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THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE CODE MIXING AND SWITCHING ON EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study is centred on the effects of language code mixing and switching on effective teaching and learning in primary schools in Ilorin metropolis. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study consists of all primary school pupils in Ilorin metropolis basically Ilorin South Local Government. Ten pupils were systematically and randomly selected across seven schools amounting to seventy (70) pupils. An adapted questionnaire tagged Language Code-Mixing, Switching & Teaching and Learning Questionnaire (LCMSTLQ) was used for the study. The instrument made up of two sections: Section A, and B. The section A contained items eliciting the bio-data of the participants and general guideline on how to fill the questionnaire appropriately while section B contained statements (15 items) on Four-points Likert Scale requiring the respondents to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement to the proposed items. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out of which twenty five (25) respondents with the same class and attributes but not part of the researcher's proposed sample schools were adopted .The responses obtained were aptly correlated using frequency counts and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient respectively. The findings show that, language code mixing and language code switching is an effective way of teaching and learning in primary schools in Ilorin. It was that, the learners learn well when their teacher mixes or switches effectively in the process of teaching and learning. Teachers should be conversant and fluent in the usage of both mother tongue and English language in schools and sometimes switches whenever the lesson seems less understandable to the learners.

Introduction

At every stage of human life, communicating with others is imperative. The foetus in the womb has a way of communicating with its mother in distinctively unique ways, especially when the baby is mature for delivery. Language is the primary means of communicating and it is an arbitrary vocal system of communication used among members of a speech community (Dada 2004 in Ibrahim 2016). The concept of code-switching among bilingual children is no longer a mirage but a reality that we have to welcome.

Factually, living languages grow, those languages that fail to grow die. Language as a living entity, changes, grows and expands spheres and modes of usage from generation to generation. The extent to which language grows or expands may be proportional to the expansion of areas of human endeavours where it is used. Once there is need for communications in the moon, across the sea, down in the bowels of the earth, etc. there would be means for meeting the challenges (Ibrahim 2016).

Language is man's most priced possessions. It is his major vehicle for self expression and a mark of his personal and group identity. The lull on the language issue was broken when in 1977, the Federal Military Government took a bold step to enunciate a National policy on Education and to enshrine in it what is regarded as the first policy statement on the Nigerian Language question. It was the 1969 Curriculum Conference attended by a Cross section of Nigerians that gave birth to the National Policy on Education, first published in 1977, revised in 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2013 respectively that underscores the importance of language in the educational process (Anyanwu, 2001)

Paragraph 15(4) of the Revised NPE (2013) specifies the language at the primary level of education that Government will see to it that medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue or language of the immediate community and, at a later stage, English.

Adetuyi et'al (2016) here pointed out that despite the status of the English language in Nigeria, especially in the area of formal education, indigenous languages still hold their strong positions, especially in the area of literacy. With the two languages used side by side, there arises the issue of language choice and code switching or code-mixing. Code-switching is the mixing of more than one language in a discourse and it is an evidence of language contact. In the Nigerian situation, the contact is often between one local language and English regardless of one's tribe or background. In supporting the existence of code switching in language classrooms, Adetuyi et al (2016) further suggest that in the circumstances where codes switching is used due to an inability of expression, it serves for continuity in speech instead of presenting interference in language. In this respect, code switching stands to be a supporting element in the communication of information and social interaction; therefore, serves for communicative purposes in

the way that it is used as a tool for transference of meaning. Additionally, the functions of the teacher's code switching stand as supportive explanations for the strong sides of the phenomenon. All these in general lead to the idea that the use of code switching somehow builds a bridge from known to unknown and may be considered as an important element in teaching when used efficiently.

In addition, retention and performance of pupils especially in rural and remote schools are hindered by second language-barriers where neither teachers, nor learners are mother tongue speakers of English. Oftentimes, the multiplicity of languages represented in the classroom is deemed a hindrance to teaching and learning. The phenomenon of multiplicity of languages in a classroom is not going away so there is a need to actually begin to take a closer look at avenues by which the languages can be used to facilitate learning. Pretorius and Ribbens (2005), in a study carried out in a township school in South Africa, question grade 8 learners' inability to read, especially since English had been their language of learning and teaching. They opine that the poor results have severe repercussions for their academic performance and wonder how learning could ever take place. The results of the annual national assessment (ANA) confirm the same thing. The concern here is that even after so many years of exposure to English as the language of learning and teaching; those learners are still not proficient in its use for academic purposes.

In the light of the above, it is very important to explore how the multiplicity of languages represented in the classroom are used to the advantage of both learners and teachers. This is one of the reasons code switching and code mixing needs to be explored as a means of facilitating learning in multilingual classrooms. It is on this note that this research work intends to find out the effect of language code mixing and switching on effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.

Research Questions

1. What effect does the LCMS have on TL at the primary school level?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses derived from the research question will be tested in the study:

H01: There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.

H02: There is no significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.

H03: There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching in primary school in Ilorin.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine language code mixing and switching as a correlate of effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin. Specifically, the study seeks to find:

I. The relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.
II. The relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.
III. The relationship between language code mixing and switching and effective teaching and learning in primary school in Ilorin.

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study consists of all pupils in Ilorin metropolis, basically Ilorin South Local Government. Ten pupils were systematically and randomly selected across seven schools amounting to seventy (70) pupils.

An adapted questionnaire tagged Language Code-Mixing, Switching & Teaching and Learning Questionnaire (LCMSTLQ) was used for the study. The instrument made up of two sections: Section A, and B. The section A contained items eliciting the bio-data of the participants and general guideline on how to fill the questionnaire appropriately while section B contained statements (15 items) on Four-point Likert Scale requiring the respondents to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement to the proposed items. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was carried out in which twenty five (25) respondents with the same class and attributes but not part of the researcher's proposed sample schools were adopted .The responses obtained were aptly correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient respectively.

Hypotheses Testing

Three research hypotheses were generated in the course of this study, and were tested using Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 alpha levels.

$H0_1$: *There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in primary school*

In order to test this hypothesis, language code mixing and effective teaching and learning were correlated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 1: Summary Table of correlation Analysis showing the relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in primary school.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r. value	p. value	Decision '
Language code Mixing	70	37.37	4.616	0.627	0.000	Reject
Effective teaching	70	17.46	2.641			

Table 1shows that the p. value of 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05, thus, the null hypothesis **Ho1** which states that there is no significance relationship between the language code mixing and effective teaching is hereby rejected. This therefore means that, there is significant relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning primary schools. The Pearson product moment correlation value of 0.627 also shows strong correlation between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning, that is coding and mixing of language will aid effective teaching and learning.

H02: *There is no significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning in primary schools.*

In order to test this hypothesis, language code switching and effective teaching and learning were correlated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 2: Summary Table of correlation Analysis showing the relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r. value	P.	Value Decision
Language code switching	70	37.37	4.616	0.821	0.000	Reject
Effective teaching	70	19.91	3.607			

Table 2 shows that the p. value of 0.000 is less than the significant level of 0.05 thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning is hereby

rejected. This therefore means that, there is significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning. The Pearson product moment correlation value of 0.821 also shows strong correlation between language code switching and effective teaching and learning, that is coding and switching of language will aid effective teaching and learning.

H_{03}: *There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching.*

In order to test this hypothesis, language code mixing and language code switching were correlated. The output of the analysis reveals thus:

Table 3: Summary Table of correlation Analysis showing the relationship between language code mixing and language code switching

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	r. value	P. Value	Decision
Mixing	70	19.91	3.607			
				0.070	0.567	
		Accept				
Switching	70	17.46	2.641			

Table 3 shows that the p. value of 0.567 is greater than the significant level of 0.05 thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching is accepted. This therefore means that, there is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching. The Pearson product moment correlation value of 0.070 shows weak correlation between language code switching and language code mixing.

Summary of findings

1. There is significant relationship between the language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in primary schools.
2. There is significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning in primary schools.
3. There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching.

Discussion of findings

It is clear from the findings that there is significant relationship between language code mixing and effective teaching and learning in Ilorin primary schools. This was backed up by the significant value of 0.000 which is less than the constant significant value of 0.05. This implies that pupils tend to understand their school subjects more when their teachers mix mother tongue with English language.

The finding also has it that there is significant relationship between language code switching and effective teaching and learning in primary schools in Ilorin South. This finding was justified by the significant value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 constant significant value. This implies that pupils in Ilorin schools learn more effectively when their teachers switch from English to mother tongue as a means of passing instruction to them during lessons in the classroom.

This finding is in line with the assertion of Macdonald (1990) in Ibrahim (2016) which says the use of code switching and code mixing oftentimes supports learning because the learners get a clearer picture of the subject matter, and are also able to express their own understanding and questions more readily. After all, what is the point of teaching a "good" lesson if half of the class does not understand and is not carried along? Studies have shown that where the learners are conversant with the language of learning (medium of instruction) there is more interaction and willingness to participate and attempts to answer questions.

There is no significant relationship between language code mixing and language code switching. This assertion was justified with a significant value 0.567 which is greater than the standard significant value of 0.05.

Conclusion

Language code mixing and code switching are effective ways of teaching in primary schools in Ilorin. Teachers are encouraged to mix both English and mother tongue when passing instructions to the learners. In order to translate this into action, the process requires improvisation and effective use of local materials especially where the real instructional materials are not available.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research work, the following recommendations were made to improve the pupil's academic performance in Ilorin South Local Government.

1. Learning is made easier when both language code mixing and language code switching are used, therefore teacher s should endeavour to mix and switch language code in an effective way.
2. Teachers should also be at alert in order to know whenever he/she is to mix or switch in the process of the lesson delivery.

3. The authorities concerned should endeavour to provide enough teachers that can effectively speak both the language of the immediate environment and as well the official language fluently.
4. In code mixing and code switching, while teaching requires more time, additional teaching and practical demonstrative hours should therefore be provided adequately and appropriately. .

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