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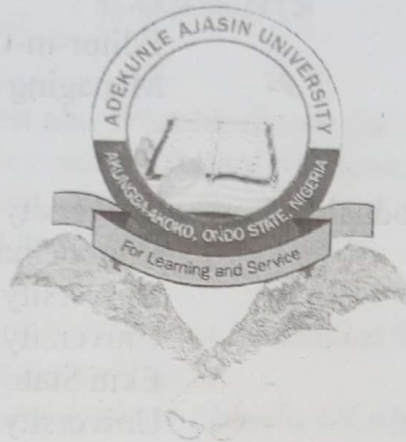
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TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF UPPER BASIC EDUCATION YORÙBÁ LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN ÒYÓ NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research investigated teachers' assessment of the objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language curriculum in Òyó North Senatorial District, Nigeria. A 13-item researcher-designed questionnaire was used to sample the opinions of the Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language teachers. The data collected were analysed using mean scores and standard deviations to answer the research questions and the t-test statistic to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All the 246 Yorùbá language teachers in the 184 Upper Basic Schools in Òyó North Senatorial District were purposively sampled for this study. The results indicated that the curriculum objectives are clearly stated and are attainable. Also, there were no differences in the assessment of male and female teachers but, there were differences in the assessment of qualified and unqualified teachers. Based on these findings, it was recommended that government should recruit teachers of Yorùbá in quantity and quality; curriculum developers/designers should make a periodic review of Yorùbá language curriculum and organise capacity building workshops for all stakeholders on curriculum implementation; teachers of Yorùbá should show a great interest in the teaching of the subject and be role models.

Key words: assessment, objectives, Upper Basic, curriculum

Introduction

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with about 513 indigenous languages belonging to different and distinct language families (Fágbohùn, 2004). For education to be effective, the medium of instruction in schools should not be just any language but the mother tongue (MT) of the recipient. When the MT is used as a medium of instruction, the person being educated can fully take in, digest and assimilate properly the content knowledge being imparted. The recipient would then develop clarity of mind, originality of thought and perceptive analysis in respect of such content of knowledge (Bámidélé, 2005).

The Phelps-Stokes Commission on Africa between 1920 and 1921 is a landmark in recognition of mother tongue in the education of a child (Awóníyí, 1978). Among other things, the commission touched upon the language issue. After making an appraisal of the linguistic situation in African territories, the commission came to the conclusion that both English and the mother tongue must be given recognition in the educational system. Recognizing the fact that languages, be they European or African, have contribution of far

greater significance to make in the transfer of knowledge, the Commission remarks that, native tongue is immensely more ritual in that it is one of the chief means of preserving whatever is good in native customs, ideas and ideals and thereby preserving what is more important than all these, namely, native self-respect among others. All people have an inherent right to their language. No greater injustice can be committed against a people than to deprive them of their own language.

The succeeding commissions: Asquith (1943), Elliot (1945), and Ashby (1959) were silent on the role the MT should play in the education system (Abiri, 2003). Though, the Ashby commission of April 1959 to September 1960 recommended that the university courses should include programmes in such areas as African Studies among others, it did not spell out how MT should be used from primary to the tertiary level of education.

In the 1926 Education Ordinance, broad guidelines were given on what the Government considered as the general syllabus for Education. In a full primary school, reading in MT was to continue to Standards 1 and 2. From Standard 3 onward, English reading gradually took the place of MT reading (Awóniyi, 1978). Though, the 1926 Ordinance gave useful guidelines, they were inadequate to meet the demands of the schools.

In 1952, according to Awóniyi (1978), the Government of the Western State set up a committee to work a new curriculum for primary schools based on a 6-year course to replace the existing 8-year one. This curriculum, which was published in 1954, included the syllabus for the Yorùbá language. The Yorùbá syllabus has two parts: the first, occupying the first 2 years of the proposed 6-year course, and second, the succeeding 4 years of the course. The aim of the first part was to teach the mechanics of reading and writing skills, while the second part was to enable children express themselves fluently, correctly and effectively in their MT.

Yorùbá language appeared among the core subjects in the 6-3-3-4 system of education. The language is to be used as a medium of instruction in primary 1-3. At both the junior and senior secondary schools, MT is made compulsory (FRN, 2004). Also, in the current 9-3-4 system, MT is grouped under core subjects at the upper basic level, in which every student is expected to study his or her MT. At the senior secondary level, student is expected to sit for at least a MT at the school leaving certificate examination (FRN, 2004). The language has over twenty-two million speakers in Nigeria, Benin Republic, Togo, and Sierra-Leone, where it is called *Aku*; Brazil, where it is called *Nago*; and in Cuba, where it is called *Lucumi* (Fágbohùn, 2004).

There are various dialects of Yorùbá. Aside from these various dialects, there is a standard Yorùbá, which is used for educational purposes (e.g. in the newspapers, on the radio and in schools) (Fágbohùn, 2004). The standard Yorùbá has its origin in the 1850s, when Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a native of Òṣoògùn and the first African Bishop, who published a *Yorùbá Grammar* started his translation of the Holy Bible. The Standard Yorùbá incorporates several features of various dialects. It is the variety learnt at school and used in the media, and it has been a powerful consolidating factor in the emergence of a common Yorùbá identity (Adétugbò, 1982).

Objectives are very crucial in any educational process. This is due to the central role attached to them in determining the content of the curriculum. Dàda (2003) defines an objective as a thing which one sets out to achieve. Objectives are the expected or intended outcome which a curriculum strives to attain. They are the guide to the selection of content, learning materials and evaluation aspects of a curriculum (Odùlówò, 2000). The set objective is the standard against which the educational process could be assessed.

On the other hand, a curriculum is a rounded programme of learning and living with its vital purposes to be found in individual and group needs, interest and abilities of children as well as the requirement of a particular society for the transmission, renewal and improvement of that society (Awóniyì, 1978). Dàda (2003) defines curriculum as the totality of the experiences which the learner has acquired under the direction of the school for the purpose of effecting desirable patterns of behaviour. It is the meeting point for the programme of teaching and learning. Also, Kòlówólé (1998) defines curriculum as the totality of planned learning experiences an individual encounters under the auspices of the school.

A curriculum plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. It is a guide to what is to be taught, how it should be taught and to whom it should be taught. It has been observed that an effective school curriculum should be relevant, viable, practicable at the classroom pedagogical situation, and capable of bringing about the intended result (Ughamadu, 1998).

Curriculum, according to Abdulrahaman (2000) is a document in which the learning activities and experiences are sequentially arranged to bring about permanent and desirable changes in behaviour and to make learning easier for the learners. To many scholars, among who are Abdulrahaman (2000) and Dàda (2003), curriculum plays a major role in the determination of the course of education, because it contains everything that is required to make enterprise of education successful.

Curriculum is a package of well-structured description of what is to be taught, the objectives to be achieved, the learning experiences, organisation of contents and activities, including the evaluation of all other components (Abdulrahaman, 2000). Curriculum deals with the total experiences used by the school in educating the students. A curriculum provides the scope for all the learning experiences and serves as a guide for the teachers to assist in the actual implementation. A curriculum, unlike the scheme of work or lesson-note, is not the handiwork of an individual teacher or that of a particular school. Syllabus, scheme of work and the lesson notes are subsets of a curriculum. Curriculum objectives are the educational purposes of a given curriculum or a given educational system. They are the specific outcome of learning over a period of time in the course of a particular lesson (Odùlówò, 2000). Every curriculum has statement of objectives which guide the teacher in selecting learning materials and activities, and in finding out whether the education taking place at any level is one that can help learners in acquiring desirable social skills, knowledge and values which enable the society to make progress (Dàda, 2003).

Assessment can be defined as the means of making judgment on the merit, value and worth of educational programme. It is the process of organising test data into

interpretable forms. Data are obtained using a wide variety of instruments, such as tests, questionnaires and observations (NTI, 2007).

Gender has been considered as an important factor in human life and the dichotomy is an important factor in human experiences. Gender can influence the lives and aspirations of individuals, their perception in life, their responses to certain thoughts, and their ability to use certain materials (Eḷégbéléyè, 1995). However, Kòláwólé (1998) considers the influence of teachers' academic and professional qualifications as a major determinant of students' performance.

Basic education is a process which encourages articulation of formal, non-formal and informal approaches to education and structure for the awakening of all round development of human capital and potentials (Awolólá, 2007). The specific goals for basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies (i.e. primary education, junior secondary education and adult and non-formal education). Basic education is a 9-year duration comprising 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education, and it shall be free and compulsory.

Each State of the Federation is constitutionally divided into three Senatorial Districts. The boundary of each district is as contiguous as possible, such that, the number of inhabitants thereof is as nearly to the population quota as is reasonably practicable (FRN, 1999). Oyo North Senatorial District is one of the three senatorial districts in Oyo State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find out:

- i. teachers' assessments of the attainability of the objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum;
- ii. whether there is a difference in the assessments of male and female teachers; and
- iii. whether there is a difference in the assessments of qualified and unqualified teachers.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study.

- i. What are the teachers' assessments of the attainability of the objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum?
- ii. Is there difference in the assessments of male and female teachers?
- iii. Is there difference in the assessments of qualified and unqualified teachers?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study.

- HO₁ There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum.
- HO₂ There is no significant difference between the qualified and unqualified teachers'

assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum.

Theoretical Background

An educational reform is a change or changes made to the system of education in order to improve it. Educational reforms emanate from the basic conviction that considerable progress can be made in a nation by its people through careful engineering of the educational process (Omoléwà, 2007). This tells, in a sentence, what educational reform is all about. Nigeria has witnessed several educational reforms which started at pre-independence. It was to the credit of Nigerians, notably agitators for self-rule, that the British colonial rulers changed the educational system in operation in 1954 from 8-6-2-3 system, that is, 8-year primary, 6-year secondary, 2-year high school certificate, and 3-year university to a new 6-5-2-3, that is 6-year primary, 5-year secondary, 2-year high school certificate and 3-year university. The change resulted in reducing the number of years at the primary and secondary school levels. This change, according to Omoléwà (2007), was viewed as a patriotic struggle to effect a significant change in the educational structure for the general good of the country because, Nigerians then were concerned about education.

The FRN (2004) states that, basic education shall be of 9-year duration comprising, 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary education. It states further that basic education shall be free and compulsory. It also includes adult and non-formal education programmes at the primary and junior secondary education levels for the adults and out-of-school youths. The specific goals for basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies (i.e. primary education, junior secondary education and adult and non-formal education). The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2004) states that the UBE was launched and executed by the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty as well as stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration.

The decision of the Federal Government to introduce the nine-year Basic Education Programme and the need to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, as well as the critical target of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS), which can be summarized as value-reorientation, poverty eradication, job creation, wealth generation and the desire to use education to empower the people make it become imperative that the existing curricula for primary and junior secondary schools be reviewed, re-structured and realigned to fit into the 9-year Basic Education Programme. The NERDC is the body saddled with the responsibility of developing curricula for the 9-year basic education programme.

Thus, the National Council on Education (NCE) at its meeting at Ibadan in December, 2005 approved a new Basic Education Curriculum structure for both the Primary and Junior Secondary Schools in line with the Universal Basic Education Programme. Moreover, NERDC developed the Primary and Junior Secondary Schools Curricula based on the new Basic Education Curriculum in compliance with the NCE

directives. The Basic Education Curriculum lays a strong foundation for functional numeracy and literacy, basic scientific and technological skills as well as ethical and moral values. The curriculum also incorporates the basic skills of entrepreneurship and life-long learning (NERDC, 2009).

In line with the philosophy of education and the glaring happenings nationwide, Nwosu (2011) defines curriculum as:

Totality of learning experiences, activities and services selected from culture and provided by an educational institution (organised subjects, broad fields, integrated courses, or otherwise) within or outside the institution. It embraces not only the objectives and contents of what is to be taught and learnt, but also materials, methods and evaluation mechanism used. All these are geared towards the needs of the individual learners as well as the progress of the nation and the larger global community. (Pg. 13)

Keen looking at the above quotation shows that it is not only universal but also expatiates the difference between the syllabus and curriculum as a progressive and dynamic educational action plan for attaining development. Education is considered to be the major instrument needed for acquiring such development in all its ramifications, which could be political, social, linguistic, economical, religious, academic and psychological among others.

Various studies have been carried out on assessment and evaluation of curriculum. For instance, Amoloye (2006) evaluates the senior secondary school Yoruba language curriculum in Oyo State. She purposively selected 631 Yoruba teachers in senior schools available in Oyo State then. Her research instruments were a researcher-designed questionnaire and analysis of 1999-2003 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results. The findings of her study included the following among others:

- (i) the objectives and contents of the Yoruba language curriculum were adequate to achieve the set goals of the 1st language learners;
- (ii) the Yoruba language curriculum was found suitable for its 1st language learners; and
- (iii) there should be no separation between the teaching of Yoruba language and literature to enhance learners' interest in the language.

Ibrahim (2006) on the other hand, assesses the national senior secondary school Hausa language curriculum in Kano. He adopts the Stufflebeam's (1971) CIPP model for his evaluation conduct. His research considers teacher variables and students' academic performance as criteria for the evaluation of the input, process and the output evaluation respectively. The findings of the study confirmed among others, the:

- (i) clarity of Hausa curriculum objectives;
- (ii) validity of its contents;
- (iii) suitability of the learning experiences for the mother tongue Hausa learners; and
- (iv) inadequacy of qualified senior school Hausa language teachers.

Also, Ajidagba (2002) carried out an evaluation on the Nigerian Senior School Islamic Studies in Kwara State. 468 out of 477 in the then 234 senior schools were involved in the study. He used questionnaire to gather data for the study. Frequency counts and percentage were employed to answer the research questions, while ANOVA and the t-test were used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed: the consistency of the contents with the objectives; inadequacy of prescribed 3-year programme for accomplishing the Islamic Studies curriculum; and insufficiency in the human and material resources. Olaniyan (2010) emphasised the importance of experience. According to her, experience improves teaching skills. She found that variables of gender and type of school did not affect the opinions of teachers but experience did affect the opinions of teachers significantly.

Objectives are the expected or intended outcome which a curriculum strives to achieve. It is usually the set objectives that determine what is to be taught, how it should be taught and to whom it should be taught. The Nigerian language curriculum was designed for learner whose mother tongue (MT) is any of the three main Nigerian languages, i.e., Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá (NERDC, 2007). According to the developers, the objectives of the upper basic education language curriculum were formulated with regard to the overall objectives for the study of Nigerian languages. The objectives are as follows:

The learner should be able to:

- i. express himself correctly in the appropriate Nigerian language (Yorùbá in this case), employing appropriate lexis and figures (vocabulary, idioms, proverbs, witticism, metaphors, etc.);
- ii. demonstrate familiarity and acquaintance with an ability to discuss and explain element of oral traditions of the language (folktales, riddles, games, songs, etc.);
- iii. read and appreciate literature written in Nigerian languages, i.e. Yorùbá, without difficulty and at a reasonable speed;
- iv. carry out continuous writing in Nigerian languages, employing correct usage of grammar, idiomatic expressions, orthography, punctuations and other mechanics of the language;
- v. manifest creativity in Nigerian language through composition of short-stories, plays, new-sheets, word games, song, etc. in the language; and
- vi. acquire the necessary tools to cope with further studies in Nigerian languages if so desired (p.3).

Apart from these objectives, there are specific objectives for the teaching and learning of different topics and sub-topics as presented in the body of the document. Unlike the language curriculum of 1985 which was designed for the 6-3-3-4 system of education, the new language curriculum for the Upper Basic Education which the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2007) provided under the 9-3-4 system covers three years. Besides, the 2007 edition did not set out general objectives in the document.

Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature. A descriptive research in education involves the collection of data for the purpose of describing existing educational phenomenon. A descriptive research describes present happenings and events and ensures the determination of opinions, attitudes, preferences and perception of subjects involved (Fajemidàgbà, 1995).

The population for this study consisted of all teachers in Upper Basic Schools in Oyo North Senatorial District of Oyo State. All the Yorùbá language teachers in public Upper Basic Schools in all the thirteen local government areas constituted the target population. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for gathering data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, A and B. Section A requested the respondents to indicate the name of their school, their gender, qualification(s), and years of teaching experience. Section B consisted of 13-items questionnaire.

The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder-Richardson formula 21 (KR 21). The result stood at 0.41. This shows that the instrument is reliable and good enough for this study.

The data collected were analysed using mean scores, standard deviation and the t-test statistic. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to analyse the research questions, while the t-test statistic was employed to test the hypotheses with their corresponding research questions at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question1: What is the Teachers' Assessment of the Attainability of the Objectives of the Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum?

Table 1: Teachers' Assessments of the Attainability of the Objectives of the Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum

Number of Teachers	Minimum Obtainable Score	Maximum Obtainable Score	Mean Score	S.D.
246	13	52	37.82	3.57

Table 1 above shows that the minimum obtainable score is 13 while the maximum obtainable score is 52. The mean is 37.82 and the standard deviation is 6.57. Based on this result, the Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum can achieve its objectives.

Research Hypotheses

Two null hypotheses were postulated for this study and they were all tested with the use of t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the male and female teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum.

Table 2: Establishment of Significant Statistical Difference Between the Assessments Mean Scores of Male and Female Teachers of Yorùbá.

Variable (Gender)	N	Mean	S.D.	df.	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	111	37.18	2.84	244	0.114	0.909	Accepted
Female	135	37.64	3.35				

Table 2 shows a t-value of 0.114 and a significant value of 0.909 with 244 degree of freedom. Since the significant value (0.909) is greater than the t-value (0.114), the null hypothesis is thus, accepted. This implies that, there is no significant difference between the male and female teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yoruba Language Curriculum.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the qualified and unqualified teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum.

Table 3: Establishment of Significant Statistical Difference Between the Assessments Mean Scores of Qualified and Unqualified Teachers of Yorùbá.

Variable (Qualification)	N	Mean	S.D.	df.	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Qualified	233	41.17	2.22	244	4.57	0.000	Rejected
Unqualified	13	39.71	3.19				

Table 3 shows a t-value of 4.57 and a significant value of 0.000 with 244 degree of freedom. Since the t-value (4.57) is greater than the significant value (0.000), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the qualified and unqualified teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of this study revealed that the stated objectives of the Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum can be attained within the stipulated period of 3

years. The objectives are clearly stated and are learner-centred. Also, the stated objectives adequately cover the basic language skills and the behavioural domains of the learners. This finding is significant because deficiency in one language skill may hinder one's performance in the others. The behavioural domains of the learners have to be considered when stating the curriculum objectives. According to the finding of Oyèdèjì (2005), the head, the heart and the hands have to be effectively connected in order for the learners to perform optimally.

This finding is in accordance with findings of Ajidagba (2002), Amoloye (2006), Ibrahim (2006), and Ayilara (2009). Ajidagba revealed that Islamic studies curriculum objectives is consistent with the contents, while Amoloye found that the objectives of the senior secondary Yorùbá language curriculum were adequate to achieve the set goals for the first language learners and found it suitable for its first language learners. Also, Ibrahim revealed the clarity of Hausa language curriculum objectives and the suitability of the learning experiences for mother tongue Hausa learners. Ayilara revealed that 86% of 25 teachers agreed that the learning experiences incorporated in the curriculum of Yoruba as a second Nigerian language were relevant to the student future career. He also reported that all the respondents used for the study agreed that the learning experiences as packaged in the curriculum covered the curriculum objectives.

The second finding revealed that there is no significant difference between the male and female teachers' assessments. This finding is in accordance with the finding of Ayilara (2009) and Olaniyan (2010). Ayilara found that the variables of genders and school type did not affect the opinions of teachers but experience did affect the opinions of teachers significantly. Also, Olaniyan found that there was no significant difference between male and female assessments of Yoruba language textbook. The third finding revealed that there is a significant difference between the qualified and unqualified teachers' assessments of the Objectives of Upper Basic Education Yorùbá Language Curriculum. This could be attributed to the fact that Yorùbá language, in some cases is taught by unqualified teachers, who do not possess the required professional qualification. This finding is in line with the finding of Ibrahim (2006) who revealed that there was inadequacy of qualified senior secondary school Hausa language teachers. He also found that there is a significant difference between the qualified and unqualified teachers' evaluation of Hausa language senior school curriculum.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Yorùbá Language teachers should see themselves as a major determinant of the success or otherwise of the curriculum implementation.
2. They should show more interest in the teaching of the subject and be role models.
3. Teachers should expose their students to educational trips, such as, visit to Museums, Zoological Gardens, Resource Centres and National Parks among others.

4. The Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should work hand-in-hand to make periodic and unscheduled supervision to schools to ensure that teachers are doing what they are expected of.
5. The Government should recruit teachers of Yoruba in quality and quantity in order to aid effective implementation of the curriculum.

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