



Teachers' Perceived Influence of Language of the Immediate Community on the Teaching of Upper-Basic-School Social Studies in Ilorin-Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract

The promotion of Nigerian languages for effective education and nation-building has received greater policy attention in recent times. This study therefore investigated teachers' perceived influence of the language of immediate community on the teaching of Upper-Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey type and all social studies and Civic Education teachers in upper basic schools in Ilorin constitute the population of the study. A sample of one hundred (100) social studies and Civic Education teachers were purposively sampled across the upper basic schools in Ilorin-metropolis, Nigeria. A researchers-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach Alpha reliability value of the instrument was 0.79. The percentage, independent t-test and the One-way ANOVA were used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the dominant language being spoken in the locale of the upper basic school was perceived by the teachers as influencing positively the teaching of school Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis. Also, no significant difference existed in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of upper basic school Social Studies based on the teacher's gender, experience and qualification. Since the social studies teachers were positive that the dominant language in the school community influenced the teaching of social studies, it was recommended that social studies teachers should use and sustain the language of the immediate community effectively in the teaching of Social Studies. This will, by extension, assist in the realisation of national educational goals particularly in the area of employing the local languages for socio-cultural functions of nation-building.



Keywords: Language of the immediate community, Mother tongue, Social Studies, Upper basic school, Perception

Introduction

Education is a medium through which knowledge, skills, and values are acquired for functional living in any society. Therefore, education is part of the process by which a person acquires the culture of the society they inhabit. This should be carried out in a planned and conscious manner. This makes the school, the appropriate place to achieve this. The Nigerian basic education curriculum structure covers three levels, which include nine years of basic education, (lower basic; primary 1-3) (middle basic; primary 4-6) and (upper basic; JSS1-3) Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2008). Essentially, early childhood education (0-5 years) should not be neglected as it serves as the foundation of the formal schooling of children of that age category. However, children who are aged 0-3 years are taught at home and in various preschool centres. This is an arrangement to intimate a child to the communication process. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) reiterated why the foundational education of Nigerian children should be all-encompassing. This makes language to be an essential requirement for learning, communication and building relationships for a child's development to make significant stages of the world around them.

The language of the immediate Community (LIC) is considered as the means of communicating to the Basic school children with the language of locality. Therefore, it is expected that children who are taught the language of the immediate community would benefit more from various activities in the teaching-learning process than their counterparts who may not have the opportunity (Lawal 2009). Other benefits accrue to the teaching-learning process with the use of the first language including but not limited to (i) preservation of culture; (ii) promotion of social interaction and national unity; (iii) promotion of smooth interactions with neighbours and so on. According to the report of a recent study carried out by Duru (2022), the capacity building in pupils taught in their mother tongue or the LIME in the early years of the educational history in Nigeria were able to think deeply and produced some tangible local materials such as birds cage, aquariums,



household items made from bamboo etc. which were useful to their environment and can also compete favourably with the global world.

Among the objectives of the National Language Policy (2022) are to preserve Nigerian Languages and save them from being threatened to the verge of extinction and should be effectively used in education. For this reason, no Nigerian language will be classified or rated above one another, even if some are being referred to as dominant languages in Nigeria. Therefore, all Nigerian Languages are acceptable. Hence all Nigerian Languages are equal and none shall be held superior or inferior against one another and as such are assigned equitable functions and roles for communication and interaction in Nigerian Basic Schools. The National Language Policy (2022) emphasizes the adoption of the (LIC) model at the Basic Education level where we have Upper Basic Education which was earlier known as Junior Secondary Education

However, one of the educational problems that attract public interest in Nigeria is the inconsistency in the level of performance among school students in some subjects. This was linked to a lack of intimacy between the teachers to the students in identifying the problems of communication and the need to use the mother tongue to develop competence for better understanding and performance (Oyewole, 2017). The competence to be developed was recently emphasized by Duru (2022) when Duru stated that when mother tongue or LIC are developed in pupils, it facilitates essential skills such as critical thinking which can further be taken into formal education, thus, any skills and concepts acquired in the learner's home language need not be re-learned when transfer to a second language. Therefore, sustaining these thinking skills and developing them in pupils at the upper basic level of education in the Nigerian educational system would serve as educational re-orientation.

Among the notable Nigerian educationists who had made efforts in this direction was the late Professor Babs Fafunwa, who is known for his early writings on the need to introduce relevant cultural goals, subjects and local languages into the education system in Nigeria. For instance, He successfully carried out the Ife six years primary school project (SYPP) where pupils were taught in the Yoruba language by



finding substitute names in Yoruba for all things taught in the English language (Adeleye & Ogunremi, 2017). Perhaps military interruption and lack of continuity of the successive government jeopardized the meaningful progress and the sustainability of this laudable educational programme in Nigeria. Hence there is a need to re-invigorate this to make language feature in education and for better proficiency development in learners.

Over 500 native languages are estimated to be spoken in Nigeria, students are encouraged to learn one of the three dominant Nigerian languages otherwise constitutionally recognized as dominant languages in Nigeria. These are Hausa (Northern Nigeria), Igbo (Eastern Nigeria) and Yoruba (Western Nigeria). These languages were elevated because of the endorsement received through the institutional policies of the government. In addition, these languages including Edo and Efik level of development were recognized so much that they are being offered as school subjects and public-school examinations. Few other indigenous languages accorded the same recognition including Urhobo, these languages are followed by Fulfulde, Ibibio, Efik, Kanuri, Tiv, Nupe, Ijo, Igala, Ebira etc. are also popular in their various regions (Ayeomoni, 2012). Upper Basic education is the three-year (JSS 1-3) education provided in Nigeria's Education system, where Social Studies is made a core compulsory subject, and also one of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) school subjects that contribute to nation-building efforts in Nigeria. Part of the efforts in which the subject is contributing to the efforts of nation-building includes the conscious teaching of topics like family as the basic unit of society; culture and social values; consequences of drug abuse; benefits of good behaviour etc. (NERDC, 2008). It is believed that when these topics are better explained and demonstrated by the teachers and better comprehended by the learners, it will contribute to better affective domains of learning thereby projecting the learners to functional education.

According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) among the objectives and goals to be achieved through Social Studies includes but are not limited to the development of sound standards of individual conduct and behaviour through the acquisition of knowledge, relevant skills and values. However, the most important and notable problem



faced by the implementation of this laudable course was the switch to English in teaching the subject. It is evident in the teaching of Social Studies that a certain percentage of learners can learn and assimilate better when they are taught in a local language. For instance, Oderinde and Yusuf (2012) observed that tales by moonlight, folklore, oral tradition and other traditional means had been effective techniques and practices for transmitting societal values to African children before the advent of Western education. To revive these practices for sustainability, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in a recent development, approved the new Language Policy to teach primary school pupils in their mother tongue, this launched a new trend to implement any curriculum in the language the learners can best comprehend Social Studies at upper-basic level. The policy is meant to be fully implemented only when the government develops instructional materials and makes provisions for qualified teachers. However, the policy has been adjudged to be officially taken effect (FGN, 2022). This is the area where implementation will be challenging. However, this is a wake-up call from the Nigerian government to fully realize the goals of education as stipulated in the Nigerian education documents.

Therefore, the affective objectives of Social Studies should be properly implemented in Nigerian schools. For instance, Upper Basic school teachers and students in Ilorin Metropolis should leverage various learning experiences that are often associated with the culture of the immediate community or locale of their school to teach, this type of value education is an important aspect of the Social Studies integrated curriculum in Nigeria. Therefore, this helps in facilitating the moral development, clarification and actualization of values in the learners in a specific sequential order. However, achieving these is poised on effective teaching of value aspect of Social Studies which was reiterated in the nine-year Basic Education Curriculum Structure in Nigeria (FRN, 2013).

Teaching the value aspect of Social Studies in their mother tongue or local language enables the child to see no difference between the home and school environment, thereby making the child learn very fast. Interacting with teachers, school heads and peers becomes interesting and the eagerness to be in school at the appropriate time will be more



meaningful (FRN, 2000). For this reason, Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of 1978 remains relevant in education today.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory assumes that much important learning by the child takes place through social interactions with a skillful tutor, where the tutor provides verbal instructions for the child which is referred to as collaborative dialogue. Among the benefits of Vygotsky's theory is the effective way of developing and reinforcing children's language acquisition, whereby a more knowledgeable and skillful child helps a child to pronounce words correctly and better still, the less skillful child can be taught to imitate the correct pronouncement by the more knowledgeable and skillful child (Allman, 2020). All these can best be achieved when the child has continued learning in the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community.

Vygotsky's theory is relevant to this study because it reiterates the development and cultivation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society; that is, the developing of the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment. This pointed out that, Social Studies remains a school subject to assist in bringing these objectives into reality. Hence the subject is projected to have the basic function and essential responsibilities among other existing school subjects having a comparative advantage and a suitable subject capable of accomplishing the objectives as stipulated in the National Policy of Education in Nigeria. Therefore, the Federal government's wake-up call is in the right direction.

In a study conducted by Okono and Enang (2016) on the mother tongue as the first language and its effect on learning among tertiary institution students in Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria. The study revealed that there was a significant difference between males and females in learning effectiveness due to their mother tongue. However, the study of Alimi et al (2020) on primary pupils' literacy and numeracy skills revealed that there was no significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils in literacy and numeracy skills in Osun State Nigeria.

In an earlier study, Oribabor and Adeshina (2013) investigated the effect of mother-tongue instruction on the academic achievement of pupils in elementary schools. Their study revealed the efficacy of the



mother tongue over the use of English as class instruction. Kioko (2015) stated that in countries where English is not the first language, many parents and communities believe their children will get a head-start in education, thus, learners benefit from using their home language in education in early grade years in some developed countries of the world. Also, Anyagh, O'kwu and Imoko (2016) found that the use of the native language for teaching and learning Mathematics improved the academic performance of students. However, it has been noted earlier that, the building of human character, cultivation of attitudes and use of indigenous language propels the all-around development of China among communist nations and the committee of the world. If these attributes pay off in Europe, America, China, Japan, Spain, Germany and India, and Babs Fafunwa's six years of pilot study on the use of mother tongue at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Nigeria also testified that the mother tongue facilitated students' retention and performance in science subjects. Hence, a need to examine this stance from the social studies teachers.

Social Studies is a humanity subject, targeted at moulding human character and behaviour which is better tapped at the basic level of any education system. Not only this, Social Studies under the scope can be effectively deployed for all-around social transformation for the sustainability of culture, civilization and balanced development of mind and body, these also project Social Studies as a value-based subject. Since the Language of the immediate community has been evaluated on different subjects and at various levels of education in Nigeria, Many Nigerian researchers have concluded that, for Nigerian Children to develop enquiry, manipulative, spontaneity, flexibility, intuitive, psychomotor skills, and more. The mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction. Hence a need to investigate this in the teaching and learning of Social Studies at the upper basic schools in Nigeria and it is wise to start the investigation from the teachers.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin Nigeria as perceived by teachers. Specifically, the study examined:



1. the teachers' perception of the influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis
2. the teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin based on gender.
3. the teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin based on experience.
4. the teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin based on educational qualifications.

Research Question

Only one research question guided the conduct of the study.

1. What is the teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated and tested in the study.

- H0₁:** There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in based on teachers' gender.
- H0₂:** There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies based on teachers' experience.
- H0₃:** There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies based on teachers' educational qualifications.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. All Social Studies and Civic Education teachers in upper basic schools in Ilorin-metropolis constituted the population for this study. The sample consisted of 100 teachers of Social Studies in upper basic schools in the three local government areas that made up Ilorin-



metropolis comprised (Ilorin East, South and West). Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting only the teachers who are teaching Social Studies and Civic Education at the selected public Upper Basic Schools. Civic Education teachers were included to get a reasonable number of respondents as the participants in this study.

A researchers-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, section A sought the demographic information of the respondents such as teachers' gender, teaching experience and qualifications, while B section contained the question items on teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community structured on the four-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4); Agree (3) Neither agree nor disagree (2) and Disagree (1). The questionnaire was validated by experts in Social Studies and Test, Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, after which the corrected version of the questionnaire was administered to thirty teachers who were not part of the respondents to this study. The Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument of which the reliability value stands at 0.79 obtained. The percentage was used to answer the research question, while Mean, Standard Deviation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to answer the Research Question and test the Research Hypotheses postulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The only research question raised in this study was answered using percentage. The outcomes of the analysis are reported in Table 1.

Research Question 1: *What is the level of teachers' perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis?*

To answer this research question, the data collected on the 15 items of the questionnaire were subjected to percentage analysis. The minimum score, maximum score and range score of the respondents were 15, 60 and 45 respectively. The range was divided by the two perceived influences (positive and negative) and the cut-off was 22.5. Respondents with scores from 15 -37.5 and 37.6-60 were regarded as having negative and positive influence respectively. The result is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Percentage Analysis of the Perceived Influence of the Language of the Immediate Community on the Teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis**

Influence of Language on the Immediate Community	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	84	84.0
Negative	16	16.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 1 present the responses of the teachers to items that sought information on their perception of the influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin. The results indicated that (84.0%) of teachers were positive that the language of the immediate community can influence the teaching of Social Studies in Upper Basic schools, while (16%) of teachers were negative in their responses. This implies that the language of the immediate community can positively influence the teaching of upper-basic school Social Studies in Ilorin-metropolis.

Ho₁: *There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in teaching Upper Basic school Social Studies in Ilorin based on gender*

Table 2: T-test analysis of Differences in the Perceived Influence of Language of the Immediate community on the Teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies based on Gender

Sex	No	Mean	Std.	Df	Cal. t-Value	p-value	Decision
Male	31	44.90	9.61	98	.56	.57	Not Significant
Female	69	43.87	7.92				

$p > 0.05$

Results in Table 2 indicate a calculated t-value of .56 and p-value of .57 that is greater than 0.05 ($.57 > 0.05$). Since .57 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This indicated that the gender of the teachers had no influence on their perception of the language of the immediate community in the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies.



H₀₂: *There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in teaching Upper Basic school Social Studies based on years of teaching experience.*

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA on the Perceived Influence of Language of the Immediate Community on the Teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies based on Years of Teaching Experience

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	26.90	2	13.45	.19	.83	Not Significant
Within Groups	7026.49	97	72.44			
Total	7053.39	99				

$p > 0.05$

Table 3 indicates an F-value of 0.19 with a calculated significance value of (0.83) ($P > 0.05$) alpha level. Since the calculated significance 0.83 is greater than 0.05 alpha level This shows that no significant difference existed in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin based on years of teaching experience. Therefore, null hypothesis two is retained.

H₀₃: *There is no significant difference in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in teaching Upper Basic School Social Studies based on the teacher's qualification.*

To test this research hypothesis, teachers' responses on the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in teaching Social Studies were analysed based on the teacher's qualification as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Summary of the ANOVA on the perceived Influence of Language of the Immediate Community on the Teaching of Upper Basic School Social Studies based on the Teacher's Qualification**

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	128.31	2	42.77	.59	.62	Not Significant
Within Groups	6925.08	97	72.14			
Total	7053.39	99				

$p > 0.05$

Table 4 indicates an F-value for teachers' qualification (0.59) with a calculated significance value of 0.62 at 0.05 alpha level. The calculated significance of 0.62 is greater than ($p > 0.05$) alpha level. This shows that no significant difference exists in the perceived influence of the language of the immediate community in teaching Upper-Basic School Social Studies in Ilorin based on the teacher's qualification. Therefore, null hypothesis three is retained.

Discussion

The finding revealed that the dominant language been spoken in locale of the upper-basic school was perceived by the teachers as positively influencing the teaching of school Social Studies in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria. The reason for this result could be that all of the sampled institutions were public secondary schools, where it is permissible to speak local languages within the school premises. The finding was supported by Eyengho (2009) who reported that teachers had a positive attitude toward using their mother tongue in teaching and learning literacy in Nigerian primary schools. This finding was supported by Amadi (2012) who reported parents and teachers' positive disposition towards the use of first language as a medium of instruction in basic schools in Enugu. Kioko (2015) stated that learners benefit from using their home language in education in early grade years in some developed countries of the world. The study of Alimi et al. (2020) also established that learner achieved better when taught with the language of the immediate community than in a foreign language. Duru, (2022) also submitted that the use mother tongue helps the children to understand concepts easily, allows the child to think in their mother's tongue and



express themselves, thus enhancing academic achievement.

The study also revealed that there was no significant difference in the influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of Upper Basic school Social Studies in Ilorin based on the teacher's gender. This finding was supported by Alimi et al 2020 who found that there was no significant difference in the achievement of male and female pupils in literacy and numeracy skills, but Amadi (2012) reported that there was a significant difference in teachers' preferences for the medium of instruction in primary schools in Nigeria based on teachers' gender, experience and qualification. The report of Amadi was not based on a particular subject but male and female Social Studies teachers agreed that the language of the immediate community can influence the teaching of Social Studies positively based on teaching experience and qualification.

Conclusion

Language is an important factor in education and human life in general because it is the only human being that can use language to communicate effectively. This makes the language of the immediate community an indispensable requirement in education and as a language of instruction. Hence, the role of teachers in developing language acquisition in learners is of utmost importance. This study investigated the influence of the language of the immediate community on the teaching of upper-basic Social Studies in Ilorin Nigeria. Based on the teacher's gender, years of teaching experience and qualification, the study revealed that the majority of Social Studies teachers were positive that the language of the immediate community can influence the teaching of the upper basic schools in Ilorin.

However, if the wake-up call by the Federal Government on the use of the language of the immediate environment is to be implemented and sustained, teachers should be well informed and equipped about their role in achieving effective education as stated in the National Policy on Education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Having considered the findings of this study, the study recommended that: Social Studies teachers should use and sustain the language of the immediate community effectively in the teaching of



Social Studies. Federal Government should facilitate how education policymakers in Nigeria would make efforts to implement and promote the language of the immediate environment through classroom instruction. This calls for follow-up from the educational monitoring unit in the Ministry of Education to see to the implementation of the new language policy in education for effective quality assurance. Necessary materials and equipment for the implementation of the new policy at the primary school level should be provided by the appropriate authorities to avoid abandonment of the Language Policy and for a better realisation of the national goal in education. In addition, there is a need for proper orientation to sensitise the parents; students and the public on the language policy for instruction at the primary level of education (Lower-middle basic level) in Nigeria. This will give every stakeholder, particularly the pupils, the orientation on the function of language as a vehicle of cultural heritage and nationalism which should propel the essence of education to them as Nigerians.

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