

# Impacts of Visual Speech Information on ESL Learners' Perceptions of Vowels and Consonants of the Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State, Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the influence of visual speech information on English as second language (ESL) learners' perceptions of sounds English on the junior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Students who use English as second language may perceive English language vowels and consonants in different ways because what they hear is different from the visualized ones due to McGurk effect which is the theory that demonstrates an interaction between hearing and vision in speech perception. Data were collected using questionnaire titled: Impacts of Visual Speech Information on ESL Learners' Perceptions of L2 sounds Questionnaire (IVSILQ). Results of these findings reveal that students have positive attitudes towards the learning of oral English but there are inadequate qualified teachers and the schools lack infrastructural facilities. As a result of these findings, it is recommended that qualified teachers must be made available in all schools that will take care of proper teaching of oral English and infrastructural facilities must be made available for appropriate language instruction.*

**Keywords:** McGurk effect, perceptions, visual speech information, paralinguistics, auditory.

## Introduction

Speech is produced for perception. Speech is often seen as audio accompanied with visual properties (non-auditory) for good communication between human beings by means of words; the mutual perception of this generates a language of the global village. Although what is said does not matter, how it is said is also crucial. That is, the manner of articulation and the accompanied paralinguistic displays have impacts on the communication system. The humans' speech organs and the sensory system must function very well and align together during the process of speech sounds production in order to realize meaningful and coherent mode of communication. It must be clearly understood that the oral rendition where the sounds of language will be physically applied to bring out the correct lexical items and also form appropriate and grammatically acceptable syntactic structures is very vital as it is the final part of the language use where mutual intelligibility between speaker and hearer takes place. In fact, for any human language to survive, it must be primarily oral. That is, oral language is an important form and means to realize the value of a language.

In second language pedagogical scheme, auditory and visual speech perception is affected by varieties of variables. For instance, in noisy environments where speech is unintelligible, ESL learners resort to using visual stimuli and are then subjected to the McGurk effect. McGurk effect is commonly used to demonstrate the process of auditory and visual signal integration by which learners also have increase which you sense organ for perceive the sounds different from what their teachers said. Many researchers have defined the McGurk effect as the fusion effect because integration results in the perception of vowel and consonant sounds, obviously bringing out information from audition and vision. (Keil et al, 2012; Setti et al, 2013).

McGurk effect emanated in 1976 in a paper by Harry McGurk and Macdonald titled "Hearing Lips and Seeing Voices". This effect was discovered by accident when McGurk and his assistant, Macdonald, asked a technician to dub a video that comprised various phoneme from the one spoken while he was conducting a study of how infants perceive language at different development stages. When the video was played back the two researchers heard a phoneme different from the one spoken in the video.

Moreover, if students get poor quality auditory information but obtain good quality visual information, they may be more likely experienced the McGurk effect. English teachers face a lot of challenges in that their students who use English as a second language have diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds bringing language diversity to the classroom. Teaching therefore becomes a difficult task for the teachers who have to meet the diverse needs of the students. Due to this, the pronunciations of the students vary with the problems of cross-cultural communication.

There is also an interference of the mother tongue known as interlanguage through which some linguistic elements from the students' f o j o of first language are transferred into the second LANGUAGE and this causes mispronunciation of words in the target language. The sound, stress and intonation application of the mother tongue are different from that of the target language. That is why there are varieties of the use of English language proficiently in Nigeria.

Furthermore, most teachers of English at junior secondary school level are not all that knowledgeable in English pronunciation. They cannot identify the characteristics of English sounds, or pronounce them correctly. Their pronunciation which is heavily influenced by the accent of their mother tongues are fossilized. They also lack competence in the intonations and stress patterns of English language that would enhance inheritance of his residence or do I don't know what had happened which they substitute with the tonal features of their indigenous language. Most of them use the same obsolete methods that resist novel ideas and dynamic nature of teaching Oral English.

A number of public schools lack infrastructural facilities such as well-ventilated classrooms, well-stocked libraries with current books, well-equipped language laboratories, audio-visual aids among others, which could serve as the instructional materials to concretize the teaching and learning of Oral English. For example, Oyinloye & Ajayi (2008) investigated the effects of audio instructional materials on the academic performance of students in listening skills in Junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State discovered that trained technicians that can properly operate the computer systems and maintain them may not be available.

Moreover, noise is equally a very sensitive variable in that it militates against the effective teaching and learning of Oral English. It may be street noises, background chatter in the classroom due to lack of class control among others. Many schools, west most especially those that are located in urban centers, are in the areas where there are busy movements and activities of many people in the street. Some classrooms are partitioned leading to noise interference from one class to the other.

One information source that is mainly used in the presence of acoustic noise is lip-reading and speech-reading which is contained in the repertoire of paralinguistic advances. Paralinguistic displays which enhances sound that perception of speech is a very important aspect in human language communication: this makes the language of communication to be more accurate, vivid and full of dramatic display that reinforces the semantic outcome of communication

### **Review of Related Literature**

English is the language of the people of England, which originated from three Germanic tribes: the Jutes, the Angles and the Saxons who are settlers in Britain from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The dialects spoken by these Germanic invaders and settlers developed into a language known as Anglo-Saxon or Old English. It is part of the Germanic branch of the Indo European language family. Then, it developed to Middle English spoken in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Early Modern English, the language used by William Shakespeare, is dated from around mid 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Significant pronunciation changes in this period had effects on the qualities of long vowels. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, modern English proper, similar to the ones spoken today, was used. The English language came through British colonization and is now the dominant language as it developed and spread to other parts of the world (Wikipedia, 2017).

The role of English as the medium of instruction in teaching at schools cannot be overemphasized even at the nursery/primary level where the usage of mother tongue is emphasized by the National Policy on Education (2004). However, English language seems to have dominated vital sectors of people social life (Adesina & Oribabor, 2013). English is an official mode of communication in Nigeria and it is the nation's Lingua Franca. Therefore, it is mandatory for every Nigerian student to use the language as the means of communication in the society. English language has gained so much prominence to the extent that it has become the language of instruction at all levels of education in Nigeria as a political unit.

The secondary schools English curriculum aims at enhancing the listening and the speaking skills of the students' language development. The syllabus stresses the significance of oracy by giving primary position to audio-lingual skills. Speaking skill is one of the four language skills, the others are listening, reading and writing. Meanwhile, the missionaries did not concentrate on proper speaking skill of English language during their incursion into Nigeria, but were more interested in reading and writing in order to aid communication and introduce formal education. That is why reading and writing were the center of attraction in assessing students' performance at all levels of education in Nigeria. Oral language competency and proficiency form the foundation of written language, that is, if students cannot verbalize their thoughts, they will not be able to express themselves in written form. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Godwin (2010) claim that ESL learners need a "Threshold level of pronunciation for comprehensible and intelligible oral communication."

Perhaps, the result of students' deficiency in this aspect of English Language studies leads to students consistently perform poorly in their external examinations. Odeh et al (2013) in their references to the report of World Bank (2004) observe that the performance of Nigerian students in English has not only been very poor over the years but they perform below other students in twenty-six other African countries.

The poor academic performance of Nigerian students in English Language has been traced to teachers' factors (Abiola, 2013), students factors (Fakeye, 2010), mother tongue interference (Oluwole, 2008) or a combination of factors e.g home and school (Adekola, 2012).

The variables affecting ESL perceptions of L2 speech sounds include:

1. Students' attitudes to Oral English
2. Students' Home Backgrounds
3. Mother Tongue Interference;
4. Teachers' Qualification(s) and the Methods of Teaching;
5. Infrastructural Facilities
6. Noise (Environmental Concern)

**Students' Attitudes to Oral English:** Second language learning is a demanding task. Good language learning behaviour is closely related to the attitudes towards the language. The attitudes may either be positive or negative. Due to the learners' different backgrounds, students have diverse experiences in the areas of: competence, motivation for learning Oral English, needs, aspirations and interest. As a result of these, they differ in their attitudes towards learning the language. Simanova (2010) supports this view as he believes that this view that highly motivated students become essential factors in language acquisition to the teachers, and those who have no interest for learning a new language in a classroom require didactic prompting in order to generate a reasonable level of interest in learning a language.

**Students' Home Backgrounds:** Most of the time, the environment in which students find themselves does not promote the learning of English Language hence the linguistic culture is permissive and compromised with language errors as the users are less concerned about the acceptable standard. The environment is lackadaisical about correct English grammar or orthography, let alone correct English pronunciation. English is carelessly spoken without regard to rules or Received Pronunciation (RP). This reflects in the students' performance in their examinations in English Language. In fact, the different varieties of English used by students in their day to day affairs, such as, Pidgin English, American English, Yoruba English and a host of others have a lot of influence on the academic success of the students. The students are easily exposed to these forms outside the school environment because of the multilingual nature of the society. As a result of these diversities, students are unable to express themselves clearly in correct acceptable English language which impedes the learners' active participation in classroom language activities.

Many studies have shown that the younger a child is when he begins learning a foreign language the better his spoken outputs and grammar skills are in that language (Dixon et al, 2012). Thus, children who are exposed to poor, non-standard variety of English as spoken by the people in the immediate environment will find it difficult to speak English correctly at the secondary school level. That is why competent teachers are needed to teach effectively and efficiently in order to fill these missing links.

Moreover, a number of students are affected by the kind of family they grew up with. Students display excellent academic performance when their parents are knowledgeable, educated and enlightened. Small (2010) explains that children whose parents are involved with their education tend to perform better in school.

**Mother Tongue Interference:** There is no gainsaying that an average Nigerian child has a problem of mother tongue interference especially in the Oral production of English language because it is the usual thing in Nigeria for children to acquire their mother tongue from birth due to the rapport they have with the people of the environment they find themselves. To buttress this point, Kutgi, Gambari & Gana (2010) assert that children are faced with the problem of pronunciation as a result of mother tongue. Even, in some communities, the only means of communication for the child is that particular language or dialect which he uses at home all the time. By the time the child goes to school and tries to learn Oral English the problem of interference will ensue. For instance, the voiced and voiceless interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ are replaced with voiceless and voiced labio-dental plosive /t/ and /d/ by ESL learners. As in, 'three' /θri: is pronounced as 'tree' /tri:/ and 'then' /ðen/ is pronounced as 'den' /den/. More examples of mother tongue interference are: 'very' /veri/ for /feri/, church: 'shɔ:sh' for /tʃɜ:tʃ/ 'church'; /blɔd/ 'blod' for /blʌd/ 'blood' and a host of others.

**Teachers' Qualification(s) and Methods of Teaching:** The issue of unqualified teachers also contributes immensely to poor Oral English pronunciation in the junior secondary schools. The dearth of qualified teachers is a very strong hurdle to good pronunciation among ESL learners. These incompetent teachers, who obviously are poor pronunciation models, are the products of some colleges and universities with weak grades of certificates and degrees holders who never have interest in further studies to update their knowledge in their chosen field. They deposit errors into the linguistic repertoires of the students. Teachers

must be good models in language programme because language is pragmatic. That is, the teachers should be able to know the organs of speech, their functions, the articulatory manner and place of articulations and then utilize English pronouncing dictionary so as to apply the knowledge of how to articulate English vowels and consonants sounds effectively and efficiently and teach the difficult areas of the English sounds system to students. Charity & Mallinson (2011) submit that "We can't teach what we don't know". The students taught by untrained, inexperienced and unskillful teachers tend to be specifically backward in their academic performance. Correct visual speech information cannot be detached from the available models to the learners especially in language pedagogy.

Competent teachers are needed to teach effectively and efficiently in order to fill the missing links in spoken outputs and grammar skills. Teachers are the organizers and the anchors in Oral English classes and they have great influence on the effects and quality of the classroom activities. Therefore, the teaching method used by the teachers matters a lot in Oral English classrooms. The method to be used must suit the age, background and experience of the learners or else the purpose of teaching will be defeated. To buttress this point, in a recent study conducted by Adelabu & Nder (2013), there was a discovery that many secondary school teachers are unaware of some methods of teaching let alone using them to teach. The traditional classroom method of teaching cannot give room for effective understanding of oral language. A situation whereby the teacher uses textbooks to teach, writes down sounds and transcribes words on the chalkboard and then pronounces them, correctly or incorrectly and the students are allowed to pronounce what he has pronounced cannot foster learning. Students have to watch, sit dumbly, listen and imitate him only when invited to speak. Most of these students do not have the recommended textbooks and so remain passive in the classroom. Oral English teaching needs a lot of activities and tested methods such as role playing, team-teaching, demonstrations, field-trip, vee-mapping that will facilitate learning.

**Infrastructural Facilities:** Instructional materials are beneficial to both teachers and students. This makes it crucial for every teacher and student to be familiar with the topic taught in order to generate proper understanding of the subject matter. Public secondary schools are suffering from dearth of instructional and learning resources. Schools are not ready to provide visual aids for teaching Oral English and teachers do not bother to do so or improvise even though they know their effectiveness. Ogunniyi & Famuyiwa (2010) stress that the instructional materials used by teachers are only textbooks and chalk. Reborra (2011) stresses that the "lack of resources causes limited fluency in English and also causes learning disabilities".

**Noise** (The situation in learning environment): One will not expect students whose school is located in a noisy areas, such as markets, car parks or civic centers to be doing well academically. Students learn faster and better in a peaceful and amiable street than in a noisy urban street, which affects their brain and the ability to listen and causes deficits in mental concentration leading to students' poor academic performance. Learning takes place best in a serene environment.

### **Influence of Visual Speech Information on Oral Language Teaching**

It has been widely examined how visual speech information plays a significant role in speech perception. There is a situation whereby students perceive what the teacher pronounce wrongly due to lack of concentration of the students. Lack of attention affects communication. There must be an agreement between the speaker and the listeners in oral language class during instruction. Visual speech information assists students' perceptions in both normal and unconducive environmental conditions. Visual speech information can facilitate the perception of vowels and consonants, resulting from place and manner of articulation cues.

McGurk effect (McGurk & Macdonald, 1976) is often used to demonstrate the process in which listeners integrate auditory information with visual information from a speakers' face during speech perception. The learners perceive the sounds different from what the teacher said. For instance, students perceive /gau/ when visual information indicates /gəu/ and auditory information indicates /gou/. This effect is often taken as evidence of gestural approaches because it provides an account for what makes the auditory and visual information to be integrated during speech perception. It is used in face to face communication between teachers and students. "McGurk effect is used when the participants are given instruction to watch a talker's face instead of looking at a distance positioned on the face" (Tippana, Anderson & Sams, 2004).

Good English Language teachers use gestures and nonverbal features a lot when teaching to improve the atmosphere in the classroom. Paralinguistic or non-verbal cues such as gestures and body language can help interpret the true meaning of the message. Concerning paralanguage, linguist Abercrombie asserts "We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies....the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account"

## Statement of the Problem

English Language occupies a vital position in the success of other school subjects. It makes it possible to have access to social utilities within and outside a geographical domain. Due to this fact, every individual in Nigerian language community has positive attitude towards it (Babalola, 2010). For instance, promotion to the next class is impossible without a credit pass in English Language. Even, to gain admission into higher institutions, students must have a credit grade in English Language. However, low level of academic performance of students in English Language is at an alarming rate over the years.

In many English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, teaching pronunciation is granted the least attention and there is no modern technologies that can enhance the effectiveness of Oral language teaching. Instructional facilities like audio-visual aids and other linguistic tools that can be made accessible are not readily available in most cases.

Moreover, most administrators of junior secondary schools in Ondo State are yet to set a standard to be followed in the teaching of Oral English and as a result of this, the system admits incompetent teachers who use obsolete method(s) to operate in the system. Those who claim to teach Oral English mix it up with their mother tongue. This denies the students the right model in their desire to learn the vital and most needed skills of the target language. ESL students seem to be affected by teachers-induced errors. Apart from these, lack of infrastructural facilities, noise (environment), learners' home background, mother tongue interference and negative attitude of the learners also have adverse effects on the teaching and learning of Oral English.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of visual speech information on ESL learners' language perceptions as regards the productions of sounds in English Language in Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State. The study aims to identify the importance of oral language learning. The overall scheme of linguistic programme investigates the influence of mother tongue, students' attitude and home background, teachers' qualification and methodology, infrastructural facilities and noise in the school environment on L2 learners' speech perception. The study also aims at investigating the use of paralinguistic advances in ESL classrooms activities where McGurk effect is elicited.

## Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for the study:

1. Do learners' attitudes have effects on their perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?
2. What are the impacts of teachers' qualification and their teaching methods on learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?
3. How can language proficiency affect learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?
4. What influence does mother tongue interference has on learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?
5. How can infrastructural facilities affect learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?

## Significance of the Study

The study is aimed at contributing immensely towards sensitizing the teachers of English Language on the variables disturbing the effective teaching and learning of English sounds in the Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State. The findings would be helpful to teachers in order to equip them pedagogically as well as developing the right attitudes towards the teaching and learning of Oral English. It would also help teachers to know the importance of visual speech information during the process of teaching Oral English in an ESL teaching and learning situation. This study would assist curriculum planners to play a significant role on the teaching methods to use, innovation for better approaches and improving language teaching and learning. The study programmes would be of great benefit to government in order to revisit its roles on the provision of instructional resources and qualified teachers of English Language for a goal oriented language programme.

The study provides new ground for further studies in area of English Language pedagogy to other researchers for maximum attainment of good language performance by the students. Finally, the study would be significant for the general readers at large, as they may be well instructed and let loose from the negative attitudes often associated with the acquisition of the right linguistic tools, especially in second language teaching and learning situations. Findings from the research will be beneficial to students who are already interested to review their stance because oral language is a crucial tool for language learning and communication within and outside Nigeria with her acute multilingualism. In actual fact, language is primarily speech. It is the skills that opens doors for good performance in other language skills.

## Methodology

This study employs the descriptive survey method with the questionnaire for the collection of data because it is an effective tool to be used in investigating the attitudes of a large population towards teaching and learning Oral English. The population for this study comprises 250,025 Junior Secondary School Students in the 304 secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

The simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select two schools from each local government area of Ondo State for the study.

A 60-item questionnaire titled "Impacts of Visual Speech Information on ESL learners' Perceptions of Vowels and Consonants Questionnaire (IVSILQ)" was adopted in eliciting information for both teachers and students.

## Results and Discussion

**Question 1:** Do learners' attitudes affect their perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of teachers' response on learners' attitudes to oral English**

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Students' attitudes towards the learning of oral English are negative.	20	40%	30	60%	100%
I pay attention to students to foster their oral English accuracy.	45	90%	5	10%	100%
Students like oral English class.	46	92%	4	8%	100%

From table 1 above, 40% teachers respond positively that students' attitudes towards the learning of oral English are negative while 60% teachers respond negatively. 90% of the teachers respond positively that they pay attention to students to foster their oral English accuracy while 10% respond negatively. 92% teachers respond positively that students like oral English class while 8% respond negatively. The results of these findings reveal that students have positive attitude towards the learning of oral English.

**Research Question 2:** What are the roles of teachers' qualifications and their methods of teaching on learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of students on teachers' qualification and their teaching methods**

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
I can learn oral pronunciation through mere watching the movement of my teachers' lips.	44	88%	6	12%	100%
There are inadequate qualified teachers in my school	35	70%	15	30%	100%

Table 2 data reveals that 88% students respond positively that they can learn oral pronunciation through mere watching the movement of their teachers' lips while 12% respond negatively. Also, 70% of the students responds positively that there are inadequate qualified teachers in their school while 30% responds negatively. These show that there are insufficient qualified teachers to teach oral English and teachers' teaching methodology affects the learning of oral English as the results revealed that the listening and speaking skills are not used to teach oral English. Even though, majority of the students learn oral English through watching the movement of their teachers' lips.

**Question 3:** Does language proficiency have effects on learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of students on language proficiency**

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Oral test helps to improve students' oral English proficiency.	47	94%	3	6%	100%
I don't understand oral language pronunciations.	20	40%	30	60%	100%

When speaking English, my expression is not smooth.	14	28%	36	72%	100%
Listening to CNN news is a waste of time.	13	26%	37	74%	100%
I take part in debates and other literary activities.	38	76%	12	24%	100%
I like foreign teachers in order to speak oral English fluently.	45	90%	5	10%	100%
Listening to radio or watching TV programmes in standard English is a waste of time.	19	38%	31	62%	100%

In Table 3, 94% of the students gives positive responses that oral test helps to improve students' oral English proficiency while 6% responds negatively. Forty percent (40%) of the students responds positively that they do not understand oral language pronunciation while 60% responds negatively. Also, 28% of the students gives positive response that their expression is not smooth when speaking English language while 72% responds negatively. Twenty-six percent (26%) of the students responds positively that CNN is a waste of time while 74% responds negatively. Seventy-four percent (76%) of the students responds positively that they take part in debates and other literary activities while 24% responds negatively. Majority (90%) of the students respond positively that they like foreign teachers in order to speak oral English fluently while 10% responds negatively. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the students gives positive response that listening to radio or watching TV programmes in standard English is a waste of time while 62% responds negatively. The results of these findings reveal that ESL learners lack language proficiency because many of them do not listen to matured speakers of English language as obtainable on CNN news, local and international standard radio broadcasts.

**Question 4:** What influence does mother tongue have on learners' perception of L2 vowels and consonants?

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics of teachers on mother tongue interference**

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Students' mother tongue reflects in their English speaking.	50	100%	—	—	100%
Students always speak English to their peers in school.	20	60%	30	40%	100%
I focus on increasing students' cultural background knowledge.	45	90%	5	10%	100%

In table 4, all the teachers respond positively that students' mother tongue reflects in their English speaking. Sixty percent (60%) of the teachers respond positively that students always speak English to their peers in school while 40% respond negatively. Majority (90%) of the teachers respond positively that that they focus on increasing students' cultural background knowledge while 10% respond negatively. These results reveal that students' mother tongue influences their oral English proficiency.

**Question 5:** How can infrastructural facilities affect learners' perceptions of L2 vowels and consonants?

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics of teachers on infrastructural facilities**

Items	Yes	%	No	%	Total
Instructional materials provided are inadequate for oral language learning.	35	70%	15	30%	100%
Students should have recommended oral English textbooks.	50	100%	—	—	100%
I use pronouncing English dictionary to teach oral English.	45	90%	5	10%	100%

Language laboratory is very crucial for language learning.	45	90%	5	10%	100%
School libraries are not well equipped.	45	90%	5	10%	100%
Students need to make use of language laboratory to learn oral English.	38	76%	12	24%	100%

Table 5 data show that 70% of the teachers responds positively that instructional materials provided are inadequate for oral language learning while 30% responds negatively. All the teachers (100%) gave positive response that students should have recommended oral English textbooks. Majority (90%) of the teachers respond positively that they use pronouncing dictionary to teach oral English while 10% responds negatively. Ninety percent (90%) of the teachers also responds positively that language laboratory is very crucial for language learning while 10% responds negatively. Ninety percent (90%) of the teachers gives positive response that school libraries are not well equipped while 10% responds negatively. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the teachers responds positively at students need to make use of language laboratory to learn oral English while 24% of the teachers responds negatively. The above percentages show that there are inadequate infrastructural facilities for the teaching and learning of oral English: although most of the teachers use English pronouncing dictionary to teach oral English.

## Discussion

The study findings revealed that the level of the learners of English as second language academic performance in Oral English is low as a result of some problems militating against the teaching and learning of L2 vowels and consonants in Ondo State junior secondary schools. A standard pedagogical model expected learners to speak the target language as a native speaker as suggested by Gilkjan (2011). He believes that "ESL students should be taught the standardized ways of English articulation". However, teaching English as second language especially the oral aspect seems to be a herculean task because majority of the students communicate with one another in their mother tongue, the language they first acquired before learning the target language. This language of their immediate environment influences their manners of sounds articulation which leads to pronunciation errors. This is the first aspect being noticed in ESL learners.

Apart from this, the teachers who teach Oral English are non-native speakers of the language, therefore, their mother tongue interferes as well into their pronunciation and it affects the correct sound production according to the RP model. This finding is relevant to Nation's (2009) submission in his findings that both teachers and students complain about the difficulty encountered in the process of realizing vowel and consonant sounds in their effort to speak English language. In most cases, as revealed by the study, teachers frequently resort to the use of English pronouncing dictionaries to teach their students pronunciation.

The importance of English pronouncing dictionaries and language laboratories in the teaching of Oral English in the Junior Secondary Schools in Ondo State cannot be over-emphasized but these modern media and instructional materials like textbooks, among others, are inadequate or not used in school despite the upsurge of new instructional technologies. As a result, students do not obtain adequate opportunities to practice Oral English pronunciation.

The results of these findings show that there is no correlation between students attitude and language proficiency. This is because although students have positive attitudes towards Oral English, they are not proficient in the speaking skill of the language because of the prevailing linguistic environment. Tuang and Mai (2015) replicate in their own findings that learners speak their mother tongue in English lessons. Though, classroom activities like role play exercise, debates and some literary activities are used by teachers to encourage students to practice. They still lack the required competence in the use of the language for effective performance. The mother tongue creates an outlet and a primary channel for communication among the learners thereby creating a problem for a desperate desire to acquire the needed skills in the target language.

The findings reveal that there are no adequate qualified English language teachers in schools and their teaching methodologies are not appropriate as they do not put more emphasis on listening and speaking skills in the teaching and learning of Oral English. This finding aligns with that of Alonso (2014) on the practice of speaking in the classroom. The key element in the development of language competence in the second language especially the oral skills are concentrated on second language teaching methodologies.

## Conclusion

McGurk effect which occurs when the auditory component of one sound is paired with the visual component of another sound and leads to the perception of a third sound: this can be caused by some variables that influence ESL learners' perceptions of Oral English. These bring about the decline in students' performance in English Language in Junior Secondary School Certificate examinations. Despite the insufficiency of qualified teachers, students' have positive attitude to Oral English. English operates at different domains in the society: it is the language of education, mass media, religion, medicine, tourism, politics and commerce.

Students' mother tongue reflects in their pronunciations of L2 vowels and consonants. There are other variables such as teacher's qualification and teaching methodology, noise and infrastructural facilities are also significant to students' linguistic progress. On the whole, ESL learner's academic achievement is poor because of their weakness in Oral English which is an important aspect in English Language study. However, if the aforementioned variables are tackled in time, learners will improve on their pronunciation skills which will enhance better performance in Oral English and a remarkable positive effect on other language skills.

## Recommendations

These recommendations are made in order to find solutions to some of the factors militating against learners' performance in English Language in Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination. Having discovered that the positive attitudes of ESL learners emanate from the inevitable utility value of English language in Nigerian language community, the right methodology must be adopted and the appropriate linguistic environment provided in order to aver students' poor performance in English language.

Teachers need to use the RP (Received Pronunciation) skills when speaking, therefore they should imbibe the culture of using English pronouncing dictionary often for communicative competency and language proficiency. Students should use English as a medium of communication within and outside the school because majority of the students speak their mother tongue at home and interact with one another in their mother tongue. Since their mother tongue has influence on the spoken English, it also has effect on their academic achievement in English Language. Teachers must use new and appropriate methods to teach Oral English in order to generate good understanding. Teachers and students should improve their speaking and listening skills by listening to educative programmes and CNN news on radio and TV by so doing, their language proficiency will develop.

Infrastructural facilities like language laboratory and well equipped library should be provided while students should be encouraged to use pronouncing dictionary. English textbooks must be made compulsory for all learners of English.

Schools should organize debates and other literary activities for learners and allow all of them to participate actively. For instance, drama club should be formed and strengthened where series of play in the target language will be staged through various dramatic techniques like dance, music and mime. In a noisy environment, in order to facilitate learners' understanding of Oral English, it is important to add body movement and gestures into teaching, which will help learners to grasp what is being said and how it is said (lip-reading). Students should however inculcate the habits of watching their teachers' lips movement and facial expression during oral English lesson for better understanding.

However, school should not be located in noisy environments to avoid lack of concentration of learners, but any school that falls victim into this should, in order to develop students' speech perception, use paralinguistic advances in oral English class to prevent McGurk effect. If all these recommendations are strictly adhered to, there will be great improvement of learners understanding of oral English, while learners' performance in English Language in Junior Secondary Certificate Examination will be high.

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