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Relative Effects of Environmental Variables on Students' Achievement in Yoruba in four Selected Schools in Egba Area of Ogun State

Makinde, Solomon Olanrewaju

Abstract

The study sought to find out the relative effects of environmental variables (rural/urban and socio-economic backgrounds on students' achievement in Yoruba in four selected secondary schools in Ogun State. Two researcher made instruments were administered on two hundred (200) randomly selected students. Three null hypotheses were generated for the study. The results revealed a significant difference between the achievement of students from rural and urban environments while no significant differences was established between the performance of students from high and low socio-economic status. Also, a non-significant difference was established between the achievement of students of educated and illiterate parents. Recommendations were made on the basis of the findings that rural schools should be made to more attractive to both students and teachers and that parents should be educated on the need to encourage their children in indigenous language study.

Introduction

Yoruba language is the language of the Yoruba people. The Yoruba people are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. They occupy the western part of the country and to be specific, they can be found in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Kwara, Ekiti, Osun and major part of Kogi States. The Yoruba people can also be found in other countries around the world such as Benin Republic, Togo, Sierra Leone, Brazil, Cuba, South America and West Indies.

Yoruba language came into formal school curriculum through the effort of the Christian missionaries who found that it would be difficult for them to propagate Christianity effectively without the use of the people's mother-tongue. Through them, Yoruba language became the first written language in Nigeria (Olajubu 1972).

low socio-economic status in Yoruba Language.

- There is no significant difference in the achievement of students of educated and illiterate parents in Yoruba Language.

Methodology

Sampling: The study sample consisted of two hundred SS III students randomly selected from four schools in the study areas. Fifty (50) students (25 males and 25 females) were drawn from each of the four schools. The schools were Abeokuta Grammar School, African Church Grammar School (Abeokuta) and Orile-Keesi High School Olodo, Orile-Kenta High School, Olugbo (Odeda Local Government). Subjects were randomly drawn from the schools in order to ensure a true representation of both high and low socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils as well as the rural-urban dichotomy.

Every student had the chance of being selected for the study as there were more than twenty five males and females in SS II in each of the schools. Schools in the Abeokuta township were classified as being urban while the selected schools in Odeda Local Government were rural schools. The socio-economic status of parents were determined by their levels of education, professional/occupation status as well as their estimated incomes. While such professionals like Senior Academic members of tertiary institutions, judges, senior medical practitioners, top government officials, and civil servants among others were categorised as belonging to the high level status, members of the low socio-economic status include junior academic members, middle cadre officials in both the government and private establishments and others like typists, clerical assistants and artisans, farmers among others.

Instruments

For the purpose of data collection, two instruments: Students' Questionnaire on Yoruba Language Study (SQUYOLAS) and an Achievement Test on Yoruba Language (ATYOLA) were administered on the subjects. The SQUYOLAS is a 150 item instrument designed to elicit information on the subjects' background in terms of school, age, class, sex, language spoken at home, parents' occupation and other socio-economic indices. The ATYOLA has two sections: Grammar and Literature with 15 items in each of the section. Some of the questions were in the objective while others were in the fill-in the gaps format. One mark was allocated to each of the items and after scoring, the scores were converted to fifty (50) marks.

Validation and Reliability of Instruments.

The instruments were validated with a correlation coefficients of 0.72 and 0.79 respectively. The ATYOLA (Achievement Test) was also face validated by two

experts in Language Education. Their observations and suggestions were considered before the instruments were administered.

Data Analysis and Findings

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the achievement of students from rural and urban environments in Yoruba.

The students' *t*-test was used to determine the difference as presented in Table

Table 1: Difference in Rural/Urban Environments and Students' Achievement in Yoruba

| Variables | In | X | X | SD | DF | Observed <i>t</i> | Critical <i>t</i> | Remark |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|-------|-----|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Rural | 100 | 2038 | 20.38 | 5.894 | 198 | 2.13 | 1.96 | Significant |
| Urban | 10 | 2785 | 27.87 | 5.44 | | | | |

$P < 0.05$

The observed *t*-value 2.13 is greater than 1.96 table value at 0.05 level of confidence. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected. In other words, there is a significant difference in the performance of students from rural/urban environments in Yoruba.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status in Yoruba.

The students' *t*-test is also used to establish the difference as presented in Table

Table 2: High and Low, Socio-economic Status and Achievement in Yoruba

| Variables | In | X | X | SD | DF | Observed <i>t</i> | Critical <i>t</i> | Remark |
|-----------|----|------|-------|------|-----|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| High | 58 | 1416 | 24.43 | 5.72 | 198 | 0.503 | 1.96 | Not Significant |
| Low | 42 | 3400 | 23.96 | 6.63 | | | | |

$P < 0.05$

The analysis presented in Table 2 shows that the observed *t* value of .503 is lesser than the value of 1.96. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected because there is no significant difference in the achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status in Yoruba.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the achievement of students from educated and illiterate parents in Yoruba.

Table 3 displays the achievement of subjects from educated and illiterate parents:

Table 3: Educated Illiterate Parents and Students' Achievement in Yoruba

| Variables | In | X | X | SD | DF | Observed t | Critical t | Remark |
|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|------|-----|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Educated Parents | 92 | 2231 | 24.26 | 5.52 | 198 | 0.49 | 1.96 | Not Significant |
| Illiterate Parents | 108 | 2565 | 23.88 | 6.97 | | | | |

$P < 0.05$

In Table 3, the observed t of 0.49 is lesser than the critical t value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states "there is no significant difference in the achievement of students from educated and illiterate parents in Yoruba" is not rejected.

Discussion

The result of the students' t test for hypothesis one indicates a significant difference in achievement in Yoruba of students from urban/rural environments. It is discovered that the urban students performed better than their rural counterparts in the achievement test. This finding corroborates that of Ogunlowo (1984) who found that subjects from urban environment performed better than their rural counterparts. This goes to show that residence in rural/urban is significantly associated with variation in scores for all environmental indices. The variation as revealed in this study can be explained. The students from urban schools are exposed to amenities like home library, reading table, electricity and electronic gadgets (radio, television and video) and private Yoruba teachers which afford them an edge over the rural students. It was also observed that the urban schools were more staffed than the rural schools. These therefore explain the reasons behind the difference existing in the performance of the rural/urban students.

From hypothesis two, it is discovered that there is no significant difference between the achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status. Table 2 reveals that the high socio-economic status students performed better than their low-socio economic status counterparts with a high mean score of 24.43 to 23.96

although the difference is not significant. This result agrees with that of Adelusi (1978) who found that subjects from high socio-economic homes performed better than those from low-socio-economic homes. The non-significance of the difference in achievement of both groups could be as a result of the fact that students are exposed to the same equal appalling school conditions where instructional resources such as radio, television, video gadgets which could enhance the teaching and learning of Yoruba language are not available. There are programmes on the radio and television that are presented on Yoruba language and literature and which are based on the syllabus of either the JS or the SS. Such programmes could be recorded by the teacher and relayed to the students. Special festival and cultural practices of the Yoruba people could be brought to the classroom through the use of the video gadgets and there is no doubt that students who are exposed to such an enriching environment would benefit maximally from it. The finding related to hypothesis three shows that there is no significant difference in the achievement of subjects of educated and illiterate parents in Yoruba. Although students of educated parents performed better with a mean score of 24.26 than those of illiterate parents with a mean score of 23.88, the difference is not significant. From the information elicited through the questionnaire, 76% of the entire subjects had the problem of textbooks while the attitude of parents toward the subject is the same lukewarm all over the place. Most parents do not want their wards to study Yoruba language. They prefer a situation whereby their children would perform well in English Language only. Parents should have assisted their children to learn Yoruba language by speaking the language with them, provide the textbooks and sometimes to narrate Yoruba folktales to them. These might account for the reason why there is no significant difference in the achievements test in Yoruba of students from educated and illiterate parents.

Conclusion

A number of conclusions could be drawn from this study. It can be said that environment plays an important role in the acquisition of and achievement in Yoruba language. Students in urban schools are more at an advantage over their rural counterparts, because the urban schools are better staffed and they enjoy the provision of electricity supply than those in the rural areas. Students' problems can also be traced back to the home. Some parents do not yet appreciate the relevance of the mother tongue in the education of the child. This could account for the reason why most of them refused to buy textual materials for their wards in the subject. The school should educate parents more on the effectiveness of indigenous language and the mother tongue in developing the child's cognition when he has adequate linguistic facility to communicate in the language. It is therefore recommended that the

government at all levels should encourage the teaching of indigenous languages at every level of education in Nigeria, that is, from nursery/primary to the tertiary levels. Despite the fact that language provision for every level of education has been stipulated in the National Policy on Education, it is sad to note that there is no effective monitoring to ensure the full implementation of the provisions. The government can come to the aid of parents especially at this austere period by acquiring and lending books to the students. The government should make the rural schools more attractive to both students and teachers. Rural areas should be provided with basic amenities and instructional materials including library facilities provided in the schools. Special grants should be given to teachers posted to the rural schools. Yoruba teachers and other Nigerian language teachers should be given the kind of allowance that is being enjoyed by the science teachers in order to encourage them. School administrators should desist from prohibiting the speaking of Nigerian languages in the schools as this can actually affect students' attitude negatively. Teachers should also serve as models to the students. They should make their lessons more motivating and interesting. This can be made possible by keeping themselves abreast of modern methods, approaches and technique of language teaching.

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