Effective Assessment of Learning Outcomes in Yoruba Language at Senior Secondary Schools: Imperatives for Teachers' Knowledge of Innovative Assessment Instruments

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Abstract

This study investigated the teachers' knowledge of assessment instruments in Yoruba language among public senior secondary school teachers in Ibadan North Local Government of Oyo State. The study adopted the survey research design. The participants were 20 SS 2 Yoruba language teachers randomly selected from 20 public senior secondary schools (one per school) in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. The instrument used was Teachers' Knowledge Test on Assessment Instruments in Yoruba (r=0.81). Data collection lasted two weeks. Two research questions were answered. Data collected from the study were analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that Yoruba language teachers had average knowledge of innovative assessment instruments with a mean of 11.50. There was a significant difference inmale and female teachers' knowledge of assessment instruments ($t_{(8)}$ t= 2.05; p<.05).The male teachers obtained a higher knowledge score (12.68) than female teachers (9.59).Based on the findings, it is recommended that Yoruba language teachers should attend regularly organised workshops, seminars and training programmes to expose them to the various innovative assessment tools.

Keywords: Assessment tools, Portfolio, Anecdotal records, Checklists, Learning outcomes

Introduction

The Yoruba language is one of the three major native languages in Nigeria. A large number of the population in the southwest region of Nigeria have Yoruba as their mother tongue. Nigeria currently have the Yoruba as one of its largest ethnic and cultural groups, even though Nigerian indigenous languages are not equally distributed. Yoruba is predominantly spoken in the southwest, whereas Hausa and Igbo are mainly spoken in the north and the southeast of Nigeria, respectively. All of

these indigenous languages belong to different language families.

The influence of Yoruba language in some parts of the world and Nigeria, in particular, has made it a popular language around the globe. Much investigation has been carried out on the language by both domestic and foreign researchers due to its widespread use. Yoruba language has a well-developed grammar, which has doubtlessly contributed to its international recognition. Oyedakun-Alli (2014) points out that the pre-eminence of Yoruba language has been firmly established in earlier works like Greenberg's (1963) Language Universals. For many years, Yoruba language has played several important roles in the areas of education and socio-cultural activities. In southwest Nigeria, Yoruba function as the language of instruction in the pre-primary and lower primary schools, and as a curriculum subject in secondary schools. Yoruba is used in the press, as well as radio and television stations across the country. Yoruba is also studied as a University degree course both in Nigeria and abroad.

In view of the vital roles of Yoruba language in education, the quality of its teaching and learning should be high so as to guarantee improved learning outcomes in it. An important component of quality teaching is assessment (Ugwu, 2019). Assessment is a systematic process of gathering information about what a student knows, is able to do, and is learning to do. Assessment information provides the foundation for decision-making and planning for instruction and learning. Assessment is an integral part of instruction that enhances, empowers, and celebrates student learning. Using a variety of assessment techniques, teachers gather information about what students know and are able to do, and provide positive, supportive feedback to students. They also use this information to diagnose individual needs and to improve their instructional programs, which in turn helps students learn more effectively (Ugwu, 2019).

The purpose of classroom assessment is to give students the opportunity to show what they have learned. It is instructive to note that assessment can focus on different aspects of teaching and learning: respectively textbooks and instructional materials, student achievement, and whole programs of instruction (Agbesanwa, 2014)

A primary concern in education is whether students attain the objectives of the course of study or curriculum scope and sequence.

They are more detailed descriptions of exactly what a learner is expected to be able to do at the end of a period of instruction. A description of specific objectives which can be observed and measured is known as behavioural objectives.

Assessment should occur in authentic contexts that allow students to demonstrate learning by performing meaningful tasks. Meaningful assessment achieves a purpose and provides clear and useful information. For example, it may identify misunderstandings in student learning, and provide corrective feedback and direction for further instruction. Assessment improves instruction and learning. Meaningful content and contexts for assessment help students by engaging their attention and encouraging them to share their work and talk about their learning processes. The ultimate goal of assessment is to develop independent life-long learners who regularly monitor and assess their own progress (Fabonmi, 2015). A good quality of assessment its comprehensiveness. In order words, to be effective, assessment must be carried out using varieties of formats. In modern Language classroom, variety of assessment tools available include: paper and pencil test, observation, rating scale, checklists, portfolio, role play, anecdotal records and project among others.

Despite the invaluable roles played by assessment in teaching-learning process, assessment implementation in Yoruba language classroom is not comprehensive as only test, quiz, assignment and class exercises are being deployed to the neglect of other innovative assessment tools such as observation, rating scale, checklists, portfolio, role play, anecdotal records and project. Consequently, most of the data collected from such assessments have not been helpful as they do not provide comprehensive and holistic assessment of students attainment in Yoruba Language. According to Agbesanwa (2014), when appropriate assessment formats are not deployed in the teaching-learning process of languages, unreliable information about the learners' attainment will be yielded and this can lead to taking wrong educational decisions from such results. Olagunju 2005, Wilson 2006, Oladunjoye (2007), have attributed this low level of performance of students to overuse of paper and pencil tests which do not give room to students to put into practice what is learnt in different ways. According to Fakeye (2010), it is ideal that assessment in the classroom caters for the

ways of obtaining information about students in every domain: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. This is what could make for a complete all round assessment. An assessment strategies that is biased on a domain may result in a bad test because there could be poor performance by performance by students because the wrong method of assessment has been employed. It is imperative that teachers of Yoruba language learn to use the right assessment strategies in their classroom. Among the innovative assessment formats are anecdotal records, checklists, portfolio, rating scale, rubrics, questionnaires and opinionnaires, interviews, projects and continua among others.

Anecdotal records are systematically kept notes of specific observations of student behaviours, skills, and attitudes in the classroom. Anecdotal records provide cumulative information regarding progress, skills acquired, and directions for further instruction (Fakeye, 2010). Anecdotal notes are often written as the result of ongoing observations during the lessons but may also be written in response to a product or performance the student has completed. Systematic collection of anecdotal records on a particular student provides excellent information for evaluation of learning patterns and consistency of student progress. Well-kept anecdotal records provide a valuable, practical, and specific reference about a student.

Checklists, rating scales and rubrics are assessment tools that state specific criteria that allow teachers and students to make judgments developing competence. They list specific behaviours, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and strategies for assessment, and offer systematic ways of organizing information about individual students or groups of students Agbesanwa (2014). Checklists usually offer a yes/no format in relation to the specific criteria and may be directed toward observation of an individual, a group, or a whole class. Checklists may be single-use or multiple-use.

Rating scales allow for an indication of the degree or frequency of the behaviours, skills and strategies, or attitudes displayed by the learner. They may be used to gather individual or group information, and are usually single-use. Multiple-use rating scales may be achieved by having students or teacher complete the same rating scale at different times during the school year and making comparisons.

Rubrics are an expanded form of rating scale

that list several specific criteria at each level of the scale. They may be used to assess individuals or groups and, as with rating scales, may be compared over time. The quality of information acquired through the use of checklists, rating scales, and rubrics is highly dependent on the quality of the descriptors chosen for assessment. Their benefit is also dependent on students' direct involvement in the assessment and interpretation of the feedback provided.

Conferences provide opportunities for students and the teacher to discuss learning strengths and areas for improvement, and to set learning goals. In conferences, it is possible to learn a great deal about students' understanding of information, attitudes toward learning, and the skills and strategies students employ during the learning process. Conferences provide opportunity for individualized teaching, for guiding students to more challenging materials, and for determining future instructional needs. Conferences are usually short informal meetings held with individual students, or a small group of students, and involve diagnostic listening, questioning, and responding.

Interviews, on the other hand, are conducted to gather specific information. They may involve a set of questions you asked for a specific purpose. For example, you may need information about the student's reading patterns and difficulties and may use a formal conference or interview to ask questions directly related to a particular aspect of the student's performance Fakeye (2010). Sometimes more formal interviews are conducted regarding student attitudes and metacognitive behaviors. These are often presented as a set of questions or activities to which the student may respond orally with the teacher recording responses. Whether conferences are informal or formal, they are most beneficial for assessment purposes when they are held on a regular schedule and both student and teacher come prepared with materials to share and questions to ask. Systematic conference notes form a permanent record of the content of the conference and set goals for future learning. Conferences provide opportunities to assess the appropriateness of the tasks and observe other areas of concern. Once students are familiar with good conferencing procedures, peer conferencing is an alternative for students to obtain feedback and discuss progress and goals.

Continua or continuums are a series of

descriptors that attempt to describe the behaviours that students exhibit as they are developing communicative competence. Teachers can use them systematically to observe and make judgments about students' progress. Although continua are designed to list descriptors according to developmental principles, most students do not develop in a linear fashion. Individual students may exhibit a range of indicators from a number of phases at any one time Paulson (2012). Key indicators describe behaviours typical of a phase and provide a way of mapping student progress through the various levels. Students may not move through phases at a regular pace. The indicators do not describe evaluative criteria through which every student is expected to progress in sequential order, but they do provide evidence of an overall developmental pattern.

Paulson (2012) defines portfolio as a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting the contents, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection. The physical structure of a portfolio refers to the actual arrangement of the work samples and can be organized according to chronology, subject, types of student product, or goal area. The conceptual structure refers to the teacher's goals for student learning. For example, the teacher may have students self-assess a work sample, then self-reflect, and then set a goal for future learning. The work-sample self assessment and the goal sheet may be added to the portfolio. Students generally choose the work samples to place in the portfolio. The teacher may also choose to have specific work samples placed in the portfolio.

To achieve effectiveness, each of the instruments must undergo proper construction processes and or properly planned and documented and made available to the teacher and learner so as to enable them monitor the progress of learning. The implication is that the mode of assessment employed by the teacher determines students' learning approaches whether 'surface or deep'.(Lee, 1994). Over reliance on traditional pencil and paper tests tends to encourage memorization which leads to the employment of surface approaches to learning. Innovative assessment forms that measure higher-order thinking have been found to be associated with deep-learning approaches.

Statement of the Problem

Assessment information provides the foundation for decision-making and planning for instruction and learning. However, reports have it that despite various instruments available for assessing students learning, Yoruba language teachers still stick to only paper and pencil test which does not give room to students to put into practice what is learnt in different ways. To make for comprehensive assessment, teachers must have indepth knowledge of various assessment tools such as observation, rating scale, checklists, portfolio, role play, anecdotal records and project and conferencing among others. Previous studies largely focused on assessment practices of teachers with little emphasis on teachers' knowledge and utilisation of various assessment instruments in Yoruba Language. Hence, this study investigated the teachers' knowledge of assessment instruments in Yoruba language among public senior secondary school teachers in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo state.

Research Questions

What is the level of Yoruba language teachers' knowledge of various assessment instruments?

Hypothesis

There is no significant **d**ifference in male and female teachers' knowledge of innovative assessment instruments

Significance of the Study

The study investigated teachers' knowledge of innovative assessment instruments in evaluating students learning outcomes in Yoruba language at senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government area of Oyo State. Findings revealed that Yoruba language teachers' innovative assessment instruments for evaluating students learning outcomes in Yoruba language was average. It also revealed that male teachers of Yoruba language are more knowledgeable about innovative assessment instruments than female teachers.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. The participants were 20 SS 2 Yoruba language teachers randomly selected from 20 public senior secondary schools (one per school) in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. The instrument used was Teachers' Knowledge Test on Assessment Instruments in Yoruba (r=0.81). Data collection lasted two weeks. Data collected from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of teachers' knowledge of innovative assessment instruments?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing Teachers' Knowledge of Innovative Assessment Instruments?

Mean	**11.50**	
Standard Deviation	**2.52**	
Lowest Score = 6; Highest Score = 15		
Score Interval	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
0 – 8 (Low)	4	20
9 -13 (Average)	11	55
14 – 20 (High)	5	25
Total	**20**	**100**

From Table 1, four teachers scored between 0 – 8 while 11 teachers scored between 9-13 also5 teachers scored between 14 -20. The table indicates that the majority of teachers selected had average knowledge of innovative assessment instruments. The Table further shows that just four teachers (20%) had low knowledge of the language testing techniques while the remaining 16 (80%) of the selected teachers had above the average score. This is further illustrated in the bar chart in figure 1.

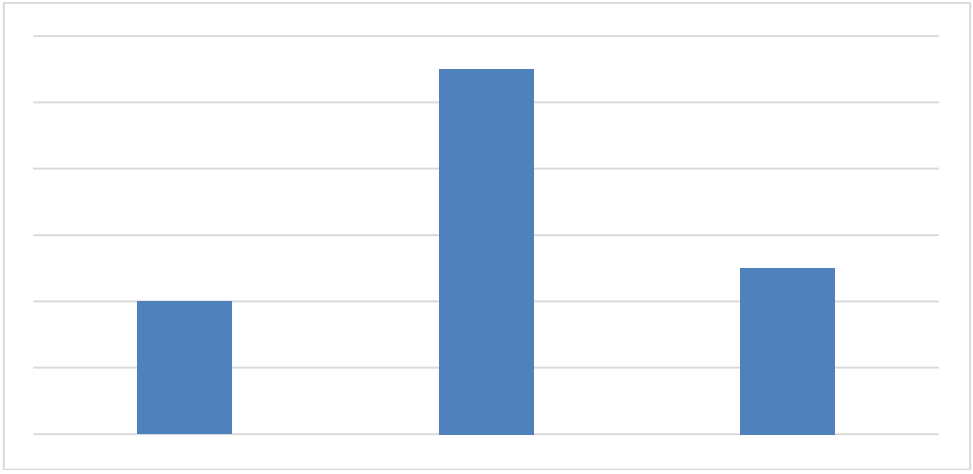


Figure 1: Level of Teachers' Knowledge of Language Testing Techniques

H_0: There is no significant difference between male and female teacher's knowledge of innovative assessment instruments

Table 2: T-test showing gender difference in

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	df	Calculated t	P	Remark
Male Teachers	12.68	2.52	5	18	2.05	.041	Sig.*
Female Teachers	9. 59		15				

*Sig. at .05 level

Table 2 showed that there was a significant difference in male and female teachers' language use in Physics classroom ($t_{(8)}$ t= 2.05; p<.05).Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Male teachers obtained a higher knowledge score (12.68) than female teachers (9.59)

Discussion of Findings

Knowledge of Yoruba Language Teachers of Assessment Instruments

The study investigated the level of Yoruba language teachers' knowledge of innovative assessment instruments. The findings showed that majority of Yoruba language teachers had average knowledge of innovative assessment instruments in Yoruba language teaching and learning. When teachers have knowledge of assessment instruments, they might be able to conduct comprehensive assessment that covers all the domains of learning in Yoruba language. The finding negates Oluwagbemi (2010) and Agbesanwa (2014) who found that teachers had no knowledge of knowledge of innovative assessment instruments other than paper and pencil test in Oyo and Ogun states respectively. The reason for the dissimilarities between the finding of this study and those of Oluwagbemi (2010) and Agbesanwa (2014) is that the two earlier studies were based on teaching of English language as opposed to Yoruba language which is the focus of this study.

Gender Differences in Teachers' Knowledge of Innovative Assessment Instruments

Findings also revealed that male teachers are more knowledgeable about the assessment instruments than female teachers. The hypotheses tested revealed that significant differences between male and female teachers' knowledge. This is not surprising because there is an age-long belief that females are better in language learning than

males. These findings agree with those of Fabonmi (2015) who reported in a study that male and female teachers differ significantly in disposition to formative and summative assessment.

Conclusion

The study investigated teachers' knowledge of innovative assessment instruments in Yoruba at senior secondary school in Ibadan North Local government area of Oyo state. The findings revealed that majority of the Yoruba language teachers are knowledgeable of these assessment instruments. Findings also revealed that male teachers are more knowledgeable about the assessment instruments than female teachers. It, therefore, becomes imperative for teachers to have good knowledge of various assessment instruments in other to be able to utilise same to enrich the teaching and learning process of Yoruba language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers should attend regularly organised workshops, seminars and training programmes and such training should be on exposing them to the various innovative assessment tools.
2. Training should also be given to teachers in service to disabuse their mind from seeing assessment as an end on its own but as a means to an end. Therefore, assessment should be seen as tool for learning and tool in learning.
3. The curriculum planners should endeavour to include carefully considered right type of assessment instruments in the curriculum so that comprehensive assessment of learning outcomes in Yoruba language could be achieved.

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