

THE USE OF MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SELECTED PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IJEBU EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

BY

**Adeosun, Ismaila Olaposi: Hallmark University, Shagamu-Ore Road, Ijebu-Itele;
E-mail: adeosuni@yahoo.com**

**Sulaiman, Folasade Rasidat: Department of Childhood Education, Tai Solarin
University of Education, Ijebu Ode; E-mail: folasade64@yahoo.com**

&

**Sholagberu, Abdulsalam Oladimeji: Department of Adult and Primary Education,
University of Ilorin; E-mail: sholagberu.ao@unilorin.edu.ng**

Abstract

The use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in early education has engendered a lot of research interests and several scholars have advocated its use in early education. The assessment of the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools has not attracted sufficient research interest, particularly from Ijebu East Local government area of Ogun State. Thus, this study investigates the use of the mother tongue as means of communication at pre-primary and primary level. The use of mother tongue is being threatened as a result of the complexities it will pose in selecting a particular language among several languages caved together in the course of state creation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study since there is no need to manipulate any variable. The population for this study comprised of Head Teachers, Teachers, Caregivers, Pupils and parents of pre-primary and primary schools in Ijebu East Local Government Area of Ogun State. Also, quality language teaching aids should be made available for educators in particular mother tongue.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Early education, Medium of instruction, PRE-primary and Primary school

Introduction

The essence of education is to develop the potentials of children who would subsequently contribute their quota to the development of their immediate environment and the nation in general. This assertion is based on the premise that education gives room for the search for the ultimate truth—knowledge. This is believed to be one of the most viable ways through which the growth and development of a nation can be actualised. This conforms to the claim that no nation or society can rise above the quality of her education. Hence, stakeholders of education are always saddled with the responsibility of strategizing adequately for the achievement of educational goals and encouraging learners to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to function in the 21st century.

Meanwhile, education involves transferring knowledge and the major means of transferring knowledge is language. Language, according to Osisanwo (2008), is human noise used systematically and conventionally by members of a speech community for communication. The language of a group of people or nation is referred to as the indigenous language or the mother tongue. It is the first language of contact that comes to the newly born child naturally and it is normally acquired without any teaching and usually meets all linguistic needs of a child. According to Fakeye (2011), language and education are inseparable because the use of language as a medium of instruction in the teaching and learning situation goes a long way in determining the success achieved by learners. He further concedes that *–learners bring all they know to school in their home language and they need to use the strength to learn another language as well as other knowledge and skill*. Fakeye et al (2009) argues that countries such as Finland, South Korea and Japan that the use mother tongue as a medium of instruction are ranked the highest in terms of education. Adegbija (2004), as cited in Ball (2011) claimed that evidence from Cameroon, India, Mali, Philippines, South Africa Vietnam attest to the benefits of learning a familiar language. The children learn to read faster with indigenous language as a medium of instruction because they already have a repository of vocabulary, knowledge of the linguistic construction and the ability to pronounce the sound language.

Fafunwa (1974) asserts that education is a process of transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee national development. Education is a powerful instrument for developing intellectual abilities, shaping culture, attitudes, skills, and for acquiring

knowledge. It is also an art of disseminating information from a teacher to a learner. Being educated is likened to being allowed to explore one's environment, and as such, the extent of the opportunity given to an individual to explore his environment determines the extent of his education (Sulaiman, 2005).

Ouadraogo (2000), cited in Owu-Ewie (2006), noted that education and language issue are very complex in Africa because of the multilingual situation. English the official language in Nigeria is used extensively in the print and electronic media, in the judiciary, legislative, executive in commerce and in politics. Government had put in place a language policy guideline for primary education among others in National Policy on 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 (the 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 subject (NPE 2004, Section 4, No 19 e and f).

Awoniyi (1974) defined the mother tongue as the language which a group of people considered being inhabitants of an area acquired in the early years and which eventually become their natural instrument of thoughts and communication. The mother tongue is the first language that a person learns, all languages learnt without formal education such as through culture immersion before puberty (Wikipedia, 2004). The mother tongue categorizes a large part of the child environment as names for most of the objects, actions, ideas, attributes and so on that are so important to him and society. David (2008) noted that mother tongue is the language of the child's environment and is also the natural basis on which verbal skills can be built.

A meeting of United Nation experts has shown that the mother tongue is the best medium for teaching a child. The emphasis on the mother tongue education is not merely for educational growth and achievement but also for national reconstruction and development. This is evident from the report on the mother tongue education by UNESCO in 1997 which considered the mother tongue as the key to success in education, as the best first entry into education, the best instrument of maintaining the culture of individual groups, and the participation in national reconstruction and development. It is also a powerful instrument in the fight against illiteracy and ignorance, discrimination and poverty. This is the best way, the only way to make education available in the most natural way for all. Training in the use of the mother tongue, the tongue in which a child thinks and dreams becomes the first essential of schooling and first instrument of human culture. It is therefore of great importance for our pupils to get a firm foundation in their mother tongue, for at the same time we are giving them a firm footing in their intellectual life. All the virtues that are necessary for a good citizen such as clear thinking, clear expression, sincerity of thoughts, feelings, and action full of emotional and creative life can be properly cultivated and developed only if sufficient attention is paid to the foundation of the emotional and intellectual life with the use of the mother tongue.

When children learn in their mother tongue, it is easy but when they learn in a foreign language, it takes more time and therefore, lesser time is left for their play and other activities. This naturally hampers the personality of the children. Gerardo Wipio Deceit, a Peruvian educator stated that —those who teach in language other than the mother tongue in the schools are violating principle of good pedagogy and are guilty of cultural imposition. This type of education has been the cause of native children dropping out of school and experiencing physiological trauma, resulting in their failure to learn, to read and write. Therefore teaching through the mother tongue and teaching of the mother tongue are important because the growth of our children depends on it. Many studies show that it makes good sense to begin a child's education in his or her own language especially in the foundation years. Many researchers have reported that the language policy in the National policy in education (NPE) has not been implemented in some states of the federation.

Kolawole (1997) observed that schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, do not teach pupils in the language of the immediate environment or the mother tongue. The parents prefer their children to be taught in English language. Adebisi (2013) was quoted by Kolawole (1999) who also concluded that private schools in Abeokuta, Ogun State, do not employ the usage of the mother tongue for teaching but as a subject in the lower level of the primary school. Linguists believe that several years of mother tongue instruction will lead to a better second language acquisition from the first day of school. It was found out that the primary school children who were

taught in their home language during the first three years of primary school performed better in English language test than those who were exposed to the English language as the language of instruction (Onochie 2002). This finding is in line with the thinking of specialists who have promoted the advantages of the mother tongue instruction in the early stages of children education. Akumabor (2010) as quoted in Adebisi (2013) observed that when children are given quality education in the mother tongue, such children achieve two things, knowledge and quality. To Akumabor, literacy developed in the mother tongue transfers naturally to the second language. The mother tongue of the learners is a gift to be valued. The teacher that gives instruction in the mother tongue is likely to be a better teacher than the one who blunders in the language, who is not an expert, speaker, or does not know the language at all. It is a fact that teaching a child in their mother tongue helps such a child to learn better (Fafunwa *et al.*, 1989).

Other research findings using Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba shows that children who were taught different subjects in those languages performed significantly better than those who were taught using English language (Okonkwo, 1979; Akinbote, 1996; and Akinbote *et al.*, 2003). According to Kolawole (1997), language is the vehicle of communication per excellence and that without it, Homo sapiens would have found it difficult to exist. Osisanwo (2008) noted that, language as a key vehicle of expression is crucial to the socialization process. Effective use of the mother tongue is one of the key factors of expressing an individual's cultural identity, cultural preservation as well as developing the culture lexically. According to Bolorunduro (1994), the acquisition and use of language is considered to be one of the most important keys to the store house of human achievements. Unoh (1989), and Onochie (2002), also noted that language is crucial to rational learning, considerable and indispensable to associational or rote and equally useful in motor or psychomotor learning. Iwara observes that language is the single most characteristic element of any culture, and that it is an unmitigated disaster for any society to be unable to work in its own indigenous language form. Every Nigerian child should be privileged to receive basic education in his or her mother tongue or in the language of the immediate community. The earliest theory about language development assumed that children acquire language through imitation. Explaining the process of learning the mother tongue in the early stage of schooling, Nwakwe (2006) noted that the process of learning the mother tongue is such that the child builds up sounds of words in the subconscious cumulatively until such a time that the speech organs are ready to utilize these internalized sounds.

The rules governing language at this stage is that language are acquired without any careful study but by imitating the words and expressions as they are used in the child's immediate environment by the father, mother, brother, sister, and nannies. The child who imitates the actions of those around them during their first year of life are generally those who learn to talk more quickly, there is also evidence that imitation alone cannot explain how children become talkers according to (David *et al.*, 2003). Language has become one of the greatest issues of discussion today: from its seemingly unnoticeable emergence in the Garden of Eden, in the biblical era, to a widely received attention in Nigeria. Language is recognized as the major tool for communicating in the social, cultural and intellectual capacity of any given society and individuals.

Similarly, Akumabor (2010) emphasized that for a child to learn basic concepts easily in order to make significant progress in life and at school, the language to use is the indigenous language. Jettisoning the first language as a medium of education would contribute to emotional, mental and social underdevelopment (Okonkwo, 1986). This is because indigenous languages are of great importance in the teaching and learning of native intelligence and wisdom which are beneficial to future development in terms of curiosity, manipulative skills, spontaneous flexibility, initiative, and manual dexterity which fosters national pride, and identity according to (Okonkwo, 1986). It also preserves and promotes indigenous culture (Okonkwo, 1986).

Additionally, Fafunwa *et al* (1989) observed that children taught mathematics and other subjects using an African language as medium of instruction over a six year experimental period significantly out-performed their control group peers in all related aspects of the school curriculum. This is in accordance with Ouedraogo's (2000) observation who noted that the use of indigenous languages as a medium of instruction enhances continuity in the child's learning process and it maximizes the child's intellectual development. The materialization of the NPE represents high promises for the Nigerian populace. It is anticipated that the National Policy on Education would encourage the massive use of every language in Nigeria and thereby

drastically minimize the loss of any indigenous language. The NPE, by implication, encouraged the development of all languages such that all Nigerian children will receive initial education in the language of the immediate community. The implication is that all grassroots languages can now become the medium of education for nursery and lower primary school children. Each Nigerian child will be bilingual in Nigerian languages. For example, a child whose mother tongue is Ijebu is expected to also learn real Yoruba. In addition, he will be expected to learn Hausa or Igbo also as second language (L2). However, a child who already speaks Standard Yoruba as L1 is required to learn Hausa or Igbo as L2 to satisfy the requirements of Nigeria.

Language has been hailed as the hallmark of humanity, the ability that separates humans from animals (Berko-Gleason, 2007). As humans in society, we use our language ability continuously to embrace ideas, share our feelings, comment on the world, and understand each other's minds. Language can be defined as an organized system of arbitrary signals and rule-governed structures that are used as a means of communication. Language occurs both receptively and expressively through reading, listening, writing, and speaking. To become fully functioning members of school and society, children must learn the elements, the rules, the structure, and the conventions of this system. Our working definition of language encompasses five structural components: phonology, semantics, syntax, morphology, and pragmatics. Phonology refers to the sounds and intonation patterns that are associated with spoken language. Semantics encompasses the words of a language and the meanings associated with those words. Syntax describes the grammatical rules of the language, how words combine into phrases and sentences.

Morphology refers to the rules that govern the use of morphemes. Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning in a language, including the prefixes and suffixes that mark syntactic and semantic information, such as number (i.e., plurals), gender, and tense (i.e., past, present, or future). Finally, pragmatics is how we adjust our speech to our audience and use language toward the goal of communication. To better address typical and atypical language development as well as strategies of prevention and intervention, the five structural components of language may be simplified into three essential aspects of communication: content, form, and use (Bloom & Lahey, 1978). Content refers to the semantics of language—the concepts and ideas that are encoded in words. Form is how meaning is represented, including speech, sign language, and writing. In the context of spoken language, form encompasses phonology, morphology, and syntax.

Relations between words and their referents are arbitrary and symbolic. Words themselves do not lend the language learner any clues to the identity of what is being labeled. Thus, learning the meaning of words involves learning how one's language community labels contained in the world. This is not an easy task. Consider, for example, seeing a rabbit hopping by and hearing the word rabbit. How does one know whether the word applies to the whole rabbit or to its fur? To its twitching whiskers or its hopping? Research suggests that even very young children are guided in this initial word-to-referent mapping by a default set of assumptions or predispositions (Woodward & Needham, 2009). Hypotheses based on these assumptions are then supplemented by input and feedback from mature speakers, allowing children to test and revise their labels to referent mappings to conform to those of their speech community.

The semantic achievement of the production of the first word typically occurs around the child's first birthday; however, it may appear as early as 8 months or as late as 16 months without indicating serious concern. By this time, children have already been exposed to a great deal of language and possess a receptive vocabulary of about 50 words (Ubahakwe, 2002). Once vocabulary learning begins, progress is slow and measured. However, by 18 months of age productive vocabularies typically expand to about 50 words. Great individual differences appear during this period. For example, although at 16 months the average number of words a baby can say is 40, the top 10% of 16-month-olds can say 180 words, and the bottom 10% can say fewer than 10, and in some cases none at all (Ubahakwe 2002). This variation among children is completely normal and should be expected. During the toddler, preschool, and school years, children continue to acquire a varied lexicon. Semantic development expands from the concrete nouns of infancy to complex, abstract, and relational concepts, such as words for actions, emotions, and colors; and deictic terms, such as I, you, this, and that. Children also make connections among the words in their vocabulary, building a complex network of interrelated words and concepts.

All the educationists and philosophers agree that a child learns better and in the easiest way in his mother tongue. They agree that the school years in a child’s life are the most important, during this period child attitude and aptitude are developed, this is the time physical as well as the emotional needs of the child requires effective care. The mother tongue becomes the ideal medium, during this period, because it is as natural to him as the mother milk children explore their natural environment better in their native tongue. In addition, if the foundation for the future development of the child is laid in his mother tongue he will be able to build upon it in later years even in another language. It is also generally accepted on the pedagogical ground that the mother tongue is best suited as a medium of instruction in education. It is the natural language of thought for the child and highly suited for concept formation while any language may be the language of added comprehension. Only the language with which one lives and grows is best suited to achieve originality in thought and expression.

Objectives of the Study

This study generally presents issues relating to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Examine the views of teachers’ and parents’ on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools;
- ii. Examine the challenges teachers’ and parents’ encounter with the introduction of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction; and
- iii. Assess the advantage of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

Research Questions

The following research questions drive the process of this study:

- (i) What are the teachers’ and parents’ views on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools?
- (ii) What are the challenges teachers and parents do encounter with the introduction of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction?
- (iii) What are the advantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools?

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study since there is no need to manipulate any variable. The population for this study comprised of Head Teachers, Teachers, Caregivers, Pupils and parents of pre-primary and primary schools in Ijebu East Local Government Area of Ogun State. A purposive sampling technique was adopted for data collection. Hence, head teachers, teachers, caregivers, and parents in six government pre-primary and primary schools and two private pre-primary and primary schools were sampled. The parents also form part of the participants as they are members of the Parent-Teacher-Association of the eight schools that were sampled out of existing 62 government primary schools within the local government area. The parents were selected from member of the Parent-Teacher-Association of the schools. Two hundred and eighty-five (285) questionnaires were administered on the respondents across the selected eight schools. Two instruments were used for the study – Educator assessment of mother tongue usage rating scale (EAMTURS) for Teachers, and Parent assessment of mother tongue usage rating scale (PAMTURS) for Parents. The two instruments were designed to elicit data from respondents. Data collected were analysed based on research questions and the use of mean score and standard deviation statistics was used to analyse the data. This helped the researcher to establish the position of the respondents on issues relating to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools in Ijebu East Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Participants by Rank across Eight Schools

NAME OF SCHOOL	NUMBER INTERVIEWED	NUMBER OF HEAD TEACHERS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF CAREGIVERS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
School A	27	1	9	2	15
School B	24	1	9	2	12
School C	24	1	7	1	15

School D	30	1	5	2	22
School E	26	1	7	3	15
School F	27	1	11	2	13
School G	32	1	11	1	19
School H	34	1	10	1	22
Total	224	8	69	14	133

The table shows that data were collected from eight primary schools tagged: school A to school H. In addition, eight head teachers, sixty nine teachers, fourteen caregivers, and one hundred and thirty three Parents across the eight selected schools, two of which were private pre-primary and primary schools. The test-retest method was employed in ascertaining the reliability of the research instrument; the instrument was administered on 30 parents, teachers and care givers at Command Children School, Odogbo Cantonment, Ibadan, Oyo State. The instrument was administered twice within an interval of two weeks. Thereafter, the outcome of the first pilot study was correlated with that of the second pilot study and a value of 0.8923 was obtained, which indicated that the research instrument is consistent (reliable).

Results

The researcher chose the four pre-primary and primary schools out of which two are private pre-primary and primary schools because they fit the scope and purpose of the study, which was to explore the views of the teachers and parents on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The schools are located in Ijebu East local government area of Ogun state. The medium of instruction in these schools are presented in English and the mother tongue. Mainly almost all teachers and some parents were the mother tongue speakers.

Respondent’s Demographic

Table 1: Job Specification

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Head Teacher	8	9%
Care Giver	14	15%
Teacher	69	76%
Total	91	100%
Gender		
Male	18	20%
Female	73	80%
Total	91	100%
Age Range		
20-30yrs	10	11%
31-40yrs	33	36%
41-50yrs	38	42%
51-60yrs	10	11%
Above 60 yrs.	0	0%
Total	91	100%

Table 1 above revealed that 9% of the respondents were head teachers, 15% were care givers and 76% were teachers. This indicates that most of the respondents were teachers. Table 2 revealed that 20% of the respondents were males while 80% of the respondents were females. This indicates that most pre-primary and primary school teachers, care givers and head teachers are females used for the study. It can be deduced from table 4.3 that 11% of the teachers, care givers and head teachers are within the age range of 20-30 years, 36% are within the age range of 31-40 years, 42% are within the age range of 41-50 years, 11% are within the age

range of 51-60 years, while none was above 60years. This indicates that most of the teachers, care givers and head teachers fall with the age range of 31-40 and 41-50.

Research Question One: What are teachers’ and parents’ views on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools?

Table 2: Mean scores of respondent’s responses on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction on pre-primary school

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	The use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction enhance pupils performance	3.62	1.09	Agree
2	Combination of mother tongue with English language as a medium of instruction promote optimal learning	3.28	1.18	Agree
3	Government policy should promote the use of mother tongue in schools	2.66	1.28	Agree
4	The use of mother tongue in classroom discussion creates friendly atmosphere	2.40	1.32	Disagree
Aggregate mean scores		2.74		

From the result depicted in table 2 the average mean response is very high and above the criterion 2.50 mean score which implies that both the teachers and parents agrees that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction promote optimal learning. Therefore, there is need for a proper policy implementation guideline and statements to support the use of the mother tongue in classroom discussion create a friendly atmosphere.

Research Question Two: What are teachers and parents views on the challenges on the implementation of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary schools?

Table 3: Mean scores of respondent’s responses on the challenges on the implementation of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction on pre-primary schools.

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	The multilingual nature of Nigeria would not allow the policy of mother tongue in primary school	2.85	1.22	Agree
2	Problems of inadequate teaching and learning materials	2.69	1.24	Agree
3	Problem of unacceptability of one local language over others	3.22	1.19	Agree
4	Curriculum development and implementation problems	3.45	1.13	Agree
Aggregate mean scores		2.74		Agree

Result depicted in table 3 above on the challenges of implementing the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary school shows that the problem of the multilingual nature of Nigeria, problems of inadequate teaching and learning materials, problem of the unacceptability of one local language over others and curriculum development and implementation problems.

Research Question Three: What are the advantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools?

Table 4: Mean scores of respondent’s responses on the advantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Pupils learn better through the use of mother tongue	3.33	1.24	Agree
2	Pupils benefit more on the use of mother tongue	3.84	1.06	Agree
3	The use of mother tongue assures quality learning among pupils	2.55	1.42	Agree

4	The use of mother tongue encourages in relaxing learning atmosphere	2.95	1.32	Agree
Aggregate mean scores		3.17		Agree

Result depicted in table 4 on the advantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools, indicate that both teachers and parents unanimously agree that pupils learn better through the use of the mother tongue with average mean score of 3.33 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. It also implies from the table that pupils benefit more from the use of the mother tongue, the use of the mother tongue assures quality learning among pupils and the use of the mother tongue encourages in relaxing learning atmosphere with a corresponding mean score of 3.84, 2.55, and 2.95 respectively. The aggregate mean score for entire item is 3.17 which also agree with the respondent level of responses.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are in response to following research questions as stated below:

Research Question One: What are the teachers and parents' views on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools?

- 85% of the teachers, care givers and head teachers use the mother tongue as a medium of instructions in their schools.
- 72% of the parents' respondents agreed that they like their children to be taught in the mother tongue in school.
- 93% of the teachers' agreed that they combined English Language with the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in their schools.
- 79% of the parents' respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction will improve the quality of learning of their children.
 - 80% of the parents' respondents agreed to promote the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools.

From the submission above it can be deduced that the respondent: Parents and teachers prefers the use of the mother tongue for teaching children.

Research Question Two: What are the challenges teachers and parents do encounter with the introduction of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction?

- 79% of the respondents agreed that there would be problem of unacceptability of one local language over others.
- 71% of the respondents agreed that multilingual nature of Nigeria would not allow policy of the mother tongue to work properly in primary schools.
- 56% of the respondents agreed that there would be problem of inadequate teaching learning materials if the policy of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction if fully implemented in primary schools.
- 60% of the respondents agreed that there is the problem of curriculum development in some subjects such as Arithmetic if the policy of the mother tongues instruction is to be fully implemented, while 40% and 54% of the respondents agreed that the policy of the mother tongue instruction would be unnecessarily and uneconomical if implemented in Nigeria.
- 67% of the parents' respondents agreed that the use of English language as a medium of instruction has limited the level of learning and communication of their children in schools.
- 63% of the respondents agreed that non availability of language learning aids are hindrances to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in school.
- 89% of the respondent agreed that parents' preference for English language is hindrances to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in school.
- 72% of the respondents agreed that low self-esteem or self-confidence in pupils taught with the mother tongue are hindrances to the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in school.
- 59% of the respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction would be uneconomical if it is fully implemented in primary schools across the country.
- 44% of the respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools will make learning of other language difficult for pupils.

Schools not having appropriate resources like libraries and laboratories, make it difficult, if not impossible, to implement the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. It can be argued from the submission above that a number of challenges such as inadequacy of insufficient materials and need for curriculum development hindered the use of mother tongue as means of instruction in the study area.

Research Question Three: How can teachers and parents determine pupils' attitudes toward the use of the mother tongue in pre-primary and primary schools?

- 96% of the respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue during discursion creates a friendly atmosphere in the classroom between teacher and pupils.
- 86% of the respondents agreed that policy of the mother tongue instruction would provide pupils information with ease and accuracy.
- 91% of the respondents agreed that using the learners' home language makes it possible to integrate culture into the school curriculum and thereby creating a culturally sensitive curriculum in their school.
 - 86% agreed that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools would promote culture, knowledge and identity in school children.
 - 93% of the respondents agreed that pupils learn better through the use of the mother tongue.
 - 91% of the respondents agreed that pupils benefit much on the policy of the mother tongue.
 - 93% of the respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue encourages a relaxing learning atmosphere among learners.
 - 90% of the respondents revealed that a policy of the mother tongue instruction would allow pupils to interpret information obtained properly and correctly.
 - 93% of the respondents agreed that pupils learn better through the use of the mother tongue.
 - 91% of the respondents agreed that pupils benefit much on the policy of the mother tongue.
 - 93% of the respondents agreed that the use of the mother tongue encourages a relaxing learning atmosphere among learners.
 - 90% of the respondents revealed that a policy of the mother tongue instruction would allow pupils to interpret information obtained properly and correctly.
 - 88% of the respondents agreed that policy of the mother tongue would allow pupils to develop practical and manipulative skills easily and quickly.

This indicates that most respondents agreed that pupils learn better with the use of the mother tongue, and greater number agreed to the friendliness of the atmosphere during class discursion between teacher and pupils, they therefore supported mother tongue policy has being beneficial to pupils.

Research Question Four: What is the level of compliance with the Federal Government language policy as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools in Ijebu East local Government Area of Ogun State?

- 90% of the respondents agreed to be aware of the Federal government policy on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.
- 76% of the respondents agreed that they employed the mother tongue as medium of instruction in their schools.
- 65% of the respondents agreed that it has been practical for their school to implement the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary classes.
- 45% of the respondents agreed that teachers in their school are trained on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary classes.

This indicates that most teachers' participants in this study agreed to use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.

Conclusion

The findings revealed that learners from the four schools faced different challenges such as lack of specialised teacher, inadequate resources, low level of awareness of federal government language policy in pre-primary and primary schools, challenge of English language having international coverage and difficulties in working with the mother tongue as language of instruction for learning and teaching by teachers in their everyday school activities. This means there is still a lot that needs to be done to ensure that the mother tongue education continues in pre-primary and primary schools. Parents and teachers should be motivated to play an important

role in using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Educators should also be given specific training in teaching using the mother tongue. The study not only suggested the need for the mother tongue teaching approaches, but also suggested the need for enrichment programmes to empower both parents and educators in using mother tongues as a medium of instruction in early childhood.

This study contributed to the existing literature on the compliance level of teachers to the usage of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria. It also points out the need for monitoring and encouraging the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools by the ministry of Education. Furthermore the research also shows the opinion of parents and educators on the usage of the mother tongue contrary to the general believe that English language is better used as the medium of instruction. It enhances the revitalization of local languages in the country by developing orthography and literature in many of these unwritten indigenous languages to the advantage of its language policy by Federal Government of Nigeria. A study that examined the challenges encountered by learners in the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, and studies that explore the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools from the viewpoint of other major ethnic groups, particularly Igbo and Hausa should be conducted.

Recommendations

In line with the research finding, the following are recommendations:

- i. The use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction should continue for learners to perform well.
- ii. The schools should be knowledgeable about the language policy implications for the school and must see to it that staff members are familiar with the school's language of instruction in the school. The staff and community should be involved in the development of a language that will be used as a medium of instruction in the schools.
- iii. The education authorities in partnership with the schools must ensure quality language teaching aids which should be made available in a particular mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Educators should also receive appropriate regular in-service training to enhance their ability, the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.
- iv. In the same manner, parents should be encouraged to assist their children with take-home activities.

References

- Adebiyi, M. E. (2013) –Mother Tongue Education Policy: Effects on Children’s Achievement in Reading Skills. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*. An Open Access International Journal, 2.
- Adegbija, E. (2004). *Multilingualism: a Nigeria Case Study*. Lawrenceville, NJ: Africa World/Red Sea.
- Adegbija, E. (2004). *The Domestication of English in Nigeria*. In S. Awonusi, & E. A. Babalola (eds). *The Domestication of English in Nigeria: A Festschrift in Honour of Abiodun Adetugbo* (pp. 20-44). Lagos: University of Lagos Press.
- Akinbote, O. (1996). Effects of Language of Instruction on Primary School Pupils’ Achievement in Social Sciences. *Studies in Education*. 2(1), 30-36.
- Akinbote, O.; Odolowu, E. and Ogunsawo, T. (2003). *The Use of Indigenous Language in Promoting Permanent Literacy and Numeracy in the UBE Programme*. In Ayodele-Bamisaye, O. Nwazuo, I. A. and Okediran, A. (eds.). *Education This Millennium-Innovations in Theory and Practice*. A publication of the faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishs Limited, pp. 415-424.
- Akumabor, P. N. (2010) –The Effect of Mother-Tongue Education Policy on Nigerian Children’s Creativity and Achievement in Reading Skills. *African Journal of Social Research and Development*. 2 (1&2), 92-98.
- Awoniyi, T. A. (1974) Utilizing Children’s Mother Tongue Experience for Effective English Language Teaching in Nigeria. *JNESA*, 6(2), 18-27.
- Ball, J. (2011). *Enhancing learning and teacher effectiveness. Education Policy Hilden from diverse language backgrounds; Mother tongue based bilingual or multilingual education in early years*, UNESCO. Paris. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/imag/e/0018/0018691e.pdf>.

- Block, P. (2013). *Stewardship: Choosing service over self-interest*. Available online.
- Bloom, L. and Lahey, M. (1978). *Language Development and Language Disorders*. New York: Wiley.
- Bolorunduro, K. (1994). *The Effects of Bilingualism on the Language Intellectual Competence and Intellectual Development of the Nigerian Child*. A Paper presented at the annual conference of Nigerian Association of Professional Educators, College of Education, Ilesa.
- Braam, G. J. M. And Nijssen, E. J. (2004). *Performance Effects of Using the Balanced Scorecard: A Note on the Dutch Experience*. Long Range Planning, 37, 335-349.
- Chumbow, B. S. (1990). *The Place of the Mother Tongue in the National Policy on Education*, In Emenanjo, E. N. (ed.). *Multilingualism, Minority Languages and Language Policy in Nigeria*. Agbor: Central Books Ltd in collaboration with The Linguistic Association of Nigeria, 61-72.
- David, A. O. (2008). The Impact of Mother Tongue on Students' Achievement in English Language in Junior Certificate Examination in Western Nigeria. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(1): 14-19.
- David, T., Gooch, K., Powell, S. & Abbott, L. (2003). *Birth to Three Matters: A Review of the Literature: Compiled to Inform the Framework to Support Children in their Earliest Years*. Department for Education and Skills, Research Report, RR444.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1969). The importance of mother tongue as medium of instruction. *Nigeria Magazine*, 102.
- Fafunwa, A. B. Macauley, J. I. & Skoya, J. A. F. (1989). *Education in Mother Tongue: The Ife Primary Education Research Project (1970-1978)*. Ibadan: university Press.
- Fafunwa, A. B. (1974). *History of Education in Nigeria*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Fakeye, D. O. And A. Soyinka (2009) Indigenous Languages in Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria. Beyond the Facadel. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(4).
- Fakeye, D. O. (2011). Primary School Pupils' Perception of the Efficacy of Mother Tongue Education in Ibadan Metropolis. *Asian Social Science Journal*, 7 (12).
- Federal Government of Nigeria 1977, revised 1981, 1998 and 2004.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education (2013). Lagos, Nigeria: Federal Government Press, (6th Ed.).
- Fakeye D.O. and A. Soyinka (2009). Indigenous Languages in Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria. Beyond the facadel *European Journal of Social Sciences* 10 (4).
- Jean Berko Gleason (1976). The Acquisition of Routines in Child Language. *Language in Society Journal*. 5(02).
- Kolawole and Adeagbo (1999). *Problems and Prospects of Build-Own Operate-Transfer Contractual Arrangement in Nigeria*. University of Jos, Jos.
- Kolawole, C. O. O. (1997). "Essentials of Language Learning and Languages Teaching". In E. T. O. Bamisaye (ed.). *Studies in Languages and Linguistics*, Ibadan: Montem Publishers.
- Kumar, R. (2014). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-step Guide for Beginners*. 4th Edition, SAGE Publications Ltd, London.
- Oderinde, J. T. (2005). *Social Ethics and Contemporary Issues*. Ilorin: Delma and Printing Press.
- Okonkwo, C. E. (1979). Bilingualism in Nigerian Education: A Case Study. *African Journal of Educational Research*, 2(2), 149-160
- Onochie, E. O. (2002). "Language in the Head: Implications for the Choice of Language of Interaction for Nigerian Primary Schools". In Perspectives on Applied Linguistics in Language & Literature edited by Lawal, A, Isiugo-Ahanihe, I. And I. N. Ohia, pp. 156-164.
- Ouedraogo, R. M. (2000). *Language Planning and Language Policies in Some Selected West African Countries*. Burkina Faso: IICBA
- Osisanwo, W. (2008). *Introduction to Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics*. (2nd ed.) Lagos: Ebute Meta, Femolus-Fetop Publishers.
- Owu-Ewie, C. (2006) *The Language Policy of Education in Ghana: A Critical Look at the English-Only Language Policy of Education*. Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.
- Patrick, J. M., Didam, B. and Gyang, T. S. (2013). -Mother-Tongue Interference on English Language Pronunciation of Senior Primary School Pupils in Nigeria: Implications for Pedagogy in Language. In *Language in India*. ISSN. 1930-2940
- Sadeghi, M. (2013). The Impact of Achievement Motivation on Vocabulary Learning in Intermediate EFL Learners. *Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research*, 3, 558-574.
- Sulaiman, F. R. (2004). Parents involvement in primary Education program in Ogun State: Implication for

- Quality Assurance in school practice and strategies. *Journal of Educational Focus* 5, 38-48. 1595-4218.
- Sulaiman, F. R. (2005). *The role of language and communication skills at the Nursery and Primary Education level*. A paper presented at the seminar organized by proprietors and proprietresses of nursery and primary schools in Ogun State.
- Ubahakwe, E. (2006). *Education Through the Continuing Transitions*. Lagos: Linye Publications.
- UNESCO (1951). Wikipedia, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>
- United Nations. (2007). *Right of Indigenous Peoples* Published by the United Nations 07-58681- March 2008-4,000
- Unoh, S. O. (1989). *The Reading Difficulties of Students in Nigerian University: Their Environmental Correlates and Psycholinguistic Implications*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Ibadan.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1962). *Thought and language*. In E. Handfmann and G. Vakar, (eds.).Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wikipedia. (2004). Mother Language <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/firstlanguage>
- Woodward, A. and Needham, A. (2009). *Learning and the Infant Mind*. Oxford University Press.