

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF YORUBA LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MORAL EDUCATION IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to examine "Teachers' Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria". The study sample was made up of one thousand and two hundred purposively sampled Yoruba teachers in South-West, Nigeria; one hundred and seventy (170) males and one hundred and thirty (130) females Yoruba teachers in Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Lagos, Ogun and Ekiti. The instrument used for the data collection was a 10-item researcher-designed questionnaire. The instrument was divided into two sections: Sections A and B. Section A requested demographic data of the respondents, while section B contained a 10-item researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Teachers' Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria". The data collected were analysed using percentage to describe the demographic data of the respondents. Research Question 1 was answered using mean scores, while Research Questions 2 and 3 which correspond with Hypothesis 1 and 2 were answered and tested using t-test statistics, all at 0.05 level of significance. The study's findings revealed proverbs like *Sùúrù baba iwà* embrace the virtues of patience, the taboos in the Yoruba language serve as an instrument in combating crimes and corruption, and there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender and qualification. It was, therefore, recommended that teachers should emphasise the importance of home language through their daily instruction in class to learners and express their commitment to teaching the Yoruba language, among others.*

Keywords: Teachers, Perception, Yoruba Language, Instrument, Moral Education

Introduction

No nation can develop in an atmosphere devoid of morally upright human beings. Morality is a basic requirement for any country's growth and development. In other words, moral education is the foundation upon which any country's socio-economic, religious and educational standards must be set (Suleiman, 2017). This is why every stakeholder -Parents, teachers, schools, religious bodies and other organizations have crucial roles to play at every stage of development of the child and these players serve to reinforce each other in the child's moral upbringing. Nigeria is a country with a diversity of tribes with different

cultures, languages and different religious affiliations. To have a morally upright individual, there is a need to understand that the human race relies on language as a powerful instrument in society to generate meanings for communication.

Language is a peculiar characteristic of the human fold. With its phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic elements, it distinguishes the Homo sapiens completely from the lower animals (Oladosu, 2012). Language on the other hand as stated by Adeyanju (2004), is incontrovertibly central to all human activities as it is crucial to either peaceful co-existence

or disunity among members. Nigeria is a multilingual nation endowed with many languages. Given the multiplicity of languages, Yoruba is one of the languages recognised in Nigeria to be used as a medium of instruction in the lower primary classes as stipulated by the Nigerian National Policy on Education.

It is a fact that the Yorùbá language, especially by accident of history can be considered one of the global languages of the world. A global language is a language the spread of whose native speakers goes beyond or is found outside the continent of its natural birth. For example, the Yorùbá languagespeakers are found in the diaspora (i.e. Brazil, Cuba, South America and Benin Republic in West Africa). In Nigeria, Yorùbá remains the vibrant mother tongue or predominantly the language of the millions of people in South-West Nigeria; Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Ekiti, Osun and Lagos States (Adeniyi, 2004).

The use of language in a society and the respect the language enjoys are bound to reflect on how the language is taught in class. Teachers, being central to curriculum implementation, are recognized as critical factors in the delivery of quality education at whatever stages of levels of education. According to Olajide (2014), the teacher plays a critical role in the curriculum process by providing the specific learning objectives and activities and by evaluating the learners and interpreting the curriculum. Likewise, the teacher helps the learner to imbibe ideas, and knowledge to develop skills and understanding of good morals so that he can develop his own innate potential (Olugbuyi, 2011). The use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction does not necessarily lead to better education but also serves as a great weapon in the moral education of students.

The term perception takes different forms which include perception of sound, speech, touch, and taste. It is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. It is also the organization, identification and interpretation of sensory information in order to represent and understand the environment. To achieve a just and egalitarian society as spelt out in the National Policy of Education, schools should be properly and uniformly equipped with qualified teachers to promote sound and effective teaching (Charles & Coombs, 2010). Scarcity of these according to Charles and Coombs (2010), will constrain the educational system from responding fully to new demands.

The essence of Yoruba education in any society is to make an individual morally upright in order to be a useful and acceptable member of society. Apparently, the alarming rate at which sound moral values are fast eroding in the lives of today's children, youths and students has been a source of concern to every responsible member of society. The Yoruba language is without a doubt an instrument for moral education, considering the role it plays in the school curriculum.

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) emphasized positive attitude, cultivation and character moulding, which are the focus of the Nigerian educational system. The moral education of Nigerian youths is not to be hinged solely and wholly on formal pedagogy. Traditional African (Yoruba) people taught their young ones to be morally upright by devising effective ways of imparting certain ideas and virtues to them. Two of these media of moral education were myths and proverbs.

Through the language of Yoruba, According to Bewaji (2004), ethical behaviour and morally approved

conduct are called, variously, “*iwa rere* (good character), *iwa pele* (gentleness) and *iwa irele* (respect)”. One terminology that captures all these various names is called *iwa omoluabi*. The attributes or qualities of an *omoluabi* are: *Oro Siso* (Spoken word, the Yoruba accord great respect for intelligent and expert use of language); *Inu Rere* (Goodwill, Having a good mind towards others); *Otito* (Truth); *Iwa* (Character); *Akinkanju* (Bravery); *Ise* (Hardwork); *Opolo Pipe* (Intelligence); and *Iwa Rere* (Good character). Meanwhile, unethical behaviours and morally disapproved conducts are *iwa buburu*, *aidaa* (evil or lawlessness), and *iwa ibaje* (bad characters) *Imele/ole* (laziness), *ole jija* (act of stealing), *iro* (lies), *ainiiteriba* (disrespectful attitude) and *ojukokoro* (covetousness). Arguably, some of the qualities mentioned above could be categorized as either personal virtues or social virtues or both depending on the manner of appraisal.

Statement of the Problem

The training of the youths in Yoruba society, especially in traditional communities, was built into the folktales told under the moon each night (Akanbi, 2014). Some stories will permanently scare one from greed, theft, betrayal, and disobedience if taught through Yoruba language (Suleiman, 2023). The one that will teach individuals about the virtues of generosity, benevolence, trustworthiness, and other good traits is there in the curriculum of Yoruba language. These stories are told to the youths to develop ethical principles and differentiate the do's of society from the don'ts. However, cases of immoral acts among the youths are increasing geometrically in society. Some children are not generous, obedient, patient, kind, upright, truthful, and dependable in keeping covenants and bonds. In

contrast, others are lazy, greedy, and proud (Yusuf & Akintola, 2017). Moreso, students were not motivated enough to use the Yoruba language effectively in the sense that the community did not encourage them to speak it at home, or in the school as a result of civilization (Adeboye, 2002).

Several studies have been carried out on Yoruba language from different points of view. Musa (2019) investigated stakeholders' perception of the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National values among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria. Findings obtained from his study revealed that Arabic education could promote in-school adolescents' better understanding of Islam and promote religious and national values among them and there was a statistically significant variation in stakeholders' view on the role of Arabic education in promoting Religious and National Values among in-school adolescents. Badru and Odutayo (2023) examined “Parents' Perceptions on the Efficacy of Yorùbá Folktales in Cultivating Moral Values among the Youths”. The scholars, found among others, that the parents' perception of the efficacy of Yoruba folktales in cultivating moral values among the youths was high, and there was a significant gender influence on their perception. The study also concluded that Yoruba folktales cultivate moral values among the youth.

Similarly, Odejebi (2014) investigated parents' perceptions of Yoruba folksongs as a potent source of moral instruction among preschool children in Osun State, Nigeria. The study's findings suggested that respondents believed Yoruba folksongs had great potential for revitalizing moral instruction among preschool children. Gender did not have a substantial impact on their perception.

Badru (2021) examined stakeholders' perceptions of the educational usefulness of Yorùbá oral literature among senior secondary school students in South-west Nigeria. The study found that parents' perceptions of the educational values of Yoruba oral literature among senior secondary school pupils in South-west Nigeria were modest, and gender did not affect parents' perceptions. None of the researchers mentioned examined "Teachers' Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria". This created a researchable gap, part of which this study filled.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine "Teachers' Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria". Specifically, the study investigated:

- a. perception of teachers on Yoruba Language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria.
- b. difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender.
- c. difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the perception of teachers on Yoruba Language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria?
2. Is there any difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender?

3. Is there any difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the course of this study:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender?

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification?

Methodology

A descriptive research survey of the cross-sectional sub-type was employed in this research. This is the type that deals with collecting data from a defined population to describe the present condition using the variable under study Bala (2010). This research design examines variables in different groups that are similar in other characteristics. This design allows the researchers to collect data from different groups at a point in time. In particular terms, things happening at the moment are the primary concern of a cross-sectional study. This allows the researchers to examine the teachers' gender and qualifications concerning their perception. The population of this study consists of all teachers in, Nigeria secondary schools, while the target population was made up of teachers in South-West Nigeria secondary schools. The study sample was made up of 1200 randomly sampled Yoruba teachers; one hundred and seventy (170) males and one hundred and thirty

(130) females in the six (6) states; Ondo, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Lagos and Ogun states that constitutes South-West Nigeria. The instrument used for the data collection was a ten10-item researcher-designed questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on “Teachers’ Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria”. It was divided into two sections: Sections A and B. Section A requested personal information about the respondents i.e. Gender and Qualification. Section B contained a 10-item questionnaire designed by the researcher to elicit information from the respondents, which was based on a four-point Likert scale; Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) weighted 1, 2, 3, 4, respectively. The validity of the instrument was determined by measurement and evaluation experts in the Department of Arts and Language Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Nigeria. The draft of the instrument was given to them for content and face validation, and their corrections were reworked before the final version of the instrument was administered to the

respondents. The study adopts a test re-test method for the reliability of the instrument. An interval of three weeks between the first test and the re-test of the instruments on the same respondents was given. The two tests were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). The value of the Correlation Coefficient was reported at 0.05 level of significance. Research Question 1 was answered using mean scores, while Research Questions 2 and 3 which correspond with Hypotheses 1 and 2 were answered and tested using t-test statistics, all at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: *What is the perception of teachers on Yoruba Language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria?*

To answer Research Question 1, teachers’ responses on Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria are summed and subjected to mean scores. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers’ responses on Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria

SN	Items	A	D	Mean	Remark
1.	Yoruba language is the storehouse of cultural values and instruments to moral codes.	294	06	3.10	A
2.	The content of the Yoruba language curriculum could curb indiscipline and other immoral vices by making students and youth imbibe acceptable behaviour.	289	11	3.26	A
3.	The transmission of Yoruba language through its folktales rebukes laziness and greediness.	284	16	2.82	A
4.	Yoruba language tends to cultivate an ability to desist from pride.	273	27	3.43	A

5.	The taboos in Yoruba language serve as an instrument in combating crimes and corruption.	298	02	3.89	A
6.	Proverbs like <i>Sùúrù baba iwà</i> embrace the virtues of patience	299	01	3.91	A
7.	Understanding Yoruba language makes one a mature person and gives room to communal decisions.	221	79	3.63	A
8.	The term <i>Omoluabi</i> in Yoruba language desists a person from disapproved behaviour.	219	81	2.35	A
9.	The level of immorality is partly due to a lack of understanding Yoruba language.	200	100	2.72	A
10.	Yoruba language through its literature genres enjoins one to be committed to good morals.	183	117	2.72	A

Keys: 0.00 – 2.49 (Disagree)

2.50 – 5.00 (Agree)

Table 1 above shows the mean scores of teachers' responses on Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education in South-West, Nigeria. Ten (10) items on Yoruba language as an instrument of moral values were identified and perceived by the teachers accordingly. The table shows that no item has a mean score below 2.50. As shown in the table, items 6 and 5 have the highest responses from the teachers. Since the teachers' responses to all the items listed above show a mean score between 2.50 – 5.00, this implies proverbs like *Sùúrù baba iwà* embrace the virtues of patience, the taboos in Yoruba language serve as an instrument in combating crimes and corruption, understanding Yoruba language considered one a matured

person and gives room to communal decisions, among others.

Hypotheses Testing

The t-test is used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. Hypothesis 1 took care of Research Question 2, while Hypothesis 2 took care of Research Question 3.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender?

In order to test hypothesis 1, teachers' perceptions of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender are coded and analysed using independent t-test statistical analysis. The result of the t-test is reported in Table 2.

Table 2: The t-test on differences in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender.

Variable	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Male	170	24.76	6.35	1.92	132	0.11	NS
Female	130	24.98	7.20				

Table 2 shows the result of the t-test on the difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender. The table shows a t-value of 1.92 and a p-value of 0.11 which is greater than 0.05 (0.11 > 0.05). Since 0.11 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no

significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification?

In order to test hypothesis 1, teachers' perceptions of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification

are coded and analysed using independent t-test statistical analysis. The result of the t-test is reported in Table 3.

Table 3: The t-test on differences in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification.

Variable	No	Mean	Std.	t-value	Df	p-value	Remark
Qualified	264	16.13	6.18	1.26	109	0.07	NS
Unqualified	36	15.04	5.72				

Table 3 shows the result of the t-test on the difference in the teachers' perceptions of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification. The table shows a t-value of 1.26 and a p-value of 0.07 which is greater than 0.05 ($0.07 > 0.05$). Since 0.07 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification.

Discussion of the Findings

The first findings revealed that proverbs like *Sùúrù baba iwà* embrace the virtues of patience, the taboos in Yoruba language serve as an instrument in combating crimes and corruption, understanding Yoruba language considered one a matured person and gives room to communal decisions, among others. The finding corroborates the finding of Akporobaro (2012) who found that that folktales are used to achieve moral purposes. This study's findings also agree with that of Badru (2021) study on the educational values of Yoruba oral literature conducted in South-west Nigeria. The author reported parents' moderate perception of the educational values of Yoruba oral literature among senior secondary school students, indicating that Yoruba oral literature can moderately enrich their education.

The outcome of this study also shows that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of gender. This finding, however, disagrees with the finding of Odejobi (2014) who found that both male and female parents did not differ in their perception of Yoruba

folksongs in revitalizing moral education among preschool children in Osun State, while it corroborates the finding of Ajayi (2018) who found no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on Christian Religious Studies values in promoting moral development among senior secondary school students.

Findings from this study also shows that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education on the basis of qualification. The finding is similar to the finding of Olaniyan (2010) who found no significant difference in the teachers' assessment of Yoruba textbooks based on qualification.

Conclusions

This study dwelt into "Teachers' Perception of Yoruba Language as an Instrument of Moral Education in South-West, Nigeria" and it was established that Proverbs like *Sùúrù baba iwà* embrace the virtues of patience, the taboos in Yoruba language serve as an instrument in combating crimes and corruption, understanding Yoruba language considered one a matured person and gives room to communal decisions, among others. This study also concluded that there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of Yoruba language as an instrument of moral education based on gender and qualification.

Recommendations

Based on the results of data analyses and the conclusions reached above, the following recommendations are made:

- ✚ The Federal Government should set up a National Literature Committee that would encourage and motivate

indigenous writers by organising literary competitions at state and national levels while prizes are awarded to deserving writers. At present, only writers in the English language medium are encouraged, rewarded and recognised. Indigenous writers in Yorùbá medium should no longer be ignored.

- ✚ The government should make an effort to inculcate Yoruba Education as a core subject in primary and post-primary schools in South-West, Nigeria. This will ensure the awareness and teachings of Yoruba language thereby enhancing their moral education.
- ✚ Teachers should emphasise the importance of home language through their daily instruction in class to learners and express their commitment to teaching the Yoruba language.
- ✚ Yoruba teachers should serve as a good example to their students; in their dressing actions and subject matter. They should make use of a variety of methods and instructional materials in the teaching of Yoruba language.
- ✚ Parents should encourage their children to read understand their mother tongue, folk narratives that have been reduced to writing and listen to folk stories on radio and television to ensure that their children are instilled and nurtured with the moral values derived from the tales, thereby becoming responsible members of the society.

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