

Challenges Associated With the Teaching of Arabic Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Implications For Stakeholders

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Abstract

Arabic language is regarded as one of the languages in Nigerian educational system. As contained in the National Policy on Education, it is one of the subject that is available for students in secondary schools. It is against this background that this paper examined the challenges associated with the teaching of Arabic Language in Nigerian secondary schools. Concept of teaching, purpose of teaching and resources for teaching in classroom. Also, concept of Arabic Language and curriculum of Arabic language in the school system were critically examined. Also, the study emphasized on the challenges that are facing the effective teaching of Arabic in the school system. Some of the challenges are from government, parent, teacher and student. Based on the foregoing, the study suggests that stakeholders in education should employ skilled, competent and motivated Arabic teachers to teach Arabic Language. Lastly, Arabic language should be made compulsory in Nigerian secondary schools for all Muslim students.

Keywords: Challenges, Teaching and Learning, Arabic Language, Stakeholders

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INTRODUCTION

Education, as a social service, is very important and it must not be shirked under any guise. It constitutes the standard upon which any society may be assessed. Educational development is imperative and urgent. It must not be treated as a national emergency, second only to war, but must also move with the momentum of a revolution (Abdullahi, 2022; Ehiahu, 2006; Muraina, 2015; Sabella & Hasan, 2022). However, the individual being educated develops physically, mentally, emotionally, morally, and socially. An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead its students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. According to Muraina (2013), teaching in this modern period is increasingly becoming more complex and technical to be effectively actualized with traditional tools alone. Since students in schools are from varied cultural and socio-cultural background and training, teacher thus needs instructional materials or teaching aids to help them to communicate and mix effectively and hence cope with students needs based on their abilities and potentialities.

Teaching of Arabic in Nigerian secondary schools can be more effective through the use of some instructional materials that guide the teacher in explaining the topics to the students effectively and efficiently. The teacher is the most important element in any educational programs. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for the implementation of educational process at any stage because a teacher is an instructor and a mentor to his/her learners. He controls their behaviour and serves as a model and confident judge of their achievement. The importance of competence teacher to the nation's school system can in no way be over-emphasized (Ibrahim, 2006; Usman & Jabar, 2022). Teachers are important factor in any society for many reasons. According to Dasko (2018), a teacher is a person that impacts knowledge on people, shows care when the need arises, and possesses the following traits; patience, kindness and love. Lending credence to this are Adewuyi and Ogunwuyi (2002), who suggest various perspectives by which a teacher could be seen in

reference to nation building. They thus view teachers as instructors, culture transmitters, technologists, moral instructors, life-skill and value educators, parents, counsellors, policy makers, policy implementation personnel, religious leaders and disciplinarians.

Therefore, teacher is a person who engaged in teaching, administration and supervision. He/She is required by law to be licensed for the position held. Therefore, Good teachers have deep knowledge of the subjects they teach: nevertheless, when teachers' knowledge falls below a certain level, it is a significant impediment to students' learning' (Coe et. al. 2014; Folorunsho & Iyanda, 2022; Smith, 2022). According to the Longman Dictionary (2009), a teacher is also someone who teaches especially in a school. Teacher also means a duly certified or licensed person employed to serve with the accurate and specific ability, intuition, experience, skills, knowledge and qualifications to teach a specific subject or number of subjects. Al Shlowiy (2022) opined that it is an accepted fact that teachers are usually not born but made. Good teachers nurture their knowledge and skills through constant and deliberate efforts. One of the pre-requisite of being a good teacher is to understand the teaching-learning process in more depth. This facilitates better appreciation of the teaching profession as well as the process of imparting education. Therefore, education can be described as the "wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaking in the believe that all should have the chance to share in life. As teachers we tend to think that teaching is all about teachers and our role; in fact the most important aspect of the educational process are the students and what they learn. However, Tayyara (2022) opined that Arabic language in Nigerian secondary schools is going into extinction due to several factors, which has culminated into neglect of the subject by students. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the challenges that are associated with the teaching of Arabic language in Nigerian secondary schools and its implications for stakeholders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Concept of Teaching

Teaching and learning processes can be defined as a transformation process of knowledge from teacher to student. It is referred as the combination of various elements instructor with the process where an educator identifies and establish the learning objectives and develop teaching resources and implement teaching and learning strategy. Learning is a cardinal factor that a teacher must consider while teaching students. Teaching and learning are an interaction processes which occur between three important components i.e, teacher, student and lesson in the classroom. The three components are inter related through method. The teachers are critical stakeholder in achieving success in educational attainment (Tanshi, 2012). Therefore, Teacher must initiate a paradigm shift in their teaching and not relying solely on "chalk-and-talk" this is because the method is boring and it decrease students' motivation to learn. Teacher must increase the quality of their teaching and learning in line with the current challenges of education with facilities which could help their understanding and help them more meaningful learning (Abdul Rahim & Hayazi, 2010).

Similarly, Taiwo (2014) defines teaching 'as a systematic process of transmitting Knowledge, attitude, and skills in accordance with professional principles. Teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning. Teaching is outside to the learner .Learning is internal to learners. You cannot motivate others if you are not self-motivated. Motives are not seen, but, Behaviours are seen. Is learning a motive or behavior? Learning is both a motive and behavior but only behavior is seen, learning is internal, performance is external. Also, Learning is about a change: the change brought about by developing a new skill, understanding a scientific law, changing an attitude. The change is not merely incidental or natural in the way that our appearance changes as we get older. Learning can be considered as a change that is permanent in nature because change is brought into students by a teacher through technique like developing specific skills, changing some attitudes, or understanding specific scientific law operating behind a learning environment (Sequera, 2012). However, in order to be an active learner in any field of study, each student expects to be treated as an adult learner who has some rights over the learning ambience in the form of asking questions and clearing of doubts (Micheal & Modell,2013), that is students are expected

to have ownership over the learning session (Mitra, Pond & Rehan, 2008). Moreover, students also want their instructor to be cooperative and humorous who would teach clearly and usually use relevant example so that the course materials being taught becomes easy to understand, and common method used is direct face to face approach. The teacher reads out the word with full explanation of the lesson (Adam & Abdul wahid, 2013).

Purpose of Teaching

Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences and feelings, and making specific intervention to help them learn particular things. It also involves creating an environment and engaging with others so that they learn particular things because all teaching involves recognizing and cultivating 'learning moments' or 'teaching moments'. It was Robert J Havinghurst who coined the term 'teachable moment'. One of his interests as an educationalist was the way in which certain things have to be learned in order for people to develop. When the timing is right, the ability to learn a particular task will be possible. This is referred to as a 'teachable moment'. It is important to keep in mind that unless the time is right, learning will not occur. Therefore, education can be described as the 'wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life (Smith, 2015).

Teaching can be defined as engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts and processes. It includes design, content-selection, delivery, assessment and reflection. To teach is to engage student in learning; this teaching consists of getting involved in the active construction of knowledge. A teacher requires not only knowledge of subject matter, but knowledge of how students learn and how to transform them into active learner. Good teaching, then, requires a commitment to systematic understanding of learning. The aim of teaching not only to transmit information, but to transform students into passive recipients of other people's knowledge into active constructors of their own and other knowledge and to impact a society's shared set of ideas, values, customs, and way of understanding to its children. The teacher cannot transform without the student's active participation of course. Therefore, a teacher's experience helps student to adapt and cope with changes in educational programs, as he or she would be in a better position to understand the curriculum. Experience is required through continuous and active participation of the teacher in teaching or learning process for a long time (Opeloyeru, 2006; Abdulhameed, 2013). Teaching is fundamentally about creating the pedagogical, social and ethical conditions under which students agree to take change of their own learning individually and collectively. Therefore, learning is about what student do, not about what we as teacher do.

Resources for Teaching in Classroom

Instructional materials refers to materials that are used to facilitate teaching and learning. It enable the teacher communicate ideas or concept with ease as they appeal to many senses at time (Mundi, 2008; Nwafor & Eze, 2014). Instructional materials are materials which assist teacher to make their lesson explicit to learners. They are also used to transmit information, ideas and notes to learn (Ijaduola, 2007). Instructional materials include both visual and audio-visual and such as pictures, flashcards, posters, charts, tape recorder, radio, television, computers among others. Instructional materials improves students'skills, ability to reason and make informed decision about what is going on in the global village (Mmari, 2008). Therefore, education impact skills, attitudes, believes, ability to reason, knowledge and any other form which enables one to adjust and interact effectively with other individuals. Through the acquisition of skills, it enables an individual and the group to proceed to the actualization of the individuals' destiny. Agu (2011) holds a similar view about instructional materials as any arrangement, object, material, real or improvised brought into learning to enhance the understanding of the learner other than the normal expression of the teacher in teaching and learning in the classroom. Categorically, we have three basic classes of instructional materials namely: audio instructional materials, visual instructional materials and audio-visual instructional materials.

1. *Audio instructional materials*: are those materials that occur basically the auditory sense. Example of this type of instructional materials are radio, tape recorder, speaker etc.

2. *Visual instructional materials*: are those materials that occur only to the sight. Example of this type of materials are posters, pictures, real objects etc.
3. *Audio-visual materials*: are the name implies are those materials that occur to the sense of auditory and the sight. Examples of audio-visual materials are television, telegram, video etc.

Instructional materials play a very important role in teaching and learning process. It enhance the memory level of the students. At this time that education has spread wide and entirely, oral teaching can not be the key to successful pedagogy; therefore, the teacher has to use instructional materials to make teaching and learning process interesting (NIC hulls, 2003; Raw 2000).

Furthermore, instructional materials provides students a lens through which students develops awareness about local and global events, a familiarity with various genres of literature, a consciousness of the present and the past and discernment about the future. They are thus a gateway to understand the world around them. Materials are the center of instruction and one of the most important influences on what goes on in the classroom. David (2012) investigates the extent to which teacher' classroom behavior and teaching experience would predict students' achievement in Arabic language among Nigerian secondary schools. Moreover, the selection of the right materials makes teaching and learning a worthwhile activity and creates a Classroom environment which is efficient, effective and meaningful. On the contrary, if materials present out of Context situations to which learners cannot relate to, are uninteresting and complicated, then teaching and learning becomes a dull and monotonous activity. It is therefore, a highly desirable initiative to give students a satisfactory experience through the use of instructional materials. age- appropriate and linguistically viable materials which adequately arouse and maintain their interest in the classrooms. Materials, therefore, should be carefully selected, processed, adapted if needed, and judged for successful application in the classroom. This can only happen once the learner is kept at the centre of the education stage and materials are selected and used for enhancement of learner knowledge.

Concept of Arabic Language

Arabic is the language of original Arabs who are inhabitant of Al-Jaziratul Arabiyyah (Arabian Peninsula). It is also the language of the Arabized nations such as Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and the whole of North Africa (Abdul-Raheem, 2004). Arabic is the language of Qur'an and Qur'an is the final authority on Islamic studies. It is a language of liturgy which convey scientific knowledge and discoveries from one part of the world to another. Arabic as a language exists with Islam. The language is popular to Nigerians been Arabic is an indigenous language to Nigerian as (Suwar Arabs) has Arabic as her mother tongue in the Nothern Nigerian (Oladosu, 2002). Today it is important language of the Semitic group spoken by millions of people and understand by many more. The Arabic writing spoken has an alphabet of twenty eight consonant and Arabic has provided most of the special vocabulary of Islam in the use of all over the world. It is the language which has influenced the values, ideas, and outlook of many Nigerians from whom Islam is a way of life. It is also the link between the old and the modern word of erudition and scholarship. It has enriched many Nigerians language such as Yoruba, Fulani and Hausa and succeeded in strengthening the political, economic, diplomatic and social ties of Nigeria with fellow African countries which use it as a mother tongue.

Moreover, Arabic constitutes one of the academic subjects in Nigerian secondary schools, Oladosu (2003) states that the approved Islamic Studies (I.R.K) and Arabic language syllabi designed under the auspices of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) came to operation in 1968 and 1974 , respectively. This is an indication that Arabic has been one of the approved subject in Nigerian secondary schools curriculum for long. Arabic language is the language of Islam, whenever Islam is to be taught or preached, Arabic language is simultaneously taught. Arabic education has been defined as the process by which Arabic-related skills, competence, attitudes and cultural heritage are developed in learners, using professionally approved method of teaching carried out by trained teachers, who are guided by general and specific principles and practice (Oladosu, 2012). The Nigerian government also attaches importance to the subject through the design of curricula and syllabuses at various levels of our educational institutions and the provision of teachers as well as policy statements to enhance its teaching and learning in the 6-3-3-4 system of

education, Arabic is among the elective subjects approved to be taught in Nigeria secondary schools (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2004).

Similarly, in the current 9-3-4 education system, Arabic is one of the elective subjects offered in the upper level that is junior secondary level and senior secondary school (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2013). The famous language is Arabic is presented in the formal school system in Nigeria but as a foreign language along with the others like English which is known as a second language which is also applicable to French language. In the words of Alaso (2018), Arabic is the first developed language that brought its culture to Nigeria many centuries before European could dream of coming to the area. Arabic, the Language of the Qur'an and thus the most sacred language for all Muslims. Since it is the language of the final and uncorrupted language of revelation, the Qur'an cannot be translated: it can only be interpreted or paraphrased in other language. Therefore, Arabic is the language of the obligatory prayer (Salat).

Curriculum of Arabic Language in Secondary School

Curriculum is the way of bringing the learner to know the aim and objectives of learning. It always giving light or how to choose the subject or how to experience the subject that Student is learning, therefore Curriculum is a way to attain the syllabus or subject to be learnt (National Policy on Education, 2014). The Arabic language curriculum is relevant because it has taken care of the interest, age level and classes of the Students. In terms of richness, the Curriculum is reach because it consist of various topics and sub-topics which are distributed or shared to the three (3) years programme of junior secondary school. The way Arabic language curriculum is designed with illustrations, examples, simple, clear and understandable Arabic Language makes it easy to be interpreted by the teachers.

The current Secondary School Curriculum in the area of Arabic Language studies agrees with the modern concept of Curriculum. It is necessary to stress the importance of Secondary education in Nigeria. The importance of Secondary education within the overall educational framework of any country can hardly be overstressed. In Nigeria, Secondary education occupies a

sacred place in our system of education, it is inevitable link between primary and higher education aiming at the preparation of the youth for useful living within the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2014). Contrary to the traditional concept of Curriculum embraces a wider domain concerning itself with the intellectual, social, moral, spiritual and physical perspectives of the learner. Modern approaches to Curriculum development follow certain systematic steps towards the evaluation of feasibility Curriculum. The steps are as follows: (1) Identification of aims and objectives of the Curriculum; (2) Selection of learning experience capable to affect an in-desirable change; (3) Selection of a specific content for the learning experiences; (4) Organization of the learning experience and contents; (5) Evaluation of the whole process to assess the extent to which the spell-out objectives has been achieved.

The extent that modern Curriculum takes care of the learner's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development, the Arabic studies Curriculum meet this requirement through the teaching of the four Arabic Language skills: (1) Arabic comprehension; (2) Arabic conversation; (3) Reading in Arabic; (4) Writing in Arabic.

Following the guidelines established by the American Council on the teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), advanced language proficiency is defined as follows: (1) *Speaking*: able to handle with ease and confidence a large number of communicative tasks; active participation in formal exchange on a variety of topics relating to work, school, home and leisure activities, as well as to events of current, public, and personal interest or individual relevance. (2) *Listening*: able to understand main ideas and most details of connected discourse on a variety of topics beyond the immediacy of the situation. (3) *Reading*: able to understand texts which are conceptually abstract and linguistically complex, and/or texts which treat unfamiliar topics and situations, as well as some texts which involve aspects of target-language culture. (4) *Writing*: able to meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs and can handle most social and informal correspondence according to appropriate conversations.

Arabic majors pursuing coursework in literature will be introduced to: (1) Major samples of classical Arabic poetry from the Pre-Islamic and later Islamic periods and major samples of oral poetry ranging from the Pre-Islamic period to contemporary vernacular poetry from different parts of the Arab world; (2) Major trends and movements in modern Arabic poetry: Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, and the free verse movement in a larger comparative context both in relation to the literary tradition and to western influences, primarily Anglo-American modernist movement; (3) Major samples of Arabic prose from the pre-modern period such as: the Quran, Quranic exegesis (tafsir), maqamat, travelogues, sermons (khutba), essays, narrative accounts (akhbar), biographies, memoirs...leading to the rise of the Arabic novel, drama, the short story, prose, poetry and other forms of experimental prose in the twentieth century; (4) Major social and political developments in the Arab world through film and prose narratives.

The goal of these classes is to provide students with the ability: (1) to identify some of the important literary themes and trends in Arabic literature both classical and modern; (2) to apply some of the basic approaches of critical theory to works of Arabic literature both classical and modern; (3) to place works of Arabic literature in a larger historical, political, and social context.

Arabic Major Pursuing Coursework in Linguistics will be introduced to: (1) Arabic from a diachronic perspective (historical linguistics and Comparative Semitics); (2) Arabic from a synchronic perspective (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics); (3) Arabic from a sociolinguistic perspective (Arabic 'diglossia' and language ideology); (4) The Arabic linguistic tradition (classical, medieval and contemporary scholarship).

The goal of these classes is to provide students with the ability: (1) to recognize important historical trends in the evolution of the Arabic language and its classification within the Semitic language family; (2) to apply the methods of theoretical linguistics towards the analysis of Arabic, written and vernacular; (3) to identify the essential characteristics of the sociolinguistic environment.

Therefore, by assessment and implementation of Arabic Curriculum, government will be responsible for implementing the Curriculum, whereby the establishment of School as well as running such schools will be a government responsibility. The National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2014) emphasized as; "Government shall regulate the establishment of Schools, supervise, and inspect School regularly, and ensure that all Schools follow approved Curriculum and conform to the National Policy on Education (2014).

Challenges Associated with the Teaching of Arabic Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools

All over the world, educational system is confronted with different challenges. The challenges confronting the developed countries differ from the one confronting the developing countries. However, for the challenges, there are expectedly coping strategies in order to minimize the possible effects. Coping strategies are measure tried out to ensure the situation is improved upon. Coping strategies are the method employed by individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, or establishments with the intent of managing situations; even though it bothers on heads, leaders, managers or administrators' situation, crisis or contingency management skills under some specific conditions after analysis involves the school administrators, ability to apply suitable method to control the problem in the school. According to Subair (2013), coping strategies in school is any measures undertaken by school administrators to ensure adequate service delivery in the face of any challenges such as teacher shortage, interpersonal and intergroup relations, disciplinary problems, school community crisis and the likes. He stressed further that the central risk of institutional management is to recognize the present conditions, in adequate that point of desirability of change and taking appropriate actions even when such moves are not the best. It involves taking such policy measures that will direct future development towards more desirable ends. For the fact that teachers could be very mobile, there is always a constant need for school head to adopt measure that will make their school stand out among other equals.

According to Guardian Newspaper (2014), in a study conducted by the United Nations, it was found that teachers shortage exists in countries like Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Central African Republic (C.A.R), Cote d'ivoire, Malawi, Zambia and Ghana. Also, teacher shortage in Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly worrisome

Burkinafaso, Eritrea, Central African Republic are top on the list of countries that need to mount aggressive requirement campaign of teacher over the next four years. In Nigeria, the three levels of education are confronted with various problems ranging from class size, school location, resources availability and resources utilization (Ajigbade, 2009). In addition, it has been observed that the total number of teachers available in Nigerian Secondary Schools is far below the needed for efficiency and effectiveness the deliver of instruction (Ajigbade, 2009). Yusuf (2002) states the challenges of teaching Arabic by teachers. They are lack of teaching tools, difficulties of Arabic itself as second language, the content of textbooks are disconnected from students' life and their needs. But he added the task of teaching Arabic does not work with Arabic teacher only, all teachers are involved. Therefore, both government and private schools' administrators should endeavor to make provision for the construction of well-equipped language laboratory where people can get develop their language skill with teachers' directive. Moreover, According to Yusuf (2006), there are some factors contributing to challenges associated with teacher supply for the teaching of Arabic language in Nigerian secondary schools. The challenges are listed below: (1) Government factor; (2) Parental factor; (3) Student factor; (4) School factor; (5) Teacher factor

Government Factor

This is an area of major setback. Text books recommended by government for teaching of Arabic subject are not suitable, teacher and student do not have adequate supply of textbook simple because they are not available in the market. The few ones are very expensive and hard to come by, again some of the textbook that are available are not suitable enough. A good textbook is the one that is simple in language and very clearly in written and clearly understood by student. Under normal circumstance Arabic Language is supposed to have its own laboratory with well-equipped adequate media material to aid teaching and learning of Arabic Language. Also, it is difficult to find well trained Arabic Language teachers in our schools because of lackadaisical attitudes towards the Arabic language by the government. Government should endeavor make it mandatory in Nigerian schools to assist in producing professionally, academically, competent and motivated Arabic teachers whose personalities will motivate pupils towards the learning of Arabic language.

Parental Factor

Parent attitude can affect the learning of Arabic Language by their children and wards. In many homes, parents frown of their children saying I want to become an Arabic Language expert. It most needed for any chose career rather than learning about the religion. And also many parents believed in having their children as medical practitioner lawyers, computer scientific etc.

Student Factor

This is one of the challenges associated with teacher supply for the teaching of Arabic language in Nigerian secondary schools. Some students did not attach any importance to Arabic and Islamic studies, they feel Arabic and Islamic studies are not useful. Those who offer it do so to supplement their subject. Some students do not respect their Arabic and Islamic studies teachers as they respect other teachers some even go out whenever it's time for Arabic and Islamic studies Lesson, while some don't have a single text book on Arabic and Islamic studies subject. Some are even ashamed to introduce themselves as Arabic and Islamic studies student to perform well in both subjects. We must learn to be proud of what nature has given to us, we must be contented with what we have and desire other people's property. Also, students are also encouraged to prefer attending educative programmes where Arabic language will be used for communication and where local dialect will be used.

School Factor

The attitude of education planners in the school to the Arabic and religion knowledge is not helping at all. For instance, the number of period allocated to Arabic and Islamic studies on the school time table is very low in some schools. Arabic and Islamic studies appear once in a week on the time table for each class and this contribute to student negative attitude towards the learning of Arabic and Islamic studies. Arabic and

Islamic subject are taught in the afternoon when students must have been very tired and looking forward to go home.

Teachers Factor

The attitude of Arabic and Islamic studies teacher contributes to the challenges. Some teachers do not prepare their lesson they only have in their mind that Arabic and Islamic studies are easy subjects that can be taught without preparation. Some of the teachers handling both are not well trained in this line and they are not skillful, some of them are so lazy to the extent that they may find it very difficult to go to the classroom to teach. Some are in habit of giving home work to student without awarding grades, and poor attitude towards teaching generally accounts for one of the reason why the subject however may be poorly thought. Therefore, Teachers should be encourage and motivate the students to familiarize with mass media this will help in improving the communicative competence in Arabic language , these mass media include: Television, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines and internet.

CONCLUSION

It is crystal clear that the challenges associated with teachers supplied for the teaching of Arabic language in Nigerian secondary schools becomes ineffective due to the above described factors. The solution to these problems involve government, teachers, pupils, parents and guidance. Government as the sole decision maker on educational policies that will ginger the concerned people at the grass root level towards the employment of competent Arabic teachers, organizing different seminars for them to upgrade their knowledge and promoting Arabic Teacher in their respective vicinities. By so doing, the challenges and the acquisition of communicate competence in Arabic Language will being easier for the Nigeria pupil even parents in their socio- cultural district.

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