



The Use of Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction at the Early Grade Level: A Case Study of Some Selected Primary Schools in Bauchi State

¹Mohammed Mustapha Saidu, ²Sa'ad Ladan Mahmoud, ³Ibrahim Ahmad, ⁴Hussaina Musa Gar

^{1&3}Department of Hausa, School of Languages,
Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere,

²Department of Hausa, School of languages,
A. D. Rufa'i College of Education, Legal and General Studies, Misau,

⁴Department of English, School of Languages,
Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education, Kangere,
Bauchi State

ABSTRACT

This research work is going to examine the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level in some selected primary schools in Bauchi state. However, the research work is to bring the awareness of teachers, at primary school level, education administrators, critical stakeholders, curriculum experts, book publishers and host of others to be able to understand the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction, and the benefits it gives to educational development of children and the society at large. As enshrined in the national policy of education. So that teaching and learning will become more effective. The study intends to adopt qualitative research approach, through purposive sampling technique. In addition, interviews will be conducted and questionnaires will be administered on the targeted primary schools in order to ascertain their responses. Participants of this study would be drawn from the 20-primary school across the (20) Local Government Areas of Bauchi State. In the same manner, (200) primary schools will be used for the study, ten (10) pupils from each of the 20 LGA.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: August, 2023

Received in revised form: August, 2023

Accepted: January, 2024

Published online: February, 2024

KEYWORDS

Mother Tongue, Medium Of Instruction,
Early Grade Level, Primary Schools

INTRODUCTION

The importance of early grade education is unarguable. The Nigeria national policy on education (2004) stipulated that the medium of instruction in lower primary should be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment and at a later stage English. It has rightly been noted that for proper meaningful and purposeful education at the primary level the mother tongue or the prevailing language of the locality should be used as the language of instruction. The use of mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment in the lower primary school classes is to faster efficient learning and functional literacy in the primary schools. The level of the development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. Children who

come to school with solid foundation in their mother develop strong literacy abilities in the school language.

When parents and other care givers (grandparents are able to spend time with them in a way that develops their mother tongue vocabulary and concept. Children come to succeed educationally. Children knowledge and skills transfer across language from the mother tongue, they have learned in the home to school language. Transfer across can be two way-when the mother tongue is promoted in the, (e.g in a bilingual education programme) the concept language and literacy skills that children are learning in the majority language can transfer to the home language. In short, both language nurture in order the other than the educational

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



environment permits children access to both languages.

Education in mother tongue (MT) has two interpretations. The first readily comes to mind and which generated enough heat is using the mother tongue (mt) in a classroom where target language (TL), for example, English is used as the medium of instruction either for translating a word, explaining a structure, even checking comprehension children, 170s and 80s even in the 90s who dare use their (MT) in school environment, either are physically punished (Cummins, 2005,2) or finally sectioned.

The second interpretation and which has far reached implication than the first, in the policy of using the mother tongue itself as the medium of instruction. Its proponent argues, will help the students to learn efficiently in a language that they are familiar with, so that they could participate meaningfully in learning process (Atkinson, 1993). The fact of the matter is that teaching children in their MTs in a multicultural and multilingual country like Nigeria has continued to generate a lot of debate over the years. While some scholars point to the enormous gain accruable from such an endeavor, others have failed to see with a child which is tutored in a local language can cope with the demands of the technologically developed global village whose of the major language of communication is certainly not the child's local language used in teaching him.

The concept mother tongue is used synonymously with one's first language or pejoratively to indicate one's vernacular (see awoniyi, 1973), the fact is, whenever people hear of mother tongue, the first thing that registers in their minds is the word 'mother' followed by the language which that mother speaks. This line of thinking may not be entirely wrong. One should be quick to add that in the broadest of terms, there are types of relationship's; biological and social. A need, then a rise for a reinterpretation of the concept mother who sometimes may not have any generic connotations (Ouane, 1990) but merely relates to the linguistic community in which a person is born and nurtured. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) notes that a person who first introduces

and establishes a regular and lasting linguistic sound of communication with the child may or not be his biological mother tongue therefore, should be seen as that language a child knows first. Looking at these definitions and considering the fact that language is more of a social phenomenon than a psychological one, one will be tempted to redefine. MT as that language which the child is first introduced into the social environment in which he lives and which allows him function as a contributing of that society.

Teaching and learning are central to the concept of education, like in any other field; the teaching-learning situation is done through some known methodology. It is less pedagogical truism here to talk of the method of starting from known to known. The mother tongue (MT) of the child is referred to have as "known" while English is the unknown". As teaches, the mother tongue helps to actualize this method in the classroom. Mother tongue (MT) would help us to teach virtually all subject well, for example literature one reason why most of our students are afraid of literature is because the rich emotional heritage of the average. Nigerian acquired through his mother tongue was not probed and channeled to a study of his literature, however, primitive the literature might be where this is done; the child would smoothly transfer the literacy skills he had learnt through the medium of the MT to any foreign literature in later life.

MT plays an important role in learning and teaching a foreign language like English. When he runs into difficulty he could always fall back on the mother tongue (MT). In addition, more people would be able to red boots and literature on how a particular instrument is made when written or translated to their MT mother tongue. People who are technically-oriented could try their hands on such things and communicate their finding in their MT with the use of mother tongues as language of medium of instrument in our schools, and informally for adults, our parents and guardians who could read and write would be able to teach their children or words at home.

This will enhance learning al subjects effectively including the sciences, the problem of sciences phobia would be drastically reduced or

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



eliminated. Bamgbose (1976) argued that the only area in which the use of the MT in education has come to be accepted by many countries is in the realm of allow the use of MT in their school system of ten recognize that eradication of literature is best tackled through a literacy program based on mother tongue. If MT as a medium of instruction is good for the adults, one would logically believe that it should be good for the children or the youth. From the national policy on education, as it were the policy on MT education looks fantastic. But there arise problems here and there, a review of the problem of the implementation of the MT education are: There are no historical and descriptive data that are needed in many Nigerian languages. Many of the languages do not have orthography and are not interested in developing one for now. Because of the mental colonization disease, some look at their language as being inferior and could even go to the extreme aggressing communication in with their kit and kin.

It is observed that there are no enough coordinating committee in Nigeria presently for the implementation of the policy through the length and breadth of the country, while some states (especially in the far northern part of the country) practice and intact overdo it, many states do not give a host about the policy and what it says. At present, we do not have many personnel or teachers who are literate in their mother-tongue. The opposers of this system are therefore, of the view that without adequate man power, teacher that issue of mother tongue education will for a long time remain only on the paper as it in the national policy on education and not in practice. Workshops should be organized for primary school teachers from time to time on the language that re already in use as medium of instruction in the pre-primary and primary schools.

The policy should also be extended to cater for the whole period of the primary school education and not just the first three years. This is because three years will not be enough for child to learn to read and write in any language, mother tongue inclusive. Above all, the government in addition to finding the programs should be more serious in ensuring that every state of Nigeria is implementing the policy. As at now some states of

Nigeria is operate it and other do not, they should also employ more towards the success of MT education in Nigerian primary schools. If the above suggestions among others are put work the future of the use of MT as a medium of instructional the pre-primary and primary level of our education would not be as gloomy as it seems to some people in Nigeria today.

From the National policy on Education (2004) as it was a policy on mother tongue, education looks fantastic. But there are some arise problems here and there. The main aim of this study is to show the significance of the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level (early grade) in some selected primary schools in Bauchi state. It is therefore believed that teaching children in their mother tongue in a multi lingual and multi-cultural country like Nigeria, has continued to generate a lot of debates over the years. Hence, the relevance of this work which focused on the use of Hausa language in schools more especially lower primary school will be very significant particularly in the northern part of the country. It is important to note that pupils in the lover primary schools cannot speak or understand English language so, the designed objectives of the curricular of primary school are to be achieved. Therefore, teaching children in their mother tongue (MT) or language of the immediate community (L1) is necessary.

Objectives of the study

The Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level
2. To assess the problem of medium of instruction at lower primary school level
3. To identify problems of medium of instruction in lower primary schools
4. To proffer solutions aimed at remedying the problems identified

Research Questions

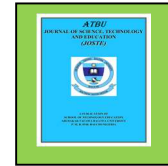
1. What are the major problems of medium of instruction in lower primary schools?

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



2. To what extent do parents provide literacy support for their children when at home or after school?
3. Do parents understand the importance of home literacy and parental support in the development of children's early language and reading skills?

METHODOLOGY

This research is Descriptive survey research. Its data will be drawn from the target population, using questionnaires and structured interviews which will be administered on the of the study. To simply put, its data would be collected from twenty (20) Local Government Areas of Bauchi State (7) LGAs from Northern, (7) LGAs from Southern, and (6) LGAs from the Central Senatorial Districts of the State. In the same manner, two hundred (200) primary schools will be used for the study, 10 from each LGA (5 from urban and 5 from rural areas). In each primary school, three (3) participants between the range of 5-8 years) would be used as source of data for the study, thereby making the total of 600 participants for the study. The data to be collected for this research will be drawn from 200 primary schools 10 from each of the 20 LGAs (5 from urban and 5 from rural areas) of the three senatorial zones of Bauchi State, using purposive sampling technique.

Purposive sampling technique is a sampling strategy that allows the researcher to collect data to be used in the research based on their relevance to the research. By this, 200 children between the ages of 5-8 (boys), 200 and 200 (girls) would be selected to participate in the study. The main instruments for data collection in

this study are questionnaire and structured interview, which will be administered on the targeted schools and their pupils. In the course of carrying out this study the researcher will do a purposive selection of 200 boys 200 girls, and 200 Teachers, making the total of 600 participants. These participants will be selected from rural and urban areas of the 20 Local Government Areas, across the 3 Senatorial Zones.

RESULTS

First and foremost, the importance of this study is to answer the boring question being asked by many Nigeria today: on the possibility of adopting a language (Indigenous Native language) as a medium of instruction Which will improve the performance pupils in the primary schools. This research as indicated in chapter is aimed at finding out the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at local government. For this purpose, I chose fifty (50) teachers ten (10) from each lower primary school of the five (5) selected primary schools in Bauchi State and they belong to different sex, age, status, educational qualification and area of specialization. There were eight (8) questions in all, and these questions were prepared in order to find out the views of the respondents as regards to the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level in Bauchi State. All questions were aimed at getting opinions and suggestions from the respondents with regards to the use of mother tongue as a medium of understands and how these can be implemented in the lower primary schools, however, all the data collected from the respondents shall be discuss below:

Table 1: Questionnaires Distribution

Variable	No. of Questionnaires Administered	Respondents	Percentage
	50	50	100%

From the above table, total number of fifty (50) questionnaires were issued and returned that is, 50%.

Research Question 2: Are teachers aware on the national policy on education as regards to the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level?

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved

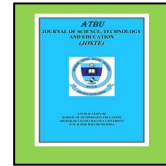


Table 2: Teachers aware on the national policy on education as regards to the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower primary school level

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	31	62%
No	19	38%
Total	50	100%

From the above, it shows that 31 questionnaires were answered Yes, i.e., 62% and 19 questionnaires were answered No representing 38%.

Research Question 3: Do you use mother tongue as a medium of instruction from primary 1- 3 in your school?

Table 3: The use mother tongue as a medium of instruction from primary 1- 3 in your school

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	20	40%
Total	50	100%

From the above table, 30 teachers indicated that they use mother tongue as a medium of instruction from primary 1 – 3 in the schools. While 20 teachers answered No.

Research Question 4: If mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction can it improve the performance of students on other related subjects?

Table 4: If mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction can it improve the performance of students on other related subjects

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	41	82%
No	09	18%
Total	50	100%

From the above table, 82% responses show that if mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction it can improve the performance of students on their related subjects. While 18% says No.

Research Question 5: Is the government taking measures on the successful implementation of this policy?

Table 5: Is the government taking measures on the successful implementation of this policy

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	18	36%
No	32	64%
Total	50	100%

The table above indicated that 64% of teachers responded No, while 35% responded Yes.

Research Question 6: What is the general performance of pupils since the implementation of mother tongue policy in school?

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ mqamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangerere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



Table 6: The general performance of pupils since the implementation of mother tongue policy in school

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	09	18%
Good	14	28%
Fair	19	38%
Poor	08	16%
Total	50	100%

The table indicated that 38% answered fair and 28 teachers responded good, 18% responded excellent while 16% teachers responded poor.

Research Question 7: Do you consider the teaching of mother tongue effective in the lower schools?

Table 7: Do you consider the teaching of mother tongue effective in the lower schools?

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Should be continued	35	70%
Should be abolished	15	30%
Total	50	100%

From the above table, it shows that 35 questionnaires were answered should be continued i.e., 70% and 15 questionnaires were answered should be abolished representing 30%.

Research Question 8: Is the government working to improve the service condition to enable them implement this policy?

Table 8: The government working to improve the service condition to enable them implement this policy

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	17	34%
No	33	66%
Total	50	100%

The above table indicated that 66% of teachers responded No, while 34% responded Yes.

Research Question 9: Did the government provide teaching aids, equipment such as textbooks on the mother tongue to be use for teaching/learning in your schools?

Table 9: the government provide teaching aids, equipment such as textbooks on the mother tongue to be use for teaching/learning in your schools

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	32%
No	34	68%
Total	50	100%

From the above table, it shows that 34 questionnaires were answered No. i.e., 68% and 16 questionnaires were answered Yes representing 32%.

some selected primary schools at the lower level in Bauchi State.

All the above were the data collected from our respondents who happened to be teachers of

CONCLUSION

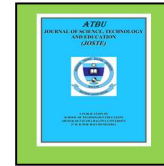
The research study was on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at lower

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangerere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



primary school level in Bauchi State. The scope of the research was restricted on five (5) primary schools in Bauchi State, the aim of the study was to know if this policy implemented by the government is being put into practice and if there is any improvement in the teaching and learning process.

From the data collected the responses shows the awareness and as for performance fair, which is the of mother tongue affects the pupils positively, also problems encountered by the teachers comes from the government most especially lack of materials that is books, teaching aids and as for the majority of the teacher government is not really working to improve the service condition of teachers to enable them implement this policy because of lack of materials also government is not taking any measure on the successful implementation of this policy, and until government do so all the policy be successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the problems discussed on this research project, the researchers wish to provide recommendations and suggestions based on their findings.

1. The correctness of ideas and contents is the function of a good knowledge of the language transmission. In case of primary school context, it is the language most spoken in the area school is situated. Cogent understanding of the mechanics of mother tongue is based to the ability of the child in primary school to understand other subjects in the curriculum.
2. To make meaningful impact mother tongue in Bauchi State on the study of other subjects, the following matters require attention.
3. The policy makers should be consistent. One way of solving the problem of inconsistencies is to furnish and staff our public school like the private schools to attract parents who are policy makers and other parents be encourage to send their children to such public schools where mother tongue (MT) is used as a medium of instruction.
4. Workshops should be organized for primary school teachers from time to time on the

languages that are already in use as medium of instruction in the pre-primary and primary schools.

5. The policy should also be extended to cater for the whole period of the primary school education and not just the first three years. This is because three years will not be enough or a child to learn it read and writes in any language, mother tongue (MT) inclusive.
6. Above all, the government in addition to funding the programme should be more serious in ensuring that every state of Nigeria is implementing the policy. As at now, some states operate it and others do not. They should also employ more personnel to join the coordinating committee to work towards the success of (MT) mother tongue education in Nigerian primary schools.
7. If the above suggestion among others are put to work, the future of the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the pre-primary and primary level of our education would not be as gloomy as it seems to some people in Nigeria today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors acknowledged the Telfund and management of Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education, Kangere for financially supporting the research.

REFERENCES

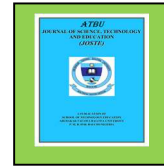
- Awoniyi, T. A. (2016). *Mother Tongue Education in West Africa, A Historical Background in Bamgbose A. (Ed.) Mother Tongue West. Stouthton: An Experience* Hodder.
- Ayodele, S. A. (2018). *Implementing the language components of National policy on Education at tertiary levels, The way out. Okene: Conference on teaching languages in Nigeria.*
- Bamgbose, A. (2016). *The changing role of the mother tongue in education in Bamgbose. A (Ed.) Mother tongue Education. UNESCO, 29.*

Corresponding author: Mohammed Mustapha Saidu

✉ ogamustykangere@gmail.com

Department of Hausa, School of Languages, Adamu Tafawa Balewa College of Education Kangere.

© 2024. Faculty of Technology Education. ATBU Bauchi. All rights reserved



- Education in the mother tongue by Dr. Moh'd Abdul, Department of modern European languages, Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. (2005). A paper presented at a National Capacity building workshops and roundtable for teachers in Sokoto Zone, organized by teachers Registration Council of Nigeria Between 19th and 23 December, at Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (1989). *National policy on Education (Revised 1981)*. Federal Ministry of Information Lagos.
- Ige, B. S. (2019). "Language in Education practice and Pupil's performance in scheduled Primary Schools subjects in Abeokuta". A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor for Philosophy, Department of teacher Education, University of Ibadan.
- Osuagu, E. C. (2016). *The effect of the English language on the study of other languages*. Stouthton: An Experience Hodder.
- Sambo, S. (2022). *Seminar Paper "Mother Tongue and its problems*.