

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHING ARABIC AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA: A PRELIMINARY SUBMISSION

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Preamble

Perhaps the most important single factor in the rise of Arabic from a tribal dialect to an urban and international language was its codification, which not only fixed grammatical rules, but also motivated intensive linguistic studies¹.

Arabic language in this part of the Sub-Saharan region has had an unbroken history of a millennium. After more than five decades of Arabic teaching in the Nigerian university system, the time is ripe for a re-appraisal. The teaching of Arabic in tertiary institutions in Nigeria over the period is experiencing a kind of growth in enrollments and thus becoming conscious of the need for effective quality assurance and quality improvement. The quality concern in higher education sector is not a new concept, as it has been addressed by scholars over the last two decades. This is because it was considered an integral part of professionalism.

The years between 1960 (when Nigeria became an independent nation) and 2010 have witnessed phenomenal changes in the educational system of the country particularly in the development of Arabic learning and teaching in Nigerian schools. In respect of student enrollment, for instance, there have been regular intakes no matter the numerical strength of prospective candidates of Arabic Studies in the various tertiary institutions. There has been tremendous growth of scholarship in Arabic language and literature in institutions of learning while issues relating to Arabic receive due attention from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) and the Nigerian Arabic Language Village in Borno State.

The history of tertiary education in Africa reveals traces of transnational quality assurance mechanisms. Apart from the measures from the government and its agencies in ensuring quality and standards in the Nigerian educational system, professional bodies also served as watchdogs to achieve effective QA mechanism.

For instance, NATAIS over the years has laboured to see that *Arabic teaching and learning* in our schools is given its pride of place it deserves.

It is not enough to have Arabic taught in universities and other tertiary institutions. There must be constant evaluation to ensure that, with the change and continuity in the course of studying the language, standards and operational guides for successful teaching are maintained. A system that is intended to grow *should set standards and should discipline itself* to attain them. This is the more reason *why Arabic teaching method* in the system requires re-appraisal.

This paper examines the dynamics of *quality assurance in the teaching of Arabic* as a foreign language in Nigerian higher institutions in particular. It examines the multidimensional concept of quality assurance as embracing the functions and activities relating to self-evaluation and review that are vital for embracing quality. It rounds off with conclusion.

Arabic as a Foreign Language in Nigeria

Of the 6,000 living languages in the world today, Arabic is one of the widely used by more than hundreds of million people comprising of the Arabs (who are native speakers) as well as non-Arab Muslims across the globe. Considerable numbers of speakers of Arabic whether as mother tongue (MT) or as a second language (SL) or foreign language (FL) are to be found in every continent. An equally widely distributed body of second language speakers who use Arabic either for liturgical or daily needs are considerably found here and there.

Having emerged in the Pre-Islamic Arabic from a cluster of dialects, the standard Arabic language – *al ‘Arabiyyah al Fus-ḥa* - was later adopted by the Qur’ān and thus became not only the language of the native speakers but also the language of non-Arab Muslims all over the world. The adoption of Arabic by the Qur’ān consequently imposed a religious dimension not only to its liturgical usage but also linguistic and literary studies. The inception of Islam in Nigeria, like any other non – Arab lands, brought about the simultaneous process of Islamization and Arabization.

The expansion of Islam beyond the shores of the Arabian Peninsula especially in the early days of Islam witnessed the outbreak of *al Lahn* (solecism) in which both the Arab native speakers as well as non-Arabs were involved. The linguistic intermingling of Arabic and some other foreign languages as a result of which Arabic was becoming adulterated especially in the conquered territories then called for a prompt action to forestall negative effects on the Qur’ān.

Thus, the need for codifying the language for the future textual integrity of the Qur’ān to be preserved was later seen as a religious duty. The process and eventual codification of the Arabic grammar in particular could be said to form the basis of learning and teaching Arabic in the then Muslim territories. It later

developed to the linguistic and literary study of Arabic as part of other traditional Islamic sciences. Later, certain linguistic reforms were made to simplify the language and facilitate its learning².

The history of Arabic in Nigeria is not quite different from that of other non-Arab Muslim lands in its inception. Arab traders who extended their trading interests to West Africa also carried along with them their religion and language. On arrival in West Africa, they embarked on a process of conversion of the African population, an effort which involved adapting not only to the religion – Islam, but also to Arabic as a foreign / second language. At the time, nothing could be done by the few Muslim teachers to change much of the traditional education based on the Mother Tongue (MT).

As early as 11th century, the introduction of Islam in Kanem Borno signalled the inception of Qur'ānic Arabic education in the area. In this case, the learning of Arabic alongside the Qur'ān is a clear pointer to the fact that the language was but foreign to other ethnic divides apart from the Shuwa extraction in the area and the other parts of the present-day Nigeria.

Nigeria has a population of about one hundred and forty million people, made up of several ethnic groups each with its language and dialects. Such a linguistic situation constitutes pedagogic and administrative problems. Federal Government policy on education recognized the three major languages- Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo- for education purposes. These languages are being taught and examined by the examination bodies, i.e. WAEC and NECO in Secondary schools while many colleges and universities offer them as academic disciplines.

Second language (SL) mostly symbolized as L_2 is a language learnt after the acquisition of the mother tongue which is the first language L_1 . The term second language is applied in a situation where the language so considered is not an indigenous language of the tribes that make up that society, but where it is used for wider communicative purposes. Second language is usually adopted as official language or lingua franca especially in a multilingual societies as Nigeria for the purposes of education, political and economic activities³.

A foreign language (FL) however, is that language which is not the mother tongue of any group of people where it is studied or spoken. It has no communicative value or function as the mother tongue (MT) or the second language. Examples of foreign languages in Nigeria are Arabic, French, German, Latin, etc. Foreign languages mostly have no official functions but are studied for education purpose⁴.

In Nigeria, for instance, the child usually has his mother tongue, which is one of the many Nigerian languages. In school, he learns English, which is not native to Nigeria in the same way as it is to Britain or America or even Australia, but which is widely used institutionally by a considerable proportion of the literate community and which constitutes the official language of the country. In

such a context, English, which is usually the second language of the child (it may be the third in some cases) or his first received language, is not regarded strictly as a foreign language. A foreign language in Nigeria will therefore be defined as any language (except English and other Nigerian languages) spoken by nationals of countries other than Nigeria. In this case, Arabic can thus be referred to as a foreign language in Nigeria.

Arabic could be considered as a foreign language in places like Nigeria and not second language. Arabic as a Foreign Language AFL and Arabic as a second Language ASL are mere 'blanket' terms, each covering part of a very wide spectrum. For instance, in an extreme AFL situation, Arabic is so foreign to the listeners that it is merely a subject on the school timetable, which is studied in two or three lessons a week, and never using it otherwise outside the classroom. In an extreme ASL situation on the other hand, Arabic may play a larger part in the daily life of the learners, apart from the use by the teachers for other subjects where it is being used outside the classroom. In any case, second language and foreign language are both L₂.

Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language (TAFL) in Nigeria

Teaching of foreign language in Nigerian schools is a recent phenomenon, starting only in the later part of the last century. Its introduction has been rather sporadic and arbitrary as one cannot talk of foreign language teaching in Nigeria the same way as one would do in countries where it has the official blessing of the government at all levels. The case of teaching Arabic and its learning here is a good example.

Arabic is taught as an important foreign language in hundreds of schools and universities across the globe including the overwhelmingly Christian countries of Europe and America. While this is done particularly largely because of educational, political, military and economic considerations, the tradition of studying Arabic in those parts of the world as a foreign language, with no religious motivation goes back to the medieval period⁵. Apart from the unofficial widespread interest in Arabic, which is manifested by teaching the language in private homes, mosques, and in Arabic Qur'ān ic or *'ilmi* schools, Arabic has been for years a recognized subject on the curriculum of the Nigerian and West African schools. It is among subjects being examined by the West African School Certificate Examinations Board.

The importance of Arabic in Nigeria particularly in the religious sphere accounts for the widespread of Arabic learning in this part of the globe. Great importance is attached to the language for liturgical purposes and an average Muslim sends his wards to learn the language. Apart from the religious importance of this language, it played important roles as the first language of writing, technology, commerce and keeping of historical records and agreements.

The mode of instruction in the local Qur'ānic schools which formed the nucleus of learning Arabic as a foreign language in Nigeria was traditional in form of parrot-like repetition and memorization. The teacher copies the alphabet on pupil's wooden slates and then employs the choral technique in teaching them⁶. The later development on this was the system referred to as 'Ilmi or 'Ilmiyyah. Here, the pupils are introduced to many Islamic branches of knowledge such as Arabic grammar, rhetorics, literature, etc. The method of teaching Arabic in this period was that of medieval method of Islamic education, which revolves around the reading of certain selected venerated texts on every subject, not with a view to discussing the contents but merely to appropriate the form and style of the author and to memorise the details⁷.

One important characteristic of the language teaching programmes in this early phase of West African history was its restriction to the ruling class, the nobility. Thus, it was in the courts that Arabic was spoken and written; it was also there that scribes and teachers lodged and worked⁸. Another characteristic of the language teaching programme was the factor of individual effort and its functionality. By the end of the 19th century, in addition to the multitude of West African indigenous languages, Arabic, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English were being taught to a limited audience and confined only to the favoured class of population.

The method used during the foundation period was the direct, face-to-face approach. The teacher read out the word and the students repeated it after him. There was some thoroughness in the teaching of languages because of the central role of language in education. There were few teachers qualified to handle language teaching, a situation which created further problems. The years between 1960 (when Nigeria became an independent Nation) and 2010 have witnessed phenomenal changes in the educational system of the country particularly in the development of Arabic learning and teaching in Nigerian schools.

Perhaps, the primary motivation for including the teaching of Arabic in the curriculum then was instrumental and not really integrative. It was instrumental because the primary object was to train Arabists who could use it for operational purposes – to be able to read books in the new language, to be able to communicate with other speakers of the language. Arabic was learnt then particularly to have easy access to the information about African past preserved in Arabic language as well as the need to understand the rudiments of Islam.

The situation later was more of integrative purpose in the sense that the learner learnt the language in order to identify with the speech community, which uses the language variety and wants to feel at home in it. He will equally like to understand the attitudes and the world view of the speech community. For a good command of a particular second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement, and a successful user of the said language identifies

himself as a successful, integrated member of that speech community. This means that a good command of Arabic like the native speakers automatically enlists one into the fold of the mother tongue speakers.

Since language is a means of communication and communication is the fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language, Arabic language along other foreign languages like English and French became one of the foreign languages taught in the Nigerian universities. It was in the University of Ibadan that Arabic in Nigeria first found its way into the curriculum in a Nigerian University. This was in 1962 after being considered a subject worthy of academic discipline. Even within a given university the purpose of learning Arabic varies, emphasis on communication will demand competence in the language –competence, that is, in understanding what is heard and read as well as in speaking and writing.

Considering the differences in the level of the prospective intakes, the then Department of Arabic & Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan designed the syllabus for two categories of its prospective candidates. There is syllabus A for the prospective candidates with at least background in Arabic most of who must have attended one Arabic school and have at least Ordinary level in English. The syllabus B was for those who did not have any background at all in Arabic but are relatively good in English. It was the syllabus B that produced crop of scholars in Arabic in the late sixties in the university.

It should be noted that the curriculum designed was a pragmatic one based on the ones used in any of the European countries. This is because, the pioneer staff then, though not native speakers per se, but are professionals in the field. They were players on the field. Any meaningful discussion of the status of any language must take account not just of the teaching method or classroom situation but of prevalent social political and economic situation. Indeed, contrary to the much widely spread idea of the relationship of language and culture, the economic and political factors appear overriding; and much explanation, for the promotion of any language is perhaps to be found in the desire of the people to find adequate justification for engaging in any deliberate learning process.

Socio-linguistic research in the past few years has made educators more conscious of language functions and therefore has clarified one level of language teaching goals with greater precision⁹. The fact that Arabic in Nigeria as noted earlier could only be considered as a foreign rather than second language presupposes the methods and approaches in teaching especially by the personnel in charge. Teaching is an observable activity and perhaps that is why teachers usually discuss teaching – technique rather than learning process, even if a good teaching technique works, the role of learning technique should not be played down.

The classical method adopted in the past was that of reading – translation influenced by the Direct Method and Aural-Oral Method. Much later, the

Audiolingual Approach, which comprises of the four skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing simultaneously was employed. In any case, there was dearth of relevant texts particularly by the indigenous scholars that will make the learning process a little familiar to the students. Besides, there were few or no native speakers teaching the subject. Some other teachers were even using the Programmed Learning and Individualized Instruction that take cognizance of the differences among the learners particularly in terms of linguistic competence in the language learning.

In terms of texts used in teaching Arabic as a foreign language, there has been dearth of such in Nigeria, to a large extent. Texts such as Modern Literary Arabic was used alongside practical drilling. In the United States, for instance, teaching of Arabic before the World War II was an integral part of the Near Eastern Studies program but limited to few numbers of concerned research students and the orientalist. It should be noted that the approach then was solely on *taqlid* of the methods found in European Universities, particularly because of the dearth of suitable texts not only for the students but also the teachers who specialise in the teaching.

In the United States where foreign language teaching and learning is well established, specialists and experienced teachers of the foreign languages used to meet and discuss for the success of the program. Hence, the subject must be taught by qualified personnel in the foreign language who are also capable of teaching the children. This means that the teachers must have professional training.

Problems of Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in Nigeria

The teaching of a foreign language particularly in a multilingual situation like Nigeria will definitely have serious implications. Teaching and learning of the language is prone to face a number of problems. The problem of multilingualism in the case of Nigeria, for instance, will allow for what is referred to as language interference. This is because speakers of diverse languages tend to transfer unconsciously some or most of the features of their languages MT to the target language TL, Arabic in this case. And except for the religious orientation, the social attitudinal problem of considering learning Arabic as a complex activity cannot be played down.

There has been negative attitude of members of the society to learning Arabic. This serves as a psychological problem by discouraging the prospective learners. It has been having a spill-over effect on the teaching process. Even when there is motivation for learning, there is general lack of adequate educational instructional facilities here compared to the 'developed' nations.

One of the major problems of teaching Arabic as a foreign language is lack of qualified professional personnel who specialize, for instance, in teaching

Arabic as a foreign language mostly in schools. While there is teaching of say English for Special Purpose ESP, English for Academic Purpose EAP, etc, and there are specialists in each of these areas such as teaching English for Special Purpose, teaching of English for Academic purpose, and so on, there is hardly a situation where there has been attempt to incorporate in the curriculum teaching Arabic for either special purpose or for academic purpose. The relative dearth of specialists quantity-wise and quality-wise (to borrow from Abdul) has been a cog in the wheel of teaching and learning Arabic in Nigeria as a large number of the few available ones lack the necessary linguistic background to take the course¹⁰.

Besides, there has not been any emphasis on teaching and research by the teeming academics in the aspects of (Arabic) language and language teaching particularly in tertiary institutions. Most of the researches center on the literature aspects of the language. In Kogi State University, for instance, hardly could one differentiate from among academics in the Department of Arabic Unit anybody who specializes in teaching Arabic as a foreign language either in his undergraduate days or during the graduate program.

There is no pedagogical training to address the deficiency in the linguistic competence of the Arabic teachers at the university level. Even experienced teachers who support the use of the bilingual method in teaching foreign language are thinking in terms of the foreign language and mother tongue, whereas in this case, translation is from third to second language in which the student is yet to find his feet.

While countries like Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and perhaps Egypt are trying to train specialists in teaching Arabic as a foreign language, the curriculum of institutions where Arabic is being taught in places like the United States of America and Europe contain the program of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. It is only when this is done that one can expect quality assurance and proficiency in the standard of performance in Arabic.

One can safely say here that apart from those who were opportuned to study in any of the Arab countries and some few individuals, there is no gainsaying the fact that today, in spite of the continuity and change in the enrollment of prospective candidates for Arabic studies in Nigeria, the standard performance in Arabic language in Nigeria is drastically dwindling.

While the blame is generally put on both the learners and the teachers, this particular paper focuses on the aspect of teaching in order to obtain quality in the products of the effort. The major problem that is always referred to here in Nigeria is that the government is lakadaisical especially when it comes to Arabic and Islamic Studies.

It is often observed that part of the problem of teaching Arabic whether as a language or as a foreign language lies in lack of adequate texts. We want to note here that initially the bulk of texts used in teaching both the language and

Literature aspects of Arabic in most of our schools are foreign. In most cases, they are not in any way in tandem with the immediate environment thereby making it difficult if not impossible for the learners to easily understand the contents. Besides, there has never been any effort by those teaching the subject to produce suitable texts in language and language teaching for the learners.

One discovers that despite the shifting paradigm in the orientation of the Arabic literary writings of the Nigerian authorship from religious to mundane topics, little have Nigerian Arabists contributed, if any at all, to the area of pedagogy. Taking stock of the available texts in Arabic pedagogy in Nigeria, particularly in the area of language and language teaching, apart from works such as *Kayfa natadhawwaq al adab al araby* of Naibi Suwayd of blessed memory and some handful ones available in teaching Arabic rudiments for non-Arabic major students (mostly English audience) in subjects such as History and Law, most of which are even written in English, one hardly sees any text by Nigerian Arabic teachers venturing into the area with a view to ameliorating the situation. The complaint will be that there is no sufficient funds for such, yet there are handful of publications regardless of the quality in the area of literature produced so far by lecturers in Arabic.

The case of Arabic in Nigeria is like that of a proverbial orphan who needs to fend for himself when nobody cares for his welfare as noted by Hafiz Ibrahim. Like the comment of Abd al Muttalib when he was informed of the imminent demolition of the then Ka'bah acknowledging his helplessness, he remarked: *inna lil-Bayt rabban yahmiih* (there is a Lord for the House protecting it). There are efforts that can be made to ensure sustenance and development of Arabic learning in Nigeria.

Unlike the situation in the developed countries like United States, where there are organizations who are always ready to fund educational programmes such as the Ford Foundation and humanities foundation, there are no bodies and provisions to fund projects like the textbook writing and other necessary materials for teaching the language here in Nigeria. There should be funds to assist in the production of relevant texts for teaching Arabic in any of the universities. This would have gone a long way to promote the teaching of the language for the target purpose.

There is the problem of teaching of Arabic within the context of general language policy. There are no incentives for teaching Arabic since one's educational and professional career can be much more determined by an examination success and proficiency in English rather than any other language. This is what Abdul described as indifference of the Federal and State Governments as well as Ministries of Education to the teaching of Arabic as a language¹¹. There is little or no encouragement for the learning of Arabic language, as it is poorly rated. The government of the country however is

lukewarm about the the importance of encouraging and enhancing the teaching of Arabic language like any other foreign language in Nigeria.

One major problem of teaching Arabic in Nigeria is the predominance of literature specialists and lack of adequate language experts in Arabic. Here, we mean the professionals in teaching Arabic as a foreign language. Substantial number of teachers of Arabic in our tertiary institutions are more at home in teaching literature, stylistics in Arabic literature, Arabic literary history, etc. One hardly finds somebody specializing in the area of language especially language teaching not to talk of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. This has posed a serious threat to the learning as a professional Arabic language to non-Arab speakers. As such, there is proliferation of research in the aspect of literature compared to that of language in Arabic studies. It will be seen that the conditions under which Arabic is taught as a foreign language in Nigerian schools leave much to be desired when compared to the ideal foreign language teaching conditions in advanced countries.

Quality Assurance in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language in Nigeria

Quality Assurance QA is the process of maintaining standards in products or services through inspection or testing of samples¹². Quality Assurance is also seen by T. L. Adepoju & O. B. Akinola¹³ as all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements of quality. It is said to be a problem-solving approach and preventive measure against wastage and failure. It is the systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained.

The department of Quality Assurance was said to have been established in 2005 by the NUC in response to the quest for the quality assurance of the expanded university system. The process of QA in any educational setting is generally divided into Internal QA mechanism as well as External QA mechanism. These are the two components of QA in any higher institutions of learning.

External Quality Assurance Mechanism

The external quality component is particularly to establish institutions, regulatory bodies such as NUC with its statutory functions of accreditation, institutional audit, regulation of admission process into institutions, monitoring and periodical evaluation of the academic as well as administrative activities. All these are done within the purview of the statutory edict that established them and thus are referred to as being external since they operate not within the system.

In order to fully entrench this external quality process, Okojie reiterates that some innovative ideas were adopted to stimulate and promote quality in

university education delivery, which include strategic planning and management, curriculum reform and review, Nigerian Universities System Annual Review Meetings, (NUSARM), linkages and collaboration with national and international development partners, development of physical structures and facilities, Nigerian Universities Research and Development Fair, (NURESDEF), Linkage with Experts and Academics in the Diaspora (LEAD), etc.¹⁴

Since the NUC is the external body controlling the maintenance of academic standards in Nigerian universities, it invariably constitutes the external QA mechanism, which is in charge of setting the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) for all the academic programmes in our universities. Therefore, the quality assurance statutory function of the NUC consists of setting MAS for all programmes taught in the Nigerian Universities and the accreditation of such programmes¹⁵.

In its bid to ensure quality in Nigeria higher educational system, NUC, for instance has set up accreditation mechanisms as a measure, institutional ranking in terms of undergraduate and graduate programmes, monitoring, assessment/evaluation of the existing students and facilities, prescribing benchmarks and periodic review of MAS, external moderation system, capacity building for teaching and non-teaching personnels, etc.

Internal Quality Assurance Mechanism

Here, the process of quality assurance in any given discipline lies within the university system. This internal quality assurance mechanism is the responsibility of individual institution to take care of the process starting from the Departments and Faculties. The process of this particular mechanism involves members of the academic staff in the Department particularly who handle the courses directly.

The type and quality of the staff especially in terms of effective pedagogy determines the success of these quality demands. In this case, the staff take cognizance of the periodic need to evaluate particular method of imparting knowledge and its output to know when and how to improve for better results, and how a particular programme achieves its stated aims. Here, professional bodies can also assist in this regard where a particular programme is appraised periodically.

Measuring the standards in education requires quality of human resources for the system. In this case like we have noted earlier, there should be effort to put in place professionals in the area of teaching Arabic as a foreign language. This will boost the level of quality assurance demand. While some handful teachers of Arabic in our universities are undergoing professional training i.e. teaching Arabic as a foreign language in some of the Arab worlds, efforts could be made to organize a similar forum for graduates of Arabic who could be professional

teachers of the language in the tertiary institutions. The practical teaching under the guise of education might not be enough in this place.

The quality of the curriculum also guarantees the quality assurance in teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. The teaching of Arabic for academic purposes, (AAP) teaching Arabic for special purposes (ASP) etc. could also be incorporated into the curriculum and integrated the same it is done in some other foreign languages such as German, English, French, etc.

In 2001, the conference on Curricular Review for University Education was held to respond to the current and future requirements of Nigerian economy. NUC thereafter included, as a result of the conference, entrepreneurial education, practical skills and other critical skills in the university curriculum¹⁶. The MAS then failed to take cognizance of teaching the foreign languages into consideration in the curriculum. Being that as it may, it should be noted that the internal QA mechanism is much important. While NUC takes care of the external QA mechanism, little is being done to facilitate the internal QA mechanism.

The countries whose language we are teaching are naturally eager to offer assistance for they tend to see our efforts as coinciding with their natural desire to see a spread of their language and culture. Countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, etc. are particularly of great assistance in this respect. For instance, Egypt had since decades organized Arabic By Radio program for teaching Arabic particularly for non-Arabs while places like Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Libya and Morocco offer admission to non-Arabs in their Universities to promote teaching of Arabic especially to non-Arabs.

Without a strong culture of quality in institutions of higher learning, there is little chance of success at achieving the right impact of quality assurance. Hence, institutions should be able to use the quality assurance process as a means to address problems that are of genuine interest and importance. Quality assurance is a process that needs to evolve continuously in order ensure effective teaching and learning.

Quality Development in Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language

The quality of academic staff is the most important component in assuring the quality of higher education. Efforts must be made to establish service, development and appraisal policies that are conducive to staff productivity and to ensure that the programme has appropriately qualified staff sufficient for the number of students enrolled.

Wherever there is difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified staff, measures such as organizing seminars, workshops and conferences on effective pedagogy in order to ensure quality assurance demands should be put in place. Provision of the best affordable working conditions to review course contents particularly in the area of computer assisted institutions (CAI) to teach Arabic as a foreign language.

This is because the relevance of Information & Communication Technology to language teaching is no news in Nigeria as in every other place. Hence, this opportunity could be treasured to teach particular areas of specific knowledge.

Teaching, research and providing expert services are three interrelated academic activities. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that not all academic staff can be equally involved in all three activities if the institution is to excel in its three core missions of teaching, research, and service.

Recommendations

- Effort should be made to ensure that there are specialists especially in the area of teaching Arabic as a foreign language.
- In either curriculum review or a separate program, there should be provisions for the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language.
- Every Department of Arabic should have on its staff list native speakers of Arabic in addition to providing a good language model to ensure that standards comparable to those in their home universities exist in Nigeria.
- There should be staff development schemes particularly for teaching Arabic as a foreign language.
- New programmes should be designed for teaching Arabic as a foreign language with the preparation of teaching materials and aids to make this possible and effective.
- Unlike the situation where most Nigerian universities base their Arabic teaching and research programme heavily on literature, there is need for Arabic linguistics as a significant part of the Arabic studies programme.
- There should be programme planning, professional training of language teachers and proper coordination between elementary and secondary schools.

Time has come for the teachers of Arabic, for instance, to take another look at the teaching of Arabic not only in the secondary schools but also in tertiary institutions in relation to the teaching of other languages such as English, French, German, etc. as foreign languages.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to consider language education as a constant variable in all societies. The importance of language is recognized for purposes of socialization, job recruitment and acquisition of skills and proficiency for public services. The modern language association of America, for instance, provides a forum for exchange of ideas by all university teachers concerned with teaching and research in any language and linguistics. Perhaps, we here in Nigeria could borrow a leaf from this towards the ultimate goal of maximising the opportunity

of a Language Association of Nigeria, which embraces the activities of those who teach languages and linguistics.

The fact that Arabic could be studied in a University adds impetus to the role and status of the language. As noted, without ensuring good quality in tertiary institutions, there is little chance of success at achieving the right impact of QA. Partnership with foreign institutions and QA agencies can help to supplement local efforts in this direction.

To achieve the national objectives and the objectives of Arabic education in Nigeria the need to ensure good quality in the teaching of the subject is crucial to help students to attain high academic standards. Improving of quality of language education has become very necessary because, most people who pass through training in this type of education are unable to perform adequately as they ought to be.

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