

ASSESSMENT OF GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YORUBA LANGUAGE POLICY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

Victoria Oludunni Ogunniran

Mother-Tongue Education Unit
Department of Arts Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin, Ilorin
ogunniran.vo@unilorin.edu.ng

Surajudeen Adewale Badru

Mother-tongue Education Unit
Department of Arts Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ilorin, Ilorin
badru.sa@unilorin.edu.ng

Joycelyn Funke Owaseye

Primary Education Department
Federal College of Education
Okene, Kogi State
Olufunkeowaseye247@gmail.com

Moses Bayere Segun

asegun683@gmail.com

Abstract

The instrument of communication between teachers and pupils at all educational levels is language. Therefore, effective and efficient teaching, and learning will not take place without a viable language of instruction. It was stipulated in the Nigerian Policy on Education that the learners' mother tongue should be utilised as a medium of instruction (pre-primary to primary 3) and taught as a subject at both primary (primary 1 to 6) school levels. Also, the Nigerian Federal government has promised to adequately supply the necessary resources for the implementation of this policy. Therefore, this study assessed the Nigerian government's support for the implementation of the language policy in primary schools. Purposive sampling techniques were employed to sample ninety (90) primary school educational stakeholders from Oyo State (one of the Yoruba-speaking states), Nigeria. The questionnaire was utilized to elicit information from the respondents. A simple percentage was employed to analyse the responses. The result showed that Nigeria is operating a passive language policy in primary schools. It indicates that the learners' mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the lower primary school was not implemented in Oyo State. Hence, Nigerian government support in terms of provision of trained teachers, instructional resources, creation of awareness, and adequate monitoring are all abortive. Therefore, it was recommended that the Nigerian government should adequately support the mother-tongue policy in primary schools. Mother tongue helps the development of learners' cognitive domain, and it is the basis of their reasoning and the expression of thoughts.

Keywords: Assessment, National language, Mother-tongue policy, Medium of instruction, Yoruba Language

Introduction

In the fundamental years of elementary school, pupils are still learning both spoken and written aspects of their mother tongue. They are developing in the use of complex grammatical structures and vocabulary, communicative competence, and ways to express their thoughts in comprehensive ways in their mother tongue. In Nigeria, the significance of the language of instruction in primary school education was first observed by Buhler (a European Christian educationist in 1861) that teaching in English in the Yorùbá mission schools retarded the learners' progress considerably (Awóniyí, 1978). Buhler reported that it took the pupils an enormous time, four to six years before they could read their mother tongue fluently. He suggested that English should not be taught or used as a medium of instruction until the learners can read their native language. Likewise, Harden, a Baptist Missionary, who stayed in Lagos between 1856 and 1864, complained that teaching Yorùbá pupils in an unknown tongue (English) was a grievous task (Awóniyí, 1978).

The Federal government of Nigeria, however, began to take an official interest in learners' mother tongue, so, the status of the National language or mother tongue was declared (as a medium of instruction in the lower classes, and as a subject at both levels) in the first National Policy on Education in 1977. Therefore, the language policy stated that subjects in the primary school curriculum would be taught through Hausa, Igbo, and Yorùbá as a medium of instruction in the Northern, South-western, and Eastern parts of Nigeria respectively. Then, from primary 4, the English language would be used as a medium of education. and the mother tongue would become a subject in the upper primary and junior secondary school curriculum. However, at the senior secondary school level, the national languages are not compulsory for science and commercial students but the art students; it means those languages are no longer regarded as core subjects (FRN, 2013). At the same time, Arabic and French are other foreign languages that are stated to be taught as subjects at primary school levels.

In order to facilitate the actualization of the

provisions of the policy, the government had decided to create awareness, provide funds and instructional materials in Nigerian languages in an adequate number, and properly monitor the implementation of the policy, also agreed to develop more orthographies of Nigerian languages (FRN, 2013). These commitments were stated in the National Policy on Education to make the mother tongue policy a reality in the lower primary school. Therefore, it is necessary to check the implementation of one of these Nigerian languages (Yoruba), and the Federal government support as had been stipulated in the National Policy on Education.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the policy implementation theory propounded by Paulden (2009). The policy implementation theory deals with the relationship between policy formulation and practice. It means there should be no segregation between the language policy and implementation in the context of the National Policy on Education. The theory of policy implementation deals with three main approaches that were discussed by Cerna (2013). Those approaches are Top-down, Bottom-up, and Combined approaches. The first subscribes to a chain of policy implementation that stretches from the top makers of the policy to the deliverers while the second reverses the case. That is, it supports the chain that stretches from the deliverers of the policy to the top makers. The top-down approach indicates that the policy is formed by the government, and forwarded to the primary school educational stakeholders (teachers, parents, and school administrators) who are not well informed on the significance of the policy. The third approach concedes to integrating the two approaches (top-down, and bottom-up) to benefit from the strengths of the two. It is with this third approach that Paulden's (2009) Policy Incorporation aligns. Therefore, the major tenets of this philosophical viewpoint of the policy implementation are that:

- i. In the policy implementation theory, diverse levels have availed the opportunity to interact periodically;
- ii. for the implementation of a policy to thrive,

parties at the local (teachers) and central (policymakers) domains are very significant; and

- iii. multifarious policy regions are indistinguishably interactive as opposed to the segregational implementation of other theoretical viewpoints.

Lawal (2014) argued that the language acquired during the first six years of childhood cannot be removed or discarded like a school uniform. Instead, it is part of what builds his/her mind and regulates the ideas and attitudes a child gains from society. He (Lawal) affirmed that learners think, dream, cherish, love, learn, and assimilate concepts through the mother tongue. So, it is well established that no other school subject offers greater potential for a learner's education and cultural development than studying their mother tongue. This is the reason why the Federal Government of Nigeria declares in the National Policy on Education that the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment of learners should be used as a medium of teaching (the lower primary) and a subject in both levels (lower and upper primary schools). Therefore, the policy implementation theory stresses the interaction between the formulation of language policy and its implementation, which can only be achieved if the federal government adequately supports the policy.

Literature Review

Language policy refers to rules, regulations, and guidelines employed to decide on the use of a language or language in a nation. It is also the statement of goals for fulfilling the established standards influencing language structure, language usage, and language learning in educational institutions. When government entities, such as ministries of education, engage in language planning, the result might be a language policy (Gobana, 2014).

The language in education policy offers direction for the treatment of language issues in the national educational context to improve language and literacy proficiency. The objective of language policy is to confirm relevant instructional practices and perspectives for

enabling the development of confident and competent learners. The national language policy is unsuccessful without a comprehensive language policy in education and workable implementation plans. Language in education is essential and can be rated as one of the factors for the enrichment of the political, economic, educational, technological, cultural, and even social systems and development of a country if it is well implemented (Githinji, 2014). Fáfúnwá (1989) submitted that industrialized countries such as France, Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Canada, and Spain take the matter of language policy in education very critically. Thus, they support the education of their children with their languages. This aspect deals with the critical issues of the language policy in education from a comparative perspective, starting with the developed countries, as well as African countries, and finally illustrating the problem in the Nigerian language policy context.

Language Policy in Education in other parts of the World

Githinji (2014) also affirmed that in developed countries, the learner goes through his basic, secondary, and tertiary education in their mother tongue. Those countries conducted activities related to trade, business, teaching, civics, and cultural and social aspects in their mother tongue. The practice contributed tremendously to the development of their citizens' knowledge-power, which led to economic and technological development. It is because the use of their language enables learners to be creative, and therefore, promotes inventions. For example, in France, the teaching of the French language, and teaching through it is an indispensable condition for academic success at all levels of education (primary, secondary, vocational, technical, or tertiary) and for the sustainability and professional usability of learned skills.

Likewise, Zhou and Zou (2017) noted that the Australian language policy acknowledges English as their national language and language in education. Then, the Australian government adequately planned for the learning of second languages (such as Chinese and Japanese) for commercial purposes. The second language

education policy stipulates that all secondary students are invigorated to learn the language, history, and culture of China and Japan, for trade cooperation and diplomatic affairs. Then, it was established by them (Zhou and Zou) that foreign language teachers were motivated and received a lot of opportunities for work-related training. It implies that, since the English language is regarded as the home-based language and the language of education, students learn with proper assimilation. The country is producing an educated workforce that contributes to the development of Australia in all domains, which include culture, trade, science, law, education, tourism, diplomatic relations, health, and arts.

Also, Japan, one of the industrialised countries has a workable language policy of schooling. The Japanese country plans its language policy as follows: 1) the Japanese language is used as a medium of instruction in kindergarten and elementary classes (compulsory classes). 2) The Japanese language is used as a means of teaching at lower secondary schools, upper secondary schools, special education, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and institutions of higher education. 3) The teaching of the Japanese language to foreigners. 4) Education for Japanese children living overseas and returnee children - they are all trained in the Japanese language to spread their language and for the sustainability of education and economy (Education Policy Outlook Japan, 2015).

Language Policy in Education in African Countries

Generally, it is discovered that African countries have a common language syndrome of considering strange tongues as media of instruction throughout their educational levels. The factors that influence the language policy in education in African countries are colonial, political, economic, and educational influence as well as linguistic diversity.

Colonial influence: Awóbùlúyì (2013) opined that until the 1960s Africa was entirely divided among European colonial powers. In the time of decolonisation after World War II, most African states continued with the ex-colonial languages, primarily English, Portuguese, and French, as

national official and educational languages. This indicates that African countries rely on the use of inherited colonial languages such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. as the language of teaching even in the early years of formal schooling. A majority of African countries today, (Nigeria inclusive) have stated in their language policy to use the learners' mother tongue in the lower primary 1-3, but the policy is half-hearted. The elementary schools, the junior secondary, the senior secondary, and the tertiary institution students are taught in the English language. Except for Tanzania which employs Kiswahili (learners' mother tongue) as the language of education in primary schools, it is a compulsory subject from the primary level to the university education. That is why Lawal (2014) stated that the colonial monument in Africa was initiated on three strong pillars: the political, the economic, and the linguistic. He (Lawal) stressed that before we can lay claim to true independence, we must destroy these foreign pillars and erect indigenous ones in their places.

Political influence: Bámgbóşé (2013) stated that Nigeria has over 500 native languages. It positions the country as one of the linguistically varied nations of the world. Igbo, Hausa, and Yorùbá are regarded as national languages out of the existing native languages, while English is recognised as an official language. So, the English language is used by the three tiers of government: Federal, State, and Local, owing to linguistic heterogeneity, English is the principal language of governmental functions. It is the language used extensively in law courts, particularly the Supreme Court and the High Court of Justice. Likewise, Bokamba (2011) mentioned earlier that examples of the impact of political situations on a country's language policy are found in Uganda and Namibia, where English is the link language in the complex ethnolinguistic scenario in Uganda. So, the official language of the majority of African countries is English. That is why Ugwuoke (2017) affirmed that the English language is used politically to solve the problem of language diversity complications in Nigeria.

Economic reasons: In Africa, it is believed that

an international or world language will give Africans access to the world community. So, in many West African countries, French or English is the principal medium employed at higher levels for commerce, industry, and banking. Hence, African languages are held in low esteem thinking that they are not conducive to upward socio-economic development. Even Githinji (2014) submitted that African countries thought their languages did not have the mechanical and scientific concepts needed to understand today's complex world. However, African languages in education could have developed and capable of coping with the immediate realities through coinages, adaptations, and interpretation, and also expand their repertoire to deal with new experiences to play essential roles in the economy. Education plays a central role in economic improvement by producing the required human resources.

Educational influence: Bokamba (2011) stated that most African countries adopted and maintained the language policies of the former colonial leaders as exclusive media of education and official languages. Thus, it made them lose several opportunities. For example, they squandered language resources that are vital to their countries' development. Second, they have suppressed their citizens' social, political, and academic advancement. Third, they have relegated their languages to their previous colonial masters. For instance, A'ame (2010) noted that France took over West Africa in the late 19th century; they forced those Francophone countries to abandon their languages to learn the French language. Two of these previously colonised countries are Mali and Burkina Faso. A'ame (2010) affirmed that French was established as the language in government affairs, trade, business, and the mode of teaching in schools. French is also recognised as the language of instruction in schools many years after independence. However, this practice leads to low literacy and high dropout rates in both countries because the learners' language was not used as a medium of teaching.

Meanwhile, the Tanzanian language policy is better when comparing it with that of Nigeria, For

instance, Kyalo (2018) reported that there are 127 languages in Tanzania, but two languages are considered extinct. It was discovered that Germany initially colonised the country before the British took over after the First World War. Kiswahili was promoted as the language of management and education by Germans to uphold the established colonial authority dynamics. When the British arrived, they continued with Kiswahili as the language of administration, though the British recommended the use of English in schools and as the official language. Thus, in the present language education policy, Kiswahili serves as the medium of teaching in pre-primary and primary school, and English is considered a compulsory subject. However, English functions as the medium of instruction in secondary school, and Kiswahili remains a compulsory subject up to the University level.

Based on the language policy in Nigeria, Ojésúndé (2012) affirmed that the policies exist on paper but are not applicable; this is due to the linguistic diversity of the people in Nigeria. This strategy has hampered the development of Nigerian native languages, favouring the rise of English, which has earned it greater prestige and significance in Nigeria. This study recognises that 64 years (1960-2024) after independence, English (the ex-colonial masters' language) is still the language of schooling, domination, commerce, and the judiciary in Nigeria. Therefore, this has hindered equal participation of the whole people in management, access to information, and full involvement in government policies and programmes.

Emmanuel (2015) stressed that the use of English as a language in education from lower levels of education as an approach to offering learners access to expertise in English had been found challenging and ineffective. The foreign language is not sufficient to provide the solution for internal communication among citizens in post-colonial African states. It was discovered that very few people speak the English language in African countries. In Nigeria, particularly, only 23% (30 million out of 130 million) communicated in English (Fáfúnwá, 2005). Yet, English is a preferred language in education and

other affairs. It means that even global issues may not be appropriately addressed by these people and that abandoning native African languages in favour of English may result in a lack of fluency in both languages. Then, it was imperative to investigate the Government's support for this mother-tongue policy in primary schools.

Assessment of government support for the language policy implementation in primary schools

Assessment is the process of gathering, reviewing, and employing data to improve the current performance. Although assessment and evaluation are used interchangeably, they are not the same: assessment diagnoses problems to identify areas of improvement, and it offers feedback on performance and ways to improve it in the future. Evaluation, on the other hand, determines whether or not the standards have been attained. One of the benefits of assessment is that it can be a vital component to bringing improvement in education (Surbhi, 2016). The Nigerian government's support for the implementation of the language policy in primary schools was assessed and the ways forward to a comprehensive implementation of the Yorùbá language policy were suggested,

In Nigeria, the Ministry of Education has officers in charge at all ministerial levels to monitor and facilitate the execution of the language policy. There are State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs), Local Government Universal Basic Education Authorities (LGUBEAs), and the Federal Government Universal Basic Education Officers (UBE). Also, there are quality assurance and standard officers who can see to the operation of the language policy at Nigerian primary school levels. These teams are supposed to coordinate education in their areas and ascertain that language policy is implemented in primary schools. Therefore, the process of assessment was based on the goals of the MT in education, language planning and policy, language policy implementation, and the way forward to the implementation of the mother-tongue policy in education.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has considered the psychological, pedagogical, and

sociological goals of the native language in education and made the pronouncement on the status of the Yorùbá language in South-western Nigeria (FRN, 2013). MT is a psychological term describing a system of meaningful indicators in the mind that functions automatically for expression and interpretation. Sociologically, MT is a means of the socio-cultural identity of the members of a community in which a child lives. Educationally, pupils learn more speedily and reasonably through their MT than through a strange linguistic medium. If the language of instruction is different from the learners' mother tongue, the level of intellectual development and the level of language competence do not match. Subject contents may be abandoned for the sake of language acquisition. Similarly, Lawal (1989) observed that learning through an alien tongue is traumatic, especially if the language is introduced to learners for the first time. It means the neglect of the mother tongue makes learning both difficult and uninteresting to lower primary school pupils. Then, the goals of the mother tongue in teaching can be accomplished through language planning and policy that defines the status of the national languages in primary education.

Tollefson (2008) stated that language planning deals with a practical activity for the regulation and development of the current language situation. It is a combined effort of individuals or groups of people to influence language use or development, on the structure, function, and acquisition of languages. Language planning constitutes three significant aspects: One is the status of a language, which means the functions or roles assigned to a particular language that stipulates the right of speakers to use the language. The other one is the corpus of a language, which is the development of a language in terms of its: (1) Orthographic innovation; (2) vocabulary expansion (3) the preparation of language materials; (4) interpretation of registers and (5) changes in language structure. The third sub-area of language planning is the acquisition of a language which deals with the increase in the number of users or speakers of a particular language (Gobana, 2014). Therefore, the government's support for the educational language policy regarding status, corpus, and

acquisition was considered since this would aid the language policy implementation.

Adéyemí and Ajíbádé (2014) asserted that language policy implementation deals with the procedures, strategies, and devices that provide the substantial tools (funding and resources) to achieve the goals of the language policy, and the motivation to use the language by the people concerned. In general, the success of language

policy can be accomplished through careful language implementation.

Hence, the Nigerian government's support for the language policy in primary schools was assessed as contained in Figure 1: a. Creation of mass awareness, b. Provision of materials, c. Training of teachers, d. Provision of funds and e. Adequate monitoring.

Assessment Cycle

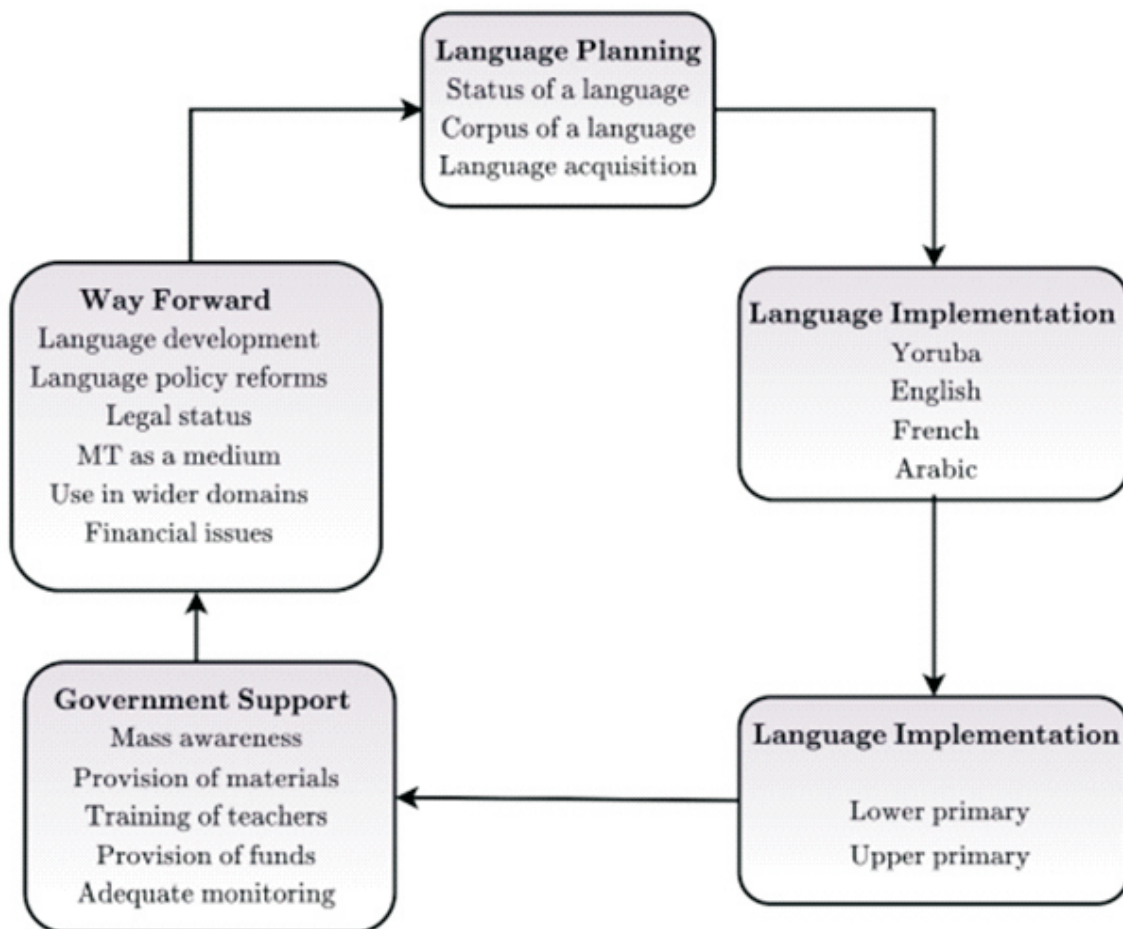


Figure 1: Assessment Cycle (Ogunniran, 2021)

Creation of mass awareness: The realisation or knowledge about the use of a language in various social contexts is called language awareness. It also deals with the interpretation and dissemination of the use of a particular language in socio-political and cultural circumstances where it is used. Gobana (2014) observed that language awareness of students, teachers, parents,

school administrators, educational officers, and the people in the local communities is indispensable. He (Gobana, 2014) affirmed that the language awareness of these groups in society would affect the use of learners' language in education. It, in turn, has a significant influence on learners' performance, and societal economic and scientific development. It was discovered that

Governments in Nigeria did not carry out sufficient awareness of the use of native languages in education. It indicates that the primary schools' educational stakeholders were not adequately informed on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Even, Adegbija (2003) observed that the linguists, sociolinguists, and implementers were not adequately involved because some teachers confessed that they were not aware of the mother-tongue medium policy in primary schools.

Training of teachers: Daby (2015) observed that Nigerian Governments did not provide sufficient qualified teachers and other stakeholders who can directly contribute to the native language policy application at primary school levels. The teachers' proficiency in the language of teaching and their awareness of the mother-tongue policy in education would lead to a successful language implementation at the primary school level. Although, Ojétundé (2012) affirmed that the UBE organised and sponsored a Teacher Professional Programme (TPP) in 2003 to equip them with the needed knowledge, and to broadcast teaching through the mother-tongue. The problem is that this programme is not regular and the selected few teachers that attended the programme did not propagate the information. So, teachers did not implement the language policy appropriately. It means there were insufficiently qualified teachers for the implementation of the MT policy in Nigerian primary schools.

Provision of instructional materials: Bámgbòsé (2013) noted that the implementation of language policy would be improved significantly by the availability of teaching materials written in the mother tongue, with their relevance to teachers' and students' cultural contexts. It was discovered that trained teachers and culturally relevant teaching materials (student textbooks and teacher's guides) in children's language are not adequately provided as it has been stipulated in the language policy. Even the rural public primary school teachers that determined to teach through Yorùbá (the learners' mother tongue in South-west, Nigeria) do it by interpreting the lower primary school subject textbooks into the Yorùbá

language. It indicates that the primary 1-3 pupils' textbooks and the teachers' guides are written in English.

Provision of funding: The objectives of the basic education policy are to: decrease the rate of school dropouts; enhance the value and efficiency of basic education; promote the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and life skills, and produce citizens that would be useful to themselves, Nation and the World. Based on this, the Nigerian Federal Government announced free education from the lower to the upper basic level. According to Owásanóyè (2018), there are UBE intervention funds that can be accessed with specific conditions. Of providing 50% counterpart money to match the FG's contribution (matching grant). Unfortunately, many states in Nigeria are unable to fulfil the requirements for receiving these funds, and thereby, basic education suffers. The states that accessed UBE funding also experienced setbacks because of the misappropriation of the funds. *It is now discovered that* the UBE at local and state government levels has a problem with federal government grants. It is concluded that the UBE funds are not committed to the purchase of instructional materials such as textbooks, teaching aids, and other materials in Nigerian languages, therefore, the implementation of the mother-tongue policy was negatively affected.

Lack of proper monitoring: Oǎgbajú and Akińşowon (2014) stressed that a share of the blame also goes to the educational stakeholders of the federal and state ministries of education. The language policy stipulates that the mother tongue (Yorùbá) or the language of the immediate community (LIC) should be the language of initial literacy in lower primary schools and a compulsory subject at the upper primary school level. In practice, however, most primary school teachers conduct nursery and lower primary activities in English, with no restrictions from the Ministry of Education officials who are never present. Adéyemí and Ajíbádé (2014) noticed that there is a need for constant inspection of what happens in private and public primary schools to enforce total adherence to the implementation of

Nigerian languages in primary school education.

Research methods

Purposive sampling techniques were employed to sample ninety (90) primary school Teachers, headteachers, and primary school supervisors from a South-western state of Nigeria. The designed questionnaire was adopted to elicit information from the respondents. The 20 items of the questionnaire and 5 interview guidelines were based on the Nigerian government's support for the provision of trained teachers, instructional resources, the creation of awareness, and adequate monitoring. The percentage was employed to analyse the responses of the participants, while the interview aspect was analysed thematically. Also, the concepts and studies that are related to the language policy implementation and the government's participation in the execution of the stated policy were reviewed. The review of that related literature was based on the language policy implementation of some developed countries, and the African countries to view the situation of the language of education at Nigerian primary school levels. The status of the stipulated language of instruction (Yoruba) in the lower primary was carefully investigated, and also the government support for the implementation of learners' mother-tongue was examined in the context of the National policy on education.

Research objective

The study investigated:

The government's support of the implementation of the mother tongue policy in primary schools in the context of the National Policy on Education in Southwestern Nigeria

Research question:

The following research question was answered in this study.

In which area does the government support the implementation of the mother tongue policy in primary schools in the context of the National Policy on Education in Southwestern Nigeria?

Data analysis

Research Question In which area does the government support the implementation of the mother tongue policy in primary schools in the context of the National Policy on Education in South-western Nigeria?

The research question assessed the government's support for the implementation of the Yoruba language in primary schools in the context of the national policy on education. To answer this research question, responses of supervisors, headteachers, and teachers, which were based on Yes or No answers, were coded and sorted using the percentage to arrive at a decision. Hence, Table 1 presents data on the assessment of the government support for the implementation of the mother-tongue policy in primary schools.

Table 1:

The Government's support for the implementation of the mother-tongue policy in Southwestern Nigerian primary schools in the context of the National Policy on Education

Respondents	Creation of Awareness		Provision of Materials		Textbooks in Mother-tongue		Provision of Funds		Adequate Monitoring	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Supervisors	10 (33.3%)	20 (66.7%)	04 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)	03 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)	02 (6.7%)	28 (93.3%)	26 (86.7%)	04 (13.3%)
Headteachers	08 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)	02 (6.7%)	28 (93.3%)	02 (6.7%)	28 (93.3%)	05 (16.7%)	25 (83.3%)	03 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)
Teachers	05 (16.7%)	25 (83.3%)	03 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)	04 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)	01 (3.3%)	29 (96.7%)	01 (3.3%)	29 (97.7%)
Composite	8 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)	3 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)	03 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)	3 (10.0%)	27 (90.0%)	10 (33.3%)	20 (66.7%)

Table 1 shows that out of thirty (30) supervisors sampled, 10 (33.3%), 04 (13.3%), 03 (10.0%), 02 (6.7%), and 26 (86.7%) agreed that the government created awareness, provided instructional materials, provided funds, and there was adequate monitoring on the mother-tongue policy while 20 (66.7%), 26 (86.7%), 27 (90%), 28 (93.3%) and 04 (13.3%) disagreed with the statement.

At the same time, the table reveals that out of thirty (30) headteachers sampled, 08 (26.7%), 02 (6.7%), 02 (6.7%), 05 (16.7%) 03 (10%) confirmed that the government created awareness, provided instructional materials, provided funds, and there was adequate monitoring on the mother-tongue policy while 22 (73.3%), 28 (93.3%), 25 (83.3%) and 27 (90.0%) disagreed with the statement.

Similarly, it was discovered that out of thirty (30) teachers sampled, 05 (16.7%), 03 (10.0%), 04 (13.3%), 01 (3.3%), and 01 (3.3%) affirmed that the government created awareness, provided instructional materials, provided funds, and there was adequate monitoring on the mother-tongue policy while 25 (83.3%), 27 (90.0%), 26 (86.7%), 29 (96.7%) 29 (97.7%) rejected the view. Therefore, it was deduced that the majority of supervisors, headteachers, and teachers pointed out that the promises to ease the implementation of the learners' mother-tongue were not adequately supported by the government based on the creation of awareness, provision of instructional materials, provision of funds, and adequate monitoring of the mother tongue education in primary schools in the context of the national policy on education.

Discussion of findings

Based on the data collected and analysed, the following findings are obtained:

The finding showed that there was no adequate support from the federal government for the implementation of the language policy based on the creation of awareness, provision of instructional materials, provision of funds, and adequate monitoring of the mother-tongue education in Southwestern Nigerian primary schools. This finding corroborates Daby's (2015) submission that Nigerian governments did not

cater to the provision of qualified teachers and other stakeholders who can directly contribute to the native language policy application at primary school levels.

Likewise, on the creation of awareness for the mother-tongue policy, the finding showed that the majority of teachers (73.7%) were not even aware of the language policy in South-western Nigerian primary schools. That is why Ojetundé (2012) argued that the awareness of the issue of the language of education at the lower primary school levels was not thorough, the researcher contributed that the policy was just paperwork. Also, Abidogun (2012) complained in his study that some teachers had never seen the national policy on education that contains the primary education language policy. The result could be a result of the fact that since a copy of the language policy in primary schools was not supplied, information on the language policy was inadequate, therefore, the implementation was not materialised.

Similarly, on the issue of funding, it was discovered that the teachers do not have the opportunity to purchase the relevant instructional materials in the mother tongue which will make the implementation easy. 90% of the respondents agreed that the funding to purchase the instructional materials was not provided. For instance, Owásanóyè (2018) submitted that the state government failed to provide 50% counterpart money to match the FG's grant, and unfortunately, basic education suffers. The result of this study discovered that the support for the funding to aid the implementation of the learners' mother tongue was not appropriate.

Likewise, the finding shows that the monitoring of the mother-tongue policy was not adequately implemented, for instance, 66.7% of the respondents agreed that the government officers did not enforce the implementation of the mother-tongue policy in primary schools. That is why Ojetunde (2012) submitted that the classroom observation on the motivation of the mother-tongue policy was not effective, it was declared that the government officers were not even present in the primary schools to enforce the language policy. The finding reveals that the monitoring officers are not fully in support of the

policy, therefore, the language policy was not implemented.

The way forward to the comprehensive implementation of the Yorùbá language policy:

Following the literature reviewed and the data analysed, there are some ways by which the Nigerian government can improve the Nigerian languages to make the languages of education in the context of the national policy of education. The following points are suggested:

Curriculum renovation and teachers training: A review of existing curricular frameworks, teaching and learning contents, and provision of teaching materials in the mother tongue is required for effective and relevant language policy implementation. A holistic and coherent curricular approach will necessitate the alignment of the curriculum content based on the specific status accorded the MT in primary school education. The training of teachers, primary schools' leadership management, the involvement of sociolinguistics, and linguists, and the community awareness of the mother tongue policy are also indispensable for the effective implementation of the policy at the primary school.

Language development: Bámgbóṣé (2014) asserted that language reformation would facilitate the use of African languages in several domains. Language development covers language design, harmonisation of orthographies, and vocabulary expansion through terminology creation. Also, this reformation would involve a compilation of dictionaries, grammatical descriptions, and language teaching manuals. However, the available publications on the mother-tongue and terminology created in the process of translation (such as Quadric-lingual Dictionary, Metalanguage, a dictionary of a technical term, and a Yoruba dictionary of engineering physics) should be utilised for the effective implementation of the mother-tongue policy (Dada, 2010). Then, the use and development of the learners' mother-tongue can go hand in hand, and when confronted with scientific terms, there will be means of expressing

them.

Financial issues: The Federal, State, and Local governments need to support primary schools financially for the successful implementation of the language policy. The SUBEB, LGUBEA, and the state governments should be encouraged to access the federal government matching money and use it judiciously for primary school education. It could be mentioned that there is a need to ensure more effective and reasonable use of resources to promote greater accountability in the use of public capital for primary school education.

Mother tongue as a means of instruction: The use of the mother tongue as a language of education is a powerful way of enhancing the status of National languages. This policy will be possible if such use is not confined merely to initial literacy or the lower classes of basic education but used for the entire primary school and, where possible, beyond. Bámgbóṣé (2014) stressed that what needs to be avoided is the implied stigma that learners' languages can only be used for teaching in lower classes or that they are only good enough for “soft” subjects. It could be concluded that as the developed countries are using their languages throughout the education of their citizens, Nigeria also can do the same. Since the school is the most potent avenue for enforcing language policy, the use of learners' languages in education will not only help or empower them but will also foster respect for and positive attitudes toward them.

Monitoring: Monitoring exercise requires having access to more reliable, timely, and disaggregated data. It will also need a strengthened capacity to analyse data on participation and learning outcomes at primary school levels through the implementation of the language policy. Adeyemi and Ajibade (2014) attested that the Ministry of Education officers should embark on continuous inspection of the teaching activities in private and public primary schools. It would force them to adhere to the language policy in primary schools, and this would aid the performance of learners. Therefore, it could be mentioned that the national

languages are not just status symbols, but their uses should be established in education and expanded to a wider range of domains to benefit the masses. Then, the pronouncement of the National language (Yorubá) status in primary schools should be legally defined and implemented.

Conclusions

The conclusion was drawn based on the responses of the participants regarding the government's support for the language policy implementation, it was revealed that the government does not adequately support the primary educational stakeholders to create awareness, provide teaching materials, and train qualified language teachers on the learners' mother-tongue policy. Then, the Yorubá language which is the learners' language in South-west, Nigeria, was not adequately utilised as a medium of education at the lower primary school in the context of the national policy on education. The study has identified the unfulfilled promise of the federal government towards the learners' mother-tongue in Nigeria, it could be concluded that the mother-tongue policy as a medium of instruction is just a mirage. Also, this study identified suitable ways of developing and using the mother tongue as a medium of education. However, since this study was limited to the assessment of Nigerian government support for the implementation of the mother-tongue policy in primary education, a similar study could also be conducted in South-western Nigerian secondary schools.

References

- A' ame, K. (2010). Politics of language: The struggle for power in schools in Mali and Burkina Faso. *International Education*, 3 (1), 985-990.
- Abidogun, B. G. (2012). Teachers' experiences of using Yorubá as a medium of instruction in primary three classes: Implications for learning. (Published Doctoral Thesis). University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Adégbijà, E. (2003). Central language issues in literacy and basic education: Three mother-tongue education experiments in Nigeria. In A. Ouane (Eds) *Towards a multilingual culture of education*, 299-331. Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education.
- Adéyemí, B. B. and Ajíbádé, Y. A. (2014). Degree of implementation of the language provisions in primary and secondary schools in South-western, Nigeria. *Scieedu World Journal of Education African Languages, Makerere University*, 4(4), 92-104.
- ÀjàpéşK. O. & Yusuf, T. O. (2014). Teaching and learning Arabic as a foreign language in the context of the Nigerian National Policy on Education. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, (Language for Communication and Learning)*, 20, 40-44.
- Awóbùlúyì, O. (2013). *Official language policies in Africa*. Selected Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Conference on African Linguistics, (Eds). Olanike Ola-Orie and Karen Sanders, 68-76. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Awóniyì, T. A. (1978). *The Yorubá language in education (1846-1974): A historical survey*. Ìbàdàn: Oxford University Press.
- Bámgbóşé A. (2013). *The language factor in development goals*. Paper presented at the 10th International Conference on Language and Development, Lagoon Beach Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Bámgbóşé, A. (2014). *African Language Empowerment: Why, how, how far and what more?* Linguistics and African Languages International Conference, Kwara State University, Ilorin, Nigeria, Keynote Paper, March 20-22, 2014.
- Bokamba, E. G. (2011). *Ukolonia in African language policies and practices*. In Selected Proceedings of the 40th Annual Conference on African Linguistics, ed. Eyamba G. Bokamba et al., 146-167. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com. document

- Cerna, L. (2013). *The Nature of Policy Change and Implementation: A Review of Different Theoretical Approaches*. Retrieved on May 24, 2021. <https://www.semanticscholar.org>
- Daby, P. (2015). The effectiveness of a mother-tongue-based education to improve learning outcomes and second language acquisition in public primary schools of Zone 3, Mauritius. *The Bridge: Journal of Educational Research-Informed Practice*, 2(3), 24-41.
- Dàda, S. A. (2010). Language policies and planning in Nigeria: Issues & perspectives. *Journal of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (Jolan)*, 13(2), 417-440.
- Education policy outlook, Japan* (2015). *educators as policymakers*. New York: Routledge. <https://www.researchgate.net>
- Emmanuel, S. (2015). *Postcolonial language-in-education policies in Africa: The case of Kenya*. Rwanda Journal of Education, *Rwandan Journal of Education*, 3(1), 37-51.
- Fáfúnwá, A. B. (1989). *Education in mother-tongue: The Ife primary education research project (1970 - 1978)*. Ibadan University Press.
- Fáfúnwá, A. B. (2005). *Forms and functions of English and indigenous languages in Nigeria*. In Honour of Prof. Ayò Bánjo's 70th Birthday, University of Ibadan Conference Centre, May 19.
- Fáníran, A. O. (2017). French as a second official language in Nigeria: problems, prospects and implications for the future of the English language in Nigeria. *European Journal of English Language, Linguistics and Literature*, 4(1) 7-15.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) *National policy on education* (6th Edition). Lagos Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council Press (NERDC).
- Githinji, W. (2014). *Situational analysis of the language of instruction in the lower primary school in Kenya in Nyeri County, Kenya*. (Published Doctoral Thesis), Kenyatta University.
- Gobana, J. A. (2014). *Challenges of mother-tongue education in primary schools: The case of Afan Oromo in the East Hararge Zone, Oromia Regional State*. (Published Doctoral Thesis) Ethiopia University, South Africa.
- Kyalo, C. (2018). Language education policies in Tanzania. In F. V. Tochon (Ed.), *Language Education Policy Studies*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin—Madison.
- Lawal, R. A. (2014). The mother-tongue in the education and development of the Nigerian child. *The 18th in the Annual Series of Fáfúnwá Education Foundation Lecture*, September 23, 2014.
- Ogunniran, V. O. (2021). *Status of Yorùbá language on South-Western Nigerian primary schools in the context of the national policy on education* (Doctoral Thesis). Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Òjètúndé, F. (2012). A critical evaluation of the implementation of the Nigerian language policy at the pre-primary and Primary School Levels, *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3(16), 8-13.
- Ọlágabajú O. O. & Akínşòwón, F. I. (2014). The use of Nigerian languages in formal education: challenges and solutions. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5 (9) 123-127.
- Oṣwásanóyè, O. (2018). *Basic education utilisation of funds and standards in Nigeria*. Media <http://cdn.punchng.com/wp-content/upload/2017/11/23221138ubec>, Published on [February 16, 2018](http://cdn.punchng.com/wp-content/upload/2017/11/23221138ubec).

- Pauden, N. R. (2009). A critical account of policy implementation theories: status and reconsideration. *Nepalese Journal of Public and Governance*, 25(2), 37-57.
- Surbhi, S. (2016) Difference between assessment and evaluation. https://keydiferences_content/uploads/2016/07/assessment-vs-evaluation1.jpg.
- Tollefson, J. W. (2008). Language planning in education. In S. May & N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education: Springer: Science+Business Media LLC*, 2(1) 3-14.
- Ugwuoke, J. O. (2017). *The roles of the English language in Nigeria*. August 25, Http: academic power. blogspot/2017/08.
- Zhou, Y. & Zou, L. (2017). On the development history of Australia's language policy and the enlightenment of China's foreign language education. ISSN 1799-2591. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 7(5) 366-370.