

his job, the teacher's morale would be naturally low, and his quality could also be in steady decline due to redundancy or underutilization. All these factors would eventually lead to poor teaching quality, which is also largely responsible for the poor quality of students' output.

Quality of Teaching

Although most primary and secondary schools lack the essential infrastructure to enable them to provide a quality education, a critical evaluation of many of them reveals a poor level of quality in the schools and their products. Today, deteriorating infrastructure, obsolete facilities, low quality of teachers, massive examination failures, examination malpractices, and maladministration are among the many problems plaguing our education system in Nigeria. They lack adequate support services that enhance teaching and learning.

However, for meaningful educational development, it is important to pay sufficient attention to the quality of teaching in our schools. The poor quality of educational results recorded in recent years is attributable to the inconsistencies in our educational policies, which are indirectly responsible for the low quality of teachers, as indicated in the various points above. There is no doubt that a redundant teacher cannot be compared to a busy teacher. In other words, when a teacher is really busy with their professional commitment, they have no choice but to constantly update themselves to prove themselves worthy of their increasingly demanding profession. Knowing that the quality of our education system will be judged by the quality of our teachers, it is regrettable to note that the place of French in the sixth edition of the NPE (2013) encourages laziness, and lazy teachers will no doubt turn out badly.

The Status of French

According to the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF, 2024), French is estimated to be spoken by 321 million speakers across five continents. Ordinarily, one would expect Nigeria to seamlessly fit in with the help of its population as the world's most populous black nation. But, as it is, the country does not appear to be eager to be a part of these 2050 geo-demographic calculations, due to its lackadaisical attitudes toward the language. The elevation of French language, either through its teaching and learning or through its adoption as a second official language, could have

greatly enhanced the country's international status, but the status of French as a second official language in the country is more of a myth than a reality. Language policies have inadvertently been a stumbling block to renewed interest in French, particularly in schools.

While the National Policy on Education does not deny the crucial role of French as a key agent of subregional integration, and even expects it to serve as a second official language after or alongside English, the means to do so do not seem to be available at all times in the former 6:3:3:4 and the current 9:3:4 educational systems. As a matter of fact, the structure keeps French in suffocating competition with other subjects (and not just languages) in the curriculum.

The Recruitment Exercise

It is no longer news that recruitment exercises in Nigeria are highly politicized. This statement may sound like mere speculation, but a recent document from the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria lends credence to this claim. The Senate Committee on Higher Education and TETFund, in a leaked memo referenced (NASS/S/CTIT/60/03/VOL.1/14) and addressed to the Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian public universities, complained that they had been sidelined in recruitment exercises by the University Councils. While the fact remains that they will politicize the process as soon as they are allowed to participate, the likely implication of their involvement is that wrong pegs may end up in square holes, which will have a direct impact on all the other points already listed above. The very moment that mediocrity is placed above merit in recruitment, the whole system is bound to fail! Over time, this will affect other teachers, pupils, schools, education, and eventually the nation.

The Future of French

Today, the influence of French as the language of the future in Nigeria is waning, due in particular to strong competition from English, Arabic, and the three main Nigerian languages. The decline in influence is also attributable to strategic miscalculation on the part of the Nigerian government, particularly with regard to policies directly or indirectly linked to the teaching and learning of French in the country. If French as a language of communication in Nigeria is yet to