

# ORATURE AS A VERITABLE TOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*A study of the communication process is important especially as it relates to the use of oral tradition as an instrument for the development of entrepreneurial skills. The mastery of the art form improves all the different aspects of a speaker's language which could be L1 or L2. It is noted that oral literature in Africa has continued to attract the interest of researchers and scholars because of its enduring aesthetic appeal and relevance. It is imperative for teachers and pupils to take oral literature with every seriousness required of it, but this can only be achieved when teachers interest, perception and attitude has been well stimulated towards an acceptance of oral tradition as a part of our existence irrespective of the Eurocentric views of some Africans.*

*This paper therefore attempts to investigate the perceptions of teachers and pupils with respect to the inclusion of oral tradition in the basic school curriculum in Nigeria. It concludes on the note that schools should inculcate traditional values into the students from an early age to bring them back to their roots, to remind them of who they are, the African in them and the tradition to which they belong thereby handing over the heritage of liberation as left by our forefathers.*

## **Introduction**

Communication takes place daily in our society through conversations either face to face, on the phone, Internet, letter and host of other means. The significance of communication is crucial to the continued understanding, cooperation, and development of entrepreneurial skills. Effective communication in entrepreneurship is important for decision making and successful operation. Entrepreneurs are generally self-reliant as well as proactive in nature. They are often discontent with the status quo and forced to react to the rapid change and complexities of their environment. (Wikipedia 2014). A commonly held view is that entrepreneurial education is an offering which tools learners with knowledge, skills and attitudes to be an entrepreneur – an innovator, the person who develops a new product, a new market, or a new means of production ( Okebukola, 2011)

Contemporary societies especially in developing countries are faced with diverse challenges some of which range from unemployment which has increased their poverty level, political instability, development of vices on daily basis, to language issues occasioned largely by its multi- ethnic nature. All of these challenges will not be ‘challenges’ but for the failure of the Nigerian government to address basic issues such as language inadequacies in the country. While it is agreed that there are guiding principles and policies as regards language use in the country, one wonders about implementation and constant reviews which should normally complement provisions. A review of language issues in Nigeria has taken us to identify oral tradition as an area of study which needs to be addressed with keen interest not only because of its aesthetics endowment but also owing to its credibility in providing food for the common man who could take to such professions as : writing, such as *Things fall apart by Chinua Achebe* (rich in proverbs), advertisement ( Afeez Oyetoro a.k.a. Saka), Master of Ceremonies (Ambrose Somide a.k.a. Baba Gboin, and others like Yoruba’s alaga iduro and alaga ijoko ( Cordinators at engagement ceremonies), interpreters, praise singers , Mourners , Town criers, TV presenters (mass communication), indigenous news casting, film productions among others. All these are entrepreneurial ventures if well explored. Good ideas are of no use unless they are implemented. The education policy as a product of systematic intellectualism, laid the foundation for entrepreneurial education at the secondary school thus: “... students who complete the junior secondary school should be streamed into: senior secondary school or technical college to acquire practical vocational skills, out of the school vocational training centre or apprenticeship scheme...( FME, 2008).

Three decades after independence, it was not too steep for graduates of the Nigerian University system to secure white-collar jobs for which university training prepared them. Beginning from the 1980s with a mix of economic and social forces interplaying, the rate of graduate unemployment observed a steady rise (Okebukola, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008). The declining economic fortunes of the country, decline in the provision of social infrastructure which led to lowering of employment capacities of industries and increased production of graduates were forces which combined to reduce graduate employment from 60% before the 1980s to about 35% in 2010. The social consequences of youth, especially graduate unemployment are dire, hence entrepreneurial education was called to duty by managers of the Nigerian University system in 2005. (Okebukola 2011)

It has been observed in the recent past that most Nigerian graduates lack the required skills for employability and productivity. (Okebukola 2014) One of the necessary skills required of such professionals can come to light with a developed interest in oral traditional. Hence, this study examines the aspects of oral tradition which are relevant for this purpose. These include: riddles, tongue twisters, rhyme, songs, proverbs, myths, drum language, legends, stories, folklores, mimes et; all of which if well absorbed by learners will lead to creation of jobs considering the evolving nature of our contemporary African society.

Some scholars have limited being an entrepreneur to having a huge company for production of goods and services, but the position of this paper is that entrepreneurship can be viewed from an artistic point of view. Abruga (2011) defines entrepreneur as 'the initiative and voluntary act of managing risk and assuming responsibility in transforming creativity and innovation to unique products for the purpose of providing effective and efficient solutions to consumers (clients), while achieving long-term profitability and contributing growth to the economy as a whole. Okebukola et al (2014) further noted that entrepreneurship as a concept is knowledge based and that until and unless an entrepreneur becomes information literate he/she will be toying with insolvency. Hence, the importance of language in entrepreneurship cannot be overlooked. This accounts for Okebukola's clarion call on the need to implement the language provisions in the National Policy on Education, she observed that the use of mother-tongue or language of immediate community as medium of instruction is not complied with, as most elites do not see any good in the idea of teaching in the indigenous languages. (Okebukola 2008). Taking a quick glance at China which accords the indigenous language a prime of place may drive home this point. Although this may be considered a digression from the norm, yet, it has promoted her as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Chinese products are branded by indigenous Chinese language without an attempt at consideration for language variation. All china products carry the emblem of the people's language making it so conspicuous a product in the market. Traders are given the opportunities of interpreting the china language in an extreme

situation however anyone who has patronized Chinese electronics has discovered there cannot be a complete eradication of Chinese language from these products meaning that one is only allowed to tamper with the basics for easy accessibility. Language standards have also contributed to the growth of Chinese herbal medicines which is sought all over the world today by all and sundry because of its curative abilities. All of these have been promoted sequel to language promotion in China irrespective of the ideology of a globalised language of commerce as would be argued by most scholars. Wikipedia (2014)

This will go further to develop job varieties occasioned by acquired skills. There is therefore the need to teach oral tradition in schools to make learners know more about their oral traditions and also communicate well in their languages. One of the avenues through which this can be achieved is the introduction of oral tradition in the school system. This study therefore assesses the perceptions of teachers and pupils at the basic level of the inclusion of oral tradition in the curriculum of basic education taking into account its implications for the development of entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria especially now that it is imperative for Nigerians to think beyond white collar jobs.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1.What are the perceptions of teachers of oral tradition?
- 2.What are the perceptions of pupils of oral tradition?
- 3.What are the perceptions of teachers and pupils as regards the teaching and learning of oral tradition at the basic level?

### **Research hypotheses**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and pupils on the inclusion of oral tradition in the basic education literature curriculum.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers from public

schools and private schools on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research project is essentially a descriptive survey design.

### **Population/ Sample**

The population for the study consists of all public and private basic schools in Ojo Local Government area of Lagos State out of which 100 pupils and 20 teachers were randomly selected from 10 sampled schools from the population.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used to collect data for the research are as follows:

- i. Questionnaire on Teachers' Perception and Attitude to Teaching and Learning of oral tradition.
- ii. Questionnaire on Pupils' Perception and Attitude to Teaching and Learning of oral tradition.

The aspects of oral tradition covered are: riddles, tongue twisters, rhyme, songs, proverbs, myths, drum language, legends, stories, folklores, mimes and the instruments were face validated by three lecturers from the Department of Language, Arts and Social Science Education, Lagos State University and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained after test-retest reliability procedure using two weeks of interval.

### **Data collection and Analysis**

The questionnaires were administered to teachers and pupils after some briefs on the purpose of the study and guide on the procedure for filling the gaps and answering the questions. They were collected on the spot with 100% retrieval rate. Data were analysed using means, standard deviation and the hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test.

## **FINDINGS**

The findings of the study in the order of hypotheses are represented in the following tables:

### **HYPOTHESIS 1**

Table 1: H<sub>01</sub>: **There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and pupils on the inclusion of oral tradition in the basic education literature curriculum**

Count	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	Df	t-cal	t-value	Signf
Perception of teachers on the inclusion of oral tradition	7.4500	7.701150	19	-1.585	1.65	P < 0.05
Perception of pupils on the inclusion of oral tradition	16.100	23.10821	19			

Sources: Field survey, 2014

Table 1 reveals the perceptions of teachers and pupils on the inclusion of oral tradition in the basic education curriculum with mean and standard deviation of respondents (7.4500, 16.100) and (7.701150, 23.10821) while the t-cal 1.586 < 1.65 of t-value respectively. Since the t-cal is less than t-value, it was found not significant. Hence the null hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers and pupils on the inclusion of oral tradition in the basic education literature curriculum' was accepted, (T-cal < t-value, df = 19; P < 0.05). This result shows that pupils' perception of oral tradition is greater than that of their teachers going by the pupils mean score of 16.100 against teachers 7.4500.

## HYPOTHESIS 2

Table 2: H<sub>02</sub>: **There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education.**

Count	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	Df	t-cal	t-value	Signf
MALE TEACHERS	2.600	1.07497	19	1.205	1.65	P < 0.05
FEMALE TEACHERS	1.100	0.31623				

Sources: Field survey, 2014

Table 2 reveals the perceptions of male and female teachers on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education with mean and standard deviation of

respondents as ( 2.600, 1.100 ) and (1.07497, 0.31623) while the t-cal 1.205 < 1.65 of t-value respectively, no significant difference was found hence the null hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female teachers on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education' was accepted (T-cal < t-value, df = 19; P < 0.05) . Male teachers had higher perception shown by mean score of 2.600 as against females 1.100.

### **HYPOTHESIS 3**

Table 3: H<sub>03</sub>: **There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers from public and private schools on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education**

Count	Mean (X)	$\sigma$	Df	t-cal	t-value	Signf
Perception of teachers from public school	1.2700	0.6333	19	3.306	1.65	P < 0.05
Perception of teachers from Private school	1.1400	0.42687				

Sources: Field survey, 2014

Table 3 reveals the perception of teachers from public schools and private schools on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education with mean and standard deviation of respondents as ( 1.2700, 1.1400 ) and (0.6333, 0.42687) while the t-cal 3.306 > 1.65 of t-value respectively. The difference was found significant such that the null hypothesis, 'There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers from public schools and private schools on the inclusion of oral tradition in basic education' was rejected (T-cal > t-value, df = 19; P < 0.05). This result shows that teachers in the public and private schools have differing views as regards oral tradition going by the mean scores 1.2700 and 1.1400 which shows that public school teachers have better perception of oral tradition as against private school teachers.

### **Discussion of Findings**

- The viewpoint of teachers and pupils as regard oral tradition does not differ significantly owing to the beliefs surrounding the subject matter. The probable reason is that they do not see the importance of oral tradition to their teaching and learning as it has not been adequately emphasized in the school curriculum. Besides, the acknowledged use of English language as medium of instruction might have resulted in a dwindling interest in oral tradition. Observations in some secondary schools in Tanzania has shown that most students and teachers are seriously handicapped when it comes to using English as the language of instruction though propagated for use as language of instruction(LOI). (Mlama & Matteru,1978; Rubagumya et al,1998; Quorro,1999; Brock- Utne,2001a,b, 2005, 2007; Vuzu, 2005)
- The viewpoint of male and female teachers as regards the subject matter does not differ significantly.. This means that an equitable perception will help with a uniform dissemination of information as regards oral tradition irrespective of the teacher's sex. The National Policy on Education provides the basis for oral tradition to thrive in education having stated clearly that primary school instruction should be given initially in the mother tongue(MT) which must of necessity include the knowledge pupils bring from home and which have been acquired in their mother tongue. The National curriculum prescribes that reading in the MT should precede reading in English language for obvious reasons; some of which are that MT is the language of socialization, thoughts, perception and a means of identifying with members of the community (FME; 2009), this should serve as the basis for teachers, either male or female, to imbibe the basics of oral tradition, exhibit the knowledge and advocate for the implementation through a readdress of our language policy.
- This result shows that teachers in the public and private schools have differing views as regards oral tradition going by the mean scores. While it cannot be said that the public school teachers have attained a level of proficiency in oral tradition, it was discovered that they have a higher level of perception as against the private school teachers whose perception as regard oral tradition is less than that of the public school teachers. This might be owing to private schools teachers' lackluster attitude towards the subject of discussion because of parents' preference for English language, since he who pays the piper dictates the tune. L1 in Africa is being axed daily. Bamgbose in Brock-Utne and Ingse Skattum(2009) noted that despite many studies that show it makes a good sense to begin a child's education in his or her own language and home experience , the age-long tradition of teaching a child in a language other than the first language or teaching in a child's first language only in the lower classes of primary school still persist in many African countries' with a devastating effect. Also, in a research by Qorro (2005) on parent's views on the language of instruction issue in Tanzania, the majority of parents in the sample admitted that they were aware their children learnt very little when taught in English . However , they objected to the proposal to change the medium in secondary



school to Kiswahili' (Qorro;2009). Going by these discussions, more needs to be done to balance the insight and viewpoints of teachers in the public and private schools for adequate dissemination of information through the study of literature in English so that the same result can be achieved both by pupils of public and private schools which will in turn bring about a balanced education and a better society politically and economically.

### **Conclusion**

Going by the results of the study, teachers' and pupils' perception of oral tradition and its inclusion in the school curriculum is not encouraging. This calls for urgent attention on the part of government and education stakeholders. Researchers have drawn our attention to the educational values provided by the traditional aspects of our culture and heritage in the form of inculcation of morals, good characters such as respect for old age, loyalty to parents and institutions, honesty, devotion to duty and many other desirable qualities and the acquisition of skills through bilingual education and the development of indigenous languages that will promote entrepreneurial skills development in Nigeria (Okebukola 2012).

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, this study advocates that cultural revival is of utmost importance at this time when the economy and education of Nigeria seems not to be doing well. Education is not doing enough to sensitize pupils and teachers to socialization and familiar values while the economy is so bad that Nigerians are roaming the streets jobless. The inter-relatedness of a language to its economy and literature cannot be over-emphasized; hence, literature must be considered language in operation. Related texts materials should be approved to stimulate teachers and pupils interest in oral tradition so as to improve their perception and build employability tendencies with language and arts at the forefront. Yoruba oral tradition should be well documented and translated to other languages. They should be incorporated into the curricula of basic education. This is the only way of preventing the extinction of our cultural heritage and improving the general well-being of Nigeria and her people who rather than wait eternally for white collar jobs are creators of jobs and employers of labour.

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