 3, items 3, 9, and 10 in the chat have shown that Gwari, which is the indigenous language of the Federal Capital Territory where the University of Abuja is situated, and Ikwere, the indigenous language of Rivers State University environment, have the **highest gloominess perception** on the chat list. The **Yoruba and Igbo** languages of the University of Ibadan and Imo State University are perceived to have **lower gloominess**, indicating relative efforts in the retention of indigenous languages in the different locations. However, the **Hausa** language tested at Sokoto State University lies in the **middle**, signifying a **modest level of gloominess**.

These findings tally with Eme (2004) and Nwadike (2008), cited in Nwigwe and Izuagha (2010). In addition, Nwigwe and Izuagha quoted Njemanze (2007), who found (in her article) that out of the 46.6% of parents who communicate with their children in an indigenous language, only 33.3% of the same sample communicate with their grandchildren in an indigenous language.

7. Contributions of the study

This study has contributed to the awareness of the current sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria. It has synergized the study of language with statistics and environmental analysis, which was further explained in the domain of principles and parameters theory.

8. The implications of the study

The implications of this study are that the findings suggest a great pressure of decline in usage of indigenous languages among University students in parts of Nigeria. The situation suggests a possible extinction of the investigated languages from their usage in campuses in the next fifteen years.

In view of the language attrition by English (diverting the grip of indigenous languages on the upcoming generation leaders) and the need to check the pessimism on indigenous languages, the researcher recommends that:

- i. Government policies should provide preservative modalities for the indigenous languages at all levels of formal education in Nigeria.
- ii. indigenes should provide preservation forces in graphic representations, playlets, cartooning, customization in software, and artificial intelligence.
- iii. Interactions among indigenes of a given locality should be localized to an indigenous language discourse.

9. Conclusion

The pedagogical cheer accorded to the English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions is diminishing the grip of indigenous languages (language attrition) on the upcoming generation of

leaders who are still in the tertiary level across Nigeria. The rate of such influence as contained in the Mean and Standard Deviation table of this study among scholars in the tertiary institutions (who are being trained to become teachers and lecturers of subsequent generations) is an attempt to the nativisation of English in Nigeria, as there are speakers of English as L1 already (language dominance) in the country.

In principle, the indigenous languages are the languages of the immediate environment, but the parameters have shown that in the West, East, South, North, and Centre of Nigeria, there is a gradual decline in which every indigenous language has its percentage of suffrage. A gradual decline of the relevance of indigenous languages at the dominance of English exists at different ratios: leading to language shift (where the indigenous language usage is replaced by English), and the reclamation of their relevance at such quarters is dependent on government policies, preservation force of the indigenes, and localization of discourses.

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Appendix A

Title of Instrument: Language Pedagogical Cheers in Tertiary Institutions and its Gloom on Indigenous Languages (LAPECTIGLOOM)

1. Name of respondent: _____
2. Age bracket of respondent: Male Youth Female Youth Adults
3. Respondents place of origin: _____
4. What is your current academic level? 100 level 200 level 300 level 400 level

Research Question 1: What are the pedagogical cheers on the use of English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
1.	The use of English language enhances students' comprehension during lectures.				
2.	English language facilitates better academic communication between lecturers and students.				
3.	Students perform better in examinations when taught in English language.				
4.	The use of English promotes access to academic textbooks and global learning materials.				
5.	English language helps students participate more confidently in class discussions.				
6.	The use of English improves students' academic writing and research skills.				
7.	English language instruction prepares students for international academic and professional opportunities.				
8.	The use of English language helps unify students from diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.				

Research Question 2: In what ways have the use of English language in the selected Nigerian tertiary institutions challenged the indigenous languages?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
9.	The use of English language in schools discourages students from learning their indigenous languages.				
10.	Indigenous languages are gradually losing relevance in academic discourse due to the dominance of English.				
11.	Students are less proficient in their mother tongues because of the focus on English in formal education.				
12.	Indigenous languages are not encouraged or supported within the curriculum of tertiary institutions.				
13.	English language is seen as more prestigious than indigenous languages in academic settings.				
14.	The dominance of English language limits the development of indigenous language literature and scholarship.				

15	Lecturers rarely use indigenous languages, even when all students share the same local language.				
16	Tertiary education in English has contributed to the erosion of cultural identity among students.				