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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Place of Education in Achieving the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development Ogunyemi, B. (Ph.D)	1 -
Sustainable Development In Nigeria: The Role Of Basic Education in Achieving 2030 Global Agenda. Oduolowu E. (Ph.D)	4 - 1
Adequate Funding of Basic French Language Education in Nigeria: Implications for Realization of 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development Ademola, Michael	14 - 2
Funding Basic Education for Sustainability in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects. Ajiteru T. O.	22 - 2
Perceived Difficult Concepts In Physics among Senior Secondary School Students in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State Bello, T. O. (Ph.D); Opaleye, O. S. & Olatunde, A. N.	30 - 41
Language Policy In Basic Education For Achieving 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development Ogunniran, V. O.	42 - 49
Assessment of Early Childhood Teachers' Classroom Delivery using Reach Model Gbenga-Akanmu T. O.	50 - 58
Creating the Playful Environment in Nigerian Pre-schools: A Study Of Selected Early Years Educational Institutions in the Akure Metropolis, Ondo State, Nigeria Awopetu A. V., (Ph.D) & Ossom M. Ossom	59 - 66
The Need For Sustainable Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Education in Nigeria Oduntan, F. M. (Ph.D)	67 - 77
The Place of Visual Perception in Children's Academic Performance for 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Oriowo, A. O.	78 - 81
The Influence Of Emotion Regulation And Moral Reasoning On Academic Performance Of Senior Secondary School Students In Jigawa State. Ya'u Ahmad Sara	82 - 91
Relative Effectiveness Of Inductive And Interactive Demonstration Strategies In Improving The Learning Outcomes Of Pupil's In Basic Science Ogundipe, C. A. & Agboola, O. S. (Ph.D)	92 - 99
Early Childhood Education And The Right To Basic Education: A Philo-historical Review Ogunyemi F. T. (Ph.D)	100 - 108
Effects Of Physical Fitness Testing On Pupils' Academic Achievement In Physical Education For Achieving 2030 Global Agenda For Sustainable Developmet Nwonye, V. N. Arinze, P. N. Owoeye O. S.	110 - 116

LANGUAGE POLICY IN BASIC EDUCATION FOR ACHIEVING 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OGUNNIRAN, V. O.

Department of Arts Education,
Faculty of Education, University Of Ilorin,
Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to check the language policy in Basic Education for achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The LGEA officers and Headmasters were purposively sampled, while basic school teachers were randomly sampled for this study, and the total number of 100 participants was involved from Ogbomoso North and South local Government, Oyo State, Nigeria. One research question and three research hypotheses were raised. The mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative questionnaire items were employed to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaire entitled 'The Questionnaire on Language Policy in Basic Education for Achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (QLPBEASD)' was used to elicit information. Mean rating was used to analyse question 1, ANOVA was used for analysis of research hypothesis 1, while T-test was the statistical tool used to analyse hypotheses 2 & 3. The theoretical frameworks for this study are the Pressman & Wildavsky's (1973) policy implementation theory and Ruiz's (1984) theoretical orientations of language policy as a right and resource. Though, the goals of the mother tongue in the basic education are psychological, pedagogical and sociological, it was discovered that there was no significant difference in the responses of teachers based on their qualifications, school type and school location on the language policy implementation in basic education, the instruction was carried out through English (private) and code-mixing (public) in lower Basic schools, however MT was taught as a subject in basic schools' curriculum. Therefore, it was recommended that the LGEAs, SUBEBs, Ministries of Education

should monitor language policy implementation at basic education levels and there should be provision of the human and material resources in order to achieve 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

Keywords: Mother Tongue (MT) Medium of instruction, Language Policy, Basic Education, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Language policy is a document stipulated by a government or by the bodies authorised by the government through legislation to determine how a particular language or certain languages are used to meet national priorities or to establish the rights of individuals. It is the designed policy of linguistic communication in a given society so that the use of a particular language in education can be planned and implemented according to the rules, principles and strategies stipulated in the policy. The language policy is contained in the Nigeria's national policy on Education, and the status, corpus, acquisition of languages in each educational level are defined (FRN, 2014). This paper focused on the language policy implementation in Basic Education for achieving the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development.

Sustainable development is the positive situations that meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their needs (International Institute for Sustainable Development 2012). In Nigeria, sustainable development comprises a complete well-being of the people be it education, health, social, economic, political, culture and they should be maintained to sustain the next generation. The

2030 global agenda for sustainable development was based on a set seventeen (17) goals and 169 targets. It is the decision of the 193 member of United Nation heads of state; the conclusion on the sustainable development was reached at the meeting held on 25th- 27th September, 2015 in New York.

The language policy in basic education should be seriously addressed for the 2030 global agenda to be accomplished. Language is crucial and central to the teaching-learning process because it is the medium through which all the subjects in the curriculum are taught in the formal education from pre-basic to tertiary institution. Government policies are formulated in language. They are also implemented through language. Everything thought of and done in and out of government, by individuals and groups or globally are realised in language and through language (Cummins, 2008).

Basic Education is the type of educational system in Nigeria that exposes learners to the first level of education. The system replaced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) of 1955 and 1976 to provide a universal, free and compulsory education. It was the outcome of the World Conference in 1990, in Jomtien Thailand, and World Conference in 2000, in Dakar, Senegal, which agitated Education For All (EFA) (FRN, 2014). Universal Basic Education was launched on 30th September 1999 in Sokoto by President Olusegun Obasanjo. He eventually signed the UBE bill into law on 26th May 2004, though many states began the operation of UBE educational system in 2007. There are three major components of the UBE. These are: -a) Formal basic education encompassing the first nine years of schooling (primary and Junior Secondary Education), b) Nomadic education for school age children of pastoral nomads and migrant fishermen. c) Literacy and non-formal education for out-of-school youths and illiterate adult. Basic Education involves 6 years of primary education and 3 years of junior secondary school education culminating the 9 years of uninterrupted schooling, though with a year pre-basic, the

basic education would be 10 years (FRN, 2014). Basic education is the first level of education which a child undergoes before he/she moves on to the other levels, this level of education stands as the pillar of all educational levels. The scheme is monitored by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC).

The aims of basic education are to: inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribute to the life of the society. These cannot be achieved without the implementation of the language policy that would help the cognitive development in basic education and lead to achieving 2030, agenda for sustainable development. The Government of Nigeria has considered the psychological, pedagogical and sociological goals of the mother tongue in Nigerian basic education, and made the pronouncement on the status of the three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) in Nigeria as media of instruction at lower basic schools and core subjects in the curriculum of basic education.

English language is an official language and medium of instruction right from the basic four (transitional class-early exist) to higher institutions of learning. French and Arabic language also are taught as subjects in basic schools' curriculum. For instance, it is pronounced that the medium of instruction at pre-basic and basic 1-3 levels will be principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community. It is also expedient that every child should learn one of the three major Nigerian languages (FRN, 2014). It indicates that all subjects except English language should be taught in the Yoruba language. That is, to teach other subjects such as Mathematics, Christian Religious Studies, and Health Education, Science among others, in the school curriculum at the pre basic to lower basics 1-3, the teacher will have to use Mother tongue of learners. However, from basics 4-6 (which is a

period of transition-early exit) and the upper basics 1-3, English language shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction, while the Mother tongue is taught as a subject. Though Nigeria is a multilingual

and multiethnic nation with a large number of indigenous languages, three languages (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa) are recognised as the developed and major languages in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 2013).

Table 1: Illustration of Language Policy at Basic Education Levels

Level of Education	Age Range of Children	Medium of Instruction	Languages Taught as Subject
Early Childhood/Pre-Primary Education Crèche (daycare) Nursery Kindergarten	0-5yrs	Mother Tongue or Language of immediate community	Mother tongue/ language of immediate community
Lower Basic School 1-3	6-8yrs	Language of Immediate Environment	English, Mother tongue/language of immediate environment
Middle Basic School 4-6	9-11yrs	English	Mother tongue/language of immediate environment, English, French/Arabic
Upper Basic School 1-3	12-14yrs	English	English mother tongue/ language of immediate environment, French/ Arabic and one other major Nigerian language

Source: Primary English Methods-An Essential Guide Nwosu, (2008)

Bamgbose (2013) and Lawal (2014) were of the opinion that the mother tongue should serve as a medium of instruction in the formative years (1-12) and that this should extend to as late a stage as possible. Fafunwa (2004) asserted that such a practice will offer the child an opportunity to explore his natural environment, develop curiosity, communicate in the natural language, develop reasoning ability, and engender self-confidence as practised in many countries such as China, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, and so on. Mother Tongue (MT) is used as a medium of instruction in Japan; it is even used to teach science subject and Japanese primary school learners came first in the Primary Science competition among various countries of the world, and the Nigerian pupils came last (STAN, 1992) yet Nigeria borrowed her educational system from

that country. If a foreign language is used to teach students, they would face double problems: they would struggle with the language of instruction and struggle with the subject-matter in that language, and eventually, it would lead to rote learning and this will not help our technological advancement. Fafunwa (2005) opined that depriving the indigenous speaker of his language for education is like removing his soul. Lawal (2014) also asserted that using a borrowed language in the early childhood institution is like taking a fish out of water, and there is no greater injustice committed against people than to depriving them of their language. To achieve 2030 global agenda for sustainable development, the language policy in basic education should be implemented accordingly.

This paper checks the responses of the participants based on teachers' qualification, school type and school location in relation to the language policy implementation in achieving 2030 global agenda for sustainable development in basic education. Teachers are the implementers and managers of the language of instruction and the school is the venue of the language implementation. Fafunwa's (1970-1978) Six Year Ife Project noted that the mother tongue language policy would be futile without adequate preparation of the human resources (teachers) for the implementation, so he began the project with the training of the participants. He did not assume that all teachers in primary schools who had the communicative ability of the language without adequate linguistic knowledge were capable of teaching Yoruba (MT) or teaching through it.

The school type and location are vigorously determinant factors for the language policy implementation at basic education levels, but the MT status at basic schools exists only on paper. Githinji (2014) discovered that English is used as the medium of instruction in urban private basic schools, while code-switching or code-mixing is in operation in the urban public and rural private basic schools. Comparatively, the rural public basic schools practice the MT medium of instruction more at lower basic schools. This was in compliance with the findings of Adéyemí & Ajíbádé (2014), Medadi & Judith (2015) who confirmed that the responses of urban public, urban private and rural private basic schools on the degree of implementation of the language policy in the NPE were low.

The implication of this is that average public primary school learners that come from homes where English is not used at all in communication would not have attained a sufficient level of proficiency in the English language. Then, such learners would face two major problems; firstly, the difficulty of following the curriculum content and secondly, following the medium of instruction through which the curriculum content is transmitted by the teacher. Summarily, the Nigerian private,

public, and urban basic schools have their self-chosen language policy, while the rural public basic school teachers that could have adhered to the language policy are facing challenges of the instructional materials.

This study is premised on the theories of Language as a right & resource, and policy implementation theory. Ruiz (1984) propounded two theoretical orientations of language policy namely language as a right and resource. The theory of language as a right postulates that every human being has the right to use and learn in his or her language. Gobana (2014) supported the notion that every individual has the right to participate in all domains using his or her language. The theory of language as a resource promotes the idea that every language is valued as a precious possession and a quintessential aspect of our humanity, one that ensures achieving or fulfilling social, economic, governmental and educational objectives must embrace s/he language adherently. This approach can enhance the status of mother tongue and other languages in basic schools, and thereby implies that all language groups can contribute substantially to the development of a country through the use of their languages. Meanwhile, Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) propounded policy implementation theory which is a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared to achieve them. They asserted that the policymaker's views and the implementers should be on the same line and called for policy integration, rather than the separation of policy formation and policy implementation.

Objectives

This paper therefore:

- 1) investigated the teachers' responses on the implementation of language policy in basic education for achieving 2030 global agenda for sustainable development based on teachers' qualification.
- 2) examined the teachers' responses on the implementation of language policy in basic education for achieving 2030 global agenda for sustainable

- development based on school type.
- 3) ascertained the teachers' responses on the implementation of language policy in basic education for achieving 2030 global agenda for sustainable development based on school location.

Research Questions

This research question was raised and answered.

What is the vision for 2030 on the implementation of the language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development as perceived by teachers?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested for this study.

H0₁: There is no significant difference in teachers' qualification and the responses on the 2030 vision on the implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in responses of public and private basic school teachers on the 2030 vision on the implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

H0₃: There is no significant difference in responses of urban and rural basic school teachers on the 2030 vision on the

implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

Methodology

The survey research design was used for this study. The population comprised all Local Government education authority (LGE) officers, headmasters and basic school teachers in Ogbomosho North and South Local Government Areas of Oyo State. The Local Government officers, Headmaster and basic school teachers were randomly sampled for this study and 100 participants were involved from Ogbomosho North and South Local Government, Oyo State. One instrument entitled 'The Questionnaire on Language Policy in Basic Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (QLPBEASD)' was used. It was a four Likert of SA, A, SD and N used to elicit information. Mean rating was used to analyse question 1, ANOVA was used to analyse research hypothesis 1, while t-test was the statistical tool used to analyse hypotheses 2 & 3.

Results

Research Question One: *What is the vision for 2030 on the implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development as perceived by teachers?*

Table 1: Mean rating on the teachers' perception on the vision for 2030 on the implementation of the language policy

S/N	Items	Mean
1	Lower basic school teachers would teach every subject through Yoruba language in 2030.	2.71
2	Lower basic school teachers would like to code-switch when teaching other subjects in 2030 since there no teaching materials	3.27
3	Most lower basic school teachers would like to be professionally trained and retrained.	2.67
4	Basic school curriculum content would be expressed comprehensively through English more than learners' mother tongue in 2030.	2.77
5	The value Nigerian places on learning English would be shifted to teaching through Yoruba.	2.75
6	French would be taught as a subject in the curriculum of middle basic school.	2.58

7	Arabic would be taught as a subject in the curriculum of middle basic school.	2.25	9 th
8	Pidgin English would be used as a complementary language in basic education in 2030.	2.02	10 th
9	English language would be the preferred medium of instruction in basic education in 2030.	3.18	3 rd
10	Teaching of Yoruba would be encouraged by the basic school administrators by 2030.	3.25	2 nd

Table 1 shows the response on the teachers' perception on the vision for 2030 on the implementation of the language policy. With a benchmark mean of 2.5, any item that is less than the benchmark mean is considered not to be one of the teachers' perceptions and any variable that is greater than the benchmark mean is considered to be one of the teachers' perceptions. However, from the table, it can be seen that all the items except for items seven and eight are noted by the respondents as their perception.

H0₁: There is no significant difference in teachers' qualification and the responses on the 2030 vision on the implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

Table 2: A table of ANOVA analysis on the difference in the response teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education based on their qualification

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	10.251	2	5.125			
Within Groups	1054.499	97	10.871	.471	.626	Not Rejected
Total	1064.750	99				

P > 0.05

Table 2 shows the df (2, 99) and F value yielded .471 which is not significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected since the P-value .626 is greater than 0.05 (.626 > 0.05). This means that there is no significant difference in the responses of teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education based on their qualification ($F_{(2,99)} = .471$; $P > 0.05$).

responses of public and private basic school teachers on the 2030 vision on the implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis on the difference in the response of public and private school teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
Public	83	27.3	3.31				
				.676	98	.501	Not Rejected
Private	17	27.9	3.17				

P > 0.05

Result from table 3 shows the t value yielded .676 which is not significant with P value .501 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the response of public and private school

teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education ($t_{(98)} = .676$; $P > 0.05$).

H0₃: There is no significant difference in responses of urban and rural basic school teachers on the 2030 vision on the

implementation of language policy in basic education for the attainment of the global agenda for sustainable development.

Table 4: Mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis on the difference in the response of urban and rural school teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
Rural	25	28.1	3.46	1.110	98	.270	Not Rejected
Urban	75	27.2	3.21				

P > 0.05

Result from table 4 shows the t value yielded 1.110 which is not significant with P value .270 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the response of urban and rural school teachers on the 2030 vision of the language policy in basic education ($t_{(98)} = 1.110$; $P > 0.05$).

Discussion of Findings

Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance on language policy in basic education for achieving 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and the three hypotheses discovered thus:

There is no significant difference in responses of basic school teachers in the implementation of language policy in basic education based on teachers' qualification; it means the qualification of the participants does not make their responses differ. They had the same perception that for the language policy in Basic Education to achieve 2030 global agenda for sustainable development, teachers must be carried along. Teacher who wants to use a particular language as a medium of instruction or teach it as a subject needs to be conversant with that language to have adequate linguistic knowledge and not only the communicative ability of the language. This finding is in line with the submission of Igbojinwaehkwu & Dorgu (2015).

There is no significant difference in responses of basic school teachers in the implementation of language policy in basic education based on the school type; it means both public and private lower basic schools are not implementing the policy. While private school

adhered to teaching through English, the public schools in urban area are code-switching, though mother tongue is taught as a subject. This view is in agreement with the submission of Adeyemi & Ajibade (2014), who discovered that public basic schools in urban areas in Nigeria are in competitive race with their private basic school counterparts.

There is no significant difference in responses of basic school teachers in the implementation of language policy in basic education based on the school location. This means that what operates in reality is different from the policy statement. Githinji (2014) discovered that English is used as the medium of instruction in urban private basic schools, while code-switching or code-mixing is in operation in the urban public and rural private basic schools

Conclusion

The implementation of the language policy exhibited by this study is very low. Most basic schools in Nigeria do not conform to the language provisions in the NPE. In some schools National languages are introduced as subjects rather than as media of instruction from lower basic 1 to 3, while some schools use the English medium from pre basic to basic 6 which continues in the senior secondary school. This invariably affects learners' acquisition of appropriate skills for language development and the possible languages like French and Arabic are not seriously taught.

Recommendations

The potency of basic education for the attainment of the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development through the language

policy in basic education to improve national productivity and socio-economic transformation of the country, the researcher therefore recommends the following:

i. Government should re-address the issue or stereotype of teachers qualification meant for basic education in the country. The basic education teaching staff should be loosened to accommodate better language qualified teachers for efficiency of teaching and learning in foundational education;

ii. The urban private, public basic and rural basic schools should adhere to the stipulated language policy

iii. Government at National, state and local levels should provide a conducive and child friendly environment should provide adequate and appropriate funding of schools for the provision and upgrading of necessary teaching materials

iv. It was also noted that the epileptic funding and low facilities availability along low level of teachers' qualification at the primary school serve as deterrent to efficient and optimum implementation of the language policy in basic education and that should be addressed if the 2030 global agenda for sustainable development will be attainable.

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