

Language Education as Panacea for Effective Teaching and Learning among Pupils of Primary Schools in Ogun State.

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Abstract

The study examines language education as a panacea for effective teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, using questionnaires to acquire necessary data for the research work. The population comprises all pupils of primary schools in Ogun State. A simple random sampling technique was used to select five (5) schools in the Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State, in which twenty (20) pupils were randomly selected from each of the chosen primary schools to make a total of two hundred (200) as a sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of the study. The instrument was given to experts for construction and content validation. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Two research hypotheses were used and tested for the study. Data collected were analyzed with the use of a chi-square statistical tool. Findings revealed that language education is based on four essential skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, as children in the early childhood period do not have literacy skills, language education focuses on listening and speaking processes of effective teaching and learning of the pupils. It was therefore recommended that English is the language of instruction in schools. Hence, students should undergo language education to promote and foster better learning in school, and parents should communicate with their children in the probable pedagogical language to create familiarity with the language.

Keywords: Language Education, Effective, Panacea, Communication, Literacy

Introduction

The question of the language of instruction in schools is a very crucial one and often controversial in many parts of the world especially in developing countries. It is even more complex in previously colonized multilingual countries where the official colonial language is different from the indigenous languages. The education sector is one of the areas that share in the crisis of language choice. Owu-Ewie (2006) noted that education and language issues are very complex in Africa because of the multi-ethnic and multilingual situation. English, the official language in Nigeria, is used extensively in the print and electronic media, in the judiciary, police, the armed forces, legislature, in commerce and in politics. In education, it is the medium of instruction from the upper primary to the tertiary levels, in pursuance of Nigeria educational goals, government had put in place a language policy guideline for primary education among

others in the National Policy on Education (NPE) as follows: The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment (mother tongue) for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject. From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as subjects (NPE 2004).

A language of instruction is assumed to be an enabling tool which facilitates the learning of content subjects (Kyeyune, 2010). The current globalization phenomenon has pushed many nations to adopt English as the language of teaching and learning even in the contexts where English is a second or foreign language to learners ((Tamtam et al. 2010). In principle, using English, when it is a second/ foreign language, as a language of teaching and learning might not be an obstacle to the full development of learners' conceptual abilities, provided they are fully conversant in the language of instruction (Webb 2004).

Language education refers to the process and practice of acquiring a second or foreign language (Conger & Winsler, 2009). It is primarily a branch of applied linguistics, however can be considered an interdisciplinary field. There are four main learning categories for language education: communicative competencies, proficiencies, cross-cultural experiences, and multiple literacies. The oral language and vocabulary children learn through interactions with parents, siblings, caregivers, and educators provide the foundation for later literacy and learning across all subject areas. Students benefit from extensive opportunities to listen to and use complex spoken language. The more often teachers or instructors use particular words in conversation with Students; the sooner students will use those words in their own speech.

Language education is as equally important as first language education and that this education should start in the early childhood education period (Conger, Gibbs, Uchikoshi, & Winsler, 2019). It is known that 70% of the mental development of children is completed in 0 to 6 ages and that early childhood education is the period in which all types of development, especially language development, are the fastest and the most efficient (Becker & Roos, 2016). Therefore, education given in this period will have significant effects on the future knowledge and capabilities of students (Kalaycioglu, 2011).

Language education may take place as a general school subject or in a specialized language school. There are many methods of teaching languages. Some have fallen into relative

obscurity and others are widely used; still others have a small following, but offer useful insights. While sometimes confused, the terms "approach", "method" and "technique" are hierarchical concepts. An approach is a set of assumptions about the nature of language and language learning, but does not involve procedure or provide any details about how such assumptions should be implemented into the classroom setting. Such can be related to second language acquisition theory.

Therefore, it is essential to create opportunities to learn a new language before the brain loses its plasticity (Karakoc, 2007). According to Bickerton in Demirezen,(2003), children develop their understanding by listening before they start speaking (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). The more children learn a language in meaningful contexts through communicative activities, the more effective learning will become (Becker & Roos, 2016). In addition, as previous learning experiences affect future experiences and language learning abilities decrease with age, language learning at early ages is crucial (Conger et al., 2019; Kocaman & Kocaman, 2015). According to the European Union's 2004 action plan, many countries in Europe have initiated language education in the critical period which is the 3-6 age-period preceding primary school period (European Commission, 2012).

Considering the vitality of this period, it is essential that foreign language education should start in the early childhood period which can be considered as critical for language learning (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2001). In the early childhood period, children have open perceptions and enough cognitive capabilities to learn a new language (Garner & Waajid, 2012). Hence, children having early childhood education should receive effective language education. In this sense, language education is now provided in early childhood period before primary education in many countries. This case points at the importance of language education at early ages. Considering the increasing significance of language education in the early periods, attention has been directed to this growing area. Language education effectiveness starts with the instruction of sounds and words (Tabors, 1997). Besides its role as an important aspect in teaching and learning process, learning vocabulary is a prerequisite for language learning (Albaladejo, Coyle, & de Larios, 2018). Language education is based on four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, as children in the early childhood period do not have the literacy skills, the focus in language education is on listening and speaking (Karakoc, 2007). Speaking skill is primarily based on listening and comprehension skills. In

addition, differentiating sounds, comprehending words and giving meaning to them are prerequisites for speaking (Albaladejo et al., 2018). However, as the way to teach is important, the depth, scope and language of instruction can be altered in line with environmental and learner-related factors. Therefore, all countries place increasing importance to language education in preparing students for effective teaching and processes.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to examining language education as panacea for effective teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools in Ogun State. However, the specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the use of language education for effective teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools in Ogun State.
2. Examine how language education be used to address the challenges of teaching-learning processes in primary schools in Ogun State

Research Hypotheses

1. Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools
2. Language education will not be significantly useful to address the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design where questionnaires were used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises all pupils of primary schools in Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five (5) schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State in which twenty (20) pupils were randomly selected from each of the chosen primary schools to make a total of two hundred (200) as sample for the study. Two research hypotheses were used and tested for the study. Data collected were analyzed with the use of chi-square statistical tool. A self-developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained items on the main title of the study. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the researcher gave the draft of the questionnaire to the

experts to restructure the instrument in line with the research questions. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted and the scores were tabulated and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula was applied and a correlation coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. On the basis of the corrections done on the questionnaire items, and the test-retest reliability coefficient computed, the instrument was judged adequate, valid and reliable for the purpose of gathering relevant data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using chi-square statistical tool.

Presentation of Data Analysis and Results

Research Hypothesis One: Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools.

Chi-square contingency test for Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools.

Variables	Respondents	Calculated Value (X²)	Table Value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
SA	401	413.28	9.49	4	0.05
A	419				
SD	74				
D	106				
Total	1000				

From the chi-square contingency table above, the calculated value, ($X^2 = 412.28$) at degree of freedom of 4 and 0.05 level of significance is greater than the table value of 9.49 as a result of this, the null hypothesis which states that Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools . Language education will not effectively use is rejected. This indicates that Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools

Research Hypothesis Two: Language education will not be significantly useful to address the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State.

Showing chi-square contingency test for Language education will not be significantly useful to address the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State

Variables	Respondents	Calculated Value (X^2)	Table Value	Degree of freedom	Level of significance
SA	368	328.13	9.49	4	0.05
A	435				
SD	114				
D	83				
Total	1000				

From the chi-square contingency table above, the calculated value ($X^2 = 328.13$) at the degree of freedom of 4 and 0.05 level of significance is greater than the table value of 9.49 as a result of this, the null hypothesis, which states that Language education will not be significantly helpful to address the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State. Language education will only be significantly helpful in addressing teaching-learning challenges if accepted. This indicates that Language education will not be significantly helpful in addressing the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State.

Discussion of Findings

From the results gathered from hypothesis one, the findings show that Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools. It revealed that Language education will not effectively use for teaching and learning among pupils of primary schools. These findings are in collaboration with the findings of Aladejana and Odejobi in Albaladejo, Coyle, and de Larios (2018). ‘who wrote that a student will learn faster and better if he is taught in his mother tongue at the early stage of his education. It was identified that mother tongue instruction would help the children to acquire facts and information easily and quickly,

interpret information obtained properly and correctly, acquire practical and manipulative skills easily and quickly and acquire and develop desirable attitudes towards people.

The research further revealed in hypothesis two that Language education would not be significantly helpful in addressing the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State. The findings show that Language education will not be significantly helpful in addressing the challenges of teaching-learning in primary schools in Ogun State. This report is in line with the finding of Karakoc (2007) said that language education is based on four essential skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, as children in the early childhood period do not have literacy skills, language education focuses on listening and speaking. Speaking skill is primarily based on listening and comprehension skills. In addition, differentiating sounds, comprehending words and giving meaning to them are prerequisites for speaking.

Conclusion

Although studies on foreign language education were previously conducted more by linguists, the social network has become globalized following the developments in the transportation network and communication technologies. Especially with the proliferation of English globally, pedagogues have also started emphasizing studies on this issue. As the variety of individuals increases in the social environment, learners must develop their communicative skills in all contexts, including foreign language classes. For this reason, in light of the advantages of developing technology, there should be growing emphasis on research testing the effectiveness of learning environments supported by different technologies in foreign language education.

Recommendations

1. The English language is the language of instruction in schools. Hence, students should undergo language education to promote and foster better learning in school.
2. Parents should communicate with their children in the probable pedagogical language to create familiarity with the language.
3. Language education should be given to students to prepare them for schooling adequately.

4. These results indicate that the existing studies were primarily published in field-specific journals rather than educational ones. Therefore, it is suggested that future research focuses more on the pedagogical aspects.
5. More research is needed to test whether teaching environments support foreign language education and student learning.
6. Teachers should reinforce directives on using English for communication in a multilingual school environment since it is the only successful ESL learning strategy.

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