

**FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARDS SPOKEN ENGLISH (PHONETICS)**

BY

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BENIN CITY,**

FEBRUARY, 2025

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
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CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this research work carried out by **Godstime, Oghenekevwe NAFAGHA** Matriculation Number EDU2001515 in the department of Educational Foundations, University of Benin, Benin city, Nigeria.

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(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God, for giving me the strength and guidance to properly carry out and complete the work and also for his protection throughout my time in the University of Benin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to acknowledge God almighty for this milestone, my project supervisor, DR. Mrs P.Y Iode for his corrections, guidance, for taking out time to go through my work, for his referral, advice and tolerance during the course of my research. I also want to acknowledge. May God bless you, grant you good health and sound mind in Jesus name. Amen.

Immeasurable thanks to my Mum (Best Mum in the World), Mrs Ragina Nafagha, for her constant unwavering support, care and guidance during the course of this project work and my stay in school. It is my earnest prayer that God keep you alive in good health in Jesus name; Amen. Special thanks to my amazing siblings, Mrs Peace Ekiugbo, Mrs Ese Goodness, and Mrs Mine John, for their moral and emotional support that kept me pushing through this academic journey.

To my Pastor Ambrose Testimony, Rev. P.E. JEW0 and to my brother, Master Kolawale Adegoroye Ojo; Thank you for your love and support in everything and for also believing in me from the very first day and To my Family The Anagnostes God bless you all.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the Factors responsible for the negative attitude of secondary school students towards spoken English (phonetic), focusing on five key areas: articulatory, auditory and acoustic aspects, vocabulary development, creativity, revision skills, and attitudes towards spoken skills. The descriptive research design was used for this research work. Four research questions were drawn up to guide this study. Questionnaire was designed and analysed for data collection. A total of one hundred and thirty three (149) respondents were used for the study. The simple percentage was used for analysing data obtained from the study.

The findings revealed that Factors responsible for the negative attitude of secondary school students towards spoken English (phonetic) are of various factors which include proficiency and teaching methodology of phonetics teachers. Additionally, it has been observed that students' Proficiency in English language, especially phonetics, is a major concern among educational stakeholders.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that English teachers should channel their strength of emphasis on those aspect of Spoken English that is not obtainable in our Spoken native tongue. By repetitive activities, the students will familiarize themselves with those difficult but necessary aspects of the spoken English; Language laboratories and functional libraries should be provide in schools to aid learning.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

English Language is the official language in Nigeria. It is the language used in government and education. As noted by Akujobi and Chukwu (2012) It is that language of 'convenience' for a community with diverse ethnic groups being tutored Popand related in a common language.

It is important to also state that the English language is the official language because it was introduced to Nigeria by the colonial masters. This makes English a second language. English became a second language in Nigeria due to the multilingual nature of the Nation and it helped in the unification of the Nation (Akujobi and Chukwu, 2012).Therefore, the need for mutual intelligibility among the various Ethnic groups of the country and being the official language, English language was incorporated in the school curricula. ELugbe (2000) English is understood all over the world and should be encouraged i.e English which meet international standard of intelligibility, especially as, English language is an international language spoken, all over the world. Because English has both National and global language, there is need to train citizens that speak Standard English. This is why attention must be paid to the teaching of spoken English in Nigerian schools.

English as a subject essentially has two parts: The written and the spoken English. While the written has to do with vocabulary building, spelling, sentence structure and Essay, the spoken involves the oral, which includes pronunciation, stress and intonation. The study of how to rightly articulate sounds in English is called Phonetics. J. Benjamin Ohwode (2021) defines phonetics as an arm of linguistics where Phoneticians pay attention to speech production and scientifically examine in what ways these human speech sounds are classes or categorized. It is simply the study of how sounds are articulated and classified. The Cambridge Dictionary of linguistics, defined phonetics as the scientific study of speech sounds independent of their use in language, linguistics phonetics is the study of speech sounds of a particular language.

Awonusi (2015) as cited by J. Benjamin, Ohwode, stated that phonetics covers “three crucial perspectives starting with speech production by the speaker, the transmission of speech as a code to the hearer and the understanding or decoding of the transmitted message... “They are articulatory, auditory and acoustic phonetics.

Articulatory phonetics studies “the movement of speech organs during the process of pronunciation or articulation with the purpose of describing and characterizing sounds (J. Benjamin Ohwode, 2021). That is how upper and lower lips, teeth, hard palate, soft palate, etc, are involved in the articulation of a sound

Phonetics is taught in schools to facilitate effective communication. The spoken aspect of phonetics is auditory. It refers to the hearing of both segmental and suprasegmental aspects of sounds. This aspect focuses on the listener. While the acoustic phonetics involves the “properties of speech sounds like duration (t), fundamental frequency (Hz), energy and intensity (dB)” (J. Benjamin ,2021). It focuses on the duration, intensity and frequency of wave forms in the air during speech transmission.

Spoken English has not been given the attention it deserves until recently that some schools have begun paying attention to the teaching of spoken English. Spoken English is taught in these schools from primary to secondary schools. But among students there is a 'silent' cry to be ridden of the burden of spoken English. Students have developed a dread for spoken English and the results of national exams like WAEC attest to the facts that students find the subject as a burden. Hence, they have developed a negative attitude towards the subject. Attitude is an individual's disposition towards something or someone. It affects how an individual sees, hears and thinks and does something. If an attitude towards something is negative, one cannot get the best out of it. Maduekwe (2011 cited in Anana) states that most students find it difficult to learn oral English because they think it is technical. This kind of thinking creates fear and consequently affects students' attitude toward the subject. The purpose of this research is to investigate

the factors responsible for these negative attitudes of secondary school students towards spoken English.

Statement of the Problem

Attitude is an evaluative reaction to some referents or objects, inferred on the basis of the individuals beliefs or opinions about the referents (Garder, 2005). Attitude therefore can be said to be a reaction to something or someone based on judgment drawn from beliefs or opinions. It can be positive or negative. Anana (2017) states that the attitude of students is very important in determining the success or failure of the teaching of oral English in both junior secondary Schools (JSS) and Senior secondary Schools (SS). So, the attitude of students towards spoken English will determine their success or failure in their performance.

It has been observed that students' Proficiency in English language, especially phonetics, is a major concern among educational stakeholders. Observation has shown that many students find it difficult to articulate themselves in the English language, especially as to the correct pronunciation of words. This deficiency hinders both the academic performance and the global opportunities of students as English is a global language.

This deficiency has been observed to also affect their confidence among their peers. This has led to little or no participation in classroom discussion . If this continues will tell on both the self esteem of the students and also job opportunities

after school. It has been observed that there had been a noticeable decrease in the number of students that had credit in the West Africa Examination (WAEC). This can be due to the attitude of students towards phonetics. Observation shows that students find English Phonetics boring and difficult hence they either have no interest or little interest in the study of Phonetics. This has fosters negative Attitude toward the subject matter. It is because of these that the researcher seeks to investigate the factors that may be responsible for this attitude.

Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were raised:

1. What are the main factors responsible for the negative attitude of secondary School students towards spoken English?
2. How do the factors affect the performance of secondary School students in spoken English?
3. How does the proficiency and teaching methodology of English teachers affect student's attitudes toward spoken English?
4. What measures can be taken to improve the attitudes of secondary School students towards spoken English?

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate on the factors that may be responsible for the negative attitude of secondary School students toward phonetics in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study is to:

Identify the factors responsible for the negative attitude of secondary School students towards spoken English in Public schools in Egor local government Area of Benin?

To investigate the Effects of the negative attitude on students' performance in the subject.

To investigate how the proficiency and teaching methodology of English teachers affects students' attitude towards Spoken English.

To provide recommendations to educationists, teachers and the government on how to improve students' attitude towards spoken English.

Significance of the Study

The study would benefit students, English Language teachers, policy makers, Ministry of Education and prospective researchers. The study will benefit students as it will help them understand the importance of phonetics on Effective communication skills. Understanding the importance of phonetics will motivate students to learn and thereby improve their pronunciation and spelling skills.

The study will benefit English teachers as it will help them to recognize the reasons for the negative attitude of students towards phonetics and by recognizing the reasons behind the negative attitude of students towards phonetics, they can design effective lesson plans, teaching methods and activities that motivates students' interest in learning Phonetics.

The study will benefit Policy makers and the Ministry of Education as it will help them understand the reasons behind the poor performance of secondary School students towards phonetics and this will motivate them to allocate resources and make policies that will facilitate positive attitude towards Spoken English among students.

The study will benefit prospective researchers as it will serve as a source of reference point to them and a foundation for further research and potentially less to the development of new technology methodologies and techniques.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on the factors responsible for the negative attitudes of secondary School students towards Spoken English in Egor local government Area of Edo state.

The study will be delimited to students in public senior secondary schools in Egor local government Area of Edo state.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be defined as used in the study:

Negative: An attitude or something not desirable

Attitude: It is the thought and behaviour of an individual

Phonetics: It is the linguistics study of sounds. It also called spoken English or Oral English.

Factors: It is circumstances, facts, or influence that contributes to a result.

Responsible: The cause of something.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter dealt on the review of related literature. This Literature review was discussed under the following sub- headings:

- Theoretical framework
- Concept of Phonetics
- Concept of Negative attitude
- How Negative attitude affects Secondary School students performance in oral Test
- Factors responsible for the Negative attitude of Secondary school students towards phonetics in Nigeria.
- Summary of Literature review

Theoretical Framework

Attribution Theory (At)

The theoretical framework of the study is hinged on the Attribution theory propounded by Fritz Heider in the Early 20 century and it was advanced by Herold Kelley and Bernard Weiner. Attribution theory offers a profound understanding of the factors responsible for students' negative Attitude toward learning Phonetics.

Attribution Theory, developed by Fritz Heider in 1958, seeks to explain how individuals interpret events and how this interpretation affects their behavior. Heider proposed that people attribute their successes and failures to internal or external factors, influencing their motivation and attitude (Heider, 1958). In the context of students learning phonetics, negative attitudes can often be explained through the lens of attribution.

The theory originated from the work of Fritz Heider titled: *The psychology of Interpersonal relationship*. It was published in 1958. He proposed that people attribute causes to internal or external factors thereby influencing their behaviors and perception. Heider posits that people are ‘naive psychologists’ that attribute cause to other people behavior.

Many students may attribute their struggles with phonetics to internal factors like lack of ability ("I am not good at pronunciation"), which can lower self-esteem and motivation. According to Weiner (1974), students who believe their difficulties are due to unchangeable traits (e.g., intelligence or inherent language ability) are more likely to develop negative attitudes and become demotivated. External attributions, such as blaming the teacher’s method or the difficulty of the subject, can also contribute to disengagement.

Heider's theory suggests that when students perceive their learning challenges as controllable, they may have a more positive attitude (Heider, 1958).

However, if they see these challenges as uncontrollable, they are more likely to develop negative attitudes, leading to a lack of effort or avoidance of phonetics altogether. Teachers can play a role in shifting these attributions by fostering a growth mindset and emphasizing effort over ability.

The theory was further advanced by Herold Kelley and Bernard weiner. This is why we have Kelly's model and Bernard Weiner's Model

Kelley's Model

Kelley posits that when observing another person's behavior in front of a particular stimuli at a particular time, one can attribute such behavior to three causes: the person, the Entity or stimuli or the time. This attribution is made through covariance. Kelley said, " an effect is attributed to one of the possible causes with which over time it covaries". Covariance is qualified through consistency, consensus and distinctiveness. Depending on these three factors, a person will attribute another's behavior either to internal or external factors.

Weiner's Model

He looked at ways people explain their success or failure. He identified two dimensions that describe the cause of success or failure. They are the locus of causality and stability.

The Locus of causality shows the origin of the cause of success or failure, which can be internal or external. Internal causes are the abilities of a person as well as

the person's effort deployed in the task while External causes are the difficulty of the task and the luck the person may have.

Stability defines the constancy of the causes, they can be stable or unstable. Stable causes are difficulty of task and abilities. Unstable causes are luck of the person and effort deployed.

The theory is relevant to the study as it helps to offer insights into understanding the causes of students' negative attitude towards phonetics, by exploring the internal and external causes. Educators, stakeholders and policymakers can devise strategies that can address negative Attitude of students by paying attention to Attribution patterns.

Principles of Attribution Theory (At)

One of the key principles of attribution theory is the distinction between internal attributions, where behavior is attributed to personal characteristics like ability or effort, and external attributions, where behavior is attributed to external circumstances such as luck, task difficulty, or other situational factors (Weiner, 1974). For example, if a student fails an exam, they might attribute it internally, believing they did not study enough, or externally, blaming the difficulty of the test.

Harold Kelley (1967) expanded the theory by introducing the covariation model, which states that people assess behavior based on three factors: consensus,

consistency, and distinctiveness. If many people behave the same way in a similar situation (high consensus), the cause is likely external. If the behavior is consistent across time (high consistency) and unique to the particular situation (high distinctiveness), then the attribution may be internal.

Weiner (1974) also contributed by applying attribution theory to the study of motivation and emotion, particularly in academic and achievement contexts. He identified three key dimensions for causal attributions: locus of control (internal vs. external), stability (whether the cause is stable over time), and controllability (whether the individual has control over the cause). These dimensions help determine emotional responses such as pride, shame, or guilt following success or failure.

Attribution theory is significant because it impacts how individuals perceive their own and others' behaviors, influencing their emotional responses, motivation, and future behavior. In business, for instance, managers use attributions to assess employee performance, often affecting their decision-making about rewards or disciplinary actions (Martinko, 1995). This theory highlights the importance of understanding both personal and situational factors in human behavior.

Relevance Of Attribution Theory (AT) TO The Study.

Many Nigerian secondary school students may attribute their struggles with spoken English to internal factors, such as lack of ability, low confidence, or fear of making mistakes. This perception can lead to a negative attitude because students feel that their ability is fixed, and no matter how hard they try, they will not improve. Conversely, some may blame external factors like poor teaching, inadequate learning resources, or the societal emphasis on indigenous languages over English. This can foster a sense of helplessness, further dampening their motivation.

Students who believe that their difficulties in speaking English are within their control, such as through practice or increased effort, are more likely to adopt a positive attitude. However, those who think their language skills are beyond their control, perhaps due to socio-economic background or inadequate exposure to English at home, may develop a more negative stance towards spoken English.

In Nigeria, there is a strong emphasis on local languages, and English is often seen as a formal or foreign tongue. Students may attribute their difficulties in speaking English to cultural identity, viewing English proficiency as a betrayal of their native roots. This cultural conflict, rooted in external attributions, reinforces their negative attitude.

Attribution Theory also highlights how students compare themselves to peers. If students observe that others speak English fluently and attribute this to

those peers being naturally more intelligent or advantaged, they may feel discouraged. This self-handicapping effect can lead to further disengagement from spoken English, especially when students attribute their difficulties to fixed traits.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Phonetics

J. Benjamin (2021) defined phonetics as the arm of linguistics where Phoneticians pay attention to the speech sounds production and scientifically examine in what ways these human speech sounds are classified or categorized. It is concerned with how words and sentences are articulated. Ogden (2001) defined it as the study of physical properties of speech sounds. It covers three important aspects. They are the articulatory, auditory and acoustic phonetics.

Crystal (2001) describes the study of the physical properties of speech sounds, including their articulation, acoustic characteristics, and auditory perception. According to Mark Jones (2014) Phonetics is the study of the physical properties of speech sounds, including their production, transmission, and perception. Boyce (2023) sees it as the scientific study of speech sounds, encompassing their articulation, acoustic analysis, and perceptual evaluation. Phonetics is the study of the sound system of language, including the production, transmission, and reception of speech sounds (Dickerson,2020).

According to J. Benjamin, Articulatory phonetics is that aspect of speech studies that focuses on labeling sounds or phonemes that are present in world languages. It involves the study of the movement of speech organs during the process of pronunciation with the purpose of describing and characterizing sounds. Auditory has to do with the hearing in respect to segmental, that is vowels and consonants and suprasegmental, that is stress, intonation and rhythm, aspect of language.

Concept of Negative Attitude

Attitude is a construct of psychology. It is the feelings, the tendencies and disposition of an individual towards a person, a thing or an idea. According to Oladele (2021), attitude refers to "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and tendencies towards objects, people, or situations. Attitude therefore encompasses an individual's beliefs, feelings and tendencies towards a person or things. The social psychologist observe that attitude has three components namely; cognitive, affective and conative components.(Weiten,2008, Naire,2009, Plotnik and kouyoumdhian,2008) Okwu (2022) contributing, Said that attitude can be defined as a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably towards an object or situation. Attitude can be said to be positive or negative.

An exhibition of positive attitude leads to good or aimed results while Negative Attitude hampers or hinders expected results. Base on the forestated, we can

conclude that the negative Attitude of secondary School students will hamper their study of Phonetics, which in turn affects their effective communication skills and academic performance.

Concept of Language

Language and society are so much related. Their relationship cannot be underestimated. Language is the oil that lubricates activities within any human society Chomsky (1957). Language is a system of communication used by humans to convey thoughts, emotions, and ideas through sounds, symbols, and gestures. It is one of the most fundamental tools that enables social interaction, culture, and knowledge transmission across generations.

At its core, language is structured around grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, which allow speakers to construct meaningful sentences and convey nuanced meanings. Different languages, however, have unique rules and structures that reflect the cultural and social contexts in which they developed. Despite these differences, all languages share the same basic purpose: to facilitate communication.

Concept of English as a Spoken Language

English as a spoken language holds global significance due to its widespread use as a lingua franca. As Crystal (2003) notes, over a billion people speak English, either as a first or second language, making it essential for international communication. The spread of English can be attributed to historical factors like British colonialism and the rise of the United States as a global power in the 20th century (Phillipson, 1992). Additionally, English's adaptability, borrowing from various languages, enhances its appeal and utility in diverse regions (Graddol, 2006). The role of English in global commerce, education, and technology further cements its importance as a spoken language. As more non-native speakers use English for practical purposes, its role as a tool for intercultural exchange grows, fostering global understanding (Jenkins, 2007). Thus, English continues to evolve, reflecting both its speakers and the cultures it interacts with.

How the Negative Attitude of Secondary School Students Affects their Performance in Phonetics or Oral Test.

Negative attitudes among secondary school students can significantly impact their performance in phonetics or oral tests. These attitudes are often shaped by a combination of factors such as lack of interest, fear of failure, and societal pressure, which, in turn, hinder their ability to excel in spoken language assessments.

Firstly, a lack of motivation is a key contributor to poor performance. Students who perceive phonetics as unimportant may show little interest in learning pronunciation rules or practicing oral skills. Research by Olatunji (2015) highlights that students with low enthusiasm toward language learning often struggle to grasp key concepts in phonetics, leading to poor performance in oral tests.

Secondly, fear of embarrassment in front of peers can cause students to underperform. Many students experience anxiety when required to speak publicly, especially in a second language. According to Tsui (2017), fear of making mistakes during oral exams or phonetic drills can lead to avoidance behavior, where students refrain from participating actively, resulting in a lack of practice and eventual failure.

Furthermore, inadequate teaching methods often exacerbate negative student attitudes. In some cases, phonetics is taught in a rigid and uninspiring manner, further disengaging students. Taiwo (2019) suggests that a teacher-centered approach, devoid of interactive elements, fails to stimulate interest and engagement, thereby causing students to develop a negative attitude toward oral assessments.

Peer influence also plays a crucial role. In environments where fluency or pronunciation is ridiculed, students may shy away from participating, fearful of being mocked for their attempts. This peer pressure stifles their willingness to

practice or improve, leading to poor phonetic skills. As noted by Adeyemi and Ojo (2020), negative peer feedback in classroom settings has a direct correlation with decreased student participation in oral tasks.

Lastly, external factors, such as societal undervaluation of phonetic skills, also contribute to students' negative attitudes. In many cultures, the focus is often placed on written rather than spoken language proficiency. This creates a bias that undervalues phonetic competence, as students feel that oral tests hold less importance for their academic success (Akinola, 2021).

The negative attitudes of secondary school students towards phonetics and oral tests stem from a variety of factors, including lack of interest, fear of embarrassment, inadequate teaching methods, peer pressure, and societal undervaluation. These attitudes significantly affect their performance, as students become less inclined to practice and engage in oral assessments, ultimately impacting their language proficiency. Addressing these issues through motivational teaching strategies and creating supportive classroom environments is crucial to improving student outcomes in phonetics and oral tests.

Factors Responsible for Negative Attitude.

Several factors contribute to the negative attitudes that secondary school students develop towards phonetics or oral tests. These factors include fear of

failure, poor teaching methods, peer pressure, cultural bias, and lack of adequate resources.

Firstly, fear of failure is a significant cause. Many students are afraid of being judged by their peers or teachers for making mistakes in pronunciation, which can lead to anxiety and reluctance to participate in oral activities (Tsui, 2017). This fear often stems from past experiences where errors were not handled constructively, making students more hesitant to engage in oral exercises.

Secondly, poor teaching methods play a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes. Teachers who focus on rote memorization rather than interactive, engaging methods fail to make phonetics relatable. According to Taiwo (2019), traditional, teacher-centered approaches limit students' ability to practice phonetics in a real-world context, resulting in disengagement.

Peer pressure also contributes to negative attitudes. In classroom settings where some students mock others for their pronunciation or fluency errors, many become reluctant to practice. Adeyemi and Ojo (2020) assert that negative peer feedback diminishes students' willingness to speak out, fearing ridicule.

Another factor is cultural bias. In many societies, emphasis is placed on written language over spoken proficiency, leading to students undervaluing the importance of phonetics. Akinola (2021) points out that in certain cultures, oral

proficiency is not seen as essential for academic success, contributing to students' indifference toward phonetic skills.

Lastly, the lack of adequate resources also hinders phonetic learning. Schools with limited access to modern language labs or audio-visual aids struggle to provide students with the necessary tools for effective oral practice (Olatunji, 2015).

Impact of Negative Attitude of Secondary School Students on Their Performance in Phonetics or Oral Tests

A negative attitude towards phonetics or oral tests among secondary school students can significantly hinder their academic progress and language proficiency. This reluctance often stems from a combination of anxiety, fear of embarrassment, and a lack of understanding of the importance of phonetics in mastering language skills. When students harbor negative perceptions about these tests, their willingness to participate diminishes, resulting in poor preparation and performance.

Research shows that students with negative attitudes towards phonetics are less likely to engage in active practice, which is critical for mastering pronunciation, intonation, and stress patterns (Gilakjani, 2012). Language learning, especially phonetics, requires consistent practice and feedback. Students who shy away from these activities due to a lack of interest or fear of making mistakes tend

to underperform, as they miss essential opportunities for improvement (Krashen, 1985). Consequently, they may experience frustration, leading to further disinterest and poor results.

Moreover, anxiety is a significant factor affecting students' attitudes towards oral tests. Horwitz et al. (1986) note that students who experience anxiety in language learning situations often develop a fear of failure, which inhibits their ability to perform effectively. This anxiety often manifests during oral exams, where students feel judged or fear making pronunciation errors in front of their peers and teachers. As a result, students with negative attitudes are more likely to score poorly on oral tests, as their fear prevents them from demonstrating their full potential.

Additionally, the school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' attitudes. A lack of encouragement or an overly critical teaching style can reinforce students' negative perceptions of oral tests (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Teachers who fail to create a supportive and low-stress environment may inadvertently exacerbate students' fear of failure. Encouraging feedback and an emphasis on progress over perfection are necessary to foster a more positive outlook towards phonetics and oral assessments.

In conclusion, a negative attitude towards phonetics or oral tests significantly impacts secondary school students' performance. This attitude often arises from anxiety, fear of failure, and insufficient practice, all of which contribute to poor outcomes in oral assessments. Educational interventions that address these attitudes—through supportive teaching methods, anxiety reduction, and increased engagement—are critical to improving student performance in phonetics.

Empirical Review

The negative attitude of Nigerian secondary school students towards spoken English has been a subject of empirical research, with several studies identifying key factors contributing to this phenomenon. These factors are often rooted in linguistic, socio-cultural, and educational contexts.

Firstly, linguistic interference from indigenous languages has been widely documented. Nigeria is a multilingual society with over 500 languages, and many students grow up speaking their mother tongue as their first language. According to Bangbose (1991), the influence of local languages often leads to phonological, syntactic, and lexical interference when students speak English, making them less confident and sometimes disinterested in improving their spoken English.

Socio-cultural factors also play a significant role. Several studies have highlighted the perception that speaking English fluently can be associated with elitism or cultural alienation, particularly in rural areas. Adeniran (2006) found that

many students view English as a foreign imposition, which affects their willingness to embrace the language fully. This sense of alienation may cause students to resist practicing spoken English, even though it is a vital medium of communication in academic and professional settings.

In the educational context, poor teaching methods are another significant factor. Empirical research by Adeosun (2012) found that many English language teachers in Nigerian secondary schools focus heavily on written English, with less emphasis on speaking skills. This approach leaves students under-prepared for real-world communication in English, leading to anxiety and reluctance to engage in spoken English. Similarly, Olajide (2010) emphasized that outdated and grammar-centric curricula contribute to this problem by not fostering interactive or communicative competence in English.

Furthermore, lack of exposure to spoken English outside the classroom is critical. Adeyemi (2011) notes that many students in Nigeria primarily hear and use their native languages at home and in their communities. This lack of immersion in English makes it difficult for students to develop fluency, resulting in a negative attitude towards speaking the language.

Finally, the role of peer influence and societal expectations cannot be overlooked. Ubahakwe (1998) argued that many students are discouraged by their peers from speaking English, as it is sometimes viewed as pretentious or

unnecessary in informal settings. This peer pressure, combined with societal norms that do not always prioritize proficiency in spoken English, further entrenches the negative attitudes among students.

In conclusion, a combination of linguistic interference, socio-cultural attitudes, poor teaching practices, limited exposure, and peer influence contribute to Nigerian secondary school students' negative attitude towards spoken English. Addressing these issues will require a holistic approach, including curriculum reform, teacher training, and societal sensitization about the importance of spoken English.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

The Literature review critically examines the concept of phonetics and the factors responsible for the negative attitude of Secondary school students towards phonetics or spoken English. As seen from the Literature reviewed, Phonetics is the study of speech sounds production and their physical properties. It focuses on the articulatory, auditory and acoustic aspects. The Literature reviewed also examined how negative attitudes of secondary School students towards phonetics affects their performance in oral Tests because of fear of failure, lack of motivation and fear of embarrassment .

Furthermore, the Literature reviewed looked at the factors responsible for the negative attitude of Secondary school students towards phonetics, which are fear of failure, poor teaching methods and cultural bias.

The Literature reviewed concluded with the impact of the negative attitude of Secondary Schools students towards phonetics on performance in their phonetics text. It shows that students negative attitude towards spoken English hinder their academic progress and proficiency in the English language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter described the methods that was used in conducting this research.

This was done along the following sub-headings:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

The research used for this study is descriptive research survey design. The choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to investigate the factors

responsible for the negative attitude of secondary school student towards Spoken English (Phonetics).

Population of the Study

The target population for the study consists of all the 4497 public Senior Secondary Schools students in the fourteen (14) public secondary schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State(source:www.iwemi.com).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was made up of 140 students. with the aid of the simple random sampling technique,10 students each were selected from each schools in the 14 public senior secondary schools in Egor local government ,thus making the total size of 140 respondents.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used for this study is a questionnaire, titled "Factors Responsible for Negative Attitude Toward Spoken English Questionnaire (FRNATSEQ)". The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B .A focus on the demographic or personal data of the respondent while section B contains information which focus on the problem of the research. .

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other lecturers in language. This is done to ensure that the questions asked are

appropriate and in line with the research variables for the study seventeen items was presented to the supervisor by the researcher. The suggestion and corrections made by the supervisor were further Incorporated in the final draft of the questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument, the test retest reliability test was conducted taking a sample from the target population. The questionnaire was administered twice to the sample population with an intervening period of two weeks. A reliability co-efficient score of 0.71 was obtained using Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study was collected through the administration of the FRNATSEQ. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher to secondary school students selected from each sampled school making a total of the respondents. The researcher did this by taking permission from the school authorities of each of the schools where the instrument was administered. The researcher collected the questionnaire immediately after they were completed to ensure higher rate of return.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered from the research was analyzed using simple percentage and tables to explain the finding of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents, interprets and discusses the findings from the analysis of data interpreted for this study.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: The main factors responsible for the Negative attitude of secondary schools student toward spoken English.

Table 1: A Simple Percentage Table of the main factors responsible for the Negative attitude of secondary schools student

S/N Items	Total No of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Do you find phonetic difficult to understand?	140	25	75.0	4	20.3
Do you have access to phonetic laboratory in your school?	140	123	96.1	4	3.1
Do you feel that the teaching method used by your teacher makes learning phonetic difficult?	140	111	86.7	6	4.7
Do you think your environment influence your attitude toward phonetics	140	106	82.8	11	8.6

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.*

Responses to the table above, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents find it difficult to understand phonetics. Also, a greater percentage of the population don't have access to phonetics laboratory; However, they feel that the teaching methods used by their teacher makes it difficult for them to learn phonetics and meanwhile their environment also influences them largely towards

the learning of phonetics which contribute to their negative attitude towards phonetics

Research Question 2:How the factors affects the performance of secondary school students in Spoken English.

Table 2. A Simple Percentage Table of the factors affects the performance of secondary school students in Spoken English.

S/N Items	Total No of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Do you think that lack of interest in phonetics affects your correct pronunciation of English words?	140	115	89.5	5	3.9
Do you feel that lack of practical phonetics exercises also affects your correct pronunciation of words?	140	4	35.2	77	60.2
Do you think that class time allocated to phonetics learning contribute positively to oral test performance?	140	21	16.4	102	79.7
Do you think lack of adequate teaching method negatively affects your performance in phonetics?	140	123	96.1	2	1.6
Does your fear of failure contribute negatively to your performance in phonetics?	140	113	88.3	12	9.4

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024.

In response to the table above, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents low lack of interest contribute to their lack of correct pronunciations of some English words, and do not think lack of class practical phonetics exercises affect their correct pronunciation, and they do not agree that class time allocated to phonetics contribute positively to their oral test performance. On the other hand,

higher percentage of the respondents agree that their fear of failure contribute negatively to their performance in phonetic.

Research Question 3:Teacher's proficiency and teaching methodology

Table 3: A Simple Percentage Table of teacher's proficiency and teaching methodology

S/N Items	Total No of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Do you feel motivated when your teacher uses practical method to teach phonetics?	140	22	17.2	102	79.9
Does your teacher's pronunciation in class influence your interest in phonetics?	140	115	85.7	5	4.9
Do you think lack of enthusiasm in your teacher discourage you from learning phonetics?	140	42	32.8	81	63.3
Do you think your teacher is proficient in phonetics?	140	17	13.3	105	82.0
Do your teacher help you understand difficult phonetics concept outside class time?	140	33	25.8	84	65.6

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024,*

From the findings in table above, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents do not feel motivated when their teachers use practical method to teach phonetics. Also, they agree that their teachers pronunciation in class influences their interest in phonetics. However, they disagree to the notion that their teachers lack of enthusiasm discourage their learning of phonetics. However, a couple of the respondents are of the opposite opinion that their teacher is proficient enough in phonetics study.

Research Question 4: Measure to improve student's Attitude Towards Spoken English

Table 2. A Simple Percentage Table of the measure to improve student's attitude towards Spoken English

S/N Items	Total No of Respondents	Yes	%	No	%
Should schools organize Phonetics language club to promote phonetics?	140	22	17.2	102	79.9
Would providing teaching method training for teachers specifically for phonetics improve student's interest?	140	22	17.2	102	79.9
Would creating opportunities for students to interact with native English speakers improve students attitude toward spoken English?	140	22	17.2	102	79.9

Source: *Researcher's Fieldwork, 2024,*

From the findings in table above, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents do not find it important for the school to organize a phonetic club for them. Also, they disagree that even the provision of teaching method training won't improve their interest towards phonetics. However, they disagree that creating opportunities for students to interact with native English speakers might improve students attitude toward spoken English.

Discussion of Findings

In response to the first research question, it was found that on the optimum, greater percentage of the respondents find it difficult to understand phonetics which could be as a result of different circumstances that might even be unaware to the student. Also, a greater percentage of the population don't have access to phonetics laboratory which is due to the lack of attention that is not given to phonetics field by school management and lack of proper funding from the government could contribute to this notion; However, they feel that the teaching methods used by their teacher makes it difficult for them to learn phonetics and meanwhile their environment also influences them largely towards the learning of phonetics which contribute to their negative attitude towards phonetics

In response to the second research question, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents low interest contribute to; on the premium many Nigeria secondary school students do not feel encourage to involve themselves in phonetic activities (Adeolu 2002) which also contribute their lack of correct pronunciations of some English words, and do not think lack of class practical phonetics exercises affect their correct pronunciation which may be due to various class factors which include range of self degrading activities, and they do not agree that class time allocated to phonetics contribute positively to their oral test

performance. On the other hand, higher percentage of the respondents agree that their fear of failure contribute negatively to their performance in phonetic.

To answer the third research question, greater percentage of the respondents do not think it is important for the school to organize a phonetic club for them since they have low interest to phonetics; a contributing factor could be poor background upbringing in phonetics so the need for a phonetics club would be of no use.

Also, they disagree that even the provision of teaching method training won't improve their interest towards phonetics, this is as a sign that they have built low interest for phonetic related field, Ezeegwu 2014 in his research work “Lack of Phonetics studies among Nigeria Student” exanimate the need for school to include mind blowing activities which would be of greater advantage to student and would also help them in their improve skills in phonetic.

To answer to the fourth research question, it can be observed that a greater percentage of the respondents do not find it important for the school to organize a phonetic club for them., joining any phonetics club could be a waste of time to them and there no need and importance in joining one; Also they disagree that even the provision of teaching method training won't improve their interest towards phonetics since they find any need in improving their phonetics skills. However, they disagree that creating opportunities for students to interact with native English

speakers might improve students attitude toward spoken English because naturally many local indigenes is not ready to interact phonetically and many local indigenes sees phonetic as a foreign language.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This chapter covered the summary of the study by pointing out some key note, drawing conclusion on the findings so far discovered at the course of the research and some practicable recommendation to the Ministry of Education, in order to better the students academic performance in English language.

The study focused on the negative attitude of secondary schools student toward spoken English in Egor Local Government Area of Edo state, Nigeria of the 96 senior secondary schools found in the Local government, three schools were sampled; two public and a private school.

The poor performance and competence of the school age children was one of the alarming phenomenon that arouse such curiosity to determine the cause of their incompetence in Phonetic; could it be their linguistic background or any other unknown factor. Hence, the research focused on the examining the degree of student negative attitude toward spoken English. This is because there are some noticeable differences between phonetics and the spoken English.

The purpose of the study is to examine the characteristics of the negative attitude of secondary schools student toward spoken English, compare it to

phonetic and the factors that influences the nagative attitude towards phonetics on the teaching an learning of Spoken English and local Government under their study.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are outlined for consideration by the relevant authorities in to better the academic performance of the students:

- Parents should be informed about the importance of creating a Spoken English learning environment at home, since most of the students' find it difficult to learn phonetic right from which also contribute to their poor background. This is necessary because in the present day Nigeria, Spoken English is as equally important as our Spoken native tongue.
- English teachers should channel their strength of emphasis on those aspect of Spoken English that is not obtainable in our Spoken native tongue. By repetitive activities, the students will familiarize themselves with those difficult but necessary aspects of the spoken English; Language laboratories and functional libraries should be provide in schools to aid learning.
- The school authorities should sternly discourage the use of vernacular in schools among teachers and students and insist and encourage the use of correct Spoken English expressions

- Such structures as debate groups and presentations, news casting on and the establishment of phonetic clubs among students should be put in place in order to improve their Spoken English performance.
- The Ministry of Education should strictly enforce the prescription of an ideal classroom teacher-students ratio as stipulate in the National Policy on Education. This will be a good class management and help the teachers' pay attention to individual student's peculiar phonetic problem.

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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**FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD
SPOKEN ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE. (FRNATSEQ)**

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly to the best of your ability. All your responses will be kept confidential.

SECTION A

Background Information

1. Age: 11 – 13 14 – 15 16 – 20

2. Class: _____

SECTION B

1. The main factors responsible for the Negative attitude of secondary schools student toward spoken English.

i. Do you find phonetic difficult to understand? Yes No

ii. Do you have access to phonetic laboratory in your school?

Yes No

iii. Do you feel that the teaching method used by your teacher makes learning phonetic difficult ? Yes No

iv. Do you think your environment influence your attitude toward phonetics?

Yes No

2. How the factors affects the performance of secondary school students in Spoken English

- i. Do you think that lack of interest in phonetics affects your correct pronunciation of English words? Yes No Not Sure
- ii. Do you feel that lack of practical phonetics exercises also affects your correct pronunciation of words? Yes No Not Sure
- iii. Do you think that class time allocated to phonetics learning contribute positively to oral test performance? Yes No Not Sure
- iv. Do you think lack of adequate teaching method negatively affects your performance in phonetics? Yes No Not Sure
- v. Does your fear of failure contribute negatively to your performance in phonetics?

3. Teacher's proficiency and teaching methodology

- i. Do you feel motivated when your teacher uses practical method to teach phonetics? Yes No Not Sure
- ii. Does your teacher's pronunciation in class influence your interest in phonetics? Yes No Not Sure
- iii. Do you think lack of enthusiasm in your teacher discourage you from learning phonetics? Yes No Not Sure
- iv. Do you think your teacher is proficient in phonetics?
Yes No Not Sure

- v. Do your teacher help you understand difficult phonetics concept outside class time? Yes No Not Sure

4. Measure to improve student's Attitude Towards Spoken English

- i. Should schools organize Phonetics language club to promote phonetics?
Yes No Not Sure
- ii. Would providing teaching method training for teachers specifically for phonetics improve student's interest? Yes No Not Sure
- iii. Would creating opportunities for students to interact with native English speakers improve students attitude toward spoken English?
Yes No Not Sure

Thank you for your participation!