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ESL Curriculum: Oral Language Acquisition for Teaching Under-Privileged School-Aged
Children of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan, Nigeria.

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Hamline University

St. Paul, Minnesota

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Poverty and Shared Prosperity series of the World Bank Group (2020), reports that before the year 2020, extreme poverty was steadily declining across the world. Unfortunately, the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 is affecting the already-poor and vulnerable people, and also creating millions of *new poor*. Regrettably, children that are younger than age 15 form half of the poor population in the world. These children are deprived of the basic needs of life such as food, shelter, and education. For the sake of this work, my focus is on these children who have been deprived of the basic education needed for oral communication in English Language. The research question is: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? As an English Language teacher, I spent nearly a decade teaching English at local and international elementary and secondary schools in Nigeria. I was opportuned to teach in schools where some parents could not afford to pay their children's school fees. Some of these students were usually sent out of school in search of these fees. While some of them returned to school frustrated, others could not withstand the humiliation and the reoccurring psychological trauma. So they dropped out of school and got themselves involved in some vices within the society. The other group of children that I observed within my teaching community are those who have never been to school since they were born. There are some of them who do not have anyone to provide for them. There was also another group who had people to provide for them but their parents or

guardians could not afford to either send them to public schools or the expensive private schools. Unfortunately, these under-privileged children are isolated from society because they lack the basic oral English skills needed for communication within a multi-ethnic Nigerian Society. Following these experiences, I resolved to seek possible solutions to this societal menace that is depriving poor children from expressing themselves in English within the society. My research question is: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? My capstone project addresses this topic by developing a specific curriculum unit that addresses the challenge of oral language acquisition by deprived school-aged children of Rescue The Hopeless Mission, Ibadan, Nigeria. I will incorporate authentic materials to design this specific curriculum.

Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines my personal and professional journey to the field of English as a Foreign Language, how that journey has informed my research question and project, and the significance of this project to students, colleagues, and scholars across the world. In the rest of this chapter, I will share more details about my personal background and teaching experiences in Nigeria. I will also explain the rationale behind this project and give a preview of the literature that will be synthesized and analyzed in Chapter Two. To conclude, I will summarize the main points of this chapter and give an overview for upcoming chapters.

My Personal and Professional Background

I grew up in a Nigerian home and environment, with Yoruba language as the home language, English as a language spoken in school or for other formal purposes, and

Pidgin for a less formal setting within the community. Although my parents were not wealthy, they understood the importance of education and struggled to send all their children to school. They did this without having any access to student loans or a major government support. I could recall that public primary and secondary education were free, but parents were still expected to pay some levis, buy texts, and other school supplies. I could remember how my father was doing four jobs at some point just to be able to provide for us. My mother had a job and equally took care of us back home. So, I did not have all the luxuries of life as a child, but I attended relatively good schools and acquired the needed language skills and knowledge for effective communication in English.

On language development, they ensured that I spoke Yoruba at home and spoke English in school or in other formal functions as required by government policies. The English language was the language of prestige in society. Interestingly, my parents never forbade its use at home. So I became so passionate about the language. As an elementary student, I could recall times that I chose to communicate in English at home, and how my siblings would assess my grammar, and laugh at my errors. My father, of blessed memory, always prevented them from making me a laughing stock due to the errors I committed. He encouraged me to speak English and Yoruba at home whenever I deemed it fit. So, right from my elementary school, I had a special interest in English Language and Mass Communication. On the other hand, I saw children in the environment whose parents could not afford to send them to school.

This burning passion for English and the unfavorable conditions of some children that I observed in school and in the community at large, motivated me to teach for 1 year

in a primary school when I graduated from secondary school. After my Bachelor's degree in 2007, I started my teaching career officially in a secondary school where I taught English. Later, I taught English, and Literature in both local and international secondary schools in Nigeria. During my teaching career, I came across some children who could barely communicate in English. It was so difficult for this group of students to interact with their teachers and classmates in school. I noticed that some of these students could not attend standard primary schools where they would have learned how to speak English. Although most parents in Nigeria desired that their children fluently communicate in English, it was not all parents that could afford to give their children a sound background that could develop their language skills.

Similarly, I observed some children within the community whose parents could not afford to send them to any school at all. This is highly prevalent in rural areas. There are some of them that are introduced to farming by their parents or guardians. There are others that had to learn a trade since their mother tongue is usually the means of communication. I could vividly recall children who were asked to stay at home because their parents could not afford to send all their children to school at once. Eventually, some of these children could never attend school until they were old. While it is true that they could communicate in Yoruba and other indigenous languages within the community, they were usually stigmatized among their educated peers who could communicate orally in English. The reason for this stigmatization is not far-fetched. Standard English has attained a high level of prestige within Nigerian society. It is the language of communication in public offices, interviews, and religious worship centers. In fact, it is the language of communication in school from elementary to university. It is always

interesting each time I recall that during my school days, indigenous languages were referred to as vernacular while the standard English was imposed on us. With this development, students who could not express themselves in English within the school premises were punished by teachers or stigmatized by their peers. The most unfortunate aspect of this situation is that these groups of students who are deprived of basic communication skills in English are equally and indirectly prevented from attending job interviews in formal settings, or carrying out other important economic and social functions in the society later in life. They are sometimes portrayed as the less intelligent children in society.

In 2013, I enrolled for a master's degree in Anthropology. I became highly interested in Cultural Anthropology and Applied Anthropology. My interest in Cultural Anthropology is borne out of the fact that it focuses on the study of cultural variation among humans, while my interest in Applied Anthropology is mainly because it is designed to practically solve problems outside of the academic world. Following my interest in poverty and language acquisition, I had my final research work on poverty and its attendant problems. Shortly after my master's program in Anthropology, I immigrated to the United States and eventually started a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Journey to Research Project

Following my rich experience on the relationship between poverty and language acquisition, I started this master's degree program in Summer 2020. The aim of enrolling for this program is to develop more skills to teach English to the under-privileged children in Africa and across the world. Having observed how some of my students

struggled with formal writing in the past, I wanted to carry out research work on the role of grammar in writing. Down the line, my family and I started a non-governmental organization in Nigeria known as Rescue the Hopeless Mission. The aim of this organization is to provide food, shelter and education to school-aged children and young adults who are deprived of these basic needs. After much exposure during classes such as Exploring Learner Language and Second Language Acquisition, Pedagogical Grammar and Discourse, English Teaching Practices, Language and Society, Linguistics for Language Teachers, and Advanced Linguistic Analysis in the previous semesters of this program, I resolved to embark on research that would have a direct impact on the deprived children at Rescue the Hopeless Mission, and other vulnerable children in Nigeria.

To this end, the question to this research is: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Ibadan, Nigeria? An EFL Curriculum on Oral Language Acquisition for Teaching the Under-Privileged Children of Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Nigeria will be developed and presented in the later chapters of this work.

Rationale

English Language is the official language of communication in schools, offices and some homes in Nigeria. Unfortunately within the society, there are children who do not have basic skills for oral communication in English because they have no one to care for them. There are those who are orphans and are left to roam around without any succor. There are those whose parents are alive but are so poor and unable to attend to the basic needs of their children. So, these innocent children are left alone at a tender age to

fend for themselves. It is expected that such children would never have any plan for basic education. Even if they do, they mostly cannot afford to send themselves to school after sorting out their feeding. So, they end up without any basic English skills, and are stigmatized and accorded little or no respect in the society. The reason for this stigmatization is not far-fetched. Standard English has attained a high level of prestige within Nigerian society. It is the language of communication in public offices, interviews, and religious worship centers. In fact, it is the language of communication in school from elementary to university. It is always interesting each time I recall that during my school days, indigenous languages were referred to as vernacular while the standard English was imposed on us. With this development, students who could not express themselves in English within the school premises were punished by teachers or stigmatized by their peers. To such children, the future looks quite uncertain. Therefore, my main aim is to understand how poverty impacts the oral language acquisition of English by school-aged children in Nigeria.

Since these deprived children deeply need the basic oral proficiency in English, this work will attempt to provide possible solutions to this challenge. EFL curriculum for teaching of oral language to under-privileged school-aged children of Rescue the Hopeless Mission will be developed. The work will adopt the use of authentic materials that could expose these learners to real-world situations. What they need is not just a certificate but the basic skills for oral communication outside the classroom. Therefore, the development of this curriculum will fulfill my academic and life goals. This will provide teaching materials for the commencement of Rescue the Hopeless Mission school, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Further, this project will validate my experiences on the impact of poverty on oral language acquisition of English by school-aged children. This aim will be achieved through the extensive study of relevant literature on the meaning of important concepts like poverty, language acquisition, oral language, and the importance of English in Nigeria.

Finally, the outcome of this research will be useful for ESL teachers and students to proffer solutions to numerous challenges facing children in Africa and the world at large.

Conclusion and Chapter Overview

Poverty is a global phenomenon that impacts different categories of people in the world. Unfortunately, school-aged children are not exempted. It has deprived some of them of food, shelter, and the basic education skills that are needed for oral communication of English. It is quite regrettable to observe that children from low-income homes do not always learn the social skills needed for school (Ferguson et al., 2007). This research seeks to suggest and/or proffer solutions to the research question: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? In a bid to attempt possible solutions to the challenge brought on school-aged children by poverty, this research further intends to develop an EFL curriculum for the teaching of Oral Language to these under-privileged children. I strongly opine that the outcome of this research would greatly contribute to the existing knowledge in the field of second language acquisition, and poverty.

This chapter explored my personal background and interest in second language acquisition and poverty. It outlined my professional journey to the field of English as a

Foreign Language. I discussed the rationale for my project: a need to understand the impacts of poverty on school-aged children in relation to their acquisition of oral English language skills. This connects to my topic question: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? I further described my interest and plans to create an EFL curriculum.

In Chapter Two, I will review literature that centers on poverty, language acquisition, oral language, English Language as a Lingua Franca in Nigeria, the use of authentic materials to teach English, and curriculum development. Chapter Three will detail the entirety of this project and break down the different components. In this chapter, I will also explain the setting of the school and apply the relevant framework to this project. In Chapter Four, I will reflect on the process of this project and explore how the curriculum I create will be useful for Rescue the Hopeless Mission School Children in Nigeria, EFL teachers, and other stakeholders in the field of language acquisition.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

In my seven years of experience as an English Language teacher in Nigeria, I encountered different students who were affected by poverty. Following these effects of poverty, some of them could barely communicate in English among their peers or within the community since they are not proficient in English. Unfortunately, standard English as the lingua franca of the country is the medium of communication in Nigerian society. Therefore, it is expedient that any child who wants to communicate freely in the country, and also participate immensely in academic, economic, social, political and even religious activities in most settings within the country, needs to be proficient in English. The overall goal of this work is to examine the relationship between poverty and the oral language acquisition of English. Following this identified problem of oral language acquisition among school-aged children in Nigeria, the research question of this project is: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English Language by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? This chapter reviews relevant literature in the field of poverty and second language acquisition. The concept of poverty and its causes, effects and solutions are examined. The meaning of oral language is reviewed. I also shared more details about second language acquisition and curriculum development by carefully

analyzing and synthesizing scholars' views on these concepts. To conclude, I summarized the main points of this chapter and presented an overview for the upcoming chapter.

The concept of poverty

Poverty is a global phenomenon that affects many aspects of the human condition including the physical, the moral, and the physiological. In the words of Malumfashi (2008), the concept of poverty is expressed differently across ethnic, religious, economic, environmental, social and political settings due to its multifaceted nature. It is difficult to conceptualize it within a single context or environment. World Bank Report (1999) defines poverty as hunger, lack of shelter, being sick and not being able to attend school, inability to read and speak fluently, joblessness, fear for the future, the loss of a child to illness as a result of unclean water, powerlessness, and lack of representation and freedom. Poverty is not just lack of hunger but lack of ability and freedom to express one's opinion locally and nationally (Malumfashi, 2008). It is the lack of minimum requirements for a desirable living. It is an age-long problem with effects that do not reside with the poor alone but permeate through society (Malumfashi, 2008). Cuthrell et al. (2010) describe poverty as situational, generational and absolute. Situational poverty occurs due to specific circumstances such as illness and loss of jobs. This type is usually alleviated within a short period of time. Generational poverty is an ongoing cycle of poverty where two or more generations of families have limited resources in their possessions. Absolute poverty represents a condition where an individual struggles to survive and barely has extra resources for social and cultural engagements (Cuthrell et al., 2010). In addition, poverty is associated with deprivation and lack. It is the

deprivation and lack of what others, the rich, and the comfortable have in their possessions (Fitzgerald, 2006).

According to the Poverty and Shared Prosperity report (2020), the rural population accounts for forty-eight percent of the global population. Unfortunately, poverty is highly predominant in rural areas. It is estimated by the Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report (2020) that four of every five individuals living below the international poverty line live in rural areas. Regrettably, children and youth represent the larger population of the poor. These categories of children and youth between ages 15-24 make up two-thirds of the global poor. This unfavorable condition can be found around the world, but is predominant in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ferguson et al. (2007) affirm that these children from poor homes mostly lack the necessary motivation for school since they are denied the basic social skills needed for education. To this end, this research seeks to answer the following question: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria?

Causes of poverty

The causes of poverty can be associated with so many factors. Some of these factors are interwoven. The Poverty and Shared Prosperity series of the World Bank Group (2020) reports that Coronavirus-19 had a serious impact on the standard of living of people across the world. This report estimated that the global pandemic was going to put about one hundred million people across the world into extreme poverty in the year 2020. It has indeed led to economic disaster across the world since so many countries were plunged into recession. The recession has resulted in scarcity of funds and inflation in different countries of the world. In the words of Aliyu (2008), there are multiple

factors that are responsible for poverty across the world. These factors include: diseases, climate factors, oil spillage, poor economic growth, inappropriate economic policies by states, war, brain drain, exploitation of the poor by the rich, overpopulation and poor birth control system, historical factors, cultural factors, low wages, and poor human resource development. In a survey conducted in 2000 by Narayan et al. (as cited in Aliyu, 2008), social elements such as inadequate security, abuse of power, gender relationships, precarious livelihoods, disempowering institutions, and weak community organizations among other factors are responsible for poverty.

Policies. In the words of Shah (2006), the prevalence of poverty in most developing countries can also be attributed to the policies of international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This is because some of their policies are imposed to ensure debt repayment and economic restructuring that are capable of reducing spending on social services such as health and education. The unfavorable policies have lowered the standard of living of people in the developing countries. In a different manner, Fitzgerald (2006) opines that the poor themselves are to blame for the hardship they experience. This is because some poor people prefer to rely on state welfare benefits rather than working hard to provide for themselves and their families. This situation can also be extended to over dependence on government jobs instead of being creative enough to be self-employed.

Climate. Climate related threats such as flooding, drought and vector-borne diseases have also been identified as some of the causes of poverty. It is estimated that up to one hundred and thirty-two million people are likely to become poor by 2030 following the manifold effects of climate-change across the world. Regrettably,

Sub-Saharan Africa is mostly hit by this effect of climate change (The Poverty and Shared Prosperity series of the World Bank Group, 2020).

Effect of poverty

According to Amzat (2010), poverty has destabilized the process of education in Nigeria by depriving people from getting access to education. This situation is fueled by the corruption that is ravaging different sectors of the economy of the country. He opines that a lot of students who managed to go to school have eventually become dropouts since they could not afford the cost of education. As a result, some of them get involved in different vices such as prostitution, robbery, and theft. “In Nigeria, about 4.7 million children who are of Primary school age do not go to school. To reveal a more dreadful estimate, 10 million Nigerian children are deprived of Formal Education (Adebisi, 2015)”. In the author’s opinion, the lack of access to basic education by school-aged children is one of the crucial effects of poverty. The spread of poverty in Nigeria has led to the lack of educational facilities in some schools. Regrettably, this situation is affecting learning and quality of education (Amzat, 2010).

Solutions to poverty

Having acknowledged that poverty is a scourge that influences literacy education of school-aged children in Nigeria and other parts of the world, a number of measures to alleviate this menace have been offered by scholars in different literatures. Srinivas (2006) believes that building a more widespread commitment is the first step in overcoming poverty. This commitment should be anchored on a number of actions. One of such is the need for the benefits of economic growth to be equitably shared through an emphasis on more widespread employment. He opines that government policies should

not aggregate economic impact opportunities. Rather, there should be socially responsive venture capital and microcredit initiatives that can foster employment-generating businesses that complement local culture and environment. In addition to creating abundant employment opportunities, corruption harms society as a whole and it is only by fighting it that poverty can be alleviated. Corruption in government and private business places heavy costs on society. Hence, businesses should enact, publicize and follow codes of conduct banning corruption while citizens should demand greater transparency and due process in the corporate sector and create reform movements where necessary (Srinivas, 2006).

According to the Poverty and Shared Prosperity series of the World Bank Group 2020, lack of quality education is highly responsible for poverty in most rural areas. Aref (2011) equally opines that education is a major tool that is useful for poverty alleviation in rural areas. Improvements in the standard of education in rural settings aids general development and standard of living. It is one of the tools necessary to empower people in order for them to participate in the process of poverty alleviation in their societies. “Educationally speaking, the only way to reduce poverty is to make considerable investments in education. This investment provides many benefits such as skills enhancement and productivity among poor households” (Amzat, 2010, p.57). Bray (1999) advocates for the reshaping, upgrading and recapturing of the standard of education in Nigeria, in the interest of Nigerian children. Many children are deprived of standard education in Nigeria following financial constraints by their parents, and the poor standard of public education (Srinivas, 2006). Unfortunately, private schools are too costly for poor families. Hence, the government is capable of providing free and standard

education that will equip students with the necessary resources to take themselves out of poverty (Bray, 1999, as cited in Amuda, 2011). Further, there is the need for governments to improve their capacity in order to provide universal access to basic amenities of life and standard education (Srinivas, 2006). Similarly, broadening access to education and technology among marginalized groups, especially girls and women, could help in fighting poverty in different societies. This is because educational attainment of women has strong bearing on the well-being of their families and therefore efforts to improve education for girls and young women should be strengthened (Srinivas, 2006).

Finally, tackling poverty should not be treated in isolation but approached by considering various factors that are capable of alleviating it (Garba, 2010). It would be extremely difficult to combat poverty in developing countries as long as corruption persists and economic development policies and programmes are fashioned, designed and directed towards groups of influential people in the community rather than the masses (Srinivas, 2006).

Oral Language

Oral Language is quite essential for the development of language skills by children. The first section discusses the meaning of oral language. The second section examines the factors responsible for the development of oral language in childhood. The third section explores the importance of the acquisition of oral language by children.

Snow et al. (2014) describes oral language as one of the crucial school readiness skills needed by children before starting kindergarten and first grade. It is the use of one's ideas, thoughts and needs verbally. This language skill is required for survival as humans since language plays a crucial role in day to day activities.

Factors responsible for the development of oral language in childhood. It has been established by researchers that children who are privileged and encouraged to listen to stories, opinions and explanations about certain issues develop advanced oral communication skills. Unfortunately, it is not all children from poor homes that have access to storytelling. A survey carried out among some poor children in Brazil reveals that most of the children interviewed could only produce very short sentences and single word responses. The author suggests that the outcome of this poor sentence construction may be due to the poor oral activities offered by most schools where poor children attend (Campos et al., 2006 as cited in Wajskop, 2017). Whorrall and Cabell (2015) affirm that a child's linguistic environment is a major factor that is responsible for the development of oral language. According to them, most children living in relatively poor environments are not usually exposed to higher quantity and quality language learning environments.

Similarly, children develop oral language during play. Whenever children play, they attempt to transform the meaning of objects, gestures and actions through words. Sometimes they use some concrete supports like toys and gestures to create different learning activities that help them to develop the literary meaning of words needed for oral communication (Wajskop, 2017). In the opinion of Rajapaksha (2016), play provides the best learning experiences for children. Children learn naturally whenever they play with one another or other adults within the family or society. They learn how to interact with their environment and acquire skills for the development of advanced oral language skills. Vygotsky (1996) further observed that play possesses physical, cognitive and emotional tendencies for the development of major language skills in children (Vygotsky, 1996, as cited in Rajapaksha, 2016).

Children also develop oral language skills whenever adults consistently read books aloud to them. This act helps to expand verbal communicative skills that can influence other areas of early childhood education (Wajskop, 2017). Similarly, the development of oral language in children can be associated with the roles of teachers in school. A teacher-child conversation that includes the use of complex vocabulary words, open-ended and cognitively challenging questions from valuable sources, can help children develop basic oral language communicative skills. It is worthy of note that children tend to engage in conversations about activities in which they are fully involved. Unfortunately, not all teachers understand the unique role that meaningful teacher-child conversation plays in the development of basic vocabulary for oral language skills (Whorrall & Cabell, 2015). The authors further argue that if some of these teachers are given basic training, they can improve their level of conversation with children. They identify center time and meal time as some of the periods when teachers can engage preschool children in thought provoking conversations. In the words of Hong-Alex and Kortner (1995), there are some teacher-dominated classrooms where learners are hardly given the opportunity to engage in oral conversations. The teachers spend several hours talking while children listen without participating in the discussions. Stabb (1986, as cited in Hong-Alex & Kortner, 1995) strongly argues that students' inability to reason adequately as they transition from a lower grade to a higher grade is related to the steady decline in the use of oral language in the classroom. If one goes by this claim, the significance of teacher-child conversation in the development of oral language skills is quite enormous. One may therefore suggest that in an attempt to further develop the oral language skills of school-aged children, teachers should not assume the role of

authoritarian knowledge giver. They should rather serve as facilitators of student learning (Hong-Alex and Kortner, 1995).

Second Language Acquisition

Second Language Acquisition as a subdiscipline of applied linguistics, is a relatively new field of study (Celce-Murcia et al., 2020). This subsection reviews literature related to the meaning of second language acquisition. It also examines the factors responsible for the development of second languages by school-aged children in Nigeria. It is hoped that the insight gained in this review will guide in developing an ESL Curriculum in chapter 4.

Meaning of second language acquisition. An additional language a child or an individual acquires after the first language is referred to as the second language. Second language acquisition is the study of individuals or groups who are learning a new language after acquiring their mother tongue which is mostly referred to as first language. Although this particular language may sometimes be the third or the twentieth language to be acquired, it still maintains its name as the second language (Saville-Troike, 2003). Loewen (2020) affirms that in multilingual societies, children may gain exposure to two or more languages from birth. In such homes, there may be the privilege to acquire more than one additional language. When this type of situation occurs, the field of Second Language Acquisition still refers to all the additional languages as “second.” To this end, the term second language is used to describe any language other than one’s first language. In the words of Derakshan and Karimi (2015), Second Language Acquisition is the language that an individual developed after acquiring the first language. This language is sometimes called the official or societal language because it is mostly needed for

education, employment, and other formal activities. In summary, Second language acquisition is the process by which people learn any language in addition to their first language (Tomlinson, 2013). Further, Saville-Troike (2003) expresses his opinion on the scope of second language. A second language can be acquired informally, formally and in a mixture of formal and informal settings and circumstances. A child or an individual learns a second language in its natural state, in classrooms and sometimes in both natural and classroom contexts. While attempting to further understand the concept of Second Language Acquisition, it will be helpful to gain insight to the factors responsible for the development of a second language.

Factors responsible for the development of second languages by school-aged children. Every child is born with different abilities and capacities to learn, speak and use language. It is interesting to note that these natural capacities that humans have to acquire a new language are also determined by other factors. The factors that determine the development of second language are: Age, Sex, and Motivation (Saville-Troike, 2003).

Age. It is a widespread assumption that children learn a second language more successfully than adults. Sometimes this assumption is as a result of individual experience at home and other environments. Interestingly, Saville-Troike (2003) opines that these assumptions occur following the way researchers define what success in language acquisition implies. Some researchers describe success in language acquisition as the *initial rate* of learning while others see it as *ultimate achievement*. Some scholars also use native-like pronunciation as a parameter to determine success. While it appears that children develop more native-like grammatical intuitions because of their

non-analytical processing mode, adults have greater learning capacity and memory to retain vocabulary and probably better at understanding explicit grammatical rules. Saville-Troike (2003) further suggests that children have the tendency to receive simplified language input from others. This input assists their learning. Adults, on the other hand, have the tendency to develop higher levels of pragmatic skills and knowledge of their first language that can be useful while learning a second language. Most adults also gain exposure to real-world knowledge of the target language. This knowledge assists them to perform more complex tasks with limited linguistic resources.

Similarly, language development shows the development of the brain. Most children find it difficult to learn new languages after the age of five (Ojile, 2020). The first five years of every child are very crucial. Language development continues from childhood into adolescence. While the brain continues to develop from birth to age five, the stimulation of language development is quite essential since the brain develops new nerve cells and engages in multiple connections between nerve cells in order to serve the receptive and expressive functions of language (Hamman, 2012, as cited in Ojile, 2020). To this end, while it is clear that age strongly determines the acquisition of a second language, it is difficult to conclude that children are better learners than adults following multiple factors that should be put into consideration.

Sex. According to Ojile (2020), on a general term, girls tend to develop oral language faster than boys. Unfortunately, her reasons for this assertion were not stated.

Motivation. Motivation plays a vital role in acquiring a second language. It is quite difficult to give a simple definition of motivation. However, the characteristics of a motivated person are: goal directed, persistence, attentiveness, self confidence, strong

expectations and motives (Gardner, 2007). Myers (2001), defines motivation “as a need or desire that energizes and directs behavior” (as cited in Anjomshoa et al 2015; p. 126). Language learning and classroom motivation are two salient aspects of motivation that strongly influence the development of a second language. Language learning motivation is the motivation to learn and know a second language. It is the general attribute of an individual to utilize any opportunity to learn a language. This aspect of motivation has been further described by the socio-educational model of second language acquisition, the social context model, and the self-determination model (Gardner, 2007).

English Language as a Lingua Franca in Nigeria

A lingua franca is defined as a language of communication that is majorly used by people with different mother tongues (UNESCO 1953, as cited in Meierkord, 2006). Meierkord (2006), describes some of the world languages used as lingua francas today as: English, French, Arabic, Spanish and Russian. They occupy the position of second languages for the majority of their users across the world. Merriam-Webster (2021), defines lingua franca as any language used as a common or commercial means of communication among people of diverse speech. Standard English is the official language of communication in Nigeria. There is hardly any town in Nigeria where you will not find someone who speaks English. According to Nasuk (2016), English is preferred to other local languages in Nigeria. It is the language of commerce, law, education, and politics across the country. An average Nigerian speaks his mother tongue and one other language. In the words of Connell (2016), Nigeria is a complex multilingual country with over 440 languages. He defines multilingualism as a situation where people in a given community speak two or more languages. Nasuk (2016) affirms

that Nigeria is a multilingual country with five hundred and twenty one languages.

Unfortunately, nine of these indigenous languages have gone into extinction, while the English language keeps gaining prominence because of its significant roles.

The origin of the English Language in Nigeria can be traced to the pre-colonial days. However, the exact date that it was first used as a means of communication is quite uncertain (Ekpe, 2010). The English Language became popular as a second language in Nigeria after about one hundred years of socio-political dominance by Britain. Before this time, the people communicated in their various indigenous languages. Immediately after the country's independence in the year 1960, English was formally adopted as a second language (L2), while all other indigenous languages were termed as first languages (L1) (Nasuk, 2016). Ekpe (2010) attributes this wide popularity of English in Nigeria to factors such as slavery, trading, colonization, and missionary activities over a period of time by the Europeans. He classifies the origin of English in Nigeria into three major categories, namely: the pre missionary activities, the missionary activities, and the period after the amalgamation of the southern and northern protectorate in the year 1914. It is quite interesting to note that in some homes in Nigeria today, indigenous languages are used as second languages while English is adopted as the first language. Nasuk (2016) states that in such homes in Nigeria, especially among the elite group, children are first introduced to English before they learn other indigenous languages. In a related manner, Onjewu and Okpe (2015) express their surprise on the wide use of Pidgin within Nigerian society. They opine that at present, Pidgin has overtaken standard English in most parts of Nigeria despite the fact that English occupies a position of prestige. However, standard English is usually preferred in formal settings within the country.

Ajepe (2016) traced the adoption of English as the lingua franca in Nigeria to the lack of mutual intelligibility of most of the indigenous languages. The English language has therefore assumed the language of integration and unity within the country.

Adedimeji (2003) opines that English has become a privileged language that strengthens the unity of the country. It is the only language that is mutually understood by an average Nigerian across diverse groups (Adedimeji, 2003, as cited by Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016:12).

Significance of English language in Nigeria. The English language plays important roles within Nigerian society. In the words of Ekpe (2010), English language in Nigeria is the language of education, the language of the government, the language of commerce and industry, the language of international communication, the language of the media, the language of law, the language of science and technology, and the language of social interactions. It is truly occupying an official status. Nasuk (2016) affirms that the English language is learned as a subject in schools, it is the language of politics, and firmly plays a unifying role as the lingua franca of the country. He describes English in Nigeria as one that ascribes respect to its speakers. This implies that without the knowledge of English, it is quite impossible to attain an enviable height in the country. As it were today in Nigeria, English is the unifying language used in religious settings such as churches and mosques.

On the acquisition of English by children in Nigeria, Ige (2011) opines that the policy of the government of Nigeria recommends that every public school should operate a pre-primary section where children can be given formal education shortly after they are born. Unfortunately, a small number of children are attending creche and nursery schools

respectively due to poverty. A large proportion of this population is the children from urban areas whose parents can afford the cost of early childhood education. The children of the poor are denied this basic education. In the opinion of Omega (2014), early childhood education is not operational in public schools in Nigeria. It is majorly practiced in privately owned schools. With this development, only the children of the rich have access to early acquisition of English language both at home and in nursery schools. He further states that it is essential to introduce English to a child as a first language as early as possible. This effort will enable the child to interact with his/her peer group from other diverse linguistic backgrounds within Nigeria. Although some parents prefer to speak their mother tongues to children at home, others introduce them to English at home while helping them to maintain their mother tongues.

Bamgbose (1971) opines that out of the total heritage left behind by the British after their colonial administration, English is probably the most important in Nigeria (as cited in Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016). According to Ajepe and Ademowo (2016), the British conducted the first democratic elections in Nigeria with English. Subsequently, English was adopted as the language of campaign and manifestos during elections by the indigenes. Politicians who aspire to be elected into political offices are also judged by their level of proficiency in English. This strongly shows the great significance of English as a lingua franca in Nigeria. Following the major roles English plays within the Nigerian society, it is quite expedient for anyone who wants to gain relevance in the social, economic, education and political settings to acquire a reasonable level of proficiency in English (Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016).

Curriculum Development

Curriculum development, as an important component in the field of education, has a broad scope. It offers guidance for lesson plan preparation to fulfill the required standard by each school or country. Kranthi (2017) considers a curriculum as the major component of any learning institution. It is almost impossible for schools to exist successfully without a curriculum. To this end, the first subsection examines the meaning and importance of curriculum development. The second subsection discusses the different methods of creating curriculum. The third subsection explores the various materials needed for the development of curriculum that will meet the academic needs of the under-privileged school-aged children of Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Nigeria.

Meaning of curriculum development. Curriculum Development is described as an essential aspect of any learning institution. It is described as a planned, progressive and systematic process of creating positive improvements in the educational system (Krant, 2017). Changes and developments around the world are capable of influencing school curricula. Therefore, curriculum development is not only about institutions of learning but also about the development of society in general (Krant, 2017). In the words of Celce-Murcia (2014), “a curriculum is a dynamic system of interconnected, interrelated, and overlapping processes” (p. 49). In the words of Nkomo (2000), it is quite difficult to describe the curriculum since it means different things to different people. He opines that a curriculum involves the aims and objectives of the education system and their specific goals. It involves what is taught and the strategies of teaching. It encompasses the forms of assessment and evaluation. It also includes the source of the materials used for its building and a thorough reflection of the needs and interests of all

its users (Nkomo 2000). Celce-Murcia (2014) further describes a curriculum as a broader concept than a syllabus. “It applies to the program level, which subsumes courses, units, and lessons; and it is more comprehensive than a syllabus because it includes not only planning but also enacting and evaluating” (p.50). Khan and Law (2015) opine that curriculum is the overall learning activities that are cautiously planned and guided by the designated education institution, and used by learners in groups or individually.

Methods of creating curriculum. Curriculum development has different approaches, and every approach reflects the views of learners and learning (Auerbach, 1992). According to Celce-Murcia (2014), planning, enacting, and evaluating are the three major curricular processes. In his words, the curriculum framework for learners ages 6-14 in Bahrain (Bahrain Directorate of curriculum, 2004) follows the following five principles; “learners learn language when they are involved in meaningful and purposeful activities which require them to communicate using the target language, learning is not a linear process, learning is enhanced by the development of learning strategies and the gradual introduction of activities and tasks where learners begin to take more responsibilities for their own learning, learning is an active process, and learning of English is not an isolated event” (p. 53).

Auerbach (1992) discusses the participatory approach of curriculum development. He opines that the Participatory approach has its focus on the students as the major participants in any learning process. It allows content to be developed in accordance with the specific conditions and needs of the group of students at a particular point in time. While developing any curriculum following the participatory approach, the language

group of the participants, the job status, and their ages are to be carefully considered (Auerbach, 1992).

Tools and Techniques for the development of an ESL curriculum. Over the decades, various researchers have designed tools and techniques for the development of curriculum. The following are some of the tools and techniques that can be used for the development of an ESL curriculum; teacher classroom discourse, pairing and grouping of students, and use of visuals (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Teacher Classroom Discourse. This technique involves pre lesson, lesson warm-up, teacher questions, explanations and teacher-fronted instruction, modeling language use, error corrections and feedback, chitchat, and acknowledgement of learners' contributions (Celce-Murcia, 2014). The lesson warm-up allows the teacher to utilize the learners' background knowledge and develop their interest by giving them the opportunity to learn from a new but not totally strange experience. This tool provides a positive learning environment through the teacher's affectionate greetings. It equally encourages routine. Perhaps the most interesting advantage of the lesson warm-up is that it helps to reduce learners' anxiety and motivate them to be deeply involved in the entire learning process (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Pairing and grouping of students. This technique helps each member of the class to socialize and get to know something about one another. It also develops learners' energy by encouraging positive group building and harmonious collaboration during tasks (Celce-Murcia, 2014). According to the author, a more interesting aspect of this tool is that it encourages cooperative learning instead of unhealthy classroom competition. This type of cooperation that exists helps students to be more willing to learn.

Use of visuals. The use of visuals is quite significant to this research considering the low proficiency level of English of the intended participants. The use of various media tools has increased learners' expectations of visual tools. They usually anticipate a visually rich learning environment. Some of the examples of visual tools are; photos, stick figures, reading texts and other graphics, graphic organizers, slide shows, posters, films and streaming videos among others (Celce-Murcia, 2014). The author further stresses the popularity of graphic organizers over the last few years. These are charts that enable learners to organize knowledge with the use of structures such as grids, venn diagrams, time lines, network trees, and storyboards. These visual tools were proposed as advance organizers that could aid learners' levels of understanding (Ausubel, 1967, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014).

Conclusion

As described above, curriculum development is quite essential to any institution of learning and other stakeholders in the field of education. It affords such bodies the opportunity to plan, implement and evaluate different content and materials that will be useful for overall learning of the students. Since one of the major goals of teaching and learning is comprehensibility, it is therefore instructive to use tools and techniques that would encourage learners to learn meaningfully and purposefully.

Chapter Summary and Preview of Chapter Three

In Chapter Two, I reviewed scholarly literature that is relevant to the research question of this project. That is: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children in Nigeria? I presented a detailed analysis of the Concept of Poverty, Oral Language, Second Language Acquisition, English as a Lingua

Franca in Nigeria, and Curriculum Development. I examined other concepts related to the effect of poverty on oral language acquisition of English by school-aged children. I elaborated on the value and development of the English language in Nigeria. I also reviewed different ideas on the methods and materials needed for the development of ESL Curriculum in chapter four of this project. In Chapter Three, I will present a full detail of the relevant components of this research. I will explain the setting of Rescue the Hopeless Mission, provide the description of the under-privileged school-age children that are deprived of oral language communication in English, and finally apply the relevant framework to this project.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

As stated in the previous chapters, the English language plays an important role in Nigerian society. It is almost impossible to be successful in any formal profession without a proficiency in English. This language situation is not just peculiar to adults but to children as well. Regrettably, some children are denied daily opportunities to be exposed to the English language as the sole means of formal communication across the country. There are so many factors that have been attributed to this denial of basic English language acquisition by school-aged children in Nigeria. To this end, this research attempts to provide answers to this question: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children? This research question will be explored in order to develop an ESL curriculum for the students of Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Nigeria.

Overview of the Project

This research examines the effect of poverty on the oral language acquisition of English by school-aged children in Nigeria. In chapter 2, I discussed related views as opined by different authors on the concept of poverty, oral language acquisition, second language acquisition and curriculum development. In this chapter, I will discuss the development of the ESL curriculum in detail. To achieve this objective, I will explore the rationale, the setting, and the context of the project. I will also discuss the objectives of

the curriculum and explore the content-based and input-based theories as the basis for the project. Finally, I will provide a timeline for the completion and implementation of the project/curriculum, and preview chapter 4.

Rationale

The acquisition of English is very important to every Nigerian child because it plays major roles in Nigerian society. It is basically a unifying language of communication among people from different linguistic backgrounds. It is the official language used by the government, mass media, judiciary and other formal sectors within the country. Particularly, English is the language of Education. It is the medium of instruction and a subject in the curriculum from the elementary to tertiary level (Oyetunde, 2002). To this end, the major purpose of this project is to develop an ESL curriculum and resources that would meet the language needs of the under-privileged children of Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Nigeria. Classroom and ESL support teachers can use this curriculum to best support these under-privileged school-aged English learners and other stakeholders in the content classroom.

Further, this ESL curriculum will adopt the Total Physical Response (TPR) from the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards to expose students to oral English Language through ten units across different content areas. The proficiency level of these learners were ultimately considered since they possibly have not been exposed to any form of formal education. According to Kelly et al. (2008), the Total Physical Response (TPR) provides the opportunities to teach lower grade learners and offer them the needed support in every lesson. It also encourages learners' active participation following the use of authentic materials and the designs of each lesson.

School Setting and Context

Ibadan, the general setting of this project, is the largest indigenous city in Africa south of the Sahara. It is a cosmopolitan mega-city in South-Western Nigeria. It has a population of about four million inhabitants and is located about 145 kilometers north-east of Lagos, the commercial headquarters of Nigeria. The name of the proposed school for this project is Hopeful Academy. It is the specific setting of the project. Hopeful Academy is owned by Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Nigeria. This mission is situated in Lagelu, a local government area in Ibadan, Nigeria. Hopeful Academy is projected to commence operations in the 2024/2025 academic year. The major goal of this school is to provide quality Christian education, vocational training, and food to impoverished children and young adults in Nigeria. The age group of the targeted student is between nine and twenty-four years. These are children from different poor homes who have been deprived of basic formal education, food, and English Language proficiency. For the sake of this curriculum development, a content-based curriculum that will largely consider the language needs of these children will be designed.

Description of the Curriculum Framework

Second Language Acquisition is not easily achieved when learners memorize vocabulary words or engage in grammar activities. Rather, it occurs when they are exposed to comprehensible inputs. The major language teaching strategy is comprehensible subject-matter teaching that focuses on what the speaker says rather than how the speaker says it (Krashen, 1984, as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2014). For the purpose of this curriculum development, there are two major theories that are of special interest to me. The first is the content-based model of second language teaching, and the second is

the input-based instruction. The content-based model is the use of subject matter such as topics or themes that are related to the interests or needs of students in an English as a Foreign Language setting (Celce-Murcia, 2014). It is simply the integration of language and content teaching in a classroom setting. In a language classroom context, the content of a unit may be “celebrations” with the lesson covering the notion of invitations where students would have the opportunity to learn about the different forms of invitation such as polite and informal forms and acceptance or rejection of invitations. This content-based approach enables students to use language as a tool for solving other non-linguistic problems (Celce-Murcia, 2014). The content-based learning approach is expected to give students opportunities to gain input through listening and reading and to produce language through speaking and writing. Further, interaction in the L2 classroom is important when considering this model. It affords students the opportunity to negotiate meaning in the context of well-structured activities (Celce-Murcia, 2014).

As earlier stated, the focus of this project is to develop an ESL curriculum that will help the oral language acquisition of the under-privileged students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan-Nigeria. To this end, the following instructional strategies as designed by Celce-Murcia (2014), will be adopted.

1. Modifying Input: Bearing in mind that some of the students may have cognitive issues that pose difficulties to the acquisition of English language, their levels of proficiency will be considered and instruction will be delivered to them following these proficiency levels. The teachers will consider slower rates of speech, clear enunciation, controlled use of vocabulary words and clear explanation of class activities as suggested by Celce-Murcia (2014).

2. Using Contextual Cues: Since these students are assumed not to be exposed to English in any measure, different cues such as gestures, visuals, wall charts, posters, restatement, repetition and exemplification will be adopted.

3. Checking for understanding: Looking at the importance of language acquisition, techniques such as true or false questions, requests for examples, summary of key information and any other questions bothering the students will be entertained and addressed in the lessons.

4. Learner Grouping Strategies: Different degrees of grouping arrangements that would foster peer interactions will be used in the classroom. Students will be made to work in pairs and small groups. They will also be given different responsibilities within their groups.

5. Designing language- and discourse-rich activities: Teachers will be open to the language needs of the students and design activities that teach grammar, vocabulary, and language functions within the meaningful context of the content-based lesson.

Similarly, under the input-based instruction model, learners have access to oral and written input which helps them to develop form-meaning mappings (Shintani et al., 2013, as cited in Loewen, 2020). This type of instruction focuses on the understanding of specific structures with learners having the opportunity to indicate their understanding of the lesson through non-linguistic activities such as pictures, graphs, and posters that match the input. The input-based instruction approach can be adopted for lower-level learners since it is capable of providing exposure to new structures in the input, and equally reduces learner anxiety that could affect the learning process (Loewen, 2020). Looking at the age level of the learners under consideration, the input-based approach

would serve as a useful guide in designing this ESL curriculum. Overall, the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards will be adopted for this ESL Curriculum.

Curriculum Alignment to the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards

The materials, activities, and units of this ESL Curriculum are all based on the Total Physical Response (TPR) from the WIDA English Language Proficiency standards. Considering the fact that the students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan-Nigeria have no major foundation in English, grades 1-2 curriculum has been chosen for the sake of clarity and understanding. To this end, the Total Physical Response (TPR) was used to develop the different units of this curriculum. This technique encourages teachers teaching lower grades to scaffold language through various content-based activities. “In order to provide comprehensible input to K-1 students, the ESL teacher gives a command for a single action word or phrase such as "jump" or “point to your eye” and then demonstrates the action” (Kelly et al., 2008, p.8). The following topics will be used to develop ten units:

- Unit 1: Introductions: The entire content of the curriculum will be explored.
- Unit 2: Everyday Objects: Authentic objects in the classroom and home environment will be used as materials.
- Unit 3: At School: Authentic objects in the school environment will be used.
- Unit 4: Body Parts: Charts, photos, selected learners’ body parts.
- Unit 5: Likes & Dislikes: Teacher classroom discourse technique will be highly engaged for this lesson. Materials such as songs, craft activities, funny story, play board game will be used with the support of poster cards and graphic organizers.

- Unit 6: Animals: Animals in the school compound, video clips from National Geographic, and visuals will be used.
- Unit 7: Eating & Shopping: Authentic materials about food and shopping will be used. Posters and videos will be used as well.
- Unit 8: Families & Responsibilities: Teachers' and learners' families, videos, slide shows, texts about family structure and responsibilities.
- Unit 9: Time & Money: Real wall clock, clock puzzle, Teacher Discourse on Time for life events using visual aids. The Nigerian Currency - Naira, Currencies in Africa and the World.
- Unit 10: Celebrations & Customs: Videos on holidays and celebrations in Nigeria and the world.

Timeline

I started this project at the beginning of Fall semester in September 2021. I embarked on research through various documents and archives of relevant organizations and scholars. I drafted chapter one, two and three between the months of September and December 2021. I had the period between January and April 2022 to write my chapter four and also edited my previous drafts on chapter one, two and three. Overall, this project was completed over the period of two semesters, that is Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. The ESL curriculum was majorly designed for Hopeful Academy, Ibadan-Nigeria. Therefore, the primary implementation of this project will commence in the 2024/2025 academic year when the school commences full operation. Meanwhile, this project is available for use by other stakeholders in the field of education starting from May 2022.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of my capstone project. In this chapter, I have been able to associate the rationale of the capstone project to the important roles of the English Language in Nigerian society. Since English is the language of communication used by the government, schools, the media and in other formal settings, it is therefore expedient for any child to be exposed to the language as early as possible. Looking at the overall aim of the project and the proficiency level of the students, an ESL curriculum that is guided by the content-based and input-based instructions will be suitable in teaching oral language in English to the under-privileged students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan-Nigeria. I am hopeful that the inspiration drawn from these content-based model of second language teaching, and the input-based instruction as described by Celce-Murcia (2014) and Loewen (2020), respectively, will largely help in designing a rich ESL curriculum that will not only be useful for the students of Hopeful Academy, but for other stakeholders in the field of education.

Overview

In Chapter Three, I presented an overview of my capstone project and explained the rationale behind it. I also described the school setting and context, and made connections with the theories and frameworks that guided this project. In conclusion, I discussed the general timeline of the project. In chapter four, I will reflect on my learning, revisit my literature, and suggest the implications and limitations of this project. Finally, I will discuss the future implementation of this project for the students of Hopeful Academy, Nigeria (Rescue the Hopeless Mission, Ibadan, Nigeria), and other stakeholders, and provide a detailed summary.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion and Reflection

Introduction

The primary objective for my curriculum development was to design ESL Curriculum units that would address the challenge of oral language acquisition by deprived school-aged children of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan, Nigeria. Specifically in this project, I examined the Total Physical Response (TPR) from the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards. This technique enables teachers teaching lower grades to scaffold language with the aid of content-based activities (Kelly, et al. 2008). To this end, I incorporated several authentic materials that would ensure a solid foundation for the students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan, Nigeria who have not been exposed to formal education as a result of poverty and its attendant problems. This project addressed my research question; How does Poverty Impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children?

In this final chapter of my capstone project, I mention what I have learned throughout the capstone project. I revisit the literature review and discuss project findings and limitations. I make suggestions for possible future research in the field of second language acquisition and curriculum development. I conclude this chapter with the final remarks on the project as a whole.

Revisiting the Literature Review

Several resources from my literature review are quite essential for this project. Works by Malumfashi (2008), Cuthrell et al. (2010), Ferguson et. al (2007), Fitzgerald (2006), Amzat (2010), Adebisi (2015), Srinivas (2006), Shah (2006), Aliyu (2008), Aref (2011), Bray (1991), Amuda (2011), Garba (2010) and The Poverty and Shared Prosperity Series of the World Bank Group (2020) supported and enhanced my understanding of poverty and its effect on education of children, especially in the field of Second Language Acquisition and the acquisition of needed proficiency in English by the underprivileged learners in Africa and the world at large. These numerous scholastic works explain the meaning and causes of poverty explicitly, and state the possible effects and solutions to the problem of poverty as it relates to the acquisition of oral language by school-aged children in Nigeria. This further serves as a solid foundation to the review of literature in accordance with the research question of this project: How does Poverty impact the Oral Language Acquisition of English by School-Aged Children?

Further, Snow et. al (2014), Campos et. al., 2006 as cited in Wajskop (2017), Whorrall and Cabell (2015), Wajskop (2017), Rajapaksha (2016), Vygotsky (1996), and Stabb 1986, as cited in Hong-Alex & Kortner (1995) were tremendously instrumental to the understanding of oral language and the possible factors that are responsible for its development in childhood. Similarly, in the field of Second Language Acquisition, the works of Celce-Murcia et. al (2020), Saville-Troike (2003), Loewen (2020), Derakshan and Karimi (2015), Tomlinson (2013), Ojile (2020), Gardner (2007), Myers (2001), and Anjomshoa et. al (2015), validated my knowledge on the meaning of Second Language

Acquisition, and the possible factors responsible for the development of second languages by school-aged children. Also, the works of UNESCO as cited in Meierkord (2006), Merriam-Webster (2021), Nasuk (2016), Connell (2016), Ekpe (2010), Onjewu and Okpe (2015), Ajepe (2016), Adedimeji (2003), Ige (2011), Omego (2014), Bamgbose (1971), and Ajepe and Ademowo (2016) vividly discuss English Language as a lingua franca in Nigeria and its significance.

Finally, the concept of curriculum development was examined. The works of Kranthi (2017), Celce-Murcia (2014), Nkomo (2000), Khan and Law (2015), and Auerbach (1992), deeply helped in the understanding of curriculum development and the necessary tools needed to create an ESL curriculum for the under-privileged students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Project Findings

There are many areas of this project that challenged my thoughts based on my previous knowledge of different concepts and practices in the field of second language acquisition. Similarly, I have been exposed to new concepts and practices on the development of ESL curriculum for school aged children. The findings of this research are highlighted below:

Flexible and dynamic tools and techniques. While learning the English language as an elementary school student in those days, I did not experience the use of tools that make lessons more comprehensible. I learned grammar mostly through explicit instruction. Later in life as an English teacher, I learned to use online videos to support the recommended text books that majorly give a general approach to learning. This research has revealed to me that students do not always learn the same way. There are

multiple factors that influence learning. While some students may learn fast with explicit instruction, others may need more realistic and flexible materials to comprehend a new language or concept. This project has further revealed the importance of teacher classroom discourse, pairing and grouping of students, and the use of visuals to teach English language learners and learners in general. A very important teacher classroom discourse technique that this research has further exposed me to is the lesson warm-up that reduces learners' anxiety and helps them focus on the lesson as one of the major stakeholders in the classroom. I have observed that some learners tend to be quite nervous when they are learning a new language. Since a lesson warm-up encourages the teacher to make use of learners' background knowledge and helps them to learn from a familiar point of view, learners usually find the learning environment as positive and conducive enough for a new learning experience.

Similarly, the physical arrangement of some classrooms are usually permanent. In this case, learners are only given the opportunity to learn solely from their teachers. Pairing and grouping of students is a learning technique that encourages learners to socialize and benefit from one another. It helps them to brainstorm ideas instead of being stuck and frustrated. This is another useful technique that I have incorporated into this ESL curriculum considering the fact that the target learners have different informal learning backgrounds that could be used to support one another in the classroom.

Finally, the use of visuals like real life photos, graphic organizers, and streaming videos help to develop the interest of learners in the learning process since they are usually given the opportunity to visualize ideas and concepts. These visuals help learners to organize their thoughts during and even after the lesson.

Second language acquisition variables. The outcome of this study has revealed that there are so many factors that influence the acquisition of a second language. Apart from a learners' environment, gender and motivation, age is another major factor that influences the acquisition of a new language. Before embarking on this project, I had an assumption that children have the ability to acquire a new language better and faster than adults following their age and the development of the brain. Interestingly, some literature in this study supports my assumption by suggesting that learning a new language is mostly productive before the age of five since major development takes place in the brain at that age. However, due to multiple factors that influence the acquisition of a new language, it is difficult to conclude that adults that are obviously above the age of five have lower chances of acquiring a new language than the children that are below the age of five. If age is the only factor that influences language acquisition, and adults are at a disadvantage, it therefore means that the potential students of Hopeful Academy to whom this project is primarily designed for, have zero chances of acquiring English language skills since they are between the ages of nine and twenty-four. So, having the opportunity to learn that multiple variables influence language acquisition, and that adults can as well learn a new language as fast as children, I am deeply looking forward to the implementation of this curriculum in 2024 when Hopeful Academy finally starts operation. This finding has also influenced my choice of comprehensible input strategies that could help overcome the challenges of these variables on learners of English who have no background knowledge of the language.

The use of comprehensible input. Another unique finding of this project is that second language acquisition is not easily achieved when learners memorize vocabulary

words or are exposed to explicit instructions. Learners usually learn differently when they are exposed to authentic materials that could support their learning. The comprehensible subject-matter teaching focuses on communicative competence of learners rather than the linguistic competence. This is the first aim of this ESL curriculum. The curriculum is focused on how these under-privileged English learners can develop a means to orally communicate their thoughts in English instead of worrying about grammar rules. Indeed, this is the ultimate goal that I hope that this curriculum will serve to all its users. The content-based model is quite instrumental to this project since it considers the interests and needs of students in an English as a Foreign Language setting. The students will equally be able to use language as a vital tool for solving other non-linguistic challenges. It also affords learners the opportunity to interact with one another, and negotiate meaning in the context of well-structured activities. Similarly, it is quite revealing to know that the input-based approach has the tendency to reduce anxiety that could affect the learning process. Considering the age level of learners of Hopeful Academy and their unfavorable social and economic backgrounds, I have envisaged the impact of anxiety and inferiority complex on their learning. It is exciting to know that the use of comprehensive inputs will expose them to authentic materials and strategies that will help them overcome this learning problem.

Poverty and language acquisition of children. On a final note, this research has hugely exposed me to some of the realities facing children across the world, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa. A good population of these school-aged children to a large extent are deprived of the basic skills needed for education due to poverty. These children from poor homes mostly lack the needed motivation for formal education since their parents

struggle to earn a living. Perhaps a more shocking revelation is the estimate that over 10 million Nigerian children are deprived of formal education (Adebisi, 2015).

Similarly, this project reveals the influence of a child's linguistic environment on the development of oral language. It is interesting to learn from different scholars on how children's poor environments prevent them from being exposed to higher quantity and quality language learning environments. Some of these children do not have the opportunities to possess some learning materials like toys and gestures that would create different learning activities that could help them develop the literacy skills needed for basic communication.

Further, the acquisition of oral language by children has been linked to adults' involvement in consistently reading books aloud to them. Unfortunately, this opportunity is not readily available to children in poor homes since their parents have to prioritize their needs. Food and shelter mostly take priority over other human needs. This deprivation is a huge disadvantage to the oral language acquisition of language by children. Following my overall learning in this capstone project, the effect of poverty on the language acquisition of children is quite enormous.

Project Limitations

This ten unit curriculum is obviously not a perfect piece. To start with, the curriculum was developed with specific learners in mind. These learners are the underprivileged students of Hopeful Academy, Ibadan, Nigeria. An important question to ask is if the learners' impoverished situations and needs as described in this project are transferable to other non-literate or low-literacy learners with different language backgrounds and needs. Similarly, the target school is yet to commence operations. The

target learners have also not been admitted into the school. To this end, the exact proficiency level of these potential learners is unknown. This project only used a projected proficiency level of the learners. If this projection is far from the reality on ground during its full implementation in 2024, the ESL curriculum may need to be reviewed before using it in classrooms to teach the students. It appears that either one or both issues raised above are potential limitations to this project.

Further, the teachers that would implement this ESL curriculum may also serve as a form of limitation to this project. In theory, one would expect every teacher to be able to fully implement this curriculum perfectly. Unfortunately, this may not be the true situation since teachers across the world have different academic backgrounds and expertise in some domains than in others. Hence, there may be a need to train and retrain teachers so that they can fully implement this curriculum for the benefit of their students. A failure in this training process may further pose a limitation to the project.

Finally, this curriculum adopts the Total Physical Response (TPR) from the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards. Since the primary implementation of this curriculum is slated to begin in 2024, it is not certain if every unit of this curriculum considers other special needs learners who may have limited abilities to carry out the instructions in each unit and each lesson. It appears like this ESL curriculum does not make adequate provision for diverse learners with varying academic, physical and social needs. If this situation is found to be true during the implementation of this curriculum, an immediate review will be needed in order not to further deprive these categories of learners.

Possible Future Research

The scope of this curriculum does not extend to all the four domains of English language, namely: listening, reading, writing and speaking. It rather focuses majorly on speaking which is described in this project as the oral language. I am of the opinion that future research needs to expand this ESL curriculum to other domains of English. It is my understanding that this expansion has the tendency to improve the proficiency level of learners, and help them to compete with their peers all over the world. In the future, much consideration is needed for further research on an ESL curriculum that would meet the total language needs of low proficient learners across the four domains.

Further, ESL curriculum for the special needs learners is another possible research area in the future. From my personal observations, there are some special needs ESL students that are not identified and given the needed accommodations for learning in some parts of the world. It would be quite inspiring to further develop this ESL curriculum in this project to one that would give the special needs ESL students the needed priority for their academic success.

Finally, following my multilingual background, my son's current experience in our bilingual family, and the overall learning experience in this capstone project, ultimately, future research needs to work on oral language acquisition of toddlers and infants in a bilingual home. Some possible research questions are: How does a bilingual home promote oral language development of infants? What are the effects of exposing an infant to two languages at the same time? How does Kids Youtube influence the oral language acquisition of children ages 1 - 5? I am personally interested in researching the influence of Youtube and other kids media platforms on the oral language acquisition of

children. I hope to continue to review my thoughts until I have the opportunity to embark on another research project. There is no doubt that the various potential research areas as suggested above would ultimately contribute to existing research and learning in the field of second language acquisition.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I reflected on my learning experience in the entire capstone project. I revisited the literature review and discussed project findings. I also examined some limitations to this project. To conclude this chapter and the entire project, I made suggestions on possible future research for scholars and researchers in the fields of curriculum and instruction, as well as second language acquisition. I strongly hope that these further research areas would make room for clarifications and possibly increase my knowledge and those of other scholars in these fields.

My work on this ESL curriculum has indeed exposed me to various second language acquisition theories, techniques and strategies that would make learning effective for ESL students of various proficiency levels. It has equally developed my interest in curriculum development especially by using the most authentic tools and standards that would relate to learners' backgrounds and language needs. There is no doubt that there is room for more research in these growing fields as more techniques continue to advance, and technology continues to shape our world across different fields.

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APPENDIX A

Definitions

ESL	English as a Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition theory
WIDA	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment