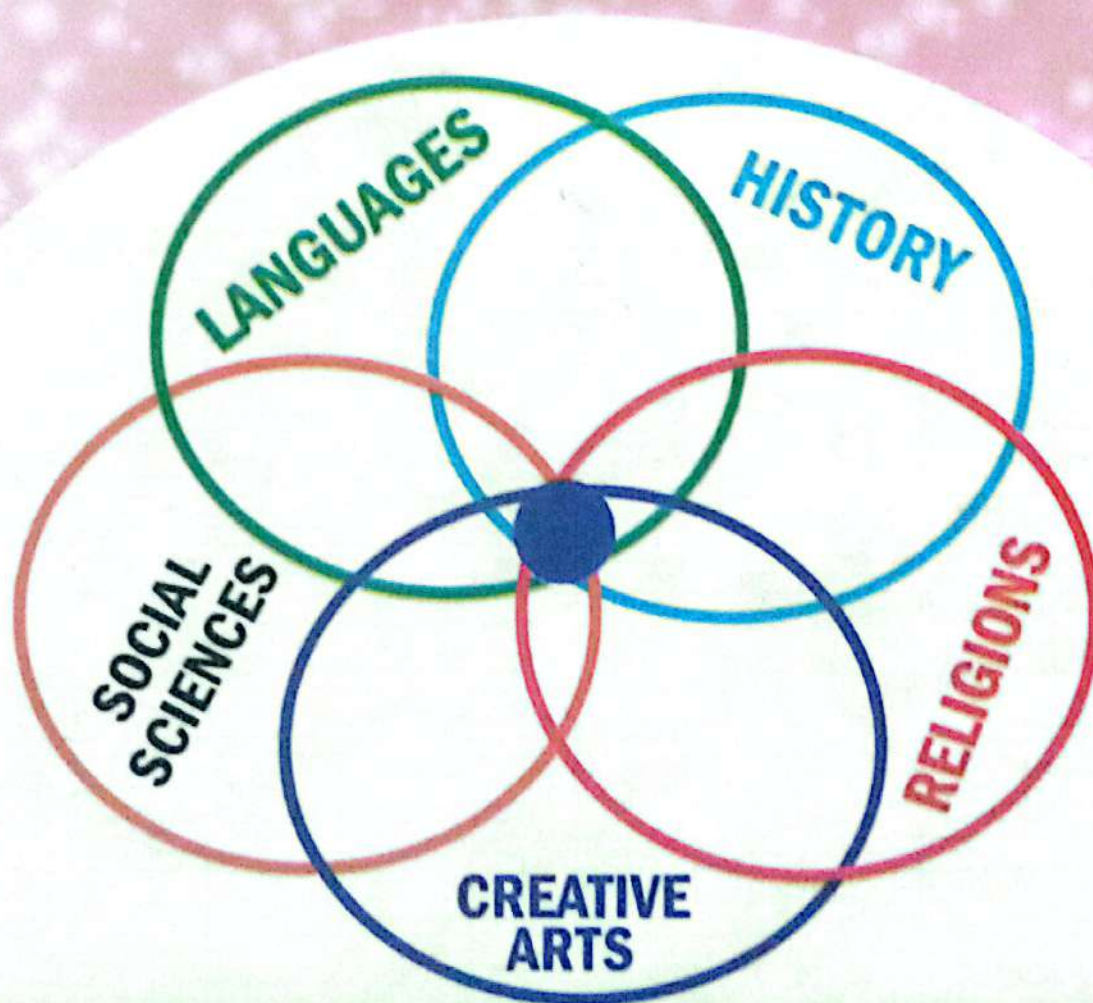


TEACHING METHODOLOGY

in

THE HUMANITIES



Edited by
'Raheem Adebayo Lawal

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PREFACE

Rooted in humanism, a philosophy which places premium on human nature and values, "The Humanities" are primarily concerned with liberal education as a tool for the cultivation of strong moral values and sound intellectual capabilities. They are those academic disciplines which explore aspects of human society and culture, and they exist in the school curriculum today in sharp contradistinction to The Natural Sciences and, sometimes, The Social Sciences. Without any central discipline, again in contrast to The Natural Sciences, The Humanities employ critical or speculative methods of enquiry, with a significant historical element. History therefore appears to be one of the most important subjects in this group of disciplines. The Humanities include language, literature, history, philosophy, human geography, sociology, law, political science, religion and art. In the Basic and Secondary School nomenclature, they are "art subjects" and in many colleges and universities all over the world, there is a Faculty, College or School of Arts either existing independently or co-existing with an allied discipline such as The Social Sciences.

The Humanities have undergone a chequered history and experienced fluctuating fortunes since the Renaissance Period. While, understandably, English in Nigeria has continued to enjoy a pride of place in the curriculum at all levels of the school system, other art subjects, including languages and literature, are not that privileged. History as an autonomous subject has since been phased out of the primary and junior secondary school curricula as Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies are struggling to keep afloat. In Colleges of Education and Universities, the 40-60 admission ratio in favour of The Natural Sciences, Applied Sciences and Technology to the detriment of The Humanities and Management Sciences, has exacerbated the challenge. Enrolment in the elective Humanities (i.e. excluding English and Economics) has therefore continued to dwindle in the face of non-supportive official policy and the morale of teachers and learners cannot but be at a very low ebb.

Concomitantly, the classroom climate is often lukewarm and devoid of any purposeful and well-informed methodology. Against this unwholesome background, a fairly comprehensive methodological manual of a sort, for both pre-service and in-service teachers of The Humanities, especially at the all-important basic and secondary school levels, is clearly a desideratum.

This 64-chapter book is structured into ten (10) sections, A to J, and the contributions are judiciously spread over the theory, praxis and practice of humanities / arts education with close reference to the Nigerian situation at the Basic and Secondary School levels. The opening Section A, which covers Chapters 1 to 10, examines critically the historical development in the status of the ten (10) target humanities in the school curricula, namely English, Literature-in-English, Arabic, French, Yoruba, Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, History, Economics and Social Studies with Civil Education.

Section B complements the opening section to further firmly ground trainees on background concepts and issues vital for humanities instruction. The section explores the nexus among the National Policy on Education, the curriculum, the syllabus, the scheme of work and the lesson-plan; the principles of textbook selection and utilisation; and the two main broad pedagogical orientations – the teacher-centred and learner-centred instructional approaches.

Across the four (4) target languages, Section C x-rays "what to teach in languages" as essentially language structure, communicative skills, culture and civilisation, while Sections D and E present respectively with copious and explicit illustrations the principles, methods, techniques and resources for the teaching and learning of these language elements.

Section F is devoted to the testing of language structure and skills, but Section G inter-twines the teaching and testing of literature in the medium of English, Arabic and Yoruba, giving ample room for cross-linguistic insights and extrapolations. The teaching and testing of religious education (in the twin forms of Christian and Islamic Studies) are the purview of Section H and the penultimate Section I, respectively, while the book closes with the social dimension of The Humanities, focusing in Section J on the teaching and testing of Economics and Social Studies.

All the twenty-five (25) contributors to this rich and timely compendium are veteran teachers/teacher educators with cumulative professional experience at the basic, secondary and tertiary education levels, within and outside Nigeria, spanning between one decade and over four decades respectively. I strongly hope that pre-service and in-service teachers of The Humanities and researchers at all major rungs of the educational ladder would find this book to be an illuminating resource material and an indispensable professional companion.

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6th August, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking involves knowing how to select appropriate words and sentences according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter. Language has four skills, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. These four skills can be grouped according to their functions. Speaking and Writing are the expressive skills, while Listening and Reading are the receptive skills.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. explain the meaning of "speaking skill";
2. mention the essential tools for teaching speaking skills in Yoruba; and
3. explain avoidable pitfalls when teaching speaking skills.

THE ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS IN YORUBÁ

An important dimension of conversation is using a style of speaking that is appropriate to the particular circumstance. Different styles of speaking reflect the roles, age, gender, and status of participants in interaction and the expression of politeness. Lexical, phonological, and grammatical changes may be involved in producing a suitable style of speaking. Yoruba language demands the speakers to be conversant with the following tools to enhance fluent speaking of the language: proverbs, idioms and tone marks.

Activities that promote speaking skills:

Teachers can follow these activities to engage the students in teaching speaking skills in Yoruba:

1. Normal interaction among members of the class in and out of the classroom.
2. Pupils asking for their needs in the course of their activities.
3. Narrating events which interest pupils both at home and in the school.
4. Talking about themselves and members of their families.
5. Speaking about various objects and pictures which interest pupils during plays.
6. Answering questions from both teachers and fellow pupils.
7. Explaining processes involved in certain activities e.g, constructing object like chair, table, house, etc.
8. Talking about natural objects (e.g. flowers, animals, etc.) in the classroom.
9. Narrating stories heard from the teachers as well as from parents.
10. Learning of dialogues which can be used in dramatisation.
11. Learning and reciting poems and songs.

Other Activities

Discussion

After a content-based lesson, a discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim to arrive at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups. Before the discussion, it is essential that the purpose of the discussion activity is set by the teacher. In this way, the discussion points are relevant to this purpose, so that students do not spend their time chatting with each other about irrelevant things. For example, in this type of discussion, the teacher can divide students into groups, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like:

- Isé Olùkó Dára Ju Isé Àgbè Lọ" tabi Isé Àgbè Dára Ju Isé Olùkó Lọ.
- Qmọ Obìnrin Wúlò Nínú Ilé Ju Qmọ Qkùnrin Lọ.

Role Play

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student that "You are David; you go to the doctor and tell him what happened last night, and..."

Simulation

Simulations are very similar to role-play, but what makes simulation different to role play is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. Since this entertains the students, they are motivated to speak, and it increases their self-confidence. One female student can be dressed and act like a bride and make bridal recitation.

"Mo dé mo wá gbà're mi.

Ìre kí n lówó, kí n bímọ.

Ìre kí n bódegba'dé.

Ìre kí n ma kan elénìní nílẹ ọkọ.

Mo wá dúpẹ bíbí tẹ ẹ bí mi.

Mo wá dúpẹ pipọn tẹ ẹ pọn mi.

Mo tún dúpẹ ọgbọn inú tẹ mú ró mi bí aṣọ, etc.

Information Gap

In this activity, students are supposed to be working in pairs. One student will have the information that other partner does not have and the partners will share their information. Information gap activities serve many purposes such as solving a problem or collecting information. Also, each partner plays an important role because the task cannot be completed if the partners do not provide the information the others need. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to talk extensively in the target language.

Brainstorming

On a given topic, students can produce ideas in a limited time. Depending on the context, either individual or group brainstorming is effective and learners generate ideas quickly and freely. The uniqueness of brainstorming is that the students are not criticised for their ideas and, as such, they will be open to sharing new ideas.

Storytelling

Students can briefly summarise a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students to express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes. In this way, not only will the teacher address the students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class, Examples:

i. Àlọ àpamọ: Kin ni n lọ lójúde ọba tí kò kí ọba?

ii. Àlọ àpagbè: Itàn ijàpá àti ọmọ aláḱàrà.

iii. Itàn ijàpá àti Iyánníbo.

Interview

Students can conduct interviews on selected topics with various people. It is a good idea that the teacher provides a rubric for students so that they know what type of questions they can ask or what path to follow, but students should prepare their own interview questions. Conducting interviews with people gives students a chance to practise their speaking ability not only in the class but also outside and helps them becoming socialised. After interviews, each student can present his or her study to the class.

Story completion

A very enjoyable activity for the whole-class is free-speaking in which students sit in a circle. For this activity, a teacher starts to tell a story, but after a few sentences he or she stops narrating. Then, each student starts to narrate from the point where the previous one stops. Each student is supposed to add from four to ten sentences. Students can add new characters, events, descriptions, and so on. The students can take the story from their selected literature books.

Reporting

Before coming to the class, teachers will ask the students to read a newspaper or magazine and, in class, they report to their friends what they find as the most interesting news. Students can also talk about whether or not they have experienced anything worth telling their friends in their daily lives before class.

Picture describing

One way to make use of pictures in a speaking activity is to give students just one picture and having them describe what it is in the picture. For this activity students can form groups and each group is given a different picture. Students discuss the picture with their groups, then a spokesperson for each group describes the picture to the whole class. This activity fosters the creativity and imagination of the learners as well as their public speaking skills.

Find the difference

For this activity students can work in pairs and each couple is given two different pictures, for example, a picture of boys playing football and another picture of girls playing tennis. Students in pairs can discuss the similarities and differences in the pictures.

Pitfalls to avoid when designing speaking activities

Inadequate provision of in-pot and authentic materials by the teachers, insufficient vocabulary beforehand and improper monitoring of the students are major pitfalls. The teacher-centered approach in teaching speaking skill or the involvement of only few students should be avoided. Distracting students by correcting the pronunciation, grammar or word choice, giving offensive signs when commenting on students' pronunciation, offering little or no unconstructive feedback to monitor the students speaking skills are other negative features the teacher should guide against.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Speaking skill is essential in order to help the language learners to organise their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence and to be acquainted with the use of the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses. The goal of teaching speaking skill is communicative efficiency. Therefore, teachers and learners should be guided to the fullest.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is speaking skill?
2. Explain the essential tools needed for speaking Yoruba fluently.
3. Critically examine the activities that can be employed in promoting speaking skill among learners.
4. What are the pitfalls to be avoided when teaching speaking skill?

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