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OF
THE ASSOCIATION
OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES
TEACHERS (JANLAT)

NO. 1, 2004

Dr S.O. Makinde

JANLAT

*Journal of the Association of Nigerian
Languages Teachers*

No. 1 (2004)

Goke Alamu
Editor

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National Institute for Nigerian Languages
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CALL FOR PAPERS

JANLAT, *JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES TEACHERS* calls for well-researched papers, reports, in any area of Nigerian languages and literature, linguistics etc. Papers should have an abstract of not more than 200 words.

Papers will be assessed for original contribution and orderly presentation of material. An assessment fee of N1000 should accompany each contribution.

Contributors whose papers are accepted for publication will be expected to submit two hard copies and an electronic version of their papers. Such papers should be accompanied with a publication fee of N6000.

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Editorial

At the 9th Annual Conference at Aba members unanimously decided that ANLAT should establish a journal where well-researched articles on language studies, pedagogy, linguistics, literature etc. will be published. The aim of the journal is centered on its contributions to the development of Nigerian language studies and its provision of avenues for members of ANLAT and language scholars to publish their researches. This is the product of this noble idea.

We are grateful to our contributors and in particular our assessors who have reviewed the papers in this volume. But we still appeal to them that each time we call on them for their service, they should expedite action on papers sent to them for assessment.

There are fourteen papers in this volume. The first paper on language pedagogy presents a practical approach to the effective teaching of Nigerian languages. The second is on technique of humor in Faleti's work while the third presents an autosegmental approach to the interface between Yoruba syntax and tone. The fourth employs the feminist approach to analyse the West African popular literature. The next two papers dwell on aspects of literature while the seventh and eight look at methods of teaching Yoruba and language education. The ninth paper takes a cursory look at how language curriculum can be designed while the tenth discusses the challenges facing Nigerian languages in the 21st century. The next two papers present the relevance of Nigerian languages to democracy and the issue of bilingualism among students respectively. While the thirteenth paper considers the importance of the Mother Tongue to national development, the last paper employs theories of Phenomenology and Existentialism in analyzing the Yoruba concept of destiny.

I acknowledge the editorial assistance of Mrs. Glory Ebubedike and Mr. Ellis Nwulia for carefully typesetting the papers.

It is our hope that this volume will stimulate your interest in Nigerian language studies and further discussion on the issues raised therein.

Thank you.

Goke Alamu
Editor, JANLAT

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Modern Approaches and Methods of Teaching Yoruba Language and Literature

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Abstract

Undoubtedly language is a major factor in the teaching-learning process. It entails the use of the spoken or the written word for the transfer of knowledge or skills, whether in self-instruction or in a teacher-learner relationship. In this chapter, two important areas will be examined. These are Yoruba language and its literature. For Yoruba language, two situations will be covered. These include Yoruba as a first language (L1) and Yoruba as a second language (L2). Literature as a discipline attempts to explain man and his environment with a creative imagination using language in an organized and exemplary fashion. Literature in Yoruba, which has been taught as a separate subject in the senior secondary schools and examined as a subject in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE), organized by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) has now been made to be an aspect of the Yoruba Language SSCE examination.

Introduction

Yoruba is the language of the Yoruba people who are the major occupants of the southwestern part of Nigeria. Yoruba language is one of the three major Nigerian languages. It came into formal school curriculum by accident and not for scholarly purpose. Its teaching came with the introduction of Christianity into Nigeria. The missionaries discovered that soul winning cannot be effectively done without the people's mother tongue. As a result, they engaged the services of the ex-slaves like Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther towards ensuring that Yoruba language was reduced into writing. According to Olajubu (1972), Yoruba is the first to become a written language among the indigenous languages in Nigeria.

Awoniyi (1983) observes that mother tongues in the traditional society have been used for a variety of purposes by the people and these include: daily communication, greetings to suit appropriate occasions, cultural reproduction, intellectual development of the child through oral literature and oral history, fostering human relationship and consequently regulating, modifying and enhancing human behaviors in the society. Other uses of mother tongues include teaching every member of the society the roles and responsibilities expected of them, for commercial purpose, teaching the child through folklore, folktales, witty proverbs,

environment, (Fafunwa, 1975; Omojuwa, 1983; Ojerinde 1983, Olatrewaju, 1990), it is pertinent to know that many parents including the elites have refused to be convinced about the benefits inherent in learning and using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools.

One can hardly find a pre-primary or primary school where the indigenous language is used as a medium of instruction as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (1977) revised in (1981) and (1998). Many parents still discourage their wards from studying Nigerian languages. The government too is not encouraging interested students to pursue degree programmes in Nigerian language through scholarship awards as it is done to students in the sciences and there is acute shortage of manpower to teach even the major Nigerian languages as L₁ and L₂ in the secondary schools.

However, it is incumbent upon the Yoruba as well as other Nigerian languages teachers to intensify their efforts towards ensuring the survival of the languages against all identified odds. Apart from being knowledgeable in the content areas, they must be adequately prepared and equipped with modern approaches and methods of language teaching so that both they (teachers) and the students will be able to meet the challenges of an ever-developing world in science and technology.

Language Teaching: Approaches and Methods

Approach, method and technique are three concepts that are often used interchangeably and with confusion. Approach is a general teaching orientation or direction that is informed by and closely tied to a particular theory of the nature of language and how it is learnt. An approach in this regard subsumes both method(s) and technique(s). Such methods are specific instructional strategies employed in the learning of certain aspects or skills of a language like the Grammar-Translation, Direct, Audio-Lingual, Cognitive-Code, Functional-Notional and Communicative Competence methods. On the other hand, each of these methods has its own component techniques which involve the various strategies or tactics geared towards the achievement of instructional objectives like drilling, dialogue, questioning, repetition, recitation, etc. (Williams, 1990).

It is very important to know that all language approaches are offshoots of two competing theories of the nature of language and its learning, which are Mentalism or Innatism or Rationalism (Cognitive Developmentalism) and Behaviorism or Empiricism. All the methods mentioned above would be covered as well as other methods such as Acculturation, Community Language Learning, and those that are used in teaching literature in Yoruba.

The Grammar-Translation Method

The Grammar-translation method is an old fashioned method, which dominated language teaching in Europe during the nineteenth century (Williams, 1990). According to Ubahakue and Obi (1979), it was the best-known method of teaching a language until about 1950. The advocates of this method believe that learning the rules of a language is the most important thing because language according to them is ruled governed behaviour. In other words, this method emphasizes how language works. Language teaching is characterized by memorization of vocabulary items, translation and the use of mother tongue in foreign language teaching, the use of literary texts in teaching the structure of the target language with little or no attention to pronunciation and communicative use of language. Learning is also by deduction that is the teacher states the rule before giving examples to illustrate the rule. The underlying learning theory is that language learning is a process of developing or training the mental faculties.

The method is no doubt relevant to teaching Yoruba as a second language. In spite of criticisms against this method, it should be noted that in certain instances, it could be useful and necessary to state grammatical rules and explain them afterwards. Translation can also be a necessity for effective language teaching in certain instances. Using a method that works in a particular situation should be the deciding factor while choosing methods of language teaching. A typical Yoruba language class using the Grammar-translation method in teaching Greetings to second language learners in Nigeria where the official language is English is given below:

Topic: Ìkíni (Greetings)

Teacher: Greeting is a very important aspect of the Yoruba culture.

Every tribe or race has its own way of greetings but today we want to learn some greetings among the Yoruba people.

The teacher presents the lesson following this format:

| Yoruba | English Equivalent |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| (E) Káàro o/ | Good morning |
| Sé a jì dáadàa? | How was the night? |
| (E) Káàsán o | Good afternoon |
| (E) Ku ìròlé o | Good evening |
| (E) Kàalé o | Good evening |
| (O) Dàárò o/ká sùn-un re | Good night/Have a good night |
| (E) Kúusé o | well done |
| (E) Káàbò o | Welcome |

(E) is used to indicate plural or honorific forms.

The Direct Method

This method was developed and launched at the beginning of the twentieth century as one of the natural methods as a reaction to the Grammar-translation method. It swings to the other extreme by stamping out translation and the use of the mother tongue in teaching a foreign language or second language (Williams, 1990, Sanusi, 1996).

As the name implies, the teacher uses the target language right from the beginning of the lesson. The teacher helps the learners to understand the target language by using the target language with the assistance of techniques such as actions, gestures, miming, use of aids like picture, diagrams, illustration on the chalkboard, etc. The aim of the teacher is total immersion in the sound and he teaches grammar through induction that is, presenting examples and practicing it before the rule is given. Such rules given or generalized are stated in the target language.

According to Williams (1990), the Direct Method is based on the theory that language learning is a natural process. Mother tongue acquisition or language learning takes place by straight or direct association of words and structure of a language with the things or objects and actions they refer to. It is also based on the principle that speech comes before reading in language learning. Emphasis is also placed on the new vocabulary rather than any other levels of linguistics.

The method at its best can be highly exciting to the learners, as they are actively involved as they are taught to speak and understand the target language. However, it can be extremely unstructured and time consuming as the students might not have a clear idea of what they are expected to do. To the teacher, it can be energy sapping as he has to sustain the enthusiasm of the learners with reasonable talking and the use of actions, gestures, etc. that are relevant to the topic in question.

Criticisms of the less structured aspects of the method have led to its modification to its Graded Direct Method in which some grammatical explanations and occasional translation have been introduced. In reality the second language teaching and learning cannot but need the use of occasional translation and explanation of grammatical elements. In teaching Yoruba language as a second language teachers will do well by being more eclectic by adopting the principles of the Graded Direct Method.

The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio Lingual Method is based on the theory of behaviorism and structural linguistics (Bloomfield, 1993) and (Skinner, 1957). It lays emphasis on speech, pattern practice, drills, habit formation, repetition of the same structure in common

It derives its techniques of pattern practice from structural linguistics, which entails the use of substitution, addition, combination and expansion and transformation drills. While from the theory of behaviorism (the theory of stimulus-response) language like other forms of behavior take the form of repeated responses to stimuli (e.g. repetition of utterances in similar situations such as greetings), language behaviour is believed to likely occur when it is followed instantaneously by pleasurable reactions (reinforcement). For instance, a child is likely to repeat utterances (words, phrases) when he is praised by those around him. In other words, language is thus seen as habit formation.

According to Williams (1990) the following principles which have been popularized in the form of five slogans in Moulton (1961) are:

- i. Language is speech not writing.
- ii. A language is a set of habits.
- iii. Teach the language not about the language.
- iv. A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say.
- v. Languages are different.

This method is originally and popularly referred to as Aural-Oral Method. According to Akinloye (2002), it is also known as the Mim-Mem (mimicry-memorization) method. It considers the oracy skills (listening and speaking) as the first and central focus in language learning. However it does not neglect the literacy skills (reading and writing) except that they are considered as secondary. For instance, one of its proponents, Nelson Brooks in Sanusi (1996) believes that language is primarily what is said and secondarily what is written. Proponents believe that the ear and tongue should be trained first by encouraging accurate pronunciation with a sound mastery of the sound system before teaching the spelling system. This according to them is the natural order.

As earlier indicated, language teaching is approached through its structures and taught in its patterns such that words are taught through sentences and sentences are taught through realistic situations. Situations are realistic when items are chosen from the learner's environment like the home, market, classroom, etc.

It is the task of the teacher to choose the structure to be taught which is also determined by the situation. The chosen structure should be presented and practice through careful handling of the situation through variation of the content words with the use of substitution tables where the content words, can be varied to present new structures. Through appropriate drills and practice the substitution table enables the learner to learn a second language through the same method (habit formation) which he learns his mother tongue. An example of substitution which

can be used in teaching the adverbial clause of time (*Awé-gbólóhùn asàpónlẹ́ aláṣikò*) is given below:

| | | | | |
|---------------|-------|------------|----|---------------|
| Bádé | | | | òwúrò yí |
| Àyóká | | Ilé-èkó | | òwúrò àná |
| Táyé àti Tolú | lọ sí | Oja Oba | Ní | alé ijeja |
| Bàbá Ode | dé sí | Ibùdókò | | òsè tí ó kojá |
| Iyá Alákàrà | | Odò Obà | | òru àná |
| Awakò | | Ìsàlẹ̀ Aké | | òsán yí |
| Iyáwó | | | | ìdájí òní |

Figure 1: Substitution table for teaching adverbial clause of time (*awé-gbólóhùn asàpónlẹ́ aláṣikò*)

The Functional-Notional Approach

This approach is one of the current developments in language teaching that sees the learner as social individual. Language is viewed as being primarily needed for use in the society. This approach emphasizes content of the syllabus and methods of teaching. Syllabus is developed with particular reference to functions and notions in language.

Examples of language functions could be a request for or giving of information, which could take place in the restaurant, market place, bank, hospital, etc., asking for directions, making an appeal, expressing idea or opinion. In the post office, the topic would be buying and selling of postage stamps, money, order, posting of letters, etc. The role players would be attendants and customers. The notions could be the quality of services, price of postage materials, charges for services and the agency through whom the goods and services could be obtained. The teacher can teach students by pairing them to engage in imaginary dialogues and role-playing of functions in different situations. The content of the syllabus is made up of functions, which are 'speech acts' and not grammatical units of the traditional method. The teacher plans his language activities giving consideration for the setting of interaction, topic of the interaction and role in the interaction. The general principles underlining the Functional Notional Approach according to William (1990) include:

- i. Giving priority to communicative competence in language teaching and learning.
- ii. Emphasizing content without sacrificing grammatical form.

- iii. Organizing language activity around particular situations for particular communicative purposes.

The approach is highly valued for being eclectic and for integrating concern for the social dimension of language with particular concern for the function or role of the individual in language interaction. However, there is the problem of identifying and grading materials or functions for classroom and textbook presentation. Added to this is the suitability of the syllabus materials for learners who are beginners. Because the use of language activities like role-play and dramatization demand certain level of mastery basic structure that should be learned formally. In other words the Functional Notional Approach might be unsuitable where learners have insufficient background knowledge of the language in question. It cannot be said that the approach has complete answer in teaching the numerous aspects of language.

The Communicative Approach

While some scholars call this approach the Communicative Competence (Com-Com Method), (Ubahakwe and Obi, 1979), it is called communicative language teaching in Williams (1990) and the Interpersonal Approach in Akinloye (2002). This approach has its roots in the same school that gave rise to the Functional-Notional Approach, as the communicative competence is the goal of the Functional-Notional Approach. However, the Communicative Approach is method oriented while the Functional-Notional is materials-oriented (Williams 1990). This approach selects the merits of the Direct, Grammar-Translation, Audio, Lingual and the Functional-Notional Approach and applies these in determined situations.

The objectives of the Communicative Approach go beyond mere grammatical competence because language functions are perceived in socio-cultural and interpersonal contexts. In this regard the major objectives include:

- (a) appropriateness of usage
- (b) conventional usage
- (c) transactional usage
- (d) interactional usage (Williams, 1990)

Community Language Learning

This method according to Akinloye (2002) is that in which both the learners and teachers form a client-counselor forum and in non-defensive openness struggle with the form of language inductively but usually with an assurance of acceptance by the counselor and other clients. According to Akinloye (2002) this is one of the new methods of teaching language in a second language situation. Other methods also

mentioned include: *The Silent Way* (also acknowledged in Williams, 1990:345) which centers on the motivation of learners to communicate with one another and among themselves with little encouragement or no assistance from the teacher, *Suggestopedia method* which is a method that relies on the importance of the subconscious cognition of human beings (i.e. the acquisition of language through the thoughts, feelings or the senses in a subconscious situation) and this promotes language learning and acquisition of language form through relaxation and indirect manner and *The Total Physical Response* that links physical or practical activity with meaningful or functional language use.

Acculturation

This is a process whereby a second language learner is brought into linguistically rich environment of the target language for the purpose of exposing him to the art, literature, music and other intellectual expressions of the speakers of the language in question. For instance, second language learner of Yoruba language from the northern and eastern colleges of education are brought to Oyo town especially to the Federal College of Education (Special) for the Acculturation programme of about six weeks. During this period, they are taken to important places in Yoruba land like palaces, markets, traditional weaving centers (at Iseyin), local soap-making factory, palm-kernel oil making factory, the Ifa house, traditional festivals and ceremonies to mention just a few. This programme has no doubt proved rewarding as such students' return to their colleges with higher and richer linguistic resources to communicate effectively in Yoruba language.

The Use of Literature in Language Teaching

Literature shapes human conditions into form and structures of language (Fayose, 1995). It organizes language in the most elevated meaning (Williams, 1990). Onukaogu and Ohia (1997) observe that literature in the reading programme refers to whole texts that include all kinds of print materials that provide information sharing and exchange of messages. To the duo, these include "the conventional literary genres (prose, poetry and drama) print books, magazines, newspapers, journals, letters, notes, lists, stories, observations and descriptions (Atweger, 1988 in Onukaogu and Ohia, 1997).

Hardit (1983) opines that literary texts can inspire in learners (especially children) a love for language and such materials can help to stimulate the learner's own writing. There is no iota of doubt in the fact that literature has the practical quality of promoting language learning. However, care must be taken to ensure that while using a literary text to serve the purpose of language teaching and learning, "its value as literature must not be destroyed or held sub-servient to the technical requirement of language study (Williams, 1990).

Literature in Yoruba can be brought into the teaching of both the oracy and the literacy skills. Poetry and Drama texts can be employed in teaching of listening and speaking skills. The poem below by Makinde (2002) can be used in teaching the pronunciation of vowels and consonants as well as their occurrence in given words.

E má dààmú jinnà;
 Ohun tí tí wá lo sí Sókótó;
 O n be nínú sòkòtò;
 E má dààmú jinnà
 Ohun e n wá lo s' Ènúgà
 Ó n be nígún ilé
 Àní ohun è n wá lo sí Abiá
 Ó kuku n be labiya wa
 Ohun è n wá lo sọjà
 Ó kúkú n be lájà wa (pp.41 – 42)

Apart from learning the pronunciation of vowels, consonants and words, the rhythm, which involves the use of tonal counterpoint and the imagery in the poem above, are meant to be enjoyed. Tongue twisters can also serve the purpose of teaching pronunciation of vowel and consonant sounds.

Methods of Teaching Literature in Yoruba

Teacher in teaching Literature in Yoruba could adopt the following methods.

Discussion Method

This method could be used in teaching any of the literary genres/forms (prose, poetry and drama). In matured classes, where students have copies of the literary texts being studied, they could be encouraged to read up such texts in advance and the teacher then discusses the texts using relevant principles of literary appreciation. In this case, it is expedient for the teacher to give a brief insight into what a particular text is all about before students start reading. In a situation whereby just a few number of students have their texts, the teacher could use the Reading Aloud Method in teaching the texts. In this case, texts are read in chapters and every chapter is discussed at the end of reading it. It should be noted that reading of a prose work will be different from that of dramatic scene. Students have to be called to take the parts of the actors in the dramatic text. The number of actors in the scene determines the number selected. Some of the points for discussion include the plot, characters/actors, themes and moral lessons, as well as the use of language.

Dramatization

In teaching a prose work or a dramatic text, significant and suitable events or scenes in such texts could be dramatized in class under the direction of the teacher. It helps learners in language use as they are engaged in a practical demonstration of language use. Dialogue is an important element in any dramatic engagement aimed at teaching the listening and speaking skills. It might be difficult to stage classroom drama, due to the factors of space and time. As a result of this, mini-dramas involving pairs of students can be used.

Literary extracts can be used in the reading comprehension lesson for the purpose of sharpening the reading skills of students. Particular attention is given to structure of sentences and the passage as a whole, interpretation or meaning of words, the theme, and the style of the writer, that is the use of language especially the figures of speech. Students can be asked to rewrite stories in their own words to test their creativity and enhance their writing skills.

Recitation

This is more relevant in the teaching of poetry. In teaching oral poetry, the teacher could chant the poems if he has the voice or use audiocassette in presenting such poems. Experts can also be invited to chant such poems. In recitation, children are encouraged to recite such poems or verses of poems already committed into memory. Recitation increases the linguistic reservoir of children.

The Use of Resource Persons

This has to do with the invitation of experts in a particular literary genre especially in teaching oral literature. Experts in Eisa (Masquerade chant), Ijala (Ogun chant), Iyere (Ifa songs) and Ekun Iyawo (Nuptial chant) could be invited to chant these before students where they are privileged to ask relevant questions from such experts. Such a class would be exciting and students' attitude to the subject will likely change for the better.

Field Trips/Excursion

Teachers can conduct or organize field trips/excursions to places of interest that relevant to the study of a particular literary genre or texts. Such places that are related to cultural studies include palaces, shrines/grooves of divinities, rocks, rivers, pottery, traditional soap making centers to mention just a few.

Films

Film of literary texts where available could be presented to the students in order to compliment the reading of such texts. This gives room for better understanding of such texts.

Conclusion

Attempt has been made to suggest some methods that are relevant in teaching Yoruba language and literature in contemporary classroom setting. In choosing a language or literature method certain factors must be considered by the teacher. These include, the learners' characteristics (attitude, aptitude, intelligence, motivation, etc.) and socio-linguistic composition of the learners (monolingual group or multilingual). It should equally be noted that no method can be regarded as the best-method. What the teacher can do is to select the best of all language methods, techniques and strategies at his disposal. This is the Eclectic Method. The traditional method must not be discarded outrightly. Some of their underlying principles, techniques and strategies are still relevant in teaching one language aspect or the other.

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