
THE TEACHERS, ENVIRONMENT AND THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN
HARNESSING DIVERSE CULTURES IN A MULTICULTURAL L2 CLASSROOM
IN NIGERIA

Mariam Anana

Mountain Top University, Ogun State

Abstract

Over the years, discordant experiences had characterized a multicultural L2 classroom in Nigeria because prevailing diverse cultures had not been harnessed. This (unharnessed cultural diversity) has been a source of worry to stakeholders in educational sector (especially English Language teachers) and this has also hampered the objectives of teaching and learning. In an attempt to solve this problem, this study investigated the role of language skills, teachers' attitudes and disciplined environment in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom in Nigeria. A non-experimental research design (ex-post-facto design) was employed because variables were used without manipulations. 20 items self-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents from tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It was discovered that language skills played a predominant role in the proper handling of diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom. Also, teachers' attitudes significantly influenced the control of diverse cultures. Finally, disciplined environment also significantly determined the harnessing of diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom. Having ascertained the potency of language skills, teachers' attitudes and disciplined environment in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom, the study recommends that these three variables be employed in order to enhance teaching and learning in a multicultural L2 classroom in Nigeria.

Keywords: language skills, teachers' attitudes, disciplined environment, harnessing diverse cultures, multicultural L2 classroom

1.1 Introduction

A skill, according to Egbe (1996), is the ability, the practical knowledge, the dexterity and the power to do something as required. It is any endowment (natural or acquired), which an individual possesses and may be used to perform specific tasks (ATSWA 2009: 101). Language skills are essential tools used in every day communication by both literate and illiterate alike. The difference between the usages of the former from the later is that the former may likely know how to apply the language skills effectively while the later may not know how to do likewise.

Language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) are indispensable in language teaching and learning. Odunsina (1989), Afolayan, 1995, Lawal, 2000, Tiboku, 2002 cited in Maduake,(1999),Adedun (2012) and Anana (2012) consider these skills as germane in disserting language in its totality. Listening and speaking are termed primary language skills while reading and writing are the secondary language skills. The primary language skills are so called because it is observed that a child first acquires them before he gets into the four walls of classrooms to learn reading and writing. Again, listening and reading are known as receiving skills while speaking and writing are called productive skills, Adedun, (2012), ATSWA(2009)

These language skills are not crucial in isolation but when applied effectively by language teachers in a disciplined environment, they are quite relevant. Effective application entails that the teacher exhibits positive attitude and pays attention to the students through his listening abilities, spoken competence, reading expertise and writing capabilities. If a teacher is not proficient in LSRW, it would be difficult for him to harness diverse cultures in his L2 classroom since a classroom is a multicultural community or a crucible that displays multiculturalism. The teacher's incompetence may also send wrong signals to the students who, if they discover these inabilities, may have little or no respect for the teacher in question and may also gain little or nothing from classroom exercises or tasks given by this deficient teacher.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Unharnessed cultural diversity has been the prevailing problem limiting academic progress in English class for sometimes now. This has been a disturbing issue to stakeholders in education (especially English language teachers). An attempt to find a lasting solution to this problem is the focus of this study. This study, therefore, collected data on the role of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment in order to examine how these variables can harness diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. establish the prevalence of multicultural setting in a multicultural L2 classroom
- ii. investigate cases of tribal rivalries in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- iii. evaluate the role of language skills in harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- iv. assess the role of teachers' attitude in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- v. examine the role of disciplined environment in harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- vi. determine the composite effects of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- vii. recommend the appropriate method for harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.

- viii. Suggest the best approach an English teacher can engage a multicultural L2 class without cases of cultural rivalries so as to achieve educational progress.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- i. Is English Language class multicultural in nature?
- ii. Are there cultural conflicts in a multicultural L2 classroom?
- iii. Do language skills positively influence the harnessing of cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom?
- iv. Does teachers' attitude positively affect the harnessing of diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom?
- v. Does disciplined environment have positive impact on the harnessing of cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom?
- vi. What are the composite effects of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment in harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as stated below.

- i. It will help the teachers to engage a multicultural L2 class professionally in a way that will harness different cultural groups in the class.
- ii. It will assist the school authorities to create conducive atmospheres that will deemphasize diverse cultures and harness them.
- iii. It will be useful to the policy makers to pay more attention to the sensitive issue of multiculturalism in school setting
- iv. It will provide a grand work for further researches on multiculturalism and educational development.

2.1 Listening Skill

Listening is a very important language skill. Both the teachers and the students have to listen if anything meaningful is to be achieved in the classroom. The teacher should have a listening ear in order to detect when cultural sentiments are projected in the classroom by students. If a teacher listens effectively, he will quickly detect the inventory of cultural sentiments and nib them on the bud before they get into the classroom. Listening is paramount in a multicultural classroom. Maduekwe (2007) observes that listening is a complex problem solving skill and that it is more than just perception of sound. Rather, it includes comprehension of meaning. For cultural diversity to be tackled, the teacher should listen attentively to the students and to himself. The act of listening to himself involves assessment of his precious listening activities and his future readiness to consciously pay maximal attention to all students irrespective of their cultural backgrounds.

2.1.1 Listening Defined

Listening is the process of hearing, receiving, interpreting, and evaluating what a speaker says as well as responding to what the speaker says. Listening requires clear thinking (stimulus), patience, high motivation and hard work. To listen in the classroom is to

consciously pay attention to classroom discourse, assimilate it and utilize it immediately or later on in life. To listen well is to be open-minded, attentive and receptive. Egan (1982 cited in Oyedeyi,1998) states that real listening is a hard work that involves observation and interpretations of students' non-verbal behaviours such as movements, postures, facial expressions, voice and tone. Egan also observes that active listening involves listening and interpreting what is being said.

2.1.2 Stages of Listening

Gbenedio, (1996 cited in Ogunyemi (2005) states that there are four stages of listening namely, *hearing*, *listening*, *auding* and *cognizing*. Gbenedio further observes that *hearing* means to perceive sounds that are modified by the ear; *listening* means to identify sounds components or sound sequence; *auding* means the translation of the continuous flow of words into meaning and *cognizing* means having knowledge of various concepts that could be used to make comparisons, infer, categorize and form sensory images. Oyedeyi (1998) observes that listening is an active process that has three sequential steps namely, *attention*, *understanding* and *evaluation*. He further explains that *attentiveness* is the key to the whole process of listening, and that it involves focusing on the speaker and his message. *Understanding*, he states, is the mental processing of the information received; and the last step, *evaluation*, is the act of weighing the message against beliefs, questioning, challenges and suspicions. It is the assessment of the validity of the message that Oyedeyi considers as evaluation.

For me, there are five listening stages. Stage one is *receptivity*. This means that an individual who has no listening impairment is able to receive the sound wave into his ear drum. At this stage, the person who receives the sound wave has not really deciphered what he has received. A mere fact that one is able to receive the sound wave is the first stage of listening process. The next stage is *decoding* and this means interpreting or getting meaning out of what one has heard. The receiver allows the sound wave to penetrate into his ear thereby enabling him to comprehend what he has heard and gives meaningful interpretations to it. The third stage is *assessment* or *evaluation* of what one has listened to. Having understood and interpreted what he has listened to, he thinks of it and this is the fourth stage, known as *rumination*. Here, the listener thinks of what to do and decides whether to utilize what he has listened to or remains inactive. When he finally decides on what to do; he proceeds to the last stage which is called *reaction*, *utilization* or *response*. This means the actual act of doing things with what one has listened to.

2.1.3. Listening Levels

The levels of listening are as follows:

- i. Listening for enjoyment: This occurs when an individual consciously or unconsciously listens to an interesting music or drama from the radio, television or entertainment houses.
- ii. Listening for information: Here, the listener's purpose is to get messages and these are got through news, sermons, lecturers, seminars, conferences, or even through informal messages such as casual telephone conversation, dinner talks and natural conversations.

- iii. Critical listening: This involves analyzing and evaluating what one has listening to. It is the act of questioning what an individual has just been “fed” with. This occurs especially when some people judge a debate; criticize a seminar presentation or other academic exercises.
- iv. Precision listening: This involves one’s ability to distinguish clearly from what he listens to. It entails listening attentively so as to get the details that give one clues to the speaker’s emotion or state of mind.
- v. Empathic listening: This is the highest level of listening because it requires concentration, retention and judgment. It essentially requires empathy i.e. ability to put oneself in another person’s position and feel the same way that person feels. This type of listening requires the skill of precision. An empathic listener does not offer his personal opinions but relies on the opinion of the speaker. He understands the feelings of the speaker and respects it and as such agrees totally with what the speaker says.
- vi. Active listening: Here, the participant searches for total meanings in spoken messages and as such, he is attentive and thoughtful. He participates fully in the listening exercise by readily responding to the feedback sent by the speaker.
- vii. Passive listening: This is a situation where the listener does not participate in listening exercise even if he filters and remembers what the speaker uttered during his delivery of messages.
- viii. Faking listening: This is a situation where a person pretends to be listening while he has not listened at all. He tries to focus his attention on the speaker and sometimes seems to be jotting what the speaker says but in actual sense, his mind is far away from the messages and he has not got anything that is uttered.
- ix. Non-listening: This is an ineffective listening where the listener is not listening at all.

(Anana, 2013)

2.1.4. Barriers to Effective Listening

Barriers are the impediments that hamper listening; some of these barriers are:

- i. Physical barriers: Physical barriers can be generated both through the listeners and the speakers. Some physical barriers that affect the listeners are the use of sign language or lip reading to communicate; environment that are not conducive to stay and mechanical faults from electronic devices.
- ii. Speaker’s barriers: These involve the speaker’s appearance and manner, lack of preparation to deliver, prejudice and lack of believability.
- iii. Self-barriers are internal distractions, lack of knowledge, personal prejudice and desire of the listener to talk all the time.
- iv. Mental barriers: These are psychological problems such as lack of concentration, wandering minds or inattentiveness, selective listening, and thinking and planning what to say instead of listening.
- v. Physiological barriers: These include hearing impairments such as deafness or partial deafness
- vi. Cultural barriers: These include where the speakers accents differ completely from the listener and the use of tabooed words and expressions.

- vii. Linguistic barriers: These occur where a speaker lacks speech skills and language competence and may resort to stuttering (i.e. disorder of speech rhythm and fluency caused by unnecessary repetitions or elongated speech sounds, interjection of superfluous speech elements and the use of non-words).
- viii. Paralinguistic barriers: These include abnormal vocal quality, pitch and intensity; unnecessary gesticulations, articulation and movements during presentations.

2.1.5 Minimizing the Problems of Listening

The problems of listening can be minimized if one avoids physical, psychological, physiological, linguistic, environmental and mechanical noises. One should also endeavour to be focused on what one does; improve accuracy of filtering (i.e. thinking fast); concentrate on remembering (by consciously trying to remember what one has heard); avoid poor speaking volume, pitch and rate; improve one's physical condition; embrace good listening attitude; be open-minded. Speakers should modify messages appropriately while listeners should always prepare to listen. They should practice good listening techniques and finally commensurate with the time that is conducive to it.

2.2 Speaking Skills

Another language skill that should be utilized by a teacher in the classroom is the speaking skill. Speaking is as old as human race. A child begins to coo as soon as he is born and from that time he speaks continuously until he dies. Finegan (2008) observes that the ability to speak arose hundreds of years ago as part of our intellectual development during evolution and speech is the primary mode of human language. It is therefore very important that a teacher watches what he says and how he says it. The teacher should try to make his speech effective. Ekweme (1996) observes that:

A speech becomes effective when it is not only pleasing but also persuasive. The speaker has a good command of language, an excellent choice of words, and spontaneous control of various nuances—pace, pause, tone, emphasis, modulation, enunciation, delivery etc.(8)

Also, Stott et al (2001) state that good speakers usually give signposts to indicate the main structure of their points.

The choice of names used in sentence constructions, intonations that depict attachment to any culture and the teacher's intentional cultural biases and affiliations to certain cultures should be discouraged. Such conspicuous expressions of cultural prejudices through the selection of certain words, phrases and clauses can trigger cultural intolerance and conflicts in a classroom. In order to harness cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom, the teacher should consciously eliminate such negative displays.

2.2.1 What Is Speaking Skill?

Speaking is the act of uttering meaningful words, phrases, clauses and sentences in formal or informal settings. It is the ability to think positively and utter healthy words that can heal the society. One should not think that one is speaking once one utters

meaningless expressions. Meaningless expressions are empty expressions and can cause a lot of havoc in the society.

Speaking is the most commonly used skill by everybody on daily bases. Whether an individual knows how to use speech or not he finds out that he consciously or unconsciously uses it almost all the time. Speech is “the ability to express oneself clearly in flexible conversational language” (Ogunyemi, 2005: 57). It is the art of producing sound waves to which meanings are ascribed. The right pronunciation, right use of intonation and stress pattern and enunciation of words must be perfectly used by the teacher if he aspires to harness diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom. Gbenedio (1996, cited in Ogunyemi, 2005) suggests that teachers should pay attention to the soundness of English words, sounds, stress, rhythm, sentence stress and intonation. For a teacher to think of harnessing diverse cultures through his spoken English, he should first understand that the human voice has diverse complex channels such as volume, pitch, rhythm, intonation and speed. The human voice also has wide ranging modulations. Having known this, the teacher should go ahead to master these segmental and suprasegmental features before he applies them in his speech. He should also use the right pronunciation, articulation and enunciation.

A teacher that speaks well is a teacher who is able to harness diverse cultures in his classroom; possibly through his ability to utilize cultural relativism by his positive constructions of sentences that depict harmony of diverse cultures or by his utilization of constructs that are free from cultural prejudices.

2.2.2 Types of Speech

Speeches are defined based on their formats (especially their tone) and their functions. Based on their formats speeches are categorized in two major types of namely, formal and informal speeches. A formal or an official speech follows laid down rules and regulations. They are delivered in public functions and ceremonies. An informal speech is characterized by lack of officialdom. Words are used anyhow and no one cares about the rules and regulations involved in speaking.

Functionally, there are many types of speeches; some of them are informative, persuasive, entertaining, instructive speeches and speeches for special occasions such as birthday toast, christening, wedding toast, funeral and retirements. McKenzie (2012) categorizes speeches into four basic types namely, informative, instructive, entertaining and persuasive. From the online famous-speeches-and speech-types, several types of speeches are identified. These are persuasive, informative, demonstrative, tribute, inspirational, anniversary, farewell, Best-man, motivational, acceptance, graduation, birthday, introduction, retirement and Maid of honours speeches.

2.2.3 Barriers to Effective Speaking

Lack of speech skills, use of ungrammatical conventions, lack of linguistic competence, inadequate preparation, inappropriate format, inconsistent context, voice disorder and lack of believability are some of the barriers to effective speaking.

2.2.4 Principles of Effective Speaking

There are three basic principles of effective speaking namely purposefulness, preparedness and clarity. Badger (2016) identifies five principles and these are ; (i) avoidance of filler words; (ii) maintaining of solid eye contact; (iii) use of the body; (iv) altering of voice, i.e. varying pitches and tones and (v) rehearsing of materials that will be used for presentation. AMA (2016) identifies seven principles namely perception, perfection, visualization, discipline, description, inspiration and anticipation.

2.3 Reading Skills

The third language skill is reading skill. A teacher should be able to read effectively and teach his students how to read well too. A teacher who is unable to do so should not be called a teacher. For one to be qualified as a teacher, one should be able to know that reading is an integral part of learning. He should understand the phrasal structures, clauses and sentence structures, observe the punctuation marks and stress patterns in the passages he reads and read fluently. He should also increase his reading rate and at the same time teach his students how to read fast effectively.

2.3.1 What Is Reading?

Reading is the ability of a reader to decode printed or written materials. It is one of the main abilities that man needs in order to receive information. A reader should be physically and psychologically balanced before he reads. Johnson (1973, cited in Ogunyemi, 2005) defines reading as the interpretation of printed or written symbols into speech or its mental equivalent. It is also the “act of communication where information is transferred from the transmitter to the receiver”(58). Adebayo (2014) states that reading is a complex and a multidimensional process that has sub-skills. In ATSWA reading is defined as an activity designed to decipher a message which has been coded according to a given orthography.

Reading should be understood by the reader; this is why reading is termed reading comprehension. Akere (1993) states that in reading, the eyes interpret the written symbols while the mind absorbs the ideas in the passage read. Otenaike (2005) observes that in comprehension, students should be taught effective skills such as reading “for exact meaning, reading for implied meaning , reading for relationship of thoughts and reading for applied meaning” (173). Also, approaches such as “activating, inferring, monitoring-clarifying, questioning, searching-selecting, summarizing and visualizing-organizing” (McEwan-Adkins, 2016) should be adopted in reading comprehension. William and Moran (1989, cited in Timlison (2003) observe that reading comprehension-based approaches are aimed at doing three things, namely: (i) to check comprehension; (ii) to facilitate comprehension and (iii) to ensure that learners read the text.

2.3.2 Reading Types

Some reading types are skimming, scanning, study reading, critical reading, extensive reading and creative reading.

Skimming: This is the act of reading at a very fast rate with a view to getting general information. It provides an overview of the text for a reader to glance and explore the content of the written materials. A reader selects what he reads here. Anana (2012)

observes that skimming is “reading something very fast in order to note only what one needs” (7).

Scanning: This is also a very fast reading rate but with the intention of getting specific materials from the text read. The main purpose for scanning is to quickly locate a specific piece of information. Scanning is often used to review familiar materials.

Study Reading: This is otherwise known as intensive, careful or serious type of reading. Here, a reader reads carefully and slowly in order to assimilate, evaluate, summarize and utilize what he has read. For example, a student who aspires to pass his tests or examinations needs to elaborately engage in study reading.

Critical Reading: In critical reading, a reader thinks along with the writer. In NCE/DLS course book, critical reading is explained as a reading that requires the reader to detect weaknesses or faults from the texts he reads. A reader has to develop his thinking and reasoning power as he reads through the text. Again, in critical reading, a reader is expected to analyze, reorder and interpret the writers’ thoughts and arrive at his conclusions.

To critically read a text, the reader must master English language very well and note how the same thing is presented in different ways. He needs to also understand direct and indirect meanings, denotations and connotations, idiomatic expressions and other linguistic conventions.

Extensive Reading: This requires a reader to read very wide in order to get enough information about himself, others and the world at large. It means reading materials that are related and unrelated to one’s discipline. It also implies reading materials that are worth reading in order to know beyond one’s area of specialization.

Creative Reading: This is also known as productive reading. It entails a reader’s ability to first of all understand the text; obtain information from the text and make a total interpretation of the text. It is the reader’s ability to create or produce something out of the previous knowledge of his reading.

2.3.3 Techniques of Reading

Techniques of reading are the methods that readers apply in order to read effectively especially as it relates to study reading. The most popular method is the SQ3Rs method of reading. This was developed by Francis Robinson at Ohio University during the War 11 (ATSWA) and since then, it has been proved to be very effective to readers. SQ3Rs simply means Survey, Question, Read, Recall and Review. There are other variants of the same technique and some of these are: SQ4Rs: Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review, Reflect; OK4Rs: Organize, Know, Read, Recall, Review, Reflect; SQ5Rs: Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Re-read, Reference, Review; PSQ5Rs: Predict, Survey, Question, Read, Re-read, Reference, Review; PROR: Preview, Read, Organize, Review and PORPE: Predict, Organize, Rehearse, Practice, Evaluate.

2.3.4 Hindrances to Reading

One of the major obstacles to reading is lack of reading readiness. Anyone who wants to read should be prepared to read but where there is no preparation, it is a sure signal of lack of readiness to read. Another major hindrance is lack of reading culture in the reader. Where the reader has no innate tendency to read, it may be difficult for such a person to read. Again, where the environment is not conducive, reading cannot be effective. The

physical and psychological states of a reader can cause problems to him. Where the reader is not physically, emotionally and mentally balanced, it may also be difficult for him to read effectively. In addition, where the reader is linguistically backward or ignorant, reading becomes a herculean task.

2.3.5 How to Overcome Hindrances to Reading

Determination to improve in reading; openness to new techniques of reading; willingness to combine techniques where necessary; readiness to keep reading until one improves and avoidance of hindrances to reading are factors that can help one to enhance effective reading.

2.4 Writing skills

Writing skill is the last language skill; it is highly formal and productive in nature. Writing skills are “special abilities in man that enable him to state his desires, thoughts and actions in written form” ATSWA (2009:110). Symbols are used to represent words and expressions in writing. Writing is almost permanent in the sense that what is written, if well kept, can be used anytime, any day. Unlike spoken words, which could be withdrawn immediately, written works are difficult to be withdrawn because of their seemingly permanent nature. In order to harness diverse cultures, a teacher should be careful of what he writes on the board and in his books. Whatever he writes either encourages cultural harmony or sparks off cultural rivalries. It is therefore very important that the teacher’s writings should harness diverse cultures rather than encourage cultural disunity.

2.4.1. What Is Writing?

Writing is a conscious physically balanced activity, psychologically motivated readiness and linguistically based process of putting something down in a paper. In other words, a writer must be physically balanced in terms of being totally healthy in his body, able to reason logically and must possess writing skills before he can write effectively. Egbe (1996) observes that the business of writing calls for skill, industry and attention to details. He further states that writing requires discipline of the mind and body.

2.4.2 Writing System

Writing was invented about 5000 years ago by ingenious people who used pictograms to represent spoken words (Finegan, 2008). Writing system was developed in Mesopotamia, Indian and China and it is quite different from the system we have today. The writing system originally developed in the Middle East and Asia was based on a relationship between graphs and words or graphs and syllable. Writing system has evolved from syllabic writing to logographic writing and now, alphabetic writing or orthography.

2.4.3 Syllabic Writing:

Syllabic writing or cuneiform originated from Ancient Middle East and Asia with the use of pictograms. Pictograms were symbols used for objects and concepts. The ancient Mesopotamians were “not familiar with paper but clay from the Tigris-Euphrates river basin” (Finegan 2008: 398). Their writing system consisted of engraving marks pressed into soft clay tables with a hard, sharp, painted object known as stylus. They did not

create an entirely new system but modified pictograms and used them to develop writing system. They kept modifying these pictograms until they became stylized in the process of becoming writing symbols. After many centuries, these pictograms became so stylized that they no longer look like pictograms.

2.4.4 Logographic Writing

Logographic writing originated from the Chinese about 400 years ago. This writing system used symbols to represent words, not syllable. This is quite different from the Sumerian-Akkadian syllable system. It is believed that the difference occurs partly because the Chinese did not borrow ideas of writing from the Mesopotamians but developed writing themselves.

2.4.5 Alphabetic Writing

An alphabet is a set of graphic symbols that represent a distinctive sound. This differs from both syllabic writing and logograph writing. In syllabic writing, graphs represent syllables while in logograph writing, graphs represent words. An alphabet that is matched to the sound system that represents it in the language is called the orthography or the spelling system. In an ideal orthography, every phoneme of a spoken language is represented by a different graph and each graph is represented by only one phoneme. It is the alphabetic writing that we use in today's writing.

2.4.6 Effective Writing

To write effectively one needs to have a high level of legibility, clarity, and use of specific norms or grammatical conventions.

2.5 What Is Attitude?

The word attitude is defined within the framework of social psychology as a subjective or mental preparation for action (Barros and Marcos, 2010). It originated in 1660s from Italian "attitudine" and this means disposition, posture, aptness and promptitude; Late Latin "aptitudinem" and "aptitude" and French "attitude" (Thesaurus online dictionary). Attitude is a lifestyle of a person exhibited continuously over a period of time. It constitutes who a person is, what he says, how he says it, how he acts and sometimes what people say about him. This definition suggests that attitude can be positive or negative. The use of the phrase, "over a period of time" suggests that attitude can be changed. Social psychologists consider attitude as individual's prevailing tendency to respond positively or negatively to an object, person or group of people, institutions or events. Attitudes, they observe, are evaluations that predispose us to act and feel in certain ways. They further state that attitudes are hypothetical constructs that are being inaccessible to direct observations but must be inferred from measurable responses such as good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

Some contemporary social psychologists are of the opinion that the evaluative nature (i.e. the semantic differential set of bipolar evaluations of harmful-beneficial, desirable-undesirable, pro-con, pleasant-unpleasant, good-bad etc.) are the characteristic attributes of attitude (Edwards, 1957, Osgood et al, 1957, Bem, 1970, Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Hill, 1981, Oskamp, 1991, Eagly and Chaiken 1993 cited in Ajzen 2005). Attitudes determine what every individual will see, hear, think and do. Maduekwe (2007) states

that attitude is crucial to language learning and central to language growth and decay, restoration or destruction.

Social psychologists also distinguish attitude into three components namely; cognitive components, affective component and conative components . Weiten (2008), Nairne, (2009) Plotnik and Kouyoumdjian (2008), Myres (2004), Feldman (2009), Winstanley (2006) and Pastorino and Doyle-Portillo (2006).Cognitive component is either an accurate or inaccurate knowledge about an object, affective component is concerned with the feelings towards an object while a conative or behavioural component deals with the action taken towards an object.

2.5.1 Teachers' Attitude

Teachers' attitude means the lifestyle a teacher exhibited especially in the classroom; his academics, social interaction, resource power and charisma. His academics include his intelligence expressed in the way he listens, speaks, reads and writes. His social lifestyle is his interrelationship with his students and the way he uses his language skills. His resource power entails what he has and how he utilizes them to manage and control his class and his charisma centres on his highly esteemed status expressed through his ability to know what he wants and permits in his class and what he does not want and permit and most importantly his influence on his students.

Teachers' attitude can positively be used to achieve the class goals and objectives and negatively be applied to enhance divisions, especially cultural diversity in the class. Pace, et al (1999, cited in Pieere 2009) observes that teacher's attitude may serve to either foster further distress or impairment or support positive adjustments. Marzano (2016) states that without positive attitude, students have little chance of learning proficiently if at all they learn and that good teachers always try to foster positive attitude.

A teacher has transferable positive or negative effects on the students he teaches. Osisami et al (2005) observes that "what a teacher is , that his pupil will be"(51) and that a teacher is a role model and a mentor and that whatever qualities a teacher wants to see developed in his pupils, he must first of all exhibit them. Oladipo (2000 cited in Osisami et al 2005) states that the only audio-visual that appears in every lesson and it is easily remembered is the teacher.

2.6 Disciplined Environment

Disciplined environment is the social and psychological creations or constructs by the teachers, students and the school administration. Disciplined environment, here, has nothing to do with the physical structure but a creation of a conducive environment where cultural sentiments or rivalries are not pronounced. Oke (1997) observes that, it is one of the fundamental responsibilities of a good teacher to create an environment that is conducive to effective learning. Oke further states that in creating a good environment, physical environment, management of behaviour and good social climate are involved. This study embraces Oke's managerial and social environments rather than the physical environment.

The school environment has positive or negative impacts on the teachers' abilities to either harness cultural diversity or spark off cultural rivalries. Where cultural sentiments are encouraged through verbal and non verbal expressions, it will be impossible for diverse cultures to be harnessed; but where they are discouraged, it will take little or no

effort for a teacher to control diverse cultures and by so doing, teaching aims and objectives may easily be accomplished. In other words, in a disciplined environment where diverse cultures are easily harnessed, realization of the aims and objectives of teaching and learning may not be farfetched.

2.7 The Concept of Culture

Sociologists define culture as “designs for living: the values, beliefs, behaviour, practices and material objects that constitute a people’s way of life (Macionis and Plummer, 2005). Hughes and Kroehler (2008) define culture as the social heritage of a people. By social heritage, they mean learned patterns of thinking, feeling and action that are transmitted from one generation to the next. These include the embodiment of material items (such as physical artifacts or objects like computer, automobiles, electric guitars, hairstyles and dressing) and nonmaterial items (abstracts such as values, beliefs, symbols, norms, customs and institutional arrangements).

Schaefer (2008) states that culture is the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behaviour and that it includes the ideas, values and artifacts such as books, DVDs and birth control devices of a group of people, passed from one generation to another. Williams (1983 cited in Storey, 2008) defines culture in three ways, one, as a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development; two, as a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group and three, as a signifying practices such as pop music, soap opera or comics. Stark (2007) observes that culture is the sum total of human creation-intellectual, technical, artistic, physical and moral. It consists of complex patterns of living that direct human social life; the things every generation must learn and to which everybody finally have. Daniel (1994 cited in Stark, *ibid*) explains that cultures interpret our surroundings for us and give them meanings and allow us to express ourselves through them.

2.7.1 Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism originated as “an educational policy in the United States” (Stark 2007: 127). MolefiKete Asante is said to be the leading advocate of multiculturalism (Stark, *ibid*). Multiculturalism recognizes past and present cultural diversity and promotes the equality of all cultural traditions. Rosado (1996) observes that multiculturalism is a system of belief and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society. It acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences and encourages and enables their consumed contributions within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all within the organization. Multiculturalism is one society with very many different cultures.

2.7.2 Subculture

A subculture is a culture within a culture; it is a distinctive set of belief, morals, custom and the like, developed or maintained by some set of persons within a large society. Lyons (2009) observes that a subculture is a distinctive culture of a subgroup that exists within a society. Subculture was developed by sociologists in order to deal conceptually with multiculturalism.

2.7.3 Counter Culture

When the norms, values and lifestyle of a subculture are at odd with those of a larger society, counter culture has occurred and is in practice.

2.7.4 Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism was pioneered by Max Weber (Hughes and Kroehler, 2008). It views the behaviour of a people from the perspective of their own cultures. It applies a free and neutral approach to evaluate other people's cultures.

2.8A Multicultural L2 Classroom

A multicultural L2 classroom is a second language classroom where classroom participants belong to different cultures. It is a classroom that is heterogeneous in nature; a classroom where there is cultural diversity. It is a classroom that may project cultural sentiments or rivalries. Knefelkamp (2008) in *Effective Teaching for Multicultural Classroom* observes that every classroom is a cultural community. As a cultural community, multi-cultures are displayed and sometimes these can lead to violent conflicts as some groups may seek to improve their dominant cultural standards and express these to others in terms of dressing, religion, language, values and norms. Prejudices and discrimination may be the order of the day in such a multicultural L2 classroom if not checked.

Prejudices, according to Staats (1975; 1986 cited in Pierre, 1994), is a negative or hostile beliefs or attitudes about some socially identified people who become the objects of hatred, contempt, suspicion or condescension just because they belong to a particular cultural group. These socially identified persons are always regarded as individuals without qualities and are relegated to the background.

In addition, discrimination may be pronounced in a multicultural L2 classroom if diverse cultures are not harnessed. Discrimination is the action taken against socially identified people. These people are denied right and privileges enjoyed by others. When members of a racial, ethnic or religious minority are denied freedom of speech, social interactions with others and ability to use their languages freely, these actions depict discrimination. Prejudices are thoughts and beliefs while discrimination is action.

Diverse cultures have to be harnessed in a L2 multicultural classroom so as to enhance assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is a process of exchanging one culture for another. It applies to adjustment to new surrounding by adopting the prevailing cultures as one's own. Accommodation is a situation where groups find that they are able to ignore some important cultural differences between them and emphasize common interest instead. This can only be obtainable if the teachers are able to utilize language skills effectively, have pleasant attitude and create a disciplined environment capable of harnessing diverse cultures.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Design

The research design employed in this study is ex post-facto design which investigates past events without manipulating any variable. Ex post-facto is a Latin word which means "after the fact or "retrospectively" Ofo (2005).

3.2 Research Population

The population of this study comprises English students from tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Out of the entire population of English students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, 100 respondents were selected from Mountain Top University and Tai Solarin College of Education using simple random sampling techniques.

3.4 Instrument

100 copies of 20 items self-developed questionnaire were used and these consist of 5 sections. Each section demanded the respondents to gracefully respond to the questions asked. Section A was based on biographical variables of only three items, namely; academic qualification, school and designation. Section B was focused on multiculturalism. Section C was centred on Spoken Skills. Section D was based on teachers' attitude and Section E was centred on disciplined environment.

3.5 Administration of Instrument

100 copies of the instruments were distributed; some that were not well responded to were re-administered. The instruments were collected after two weeks and collated.

3.6 Data Analysis

Frequency counting and simple percentage were used for the analysis of this study.

3.6.1. Section A: Biographical Variables

Qualification	Numbers of Respondents
NCE	67
Bachelor	26
Master	7
Total	100

Out of the 100 respondents used for this study, 67 respondents were NCE English students, 26, bachelor and 7, master. This shows that the highest number of respondents were NCE English students.

3.6.2 Section B

In response to research question 1, (Is English class multicultural in nature?), all the 100 respondents agreed that their classes were multicultural in nature. This shows that there is a prevalence of multiculturalism in English Language classrooms in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

In response to research question 2, 42% of the respondents agreed that cultural rivalries exist in their classes while 58% disagreed. This indicates that although cultural rivalries have not assumed an acute condition in a multicultural L2 classroom, there is a high degree of cultural rivalries requiring urgent attention before they escalate into unmanageable state and affect academic progress.

In evaluating the role of language skills, 85 % respondents agreed that language skills have positively influenced the harnessing of cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom while 15 % respondents disagreed. This shows that language skills have the potentiality of harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.

In assessing the role of teachers' attitude, 78.6% respondents agreed that teachers' attitude has very strong or positive influence in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom while 21.4 % disagreed to this. This indicates that teachers' attitude can influence the harnessing of cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.

In evaluating, the role of disciplined environment, 78.2 % of the respondents agreed that disciplined environment has the potentials of harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom while 21.8% disagreed to this. This shows that disciplined environment has a prevailing influence in harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.

The composite effect of the role of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment is 40.3%. These variables have the potentiality of collectively and positively affecting the harnessing of cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.

4.1 Findings

The findings of this study are as follows:

- i. It was discovered that language skills have prevalent effects of harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- ii. Teachers' positive attitude can easily be used as a potent tool to harness cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom
- iii. A conducive environment that deemphasizes cultural sentiments can strongly be used as a means of harnessing diverse cultures.
- iv. There is a positive collective effect of the role of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.

4.2 Conclusion and recommendations

Inability to harness diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom was a major problem to stakeholders (especially English language teachers) in educational sector. Various attempts to tackle this problem yielded little results and this necessitated this study. Data on the roles of language skills, teachers' attitude and disciplined environment in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom were collected, collated and analyzed using, frequency counting and simple percentage. The findings revealed that effective application of LSRW skills, teachers' positive attitude and disciplined environment has indispensable potentials in harnessing diverse cultures in a multicultural L2 classroom.

The study therefore recommends that:

- i. Teachers should use such language skills as listening, speaking, reading and writing to effectively harness cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom.
- ii. Teachers should display pleasant attitude; remove cultural prejudices, have unifying and refined singleness of purpose to enhance positivity in their students.

- iii. Classroom participants (especially, the teachers) should create a pleasant environment for teaching and learning to thrive.
- iv. Utilization of effective LSRW skills, teachers' positive attitude and a conducive environment should be used in order to harness cultural diversity in a multilingual L2 classroom.
- v. Further study should be done on the effects of harnessing cultural diversity in a multicultural L2 classroom
- vi. The negative impacts of teachers' attitudes on students' performance in a multicultural L2 classroom should also be investigated.
- vii. The influence of undisciplined environment on multiculturalism in a L2 classroom should also be a topic of interest to researchers.

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Appendix

Dear Sir/Madam

Kindly respond to the following questions. They are designed purely for academic purpose. Your responses will be confidentially handled. Please tick the boxes that appropriately suit your replies.

Thank you very much.

Section A: Biographical variables

- A. Academic qualification: NCE bachelor master PhD
 B. School :
 C. Designation (Position held):

Section B: Multiculturalism

Please tick the box that best suit your responses based on “Yes” and “No”

SN	STATEMENTS	Yes	No
1.	Does your class consist of students from different cultures?	100	--
2.	Are there cases of tribal rivalries in your class?	42	58
3.	Is there any cultures dominating others cultures in your class?	41	59
4.	Are there any cultures favoured by teachers in your class?	34	66
5.	Is it easily noticeable that students are of different cultures in your class?	51	49

Section C: Spoken Skills

Please tick the box that best suit your responses based on : Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

SN	STATEMENTS	SA	A	SD	D
6.	Teachers' sentence constructions that favour a particular culture could spark up disunity among students of different culture in English class.	40	54	5	1
7.	Many students would feel inferior if teachers' pronunciations reveal their affiliation to a particular tribe.	52	25	17	6
8.	The class would be more united if teachers' intonations do not reflect any cultural affiliation.	75	22	2	1
9.	Teachers' cultural intonation can never be a subject of cultural discord in English class.	36	25	24	15
10.	Teachers' correct use of English stress helps to maintain cohesion in a multicultural L2 classroom.	44	52	3	1

Section D: Teachers' Attitude

Please tick the box that best suit your response based on : Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

SN	STATEMENTS	SA	A	SD	D
11.	Teachers' ethnic bias cannot harness diverse cultures in English class.	64	34	--	2
12.	Teachers who interact freely with students of diverse cultures would achieve harmony among these students.	88	12	--	--
12.	Teachers who favour students of a particular culture in a multicultural class would promote wider cultural disunity.	58	23	18	1

14	Teachers who continuously deemphasize ethnic sentiments would foster diverse cultures in the class.	42	35	18	5
15.	Teachers' attitudes have nothing to do with unity among diverse cultures in English class.	15	22	42	21

Section E: Disciplined Environment

Please tick the box that best suit your response based on : Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D)

SN	STATEMENTS	SA	A	SD	D
16.	A school rule that is against vernacular speaking is a potent tool for harnessing diverse cultures in English class.	54	38	2	6
17	A school rule that upholds only English dress code for teachers and students harmonizes different cultures in the class.	42	31	22	5
18.	A school rule that punishes promoters of ethnic sentiments would achieve better cohesion among multicultural students in a class.	49	43	6	2
19	If students are free to promote their individual cultures in the school, harmony among them would not be affected.	30	20	38	12
20.	No meaningful harnessing of cultures could be achieved in an undisciplined environment.	50	34	12	4