



The impact of pidgin english on beninese intermediate EFL learners' communicative skills. the case study of Nigeria neighboring region secondary schools in the Benin republic

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of Nigerian pidgin English (NPE) on intermediate EFL learners in Beninese secondary schools. The Objective is to take advantage of pidgin English to promote oral communication. A mixed-method research design has been used. The instrument includes questionnaires addressed to ten (10) EFL teachers and forty (40) randomly selected learners and classroom observations. The results showed that the NPE) has a positive impact on EFL learners' communicative skills. This study suggested that the EFL process adapts to the context and draws the benefit from social and cultural content that induce motivation and participation to improve learners' performance.

Keywords: intermediate EFL learners, pidgin english, communicative skills

Introduction

Today's English as a foreign language EFL teaching-learning perspective has evolved into an increasingly communicative and competency-based process that integrates socio-cultural values to induce motivation and interactions. The success of foreign language learning, thus, in a multilingual context like Benin is ascertained by its relevance to actual academic, professional or social communication needs. Hence, EFL language learning has to dive into the available environmental content for significance and purpose that promote autonomous learning to create a continuum between the classroom and real-world challenges.

The objective is to overcome the impediments of the traditional EFL teaching-learning process, in multicultural and multilanguage contexts. Unfortunately, in Benin, multilingualism leads to the seeming irrelevance of English in learners' daily communication needs especially out of the classroom settings.

In EFL classes, most teachers still stick to the traditional grammar-translation despite the two decades of the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) that has theoretically been set out for communicative competence development. The direct consequence is the gradual restriction of English to a mere classroom subject, the success of which is guaranteed by assignment completion and grammar items memorisation. This result in ineffective teaching-learning processes, thus, the mediocre performance of Beninese learners.

Out of the classrooms, the main problem is the poor language exposure resulting from the interference with French and local languages. Depending on the region Beninese EFL learners experience different influences, most of which, negatively affect their achievement except in Nigeria's neighbouring areas where the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is widely spoken for business socialisation with Nigerian citizens.

The interest of NPE for Wilson, Fasingha and Gomba, (2013) ^[10] is the fact that it has some unique features such as uncomplicated grammatical structure, reduction of syllabus codes, reduction of consonants clusters, no tones, separate words to indicate terms usually preceding the verb, reduplication to represent plurals, superlative and other parts of speech that represent the concept being increased, a lack of morphemic variation

This can present a real advantage since most important English parts of speech are already known and used making standard English decoding easier for learners with the NPE background than common Beninese EFL learners that struggles with French and mother tongue. Nonetheless, many teachers especially those who have been newly transferred to Nigeria's Neighbouring areas can only focus on NPE use impediments and fail to promote effective classroom communication.

The present research assesses the impact of NPE and explores the possibilities to improve classroom communication and learners' performance by taking advantage of its use in Nigeria's neighbouring areas. This will help integrate socio-cultural content into formal EFL teaching-learning to raise learners' awareness of the

necessity to practise the language outside of the classroom to increase language exposure and thereby, improve their communicative competence.

To reach this goal, the following questions have guided this paper.

1. What are the challenges of EFL learners' communicative skills development in the Beninese multilingual context?
2. What are the impacts of the use of Nigerian Pidgin English by the Beninese learners in EFL intermediate classes' teaching-learning Process?
3. How can EFL teachers draw benefits from the use of PE in Nigeria's neighbouring EFL classes to promote self-directed learning that consistently improves learners' communicative skills?

Theoretical Keystones

This section explores a review of literature that specifically hinge on the concept of pidgin English, the importance of multilingualism and the relevance of NPE in Nigerian neighbouring schools.

1. Clarification of the Concept of Pidgin English

Pidgin English has been defined differently by scholars. Holm (1980: 4) defines Pidgin as a reduced language used by groups with no language in common who need to communicate for trade or other purposes. It can also be seen as 'A language which arises to fulfil certain restricted communication needs among people who have no common language' (Todd, 1974). From these two definitions, Pidgin English as a language is been used to communicate between groups of people that have no common language.

Furthermore, Ojaide and Ashuntantang (2020) see it as a language that emerged due to contact between people of different languages which is usually a combination of different languages. This shows that though it is limited lexically and structurally, it is only suitable for specialized communication. It has some unique features such as uncomplicated grammatical structure, reduction of syllabus codes, reduction of consonants clusters, no tones, such as those found in West Africa and Asian languages, separate words to indicate terms usually preceding the verb, reduplication to represent plurals, superlative and other parts of speech that represent the concept being increased, a lack of morphemic variation (Wilson, 2013) ^[10]. Similarly, decamp (1971), Hymes (1974) and Hudson (1990) in Idiagbon (1999) give a summary of the characteristics of Pidgin as follows: Elimination of grammatical devices like inflexions, plural possessives and tenses, the use of reduplication as intensifiers, the ability of a word to have the semantic extension, that is, expanded meanings.

This makes NPE an ideal Standard English (SE) alternative in a situation where SE is required as the common EFL students do not make any difference between both languages. In EFL classes NPE is used along with French and mother tongue, especially during group activities for understanding purposes. Even if the use of multilanguage may lead to chatting and playing when the classroom becomes boring, the importance of multilingualism in language teaching learning and acquisition should not be underestimated.

2. Importance of Multilingualism in the EFL Teaching-Learning Process

Multilingualism is most of the time wrongly discounted for monolingualism in foreign language teaching. The monolingual principle refers to the exclusive use of the target language as an instructional language to enable learners to think in Target Language (TL), with minimal to no interference from their Mother Tongue (Howatt, 1984) ^[6]. According to Auger (2009), this view stems from confusion between academic and linguistic skills, giving a negative view of multilingualism in the classroom. The advocates of monolingualism mistakenly think that the rejection of other languages can enhance the target language learning. Monolingualism has influenced the Beninese educational system to a level that mother tongue and other languages are disvalued and forbidden. Thus, only English is authorised in EFL classes and French is exclusive to other subjects. In practice, mother tongue-free lessons are perceived as "a badge of honour" and, hence, followed faithfully as "a religious principle" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009:24). For others, the use of mother tongue and other languages in the target language classrooms is a taboo subject, and a source of embarrassment" (Prodromou, 2002: 6) ^[9], often triggering a sense of guilt if they fail to comply with the doctrine.

Despite this common English Language Teaching (ELT) perception and practices, circumvention of the first language in second or foreign language classrooms, according to Cook (2002:140), "has no forthright theoretical rationale". Quite the opposite, recent years of development in language teaching-learning and research by Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009:24) have evidenced that the mother tongue is the most important ally for foreign language Since "we only learn language once" in perspective that "every new language is confronted by an already existing mother tongue" (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009:66). Patently, it is very useful to take advantage of what the learners' background knowledge and competences. This makes learners feel valued and they can effectively transfer their socio-cultural value and their linguistic competence from their home languages to the target language for integrative and sustainable development.

3. Contribution of NPE to Nigeria's Neighbouring Schools

In Nigeria, neighbouring school pidgin English offered a double advantage. Simplified English, not only does it maximise EFL learners' comprehensible input but also immerses Beninese EFL into the Nigerian socio-cultural and economic richness. Kenner and Ruby (2012) study evidenced the advantages of bringing the cultural and linguistic knowledge of the pupils and their communities into the classroom, creating new spaces for multilingual learning. This results in more collaborative learning; greater involvement of parents and

communities in schools; the construction of confident learner identities for the pupils; and more openness to intercultural communication among the teachers.

In a monolingual context, learners feel rejected and deprived of their identity this is why in an attempt to protect themselves they restrict English to a mere classroom subject and get rid of it out of the classroom settings. On the contrary, multilingual contexts are enriched with other languages and cultures. Multilingualism opens them to a world of interaction where they feel worthy in a safe environment where they can fully express themselves. Most learners thus keep TL out of the classroom settings as an exceptional asset gauge of competence.

Method

This research paper has been carried out using an explanatory mixed-method type of research. It involves data collection from both qualitative and quantitative sources using questionnaires addressed to ten (10) EFL teachers and forty (40) learners. Ten (10) classroom observations were carried out to assess the impact of NPE on the Beninese EFL intermediate learners' communicative performance. Throughout this section, the target population, the sampling, the instruments, the data collection procedures and the method of analysis are developed.

1. Target Population and Sampling

Table 1: Population and Sampling

Regions	Schools	EFL Teachers	EFL Students
NNS in Oueme and Plateau regions	CEG Krake plage	1	4
	CEG1 Seme Podji	1	4
	CEG1 Pobe	1	4
	CEG Banigbe lokossa	1	4
	CEG Mededjonou	1	4
Other Schools in Oueme and Plateau regions	CEG Koutongbe	1	4
	CEG Davie	1	4
	CEG Adjohoun	1	4
	CEG Ikpilè	1	4
	CEG Yoko	1	4
Total	10	10	40

For the present research, OUEME and PLATEAU regions located in the southern part of the Benin republic were targeted. The sampled population is composed of ten (10) EFL teachers and forty (40) EFL intermediate learners, from five (5) Nigeria Neighbouring Schools (NNS) and other schools for a total of ten (10) secondary schools. In the selected NNS, most learners and teachers, except those who have been newly transferred from other regions speak NPE fluently as a result of the interaction with Nigerians for socialisation and trading purposes. The intermediate learners involved in the present research have been studying English for at least three (3) years with four (4) hours of English per week.

2. Research Instruments

The research instruments consist of questionnaires and Classroom observations.

2.1 Questionnaires for Teachers and Learners

Questionnaires are addressed both to EFL teachers and learners.

- Six (6) questions to teachers about the use of NPE during classroom activities, the impact of NPE on learners' communicative skills development, the challenges related to EFL teaching learning
- Five (5) questions to learners about their perception and challenges related to the English language learning, the impact of NPE on their communicative skill development and their motivation.

2.2 Classroom Observations

This instrument helps to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Ten (10) classroom observations were carried out in five (5) Nigeria Neighbouring Schools (NN schools) and five (5) non-Nigeria neighbouring schools (other schools) in the same region. The objective is to compare both teaching-learning environments to evaluate the effective impact of NPE in the EFL process teaching-learning performance. This includes aspects related to classroom communication, activities, learners' motivation, participation and achievement. For this purpose, data were gathered using simplified oral communication and writing skills rubrics presented respectively in table 2 and table 3.

Table 2: Oral communication Evaluation Rubric

Rubrics	Criteria	Points	Total
Fluency	a. The speaker speaks confidently and naturally with no distracting hesitations. Ideas flow smoothly.	4	
	b. The speaker hesitates several times but generally seems to know the desired words, even if it is necessary to think about them a bit.	2	
	c. The speaker has many hesitations and great difficulty remembering or selecting words.	1	
Pronunciation	a. Pronunciation is accurate, with correct inflexions, numbers of syllables and other correct nuances of pronunciation.	4	
	b. Pronunciation is satisfactory; however, words sometimes have incorrect inflexions or are otherwise sometimes hard to understand.	2	
	c. Pronunciation is very hard or impossible to understand	1	
Grammar	a. The speaker speaks with no more incorrect grammar	4	
	b. The speaker occasionally uses inappropriate verb tenses and/or incorrectly uses parts of speech, however, the speaker can correct grammar without prompts.	2	
	c. The speaker makes frequent use of inappropriate verb tenses and/or incorrectly constructs sentences or uses parts of speech.	1	
Vocabulary	a. Vocabulary is sufficient to be understood in most settings and words are used with their correct meaning.	4	
	b. Vocabulary is moderate, although the speaker sometimes needs help identifying the correct words. There are only occasional problems with the correct meanings of words.	2	
	c. Vocabulary is very limited and/or incorrect words are often used.	1	
Content	a. The speaker is knowledgeable about the subject and provides a significant level of detail, given the time available.	4	
	b. The speaker is aware of the subject and attempts to provide relevant ideas about it. Provides some details.	2	
	c. Speaker seems to have little or no understanding of the subject. Statements are superficial or not relevant.	1	
Total			/20

Source: Adapted from Marek, M. W., & Wu, W. (2011)

Table 3: Writing rubrics

Rubrics	Excellent (4pts)	Good (3pts)	Average (2pts)	Poor(1pt)
Text (type and organisation)				
Content and Internal Consistency				
Grammar				
Vocabulary & spelling				
Authenticity & creativity				
Total				

Source: own compilation (2022)

The advantage of these rubrics is that they provide not only accurate quantitative measures of the teaching-learning processes as a whole but also NPE usage and impacts during activities.

The nonparticipant method of observation was used. The observer only watches and records the classroom activities objectively with no involvement. Burns (1999:82) expresses that the inquirer's goal "*is to remain aloof and distant and to have little or no contact with the subjects of the research.*" Also, Fraenkel and Wallen (2003:451) confirm that "*researchers do not participate in the activity being observed but rather sit on the sidelines and watch.*"

For this purpose, the visited EFL Teachers were asked to present within an hour class sequence of oral communication and writing skills development activities according to their actual progression in the official curriculum. This helps to get rid of unnecessary pressure related to time constraints the teacher might have experienced. Two (2) observers were required. The first one assessed EFL learners' performance using oral communication and writing performance using the corresponding rubrics from table1 and table 2, while the second one used the classroom observation from table 3 to evaluate the overall teaching-learning process.

2.3 Procedures of Data Collection and Methods of Data Analysis

Data were collected from EFL teachers and learners. Ten (10) EFL teachers were met at their weekly pedagogical workshop they were asked to fill in the questionnaire on spot as well. This enables the researcher to

collect 100 % of the questionnaires. Data obtained from the target population were analysed and processed using Microsoft Excel 2019. The results were presented in figures (charts)

Results

1. Report from Questionnaires

1.1 Learners' Difficulties

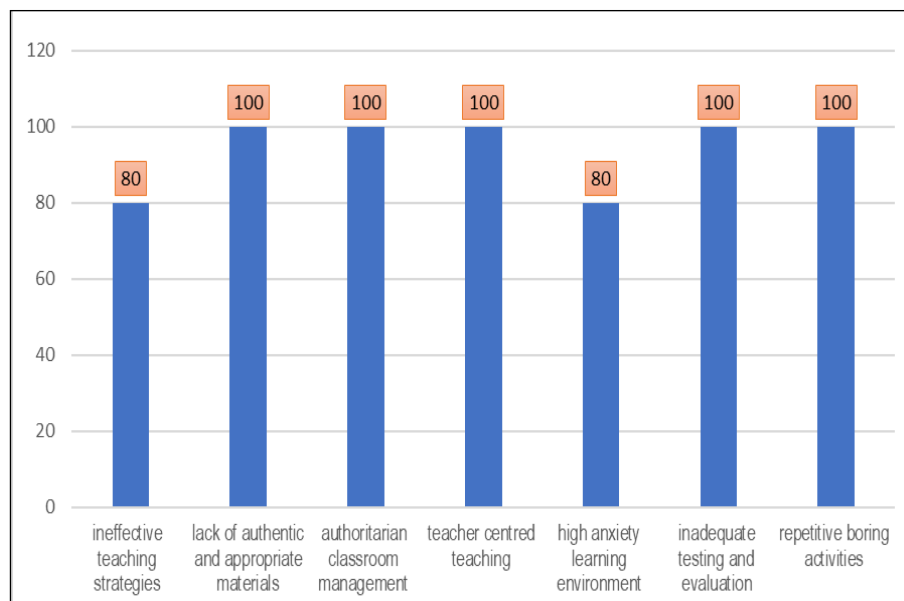


Fig 1: Beninese EFL learners' Difficulties

In figure 1, unanimously the respondents deprecate the lack of authentic and appropriate materials, the authoritarian classroom management style in teacher-centred teaching, the inadequate testing and evaluation system and the repetitive boring class activities. For 80% of the sample, these impediments and ineffective teaching strategies generate high anxiety non a communicative learning environment.

1.2 Beninese EFL Teachers' Challenges

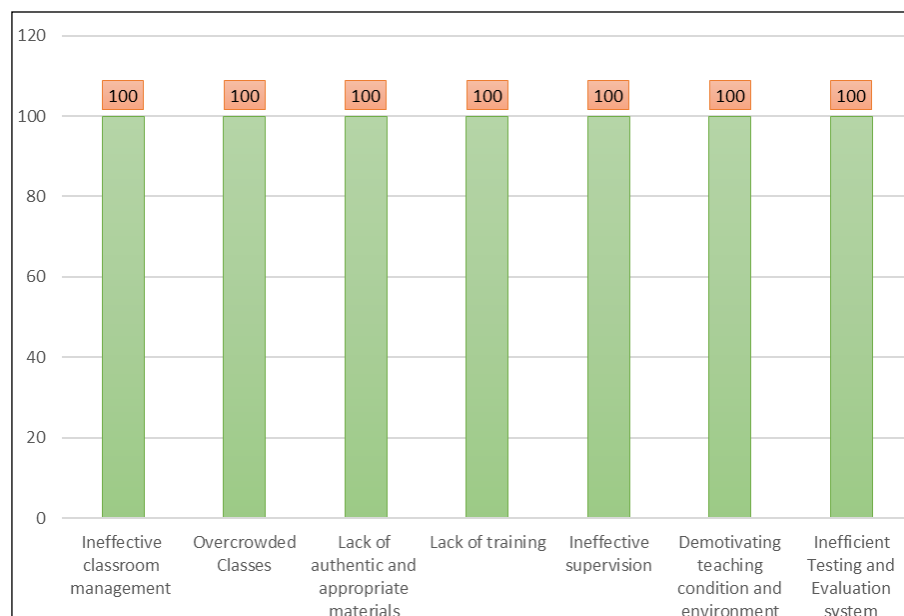


Fig 2: Beninese EFL Teachers' Challenges

In figure2, all the investigated teachers deprecated, overcrowded classes, the lack of teaching materials, outdated official materials, the lack of training, the ineffective supervision leading to classroom management challenges and demotivating teaching conditions and environment.

1.3 Benefits of NPE in the EFL Context

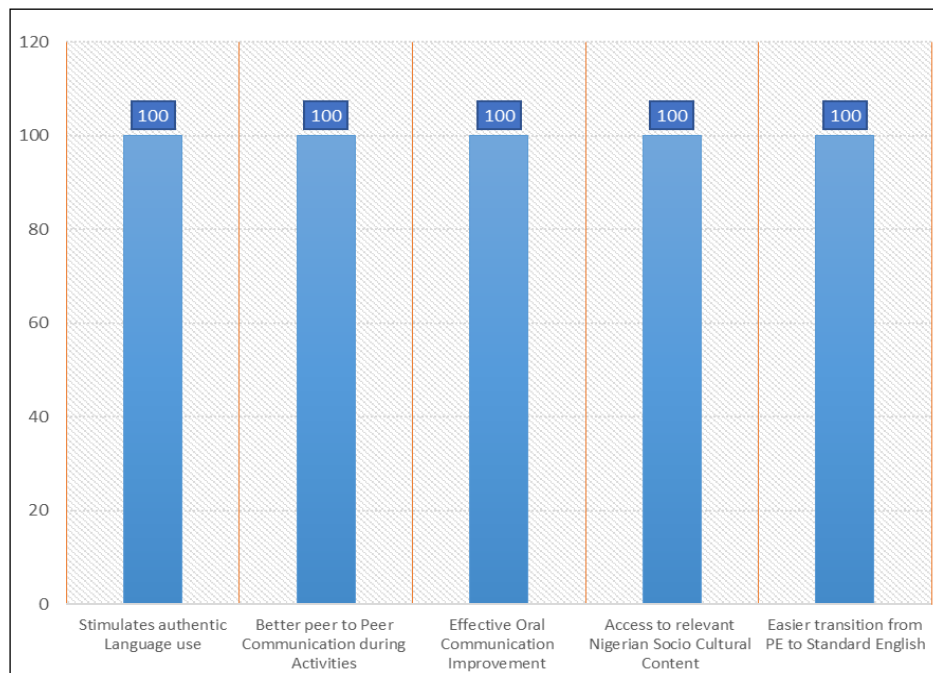


Fig 3: Benefits of NPE in ELF Context

Interestingly, in figure 3, for all the respondents, NPE improves fluency and classroom communication leading as it stimulates authentic language use through motivating and entertaining activities. The respondent consistently acknowledged effective fluency and improvement using NPE. This is possible because NPE gives easy access to Nigerian entertainment and socio-cultural content including jokes, skits, short films and humoristic audio /videos available on social networks. Most importantly, there is an easier transition from NPE to SE that promotes comprehensive input essential to effective learning

1.4 Drawbacks NPE in the Beninese EFL Context

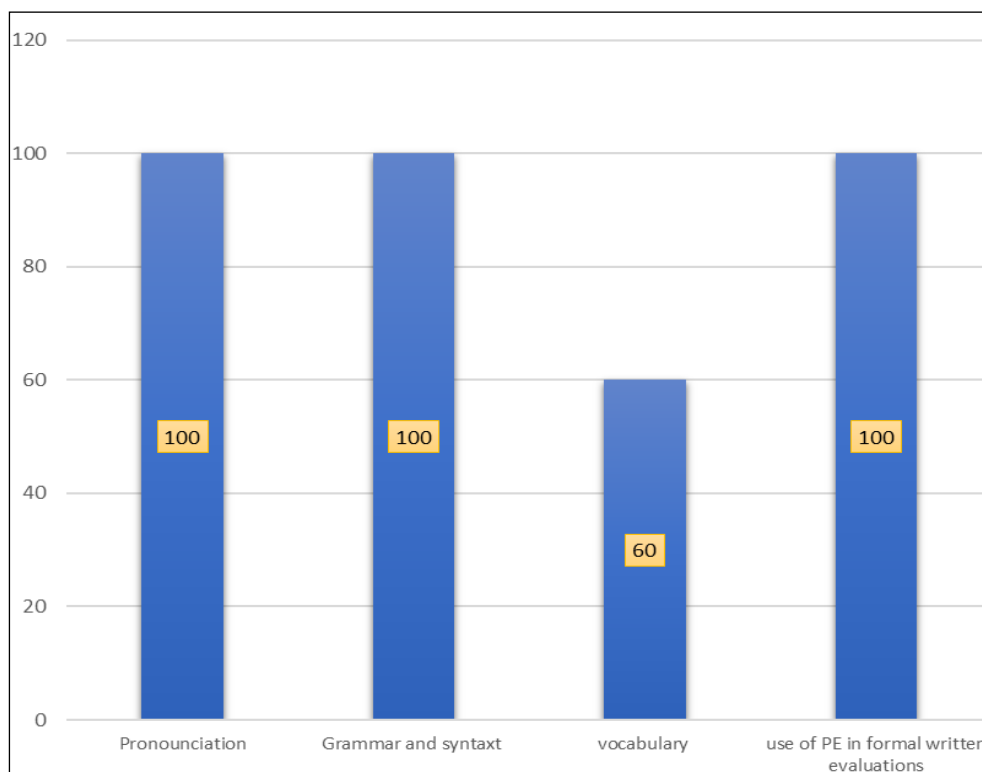


Fig 4: Drawbacks of NPE in the Beninese EFL context

Unanimously, in figure 4, the respondent teachers identified the pronunciation grammar and syntax and the inappropriate use of NPE during written evaluations as the main drawbacks. Besides 60% relived learners’ vocabulary use inappropriateness to be related to the interference of NPE Standard English.

1. EFL Language Exposure according to Regions

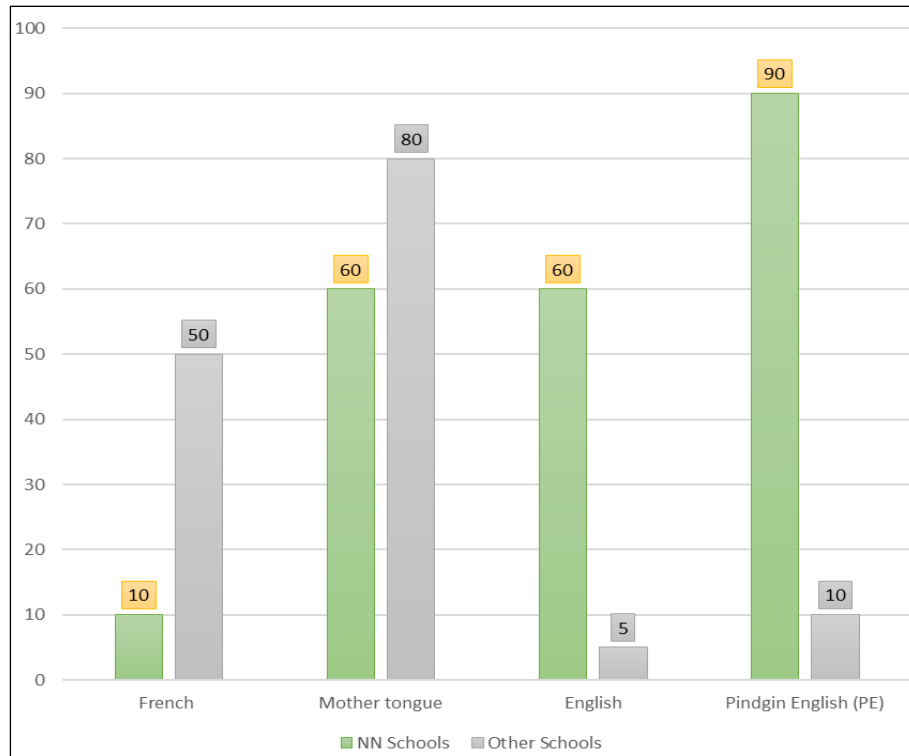


Fig 5: Language Exposure out of the Classroom Settings

Figure 5 reveals an opposite figure for language exposure of NN regions and other regions of Benin Republic. Evidently, according to their importance, the main languages EFL learners are exposed to out of the classroom settings are respectively, NPE (90%), English (60%), mother tongue (60%) and French (10%) for NN schools. For other regions, mother tongues (80%) and French (50%) prevail living almost no chance for English.

2. The Report from Classroom Observation

2.1 Learners' Communicative Skills Performance Report

2.1.1 Oral Communication Performance

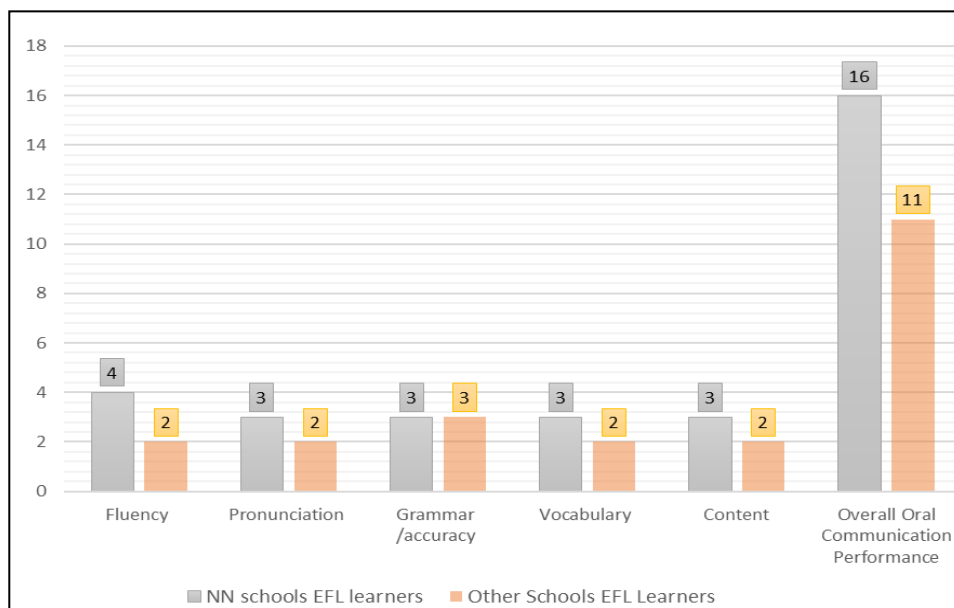


Fig 6: Oral communication Performance

Expectedly, figure 6 evidenced that NN schools' EFL learners outperformed other school learners in fluency, pronunciation, grammar (accuracy), content and communication except for grammar where they share the same difficulties scoring 3pts each. For the overall oral performance, NNS school learners score 16 against only 11 pts for other schools' learners.

2.1.2 Writing performance

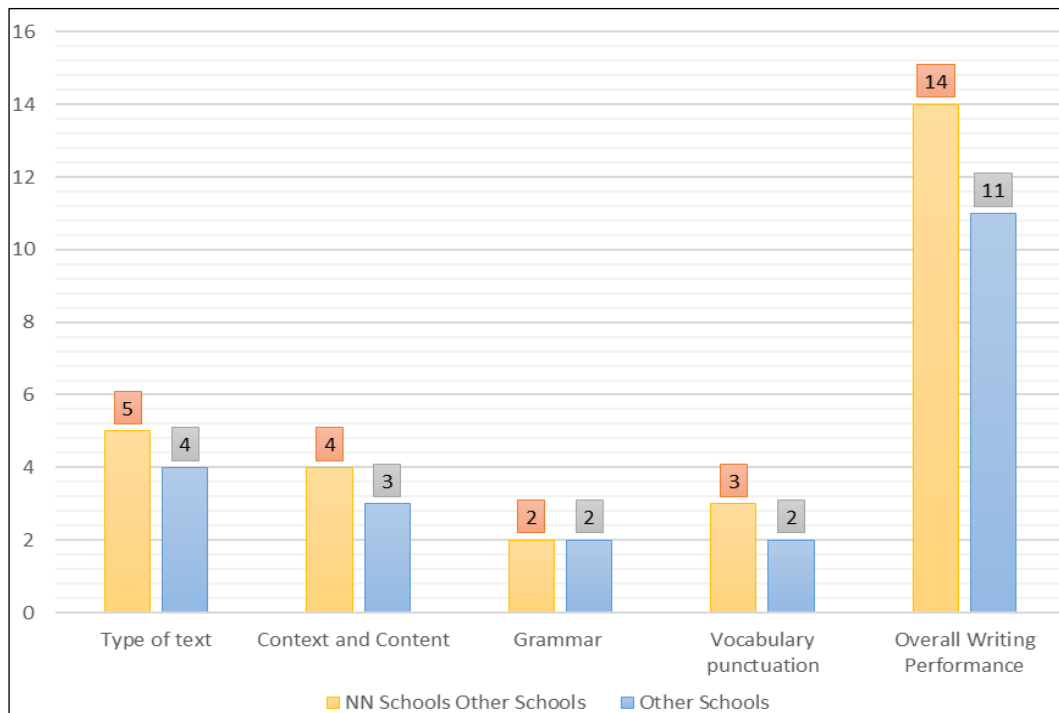


Fig 7: Writing Performance

Surprisingly, given the data in figure 7, the NPE environment proved to have a significantly positive impact on learners writing performance. Thus, other schools' learners match NN school learners only in grammar (2pts each). Eventually, NN Schools Learners outpaced their counterpart in all the other writing skills assessment rubrics i.e., vocabulary (3pts vs 2pts), content (4pts vs 3pts) and type of text (5pts vs 4pts) for an overall score of 14pts against 11pts out of 20.

2.2 Teaching Performance and Classroom Management Report

For the classroom observation, the visited teachers were asked to implement oral communication and writing activities to assess the impact of NPE on overall classroom performance and learners' achievement in communicative skills. This report presents the overall classroom performance in both regions assessed while learners' oral and written communication skills assessment is presented in figure 5 and 6 respectively using the corresponding assessment grid in table 2 and table 3

In the visited classroom, it is fortunate to notice that most ELF teachers had a lesson plan which means that they prepare for their EFL classes. However, the execution of the activities falls short in terms of the achievement of the communicative objectives intended and the smooth transition between the tasks as well. For most EFL teachers in regions other than NN schools who stick to the official 2 decades old outdated document, activities' answers are predictable by learners who expressed their boredom and devote the remaining group work time to chatting in mother tongues or French. This reduces the target language exposure and breaks classroom communication giving little chance for effective learning.

In Nigeria's neighbouring areas however the use of pidgin keeps learners exposed to essential words such as verb adjective adverbs that significantly give those learners an edge over other regions' students. In most NN schools EFL teacher job appears easier due to the use of NPE. Thus, English classes are more communicative and participative. There is also better time management since teacher waste less time on instructions.

Discussion

1. The Challenges of Beninese EFL Teaching-Learning in Today's Education Context

During this investigation, most EFL learners condemn ineffective teaching-learning strategies and the lack of authentic and adequate materials. They also complain about classroom authoritarian teacher-centred management despite the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA) that was supposed to be learner-centred and promote communicative skills. Unfortunately, Beninese teachers hardly create conducive classrooms owing to their training to match the 21st-century education requirements. Most teachers rely on their own and use the available official yet outdated documents to get their job done to avoid any negative evaluation of the supervisory staff.

The problem with the educational system is the inconsistencies of the Beninese CBA implementation due to the lack of a clear definition of the realistic and relevant output profile of the learning process based on an effective and contextualised need analysis. The CBA was grafted on an unfitting model that was forced into

implementation by the school authorities for more than two (2) decades with no effective revision to update official documents and teachers' training to fit with today's challenges and improve performance.

Another hurdle is the evaluation system benchmarks essentially, restricted to superficial aspects, explicitly, the curriculum coverage, the availability of lesson plan sheets (not the efficient execution), use of the board, the teaching strategies (collective, group, pair and individual work), etc. Learners, on the other hand, must submit written evaluations during formative and summative assessments regardless of communication competence. This result in ineffective teaching strategies with EFL teachers uncomfortable with learners who still do not figure out why they should learn a language they do not need for their daily communication. Besides, the lack of facilities resulting in overcrowded classrooms teachers, altogether deprecated generate high anxiety non-communicative learning environment they experienced as witnessed during classroom observations. Foreign as posited by Hu and Wang (2014) ^[7] could be one of the affective factors that most severely inhibit the language learning process. For Gkonou, Daubney and Dewaele (2017) ^[4] foreign language anxiety affects language performance.

In an absence of intrinsic motivation with a very poor extrinsic motivation, only the academic needs related to marks, exams and certifications pledge learners into the EFL process. Justifiably, learners, in figure 1, deprecate the lack of authentic and appropriate materials, the authoritarian classroom management, the inadequate testing and evaluation system and the repetitive boring class activities. For them, these impediments and ineffective teaching strategies generate high anxiety non a communicative learning environment. Teachers on the other hand with low commitment owing to teaching conditions mainly, the overcrowded classes, the lack of teaching materials, the outdated official materials, the lack of training, the ineffective supervision leading the classroom management challenges and learners' attitude, give up and simply focus on superficial grammar translation method just to get their job done.

These problems are experienced in most regions of Benin except NN areas where there is a need for English for socio-cultural and economic reasons. In those regions English is the language of business and socialisation and suing it out of the classroom settings is vital. Even though Pigin English is predominant, '*English is English*' and '*Pidgin is a simplified English*'. Pidgin English only needs to be polished with grammar at school as it is commonly heard.

Indeed, classroom observations in NN schools sketched the actual impact of the use of NPE on standard English communication needs. The infringement of NPE in learners' replies who focus on essential parts of speech to communicate in NN schools convey more meanings than the mix of *French-English* words or the abusive '*anglicisation*' of French words in other schools. In typical classrooms, most of the time, teachers' reactions and classmates' mockeries would break the communication and increase trepidation leading to the rejection of English as a '*source of anxiety*'.

Eventually, the easier transition from NPE to SE improves classroom communication and motivation and induces learners' participation. There is a positive impact of NPE on EFL learning. Nonetheless, this impact should not be attributed only to NPE intrinsically but also to the socio-cultural and economic needs of the NN areas. NN schools' learners are immersed in the Nigerian culture via media where SE and NPE cohabit. Most learners have access to unlimited online content including music films short humoristic videos songs new talk shows, etc. (figure 3). The need for English in that area outside of the classroom makes English mastering compulsory and explains the significant difference in performance

2. The Impact of the Use of NPE on learners' Communicative Proficiency

The results of the observations revealed by comparing the performance of both environments that there is a difference in communicative performance that can be credited to the impact of the use of NPE. Expectedly, figure 5 evidenced that NN schools' EFL learners outperformed other school learners in fluency, pronunciation, grammar (accuracy), content and communication except for grammar where they share the same difficulties scoring 3pts each. For the overall oral performance, NNS learners score 16 pts against only 11 pts for other schools' learners. NPE's impact on oral communication is predictable and acknowledged by most EFL teachers even if they often complain about learners acquired '*Nigerian pronunciation*' that they inconsistently labelled '*broken*' since only British English is officially taught in Benin.

Nonetheless, the NPE environment unexpectedly proved to have a significantly positive impact on learners writing performance. given the data in figure 6 other schools' learners match NN school learners only in grammar (2pts each). Eventually, NN Schools Learners outpaced their counterpart in all the other writing skills assessment rubrics i.e., vocabulary, content, and type of text, for an overall score of 14 pts against 11pts out of 20. This is justified because NPE is used for oral communication and learner simply transferred their oral background knowledge into written competence. Both environment learners share the same difficulties since they are only taught grammar in class with the acknowledged ineffective teaching strategies.

The present result corroborates the respondents' unanimous acknowledgement of the effectiveness of communicative skills improvement. The use of NPE during group activities stimulates authentic language use which makes communication effective and activities more motivating and entertaining. Eventually, the '*Broken English*' label does not make sense in the 21st-century education context as long as the meaning is conveyed and communicative competence is developed. Unfortunately, the negative perception of Beninese EFL teachers prevents them from exploring Nigerian (Pidgin English) opportunities to enrich their classes with authentic material and relevant content to improve teaching practices.

NPE's main advantage is to provide comprehensible input because NPE and SE share the most essential parts of speech. Wilson (2013) ^[10] confirmed that Pidgin English is a simplified language with uncomplicated grammatical structure, reduction of syllabus codes, reduction of consonant clusters, etc. NPE, thus, is an 'English' that can be understood, and then spark attention and motivation to communicate. The focus is no more on mistakes but on the meaning. Krashen (2004) suggests that input should not only be comprehensible but also interesting to the learner since if the learners are not, they will pay no attention to it. Unlike the interference of other languages NPE give access to the Nigerian cultural content relevant to learners so that they keep the language out of the classroom via social interaction and media.

The role of the EFL teachers, then, is to create the bridge to enable learners to feel comfortable with code-switching for NPE to SE, instead of rejecting it. There is a constructive possible cross-lingual transfer of conceptual understanding, phonological and functional awareness (Durgunoglu, 2002) ^[2], and cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (Hardin, 2001) ^[5], between NPE and Standard English. Effective English teaching-learning can be achieved if teachers explicitly draw students' attention to similarities and differences between their languages and reinforce effective learning strategies in a coordinated way across languages" (Cummins, 2007: 233) ^[1].

Multilingualism should thus be integrated into the classroom process, especially while giving instructions. Activities such as role play debate and discussions, service learning, project base activities can be very effective if teachers make sure to create a continuum from PE and other languages to Standard English so that EFL teaching-learning reflects African society's multilingualism.

Conclusion

This study uses an explanatory mixed method to sheds light on the development of communicative skills in the Beninese multilingual context to explore possibilities to improve teaching practice by integrating Nigerian Pidgin English and other languages with the teaching-learning process. This ultimately leads to authentic language development in a safer teaching-learning environment that emphasises communication and social integration. The result proves that there is a significant improvement in communicative skills credited to the use of NPE in Nigeria's neighbouring schools. The effectiveness of NPE is attributed to the fact that when appropriately, used it unifies learning outcomes and socio-cultural needs. This creates multilingual learning that promotes autonomous relaxed and entertaining teaching-learning unlike the traditional ineffective monolingual approach irrelevant to real-life communication.

Nonetheless, the objective is not to use NPE instead of SE in the traditional EFL language courses but to allow its use when required for communication to unify the classroom and the real world thereby increasing consistently EFL learners' language exposure. The result of this paper suggested integrating sociocultural content in the official language course to take advantage of the unlimited resources available to positively impact language learning and acquisition in multicultural and multilingual environments.

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