

AL-HIKMAH JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

VOLUME 4 NO. 2 DECEMBER, 2017

AL-HIKMAH JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

VOL. 4 NO. 2 DECEMBER, 2017

ISSN: 2384-7662

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ARTS EDUCATION

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SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON THE CHALLENGES FACING THE TEACHING OF YORUBA POETRY IN ABEOKUTA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OGUN STATE

V. O. OGUNNIRAN

Abstract

This research work examined teachers' perception on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in senior secondary schools in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, *Ogun State. Yoruba poetry is divided into two parts; oral or traditional poetry (ewi atenudenu tabi ewi abalaye) and written poetry (ewi apileko). Poetry is one of the three genres of literature. The oral poetry is dominant in African countries before the arrival of the Europeans. Most of the oral poetry is in the written form now. It is believed that poetry can facilitate the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of a child, though there are challenges facing the teaching of poetry in senior secondary schools. The research design used for this study was a descriptive research of survey type. Fifty Yoruba teachers were sampled from 10 schools using purposive sampling technique. Research questions and hypotheses guided this study. A researcher-designed validated questionnaire titled: 'Senior Secondary School Teachers' and Students' Perception on the Teaching of Yoruba Poetry Questionnaire (SSSPTYPQ)' was used to elicit information from the respondents. Descriptive statistics of mean rating and ranking order was used to answer question 1, while the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance were used to analyse the hypotheses. The findings showed that there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area based on gender and educational qualification respectively. However, there was significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience. Therefore, it was recommended that the wealth of experience of teachers really count when it comes to teaching of Yoruba poems. Thus, teachers with adequate teaching experience should be allowed to handle the poetry aspect of Yoruba and possibly literature.*

Keywords: *Senior secondary school, Teachers' perception, Yoruba poetry*

Introduction

Literature is basically a form of language which expresses opinion about the society of its creation. Literature gives students instruction on genres of oral and written language as well as the basic principles of literary appreciation, customs and institution. Lamba (2015) defined literature as a term used to describe written or spoken materials. Broadly speaking, literature is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works, but the term is mostly used for the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. A more clinical definition of literature can be made through a proper study of its genres. It is categorized into three main genres which include: prose, drama and poetry. Prose as a genre of literature comes from Latin word "prosaic" which means "straight forward". Hence, the term prosaic is often seen as pejorative. Prose writing is adopted for the description of fact or the discussion of whatever one's thoughts are

incorporated in free following speech. Drama is a specific mode of fiction represented in performance (Ogunjimi, 2003).

Poetry, which is the focus of this study was asserted by Russell (2005) as a literature in letter form. It is a form of written word that has pattern and rhythm and rhyme. It can be serious or it can be fun. Basic poetry is in verse form, called a stanza, made up of meters created by feet. Poetry uses forms and conventions to suggest differential interpretation to words, or to evoke emotive responses. Devices such as assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm are sometimes used to achieve musical or incantatory effects. The use of ambiguity, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements of poetic diction often leaves a poem open to multiple interpretations similarly figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, metonymy.

However, literature at the Senior Secondary School is not taught as a subject in its own but an aspect of language. It is believed that poetry can facilitate the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor of a child. According to Aboyeji (2005), it became necessary for the Federal Ministry of Education, to insist in the National Curriculum for Secondary Schools that Nigeria language be made compulsory to achieve the following objectives: to give a rich and well-minded humanistic education; to reinforce the Yoruba language skills already acquired by the students; to expose students to the beauty and potentials of language; and to expose student to healthy human values.

Yoruba poetry is divided into two parts; oral or traditional poetry (ewi atenudenu tabi ewi abalaye) and written poetry (ewi apileko). The oral poetry is dominant in African countries before the arrival of the Europeans, but in 1828 the Yoruba orthography was written by Mrs. Hannah Kilham, after her efforts, Yoruba writers received challenges and started writing prose drama and poetry. In 1897 E. M. Lijadu wrote something on Ifa in a poetic form, since that time oral poetry of Yoruba has gradually become the written form. Finvegan (1989) also classified it into two parts, include oral and written poetry. He further said that oral poetry is unwritten poetry. It often takes the form of a song. Oral poetry is one that is passed from our progenitors and is not in written form, it is in their memory. For instance ese ifa, ofo, owe, oriki, ijala, ekun iyawo, etc in Yoruba poetry. The second classification is written poetry (Ogunji, 2002). Written poetry has now become popular in Yoruba land. Nowadays, there are people like: Olanrewaju Adepoju, Tubosun Oladapo, Tunji Opadotun, Ademola Adewuyi, Aremu Adebayo who have worked tremendously on poetry this day. Poetry has been looked upon as been the most difficult of the genres of literature, students in senior secondary schools today seem not to realise that good understanding and appreciation of poetry is a catalyst to intensive comprehension of not only Yoruba language and its literature but also enhances their overall performance in all fields of learning (Ogunjimi, 2003).

Hence, the perceived challenges of teachers and students in teaching and learning of poetry are analysed as follows:

Lack of interest on the part of students and teachers: some Yoruba teachers perceived that they did not like poetry themselves and so flooded lessons with technical terms or turned poems into guessing games that made students feel stupid. On the positive side, there are few teachers who seemed to take genuine pleasure in poems and shared them with students as a

gift. When teaching poetry, teachers of literature may have to take into consideration the language of the poem. Sometimes students do not enjoy the study of poetry because they perceived the language traditionally used in poems is difficult to understand, (the language in Ekun Iyawo, Ijala, Iremoje, Esa Egungun, Dadakuada). Lazar (2004) stressed that poetic language exposes students to an organized, unexpected, complex use of language. Lazar (2004) assented that poetic texts reorganize syntax, invent their own vocabulary, freely mix registers and create their own punctuation. Therefore, the language of Yoruba poetry is at times difficult for the students who can't read Yoruba language fluently and it is discovered that some teachers find Yoruba poetry difficult to pronounce.

Lack of adequate approach for the teaching of Yoruba poetry: Another challenge perceived by teachers facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry that makes it difficult is lack of adequate approach for the teaching of poetry. There is a proliferation of updated approaches that can bring a variety of options for teachers. Richards & Rogers (2000) confirmed that the invention of new classroom approaches provides teachers with more efficient and more effective ways of teaching. Therefore, besides the traditional approach, teachers may use pedagogical approaches, which may prove particularly useful for the teaching of poetry. There are communicative approach, natural approach and multiple intelligence approach. These approaches give teachers and students the opportunity to express their individuality by having them share their ideas and opinions. These approaches are methodological innovations. While using these approaches (Communicative, Natural and Multiple Intelligences) students' confidence in the learning process is enhanced by the many opportunities for cooperative interactions with their fellow students and teachers. Mujibul (2008) identified the characteristics of good teaching as comprising teachers' enthusiasm and passion for the subject and good rapport between teachers and students during discussions in and out of the class. Odejobi (2013) asserted that low education qualification of some teachers who teach Yoruba poetry is another constrain, it is discovered that some teachers are assigned to take up the teaching of Yoruba who are not qualified to teach because they are not Yoruba teachers and do not have sufficient command of the language to teach the subject properly. They are usually depending on textbooks and little attention is paid to the teaching of Yoruba poetry.

Lack of teaching materials for Yoruba poetry in secondary schools: teachers and students of Yoruba language perceived that there is lack of teaching materials for teaching Yoruba poetry in secondary. Shortage of instructional materials: like the audio tape, the language laboratory and the human resource are not available for teaching Yoruba poetry. The place of instructional materials as vital tools cannot be undermined in any educational setting. In school system where better teachers' performance remains the watchword, educational resources help to facilitate teaching and learning (Adeogun, 2005).

The selection of poetry books is another major problem that both teachers and learners encounter in literature; the text that is selected by the external examination body may not consider the interest of teachers and students. This action sort of restricts students to the texts and at times the WAEC poetry book is quite different from the NECO poetry book this makes the students to read widely and even hate Yoruba language (WAEC, NECO, 2013).

Lack of adequate knowledge of the tonal marks is a great challenge in teaching Yoruba poetry, the Yoruba language is a tonal language, the students are not interested in Yoruba tonal marks again and without being conversant with this tonal mark both the teachers and students would not be able to teach and learn Yoruba poetry. The tonal mark distinguished words that are having the same spellings but different meanings (Mo ko igba sinu igba ni ona igba) =I put seed in the calabash in two hundred times. Without tonal marks it reads thus= I put two hundred in two hundred and in two hundred ways.

Lack of suitable text books and reading culture on the part of students; some teachers base the teaching of Yoruba poetry on speaking and listening alone, they should also teach how to read and write poems and encourage the reading of novels and scripts (Durotoye, 2000). Students who had been taught wrong reading habit in primary school will end up transferring it to secondary schools and tertiary levels. Reading/writing instructional tie-up is a process whereby the teacher helps the students to develop the ability of reading and writing in a classroom context simultaneously. The teacher of language is expected to inculcate the reading and writing habit through series of techniques and methodologies that are strategic in nature. A number of researchers have assessed that all categories of learners of Yoruba as a mother tongue displayed difficulty in learning to read and write. Olajide (1991) observed that the Nigerian university undergraduates showed difficulty in reading Yoruba. Olu (1996) lamented the poor reading and writing skills in Yoruba among groups of learners in the university. Yet, a number of scholars observed that reading and writing skills are fundamental to the intellectual and national development. Azikiwe (1998) observed that students are always unprepared to read aloud from text and course books, and students who can't read properly would not be able to understand poetry and the relevance of poetry is that a good poetry has the power to make a reader the best writer.

Purpose of the Study

This study specifically intends to:

i. Identify the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry as perceived by teachers;
ii. Determine teachers' perception on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' gender.
iii. Ascertain the teachers' perception on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification.
iv. Inverstigate teachers' perception on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in course of this study:

1. What are the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba Poetry as perceived by teachers?
2. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on teachers' gender?
3. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the

teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on teachers' qualification?

4. Is there any difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on teachers' experience?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the aforementioned research questions, the following research hypotheses were formulated for purpose of this study:

H_{o1}: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on teachers' gender.

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification.

H_{o3}: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was a descriptive research of survey type. 50 Yoruba teachers were sampled from 10 schools using purposive sampling technique. Three research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. A researcher's designed validated questionnaire titled 'Senior Secondary School Teachers' and Students' Perception on the Teaching of Yoruba Poetry Questionnaire (SSSPTYPQ)' was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire items were structured on a summation of ratings such as 4 Likert scale: SA = 4, A = 3, SD = 2 and D = 1. Descriptive statistics of mean rating and ranking order was used to answer question 1, while the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance were used to analyse the hypotheses.

Sample Distribution selected for the Study

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents based Gender

Gender (Teachers)	Frequency	Percentage
Female	23	46.0
Male	27	54.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 1 represents the gender of the teachers. The result shows that 24 (46.0%) of the respondents were female and 27 (54.0%) of the respondents were female.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents by Educational Qualification

Teachers' Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
NCE	14	28.0
ND/HND	4	8.0
B.A (Ed)/B.Ed.	26	52.0
M.Ed./M.A (Ed)	5	10.0
Others	1	
Total	50	100.0

The demographic profile in table 2 above shows that majority of the teachers 26 (52.0%) had B.Ed. /B.A(Ed) educational qualifications. This is followed by NCE and M.Ed. /M.A (Ed) with 14 (28.0%) and 5 (10.0%) educational qualification respectively.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Respondents by Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	16	32.0
6-10 years	24	48.0
11years and above	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 3 above shows that majority of the respondents 24 (48.0%) had been teaching for the past 6-10 years, while 16 (32.0%) and 10 (20.0%) of the respondents had 1-5 years as well as 11 years and above teaching experiences respectively.

Research Question One: *What are the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry as perceived by teachers?*

The table below shows the mean and rank order of the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry as perceived by teachers in Abeokuta South Local Government Area. The items in the instrument were measured on 4 Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points, Agree (A) = 3points, Disagree (D) =2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1point. The average score of the four values of the scale (

Table 4: Mean and Rank Order of Challenges Facing the Teaching of Yoruba Poetry as Perceived by Teachers

N	Challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba Poetry as perceived by teachers include:	Mean Score	Rank Order
4	Inability of students to read Yoruba texts fluently is a challenge to their learning	2.97	1st
1	Inability of teachers to enforce corrections after Yoruba poetry lessons (classes) hinders learning rate	2.96	2nd
5	Home background of the students affect their learning of Yoruba poetry	2.94	3rd
9	Lack of capable (qualified) hands to teach poetry is one of the challenges to students learning	2.94	3rd
10	Lack of reinforcement from Yoruba teacher	2.92	5th
2	Lack of adequate knowledge of poetic devices by teacher is a challenge to students learning of Yoruba poetry	2.83	6th
8	The method and technique teachers employed to teach Yoruba poetry is a challenge to students learning	2.73	7th
3	Teachers inability to use appropriate instructional media during poetry lessons affects students learning of Yoruba poetry	2.65	8th
7	Low quantity of teachers handling Yoruba poetry affects students learning	2.59	8th
6	The Nigerian education policy poses a serious challenge to students learning of Yoruba poetry	2.55	10th

Table 4 above shows the mean and rank order of challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area. Inability of students to read Yoruba text fluently with overall mean score of 2.97 was ranked first. This implies that one of the greatest challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry is inability of students to read Yoruba text fluently. The inability of teachers to enforce corrections after lessons was ranked

second with the overall mean score of 2.96. This is followed by home background of the students and lack of capable (qualified) hands to teach Yoruba poetry with the overall mean scores of 2.94 each. Ranked 5th is item 10 with mean score of 2.92 and states that 'lack of reinforcement from Yoruba teachers.'

The challenges posed by Nigerian education policy was ranked 10th with mean score of 2.55. Therefore, using a cut-off score of 2.50 as the baseline for determining the teachers' perceived challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Area, all the factors mentioned are the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry.

Hypotheses Testing

H_{01}: *There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on gender*

Table 5: Difference in the Teachers' Perception on the Challenges Facing the Teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on Gender

Gender	N	Means	S.D	Df	t-value	Sig.	Decision
Male	27	50.02	15.23	48	12.01	0.012	Reject
Female	23	36.15	9.27				

*Significance at $p<0.05$

The result of table 5 reveals that the calculated p-value of 0.012 is less than the chosen 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on gender. This indicates that male and female teachers have different perceptions on the challenges facing teaching Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area.

H_{02}: *There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification.*

Table 6: ANOVA Summary of Teachers' Perception on the Challenges Facing Teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on Teachers' Qualification

Variables	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between groups	663.506	4	165.877			
Within groups	749.344	45	16.652	9.961	0.144	Accept
Total	14020.160	49				

*Significance at $p>0.05$

The result of table 6 reveals that the calculated p-value of 0.144 is greater than the chosen 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification. This means that teachers have the same views on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in secondary schools in

Abeokuta South Local Government Area regardless of their teaching qualifications.

H_{03}: *There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience.*

Table 7: ANOVA Summary of Teachers' Perception on the Challenges Facing Teaching of Yoruba Poetry based on Teachers' Experience

Variables	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between groups	564.526	2	282.263			
Within groups	455.554	47	9.693	29.120	0.006	Reject
Total	1720.080	49				

*Significance at $p<0.05$

Table 7 reveals that the calculated p-value of 0.006 is less than the critical p-value of 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience. This means that teachers have the different opinions on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in secondary schools in Abeokuta South Local Government Area based on their teaching experiences.

Summary of Findings

1 There was a significant difference in the teachers' perception on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on gender.

2 There was no significant difference in the teachers' perception on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification.

3 There was significant difference in the teachers' perception on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area as perceived by teachers include: teacher's inability to enforce correction during Yoruba lessons, inability of students to read Yoruba text fluently, home background of the students, lack of adequate poetic knowledge by the teachers, inability of teachers to use appropriate instructional media and so on. This result is consistent with the finding of Adeosun and Ayodele (2008) who observed that major problems include inability of students to communicate fluently and read in a good standard form of Yoruba language.

The outcome of hypothesis one indicated that there was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on gender. This implies that male and female teachers had different perceptions on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' qualification. This means that teachers have the same opinion on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in secondary schools in Abeokuta South Local Government Area regardless of their educational qualifications. This outcome is not consonance with Osundare (2011) who linked the problems facing teaching of Yoruba poetry to low educational qualification of teachers teaching Yoruba poetry. This result may however be true because teaching of Yoruba does not really depend on educational qualification but rather on the dedication and commitment of teachers.

The result of hypothesis five showed that there was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience. This means that teachers have the different opinions on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry in secondary schools in Abeokuta South Local Government Area based on their teaching experiences. This outcome corroborates Ige (2004) who asserted that teaching and learning of Yoruba poetry is influenced by the level of teacher's knowledge of the subject matter as well as pedagogical knowledge. Teaching of Yoruba requires teachers who are well versed in all facets of the subject including poetry. Thus, an experienced teacher may have different opinions as far as the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry is concerned when compared with less experienced counterparts.

Conclusion

It could be concluded that the challenges facing teaching and learning of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area include teacher's inability to use appropriate instructional materials during Yoruba lessons, inability of students to read Yoruba fluently, interference of English in the process teaching the subject, shortage of Yoruba teachers and home background of the students. Also, there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing teaching of Yoruba poetry in Abeokuta South Local Government Area based on gender and educational qualification respectively. However, there was significant difference in the perception of teachers on the challenges facing the teaching of Yoruba poetry based on teachers' experience.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of study:

It is recommended that male and female secondary schools teachers should be conversant with the teaching of Yoruba poetry, any aspect of the poetry that is a little pit difficult, those who know it should be consulted. Adequate provision of instructional materials and poetic devices will lessen the challenges faced by teachers and students in teaching and learning of Yoruba poetry.

The qualified and the unqualified resource persons (onirara, asunjala, akewi) should be involved in teaching Yoruba poetry to arose the interest of the students.

The wealth of experience of teachers really count when it comes to teaching of Yoruba poems. Thus, teachers with adequate teaching experience should be allowed to handle the poetry aspect of Yoruba and possibly literature.

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