

# **TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF USING YORUBA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY CLASSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING**

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MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY CLASSES:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

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2012

*I dedicate this PhD thesis to my late father  
Emmanuel Adebayo Abidogun,  
whose ambition before his death was to give the best  
education to all his children, including me.*

*Though you have passed on,  
the legacy you left behind still stands.*

*I am very proud to have come  
to this world through you.*

*You are greatly appreciated.*

*May your soul rest in perfect peace.*

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## CASE STUDY SCHOOL A



## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHING ALPHABETS IN YORUBA



The Yoruba song below is usually sung to encourage learners to work hard in their studies to achieve academic excellence and be proud. However, if they do not study hard, they should be ready to face the consequences.

### **BATA RE ADUN KO KO KA**

Bata re adun ko ko ka

Bata re adun ko ko ka

Bi o ba kawē re

Baba e adun ko ko ka

Bi ooo ba kawē re

Bata re adun

Perereee ni le

---oOo---

## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

## DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING



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### LANGUAGE EDITING STATEMENT

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#### TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF USING YORUBA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY CLASSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING

by Babajide Gboyega Abidogun

- Has been edited for language correctness and spelling.
- Has been edited for consistency (repetition, long sentences, logical flow)
- Has been checked for completeness of list of references and cited authors.

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**HESTER VAN DER WALT**





## ABSTRACT

Yoruba is one of the three major languages recognised by the government of Nigeria as a medium of instruction at school. It is the language of the people living in the Southwestern part of Nigeria. As part of the Nigerian government's responsibility to promote indigenous language as a medium of instruction in schools, the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004) stipulates that the first three years of primary education should be taught in learners' mother tongue. This study was aimed at investigating how teachers experience the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes. Furthermore, the study wanted to determine if these experiences promote learning or not.

The study was qualitative in nature and made use of a case study research design. Ten teachers participated in the study and two primary schools were purposively selected. Teachers were interviewed and observed during teaching to determine how they experienced the teaching of Yoruba in primary classes.

The study was premised on the theoretical framework and related concepts which included the two schools of thought that argue for and against the use of mother tongue in teaching and learning. Concepts of culture, lived experiences and funds of knowledge were also examined from this perspective. The theories of identity and empowerment were examined to support the study.

The data were analysed through themes which were categorised into subdivisions. From these themes and categories two main groups emerged, namely a positive and negative group. The positive group outweighed the negative group. Teachers were passionate about Yoruba through their identification with the language in the way they dressed and styled their hair. They transmitted the values in the language to learners through songs, riddles, rhymes, proverbs and excursions to traditional places.

In conclusion, the teacher as the facilitator of knowledge was examined through interview and observation. The results revealed that primary school teachers used in the study experienced many challenges while using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in schools but despite these challenges, they were able to teach Yoruba effectively.

It is recommended that the training of indigenous language teachers need to be intensified and encouraged. The government should provide enough policy documents for schools for teachers to understand the stipulations regarding the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the document and be up to date. The government should also embark on the production of relevant textbooks in indigenous languages for teaching in primary schools in Nigeria.

## **KEY WORDS**

- First and second language
- Home language
- Language of learning and teaching
- Language of the immediate environment
- Medium of Instruction
- Mother tongue education
- Primary classes
- Teachers' experiences
- Teaching and learning
- Yoruba

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BEP	Bilingual Education Policy
CRC	Convention on the Right of the Child
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education For All
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
IB	International Baccalaureate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IRA	International Reading Association
LANGTAG	Language Plan Task Group
LGEA	Local Government Education Authority
NCC	National Curriculum Conference
NCE	National Council on Education
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NINLAN	National Institute for Nigerian Languages
NPE	National Policy on Education
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAPA	Situation and Policy Analysis of Basic Education
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nation Education and Scientific Organisation

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# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Learners perform better academically when they are taught in their home language by teachers, while parents also support the efforts of the teacher in making sure that they communicate with teachers regularly to monitor the progress of their children in school (Kosonen, 2005; Benson, 2002). Ball (2010) asserts that education in the mother tongue develops the linguistic and cognitive level of learners, especially between the six to eight years of primary education. This gives learners the opportunity to learn a second language and perform well in class.

This study investigated teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. In these schools, Yoruba is taught as the mother tongue, and it is also the language of learning and teaching. It should be noted that Yoruba is one of the three major indigenous languages officially recognised by the federal government of Nigeria. It is spoken by over thirty million people in Nigeria and other West African countries, like Benin and Togo.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) stipulates the use of a mother tongue as language of learning and teaching or the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary school. The concept of the mother tongue enjoys considerable popularity and acceptance in educational circles, because it provides a natural and effective way of communication, and closes the gap between the child's home and school (Cummins, 2001). However, one needs to investigate how teachers perceive Yoruba as a medium of instruction and the experiences they encounter in their day-to-day teaching.

Teachers' experience of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes is thus the focus of this study. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL 1999) asserts that education in a mother tongue means using the home language of learners to teach them in class. The teacher must not use a language that differs

from the language the child is familiar with and the curriculum of the language must also be aligned to the home language to make learning meaningful in class. The activities in class, vis-a-vis teaching and learning, must not contradict the stipulations in the policy document (FRN, 2004). Scholars mention that the curriculum, syllabus and contents must be written in the mother tongue to eradicate the problem associated with learning difficulties in class (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2005). Mother tongue education creates an environment conducive to learning which can be linked to the home background of the learners and allows for intellectual balance (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2005).

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Ologunde (1982), in his study on the historical development of education in Nigeria and the role ascribed to Yoruba within the system, argues that the role of Yoruba has undergone three stages of change namely, the period of missionary control, the period of government participation and the period of government control. Between 1842 and 1882, Yoruba was used for preaching the gospel to the Yoruba-speaking population by the Christian missions. At that stage the Yoruba language dominated the education scene. Ologunde (1982) further argues that Yoruba as home language played a significant role in Nigerian education.

Adegoju (2008) opines that, when children were exposed to the Yoruba cultural belief system about thirty-five years ago in Nigeria, they were taught Yoruba proverbs, which were embedded in African value systems. Children were also taught the various modes of greetings which are used amongst the Yoruba. These include modes of greetings for every time of the day and period of the year, and every occasion, condition, event and vocation. This exposure made them realise that within the Yoruba traditional system, no human being was an island and that the use of language to establish and maintain social relationships was an important way of life. Ironically, the oral tradition of Yoruba and its cultural principles is becoming foreign to children in primary schools. Language is therefore not just the expression of cultural identity, but also the foundation of cultural identity (Crystal, 2000).

However, the Yoruba language, like other indigenous languages, has been facing many challenges, particularly as a language of learning and teaching. Kalu (1990) questions the practicality and cost-effectiveness of producing materials and teachers in all the indigenous languages in Nigeria. Olowoyo (1990) argues that the indigenous languages are not developed to welcome new concepts, ideas, formulae, theory and scientific terms that have their origin in the western world. The debate about which language to use in early literacy is unending, because society is rife with arguments against and for the use of mother tongue in primary schools.

Odey (2002) opines that the debate is central to progress, development and peace, demanding that those concerned about language and culture should continually review and reassess the situation. Scholars agree that evolving a national language indigenous to Nigeria or the development of all 400 languages in Nigeria for literacy is a Herculean task (Makinde, 2003; Odey, 2002; Ogunsiji, 2002). This study hence seeks to determine how teachers experience the teaching of Yoruba and what significance they attach to the experience despite the various challenges prevalent in the Nigerian education system.

### **1.3 RATIONALE**

Primary school teachers should make use of the learners' experience that they acquire from the home background to develop learners' cognitive competence in class (Cummins, 2000). Cummins (2000) further explains that the learners' mother tongue must be used as a language of communication, both at home and in school, thus linking the home to the school.

Against this historical background, learners' ability to speak Yoruba fluently in primary schools in Lagos State has been impeded by many factors. Firstly, the implementation of mother tongue instruction in primary schools is expensive, because the government must provide both human and material resources if meaningful teaching and learning must take place. Indigenous language teachers must be trained and instructional materials relevant to the indigenous language also have to be made available. Presently, there is no concrete effort made by the Nigerian government to remove the challenges facing the implementation of mother tongue instruction in schools. According to Urevbu (2001), the successful

implementation of mother tongue instruction at school can only be achieved when the language orthography is available, textbooks in the mother tongue are produced and made available to teachers and learners, as well as other teaching materials. None of these are available at present.

Secondly, it is a common practice in primary schools to see teachers teach learners in English as a language of instruction (Makinde, 2003). English is sometimes made compulsory by the owners of such schools in order to meet the existing class distinction being created by the older established schools. However, it is contrary to -what the Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) states in Section IV, subsection 19(e), namely that the medium of instruction in the primary school must be the mother tongue at the lower primary classes in schools. The implementation of the national policy is problematic as the number of indigenous language teachers available for the primary education system is low. This is because very few candidates enrol for the indigenous language courses in colleges of education and universities due to the negative attitude of candidates and in particular the parents, who believe that nothing positive can emerge from such an academic venture. The primary 1 to 6 school curriculum in Nigeria is written in English. One would expect that, since the Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) outlines that children must be taught in the first three years of primary school in the language of the immediate environment, viz the home language (Yoruba), the primary school curriculum would be written in the language of the immediate environment.

Thirdly, the Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stipulation on the use of indigenous languages for teaching only at the lower classes in the primary schools creates a situation in which the indigenous languages are not strong enough to cope with the demands of education beyond primary 1 to 3 classes. This situation has prevented these languages from developing to the level whereby they can be used to explain modern scientific concepts during the early primary classes. Iyamu and Ogiegbaen (2005) argue that the problem posed by the linguistic heterogeneity further echoes the earlier writings of Bamgbose (1977), when he opines that mother tongue instruction can only be successful in the rural areas, where there is linguistic homogeneity. The multilingual nature of urban areas, like Lagos, makes this implementation impossible.



Fourthly, the challenge being faced by teachers in primary schools relates to the attitudes of parents with regard to education in the mother tongue. Most parents in Nigeria would not support their children's learning in the mother tongue because they believe that teaching in the mother tongue should be the responsibility of the home and not the school. There is the negative belief that instruction in the mother tongue is inferior to learning in English. In addition, indigenous language teachers are not happy about teaching in a mother tongue for fear of losing their prestige among colleagues (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2005). An example of this is in secondary schools, where the mathematics and physics teachers tend to assume an air of superiority over other teachers (Iyamu & Ogiegbaen, 2005).

It should be noted that the researcher is a Yoruba man from Lagos State, which is the study location. For this reason he is pertinent about this research. Given the status of Yoruba, this study investigated teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, and its effectiveness on primary 3 learners.

The research questions that guided the study will now be addressed.

### **1.3.1 KEY RESEARCH QUESTION**

*What are the experiences of teachers when using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary school classes?*

### **1.3.2 RESEARCH SUBQUESTIONS**

- How do the teachers value the teaching of Yoruba?
- What are the challenges of teaching Yoruba?
- What are the strengths of teaching Yoruba?
- What are their experiences in terms of support and resources they receive in teaching Yoruba?
- What are the implications of these experiences for learning Yoruba?

The questions are discussed in detail in chapters four and five, where the process of the study is set out and the responses are analysed and interpreted.

#### **1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study is to investigate teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes and the implication for learning. The study revealed these experiences in the manner in which the teachers teach Yoruba using it as a medium of instruction and a language of teaching and learning.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Fafunwa (1977) emphasises the importance of home language education in schools when he states that children comprehend well when they receive instruction in the mother tongue in class. In most developed countries of the world, mother tongue instruction takes a leading role in the education of the child on primary, secondary and university level.

This study explored and described experiences primary 3 teachers encounter when teaching using Yoruba as a medium of instruction. This study revealed different strategies used in teaching other subjects using Yoruba and the effectiveness in equipping primary 3 learners with literacy skills. It also revealed different perspectives held by teachers in regards to the importance of mother tongue in teaching. The study furthermore documented the support teachers receive and how sufficient or not it is in teaching, as this might inform future policy positions. Lastly, the study revealed the experiences of teachers and values attached to language that positively influenced learning.

#### **1.6 CONTEXTUALISING THIS STUDY**

This section examines the following contexts in the study:

- The Nigerian educational system and related policies;
- Primary education and language policy;
- Language policy and Lagos State;
- Rights of the child to identify with a mother tongue in a community.

### **1.6.1 THE NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND RELATED POLICIES**

Education in Nigeria is a tool for enhancing national development (FRN, 2004). It has witnessed active participation from the government and non-governmental organisations. Government has stated that for the benefit of all citizens, the country's educational objectives must be spelled out in order of importance to the aspirations of the individual and those of the community at large, in relation to the modern world (FRN, 2004).

The three levels of education in Nigeria are primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. There has been a slight change in structure of these levels of education due to the introduction of the Universal Basic Education, also referred to as Basic Education. Basic Education in Nigeria include the six year period of primary education and the first three years referred to as Junior Secondary School I-III of secondary education, making it a nine year period of basic education. This study will, however, focus on teachers' experiences on the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes and the effectiveness of these experiences on the learners in classes.

### **1.6.2 PRIMARY EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY**

The Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) defines primary education as the education given in institutions for children aged six to eleven and older. It is the foundation for other levels of education. Hence, primary education is the key to the success or failure of the whole system and the period shall be for six years. Section IV, subsection 19(b) stipulates that primary education subjects shall include Languages, Language of the environment, English, French and Arabic. Section IV, subsection 19(e) further states that the medium of instruction in primary school shall be the language of the environment, like Yoruba, for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject. Section IV, subsection (f) argues that from the fourth year on, English shall progressively be used as a language of instruction and the language of immediate environment, like Yoruba, shall be taught as a subject.

### **1.6.3 LANGUAGE POLICY AND LAGOS STATE**

In Nigeria, the three major indigenous languages are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. For political convenience, Nigeria is divided into six geo-political zones, namely North-East, North-West, North-Central, South-West, South-East and South-South. North-East, North-West and North-Central are predominantly Hausa-speaking zones. South-East takes care of the Igbo-speaking people, while South-West comprises of the Yoruba speaking people and South-South takes care of minority groups like the Ijaws Itshekiri, Urhobo, Efik and many others (Adegbija, 2004).

For this study, the focus is on Lagos State, which is one of the six Yoruba-speaking states in the South-Western geo-political zone. Lagos, the study location for this research, as a Yoruba-speaking state, was created on 27 May 27 1967 by Decree No. 14 of 1967, which reshaped Nigeria's twelve states. The state is composed of the old Federal Capital Territory of Lagos, which remains the financial hub and was the Federal Capital of Nigeria till 12 December 1991. The old colony province of the defunct Western Region of Nigeria is comprised of Badagry, Ikeja, Ikorodu and Epe divisions. These divisions still exist, but have been restructured into five divisions, namely Lagos Island, Ikeja, Ikorodu Badagry and Epe. Lagos Island and Ikeja speak the Awori dialect, while some parts of Badagry speak the Egun dialect. Yoruba is the unifying language and the language of the immediate environment (home language) in Lagos State.

### **1.6.4 RIGHTS OF THE CHILD TO IDENTIFY WITH A MOTHER TONGUE IN A COMMUNITY**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) contains 54 articles relating to civil, political economic, social, cultural and survival rights of the child. Article 28 specifies the right of the child to education and Article 30 specifies that a child who belongs to a minority community may not be prevented from exercising his/her right. He/she must be allowed to profess his/her own culture, religion and language (UN CRC, 1989).

Mother tongue, according to UNESCO (1953), can psychologically be viewed as the system that makes the mind of the learner works towards understanding. Sociologically, it can be referred to as a channel through which the learner identifies

with members of a particular community and educationally – it stimulates learning in the learner more than when a foreign language is used (Khubchandani, 1983). Hence, the learner should be allowed to make the decision on choice of language whenever the situation arises.

D'Souza (2006) argue that, with regard to human rights, it is the right of every learner to possess a language which can help to promote in him/her some level of literacy achievements, thereby reducing intellectual inefficiency in the learner (Cummins, 1976; 1977). This also prevents semilingualism in the learner (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukoma, 1976). The literacy achievement of the learner in a language is confirmed when he/she is able to engage in discussion with other members of the community in which they find themselves without any fear of molestation from anybody.

The constitution of the Federal Government of Nigeria (1999) agrees with the United Nations' pronouncement on the rights of the child to identify with his/her cultural background through the use of the mother tongue, hence the reflection of this in the policy document of 2004 stipulating that primary 1 to 3 classes of primary education should be taught in the mother tongue. Furthermore, the Nigerian Federal House of Representatives and the Federal House of Assembly, which are both legislative houses, are allowed to use indigenous languages while proceedings are occurring. This also applies for other lower houses in the various states in Nigeria. In the Lagos State House of Assembly, the business of the house is conducted mainly in Yoruba and other Yoruba dialects, like Ijebu, Awori and Egun, every Thursday. These further emphasize the relevance of the indigenous language in the Nigerian society.

The significance of indigenous language education in schools cannot be over-emphasised. The primary school is the bedrock of any educational attainment in life and if the education of the learner starts through this means, the attitude of identifying with one's culture is cultivated. Hence, citizenship education is being inculcated. Osler (2005) opines that citizenship education is about having a sense of belonging, developing the attitude of feeling secure and the ability to exercise one's human rights and responsibilities. Citizenship education is essential to encourage

and promote required skills, knowledge, understanding and the values needed in a democratic structure of civil society (Pring, 2001).

In this study, the researcher devoted a section of Chapter 2 to language and culture, to deal with the issue of language identity and culture. However, it should be noted that the focus of this study is not on citizenship education, although aspects of citizenship such as identity emerged in the literature review. However, mother tongue teaching in schools cannot be discussed without mentioning the democratic society in which the schools are situated – hence the need for the above argument.

This study, however, dealt with teachers' experiences using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria, and the enhancement of the learners' language skills in Yoruba in an attempt to promote their cultural identity and their empowerment.

## **1.7 EXPLANATION OF THE CORE CONCEPTS**

The core concepts examined in the study include teachers' experiences, Yoruba, medium of instruction, primary school and learning. These concepts are explained below.

### **1.7.1 TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES**

Experience can be described as the apprehension of an object, thought or emotion through the senses or mind. It involves active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skills (Free Online Dictionary 2012). The Free Online Dictionary (2012) further defines experience as the ability to gain some knowledge over a period of time and becoming grounded in such knowledge particularly relating to a specific profession within the society.

In addition, experience can be defined as a person's active involvement in cultural activities and other social interactions that may occur (Hedges, 2007). Wells (1999) describes experience as the fundamental source of the meanings and representations upon which the acquired knowledge is built.

Teachers' experiences in this study include both personal challenges and prospects of teaching using Yoruba as the language of instruction. These include the experiences that they encountered while teaching Yoruba and the impact of these on the learners in classes.

### **1.7.2 YORUBA**

The Yoruba language is spoken natively by over thirty million people in West Africa, primarily in Nigeria and in the neighbouring countries of the Republic of Benin and Togo (Ojo, 2006). Yoruba is also spoken in some parts of Brazil and Cuba (Lawal, 1996). The language has been written since 1800, although there have been many changes in aspects of its orthographic representation. It is a viable medium of instruction in education, with a significant amount of pedagogical materials (Ojo, 2006).

The Yoruba language is commonly used among the people living in the South-Western region of Nigeria and is regarded as the language of the immediate environment. For this study, Yoruba is the mother tongue which is used for teaching in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. It should be noted that Nigeria has three major languages namely Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. However, there are other minority languages due to the multilingual nature of Nigeria as a country. The following map of Nigeria in Figure 1.1 shows the 36 states of Nigeria. As the focus of this study is the Yoruba language and the study location is Lagos, Figure 1.2 presents the map of Lagos.



Figure 1.1: Map of Nigeria showing the 36 states



Figure 1.2: Map of Lagos State



### **1.7.3 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

A medium of instruction is a channel through which teaching and learning takes place. The free online dictionary (2012) defines medium of instruction as a language used in teaching which may or may not be the official language of the country. The National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) states that the language of instruction in the lower classes of primary education should be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment.

### **1.7.4 PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Primary education is the first stage of schooling system. Hence, it is regarded as the bedrock of other levels of education. It consists of primary 1 to 6. The Lagos State Government has 906 public primary schools with 859,456 learners. The first primary school in Lagos was established in Badagry in 1842 by the Christian missionaries.

In this study, primary school refers to the school that takes care of the education of learners from ages 6 to 11+ (FRN, 2004). Specifically, the study focuses on the primary 3 classes.

### **1.7.5 LEARNING**

Ormrod (1999) defines learning from two perspectives, that is, from the behaviourist and cognitive angles. He defines learning from the behaviourist angle as a relatively permanent change in behaviour due to experience. This refers to a change in behaviour, that is, an external change that can be observed. From the cognitive angle, Ormrod (1999) defines learning as a relatively permanent change in mental associations due to experience. This refers to an internal change in behaviour that cannot be seen or observed. Learning is regarded to have taken place when some permanent changes occur.

For this study, the objective was to investigate teachers' experiences in order to identify how teachers taught Yoruba and if learners comprehended the lessons taught in the class using Yoruba as a medium of instruction.

## 1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED CONCEPTS

This study examines teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State and the implications for teaching and learning. Language is a significant factor in education, and Lawton (1973) explains that it is a special human quality that stimulates human beings to acquire learning, think positively and adapt to societal norms and traditions. It should be noted that education promotes cognitive development and is used to achieve effective teaching and learning in class. The language of instruction between teachers and learners must therefore be a familiar language which learners can understand (Leung, 1998). The chances of learners achieving better results in class due to the use of a familiar medium of communication are higher compared to when a language unfamiliar to the learner is used in class. The medium of instruction in the class is a significant tool in learning.

The theoretical framework and related concepts of this study is influenced by two schools of thought. The first school supports the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary school classes (Adegoju, 2008; Ross, 2004; Ukwuma, 2004). The second school of thought argues that using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction has a negative effect (Bamgbose 2011; Mackey, 1992; Yadav, 1992). This school objects the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

However, these two schools of thoughts influence teachers' identity and how they perceive the mother tongue. The development of identity shapes the perception of the teacher from the cultural background because the teacher comes from a cultural background that influences his/her way of life and the way he/she perceives the mother tongue. The funds of knowledge are empowering and embedded within a cultural background. Lived experiences are shaped by politics, socio-economic factors and the media and have a bearing on how identity is conceived. Erikson's (1968) theory of identity and Freire's (1972) theory of empowerment guided the study.

## **1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

In this section, the unit of analysis, the research approach and the research methods which include data collection and analysis will be discussed.

### **1.9.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research is qualitative in nature. This inquiry employed an interpretative paradigm. Creswell (2007) argues that qualitative research is a form of research in which researchers' interpret what they see, hear and understand. The experiences of teachers using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and the implications for teaching and learning in Lagos State, Nigeria were investigated. The data was interpreted against what the literature espouses as the best context for nurturing the Yoruba language in schools. In qualitative research, the best way to understand a phenomenon is to view it in its context. Qualitative researchers investigate phenomena in their natural habitat, while trying to make sense out of the prevailing situation and interpret the meanings people give to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The qualitative approach assisted the researcher to understand the occurrence of events in their natural settings (school) while investigating the teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications for learning in Lagos State, Nigeria. It made it possible gather details about the primary 3 teachers who were qualified Yoruba language teachers and to observe the teaching. It also enabled observation of the primary 3 children's response to the medium of instruction used by the teacher. The researcher sought to examine and understand the multiple realities constructed by participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2003). Garcia (2005) asserts that cognitive development can be linked to the language learnt within a unique cultural context.

### **1.9.2 CASE STUDY**

A case study design was utilised to describe, explain and explore the teachers' experiences in using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications to learning in Lagos State, Nigeria (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005), a case study design gives an example of real situations and events. This study focused on primary 3 teachers and learners in schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Lagos State was chosen as the study area because it is located in the South-West geo-political zone of Nigeria where the language of the immediate environment is Yoruba. Two primary schools in Lagos State were used to enable an in-depth investigation. One hundred and thirty-eight learners took part in this study, together with four classroom teachers, two head teachers and four assistant head teachers. The head teachers and assistant head teachers were also classroom teachers. The number of primary 3 teachers was determined by the number of primary 3 classes found in the schools. The two primary schools purposively chosen for this study are located in the Agege and Badagry Local Government Education Authorities respectively.

### **1.9.3 SAMPLING**

The Agege and Badagry Local Government Education Authorities both assisted in identifying the two schools to be used for the study. They were chosen because Yoruba was used as a medium of instruction there. Purposive selection was used in choosing primary 3 teachers who had received training in Yoruba and were using Yoruba as a medium of instruction for teaching in primary schools. Primary 3 children were selected because they had already received two years of mother tongue instruction. It enabled the researcher to determine if there was any progress while using the Nigerian National School Curriculum for primary schools as the benchmark for assessment. Also, primary 3 falls within the lower classes, where the national policy on education stipulates that the home language must be used in teaching.

### **1.10 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

Multiple methods of data collection were used, including interviews, to gather information from the teachers of the primary 3 learners and observing how the teachers used Yoruba in teaching. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were used to gather information from primary 3 teachers. Non-participant classroom observation of the learners was also used to understand the effect of learning in

Yoruba. All these instruments assisted in answering the research questions and enabled the study to present richly descriptive and detailed data.

### **1.10.1 INTERVIEWS**

Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were used to gather information from the teachers of the primary 3 learners. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Permission for this was obtained from the respondents. Primary 3 teachers were interviewed to elicit from them the strategies used in teaching Yoruba as a medium of instruction. This afforded an opportunity to verify and triangulate what teachers said in the interviews and what was happening in classes. Interview questions were adapted as the interviews progressed to include responses from the participants. The questions progressed from direct to indirect questions.

### **1.10.2 OBSERVATION**

Non-participant classroom observations were used to enhance the researcher's understanding of the teachers' teaching practice and the values they attach to teaching Yoruba and its implications for learning in Lagos State Nigeria. The primary 3 teachers were observed while teaching and learning took place. An observation schedule was employed to determine to what extent teachers taught Yoruba to learners in a multi-linguistic class and to observe the level of response of learners to teaching and learning. The schedule comprised of criteria from the curriculum statement that indicated benchmarks in respect to the language development of primary 3 learners. The criteria are included in the policy statement which states that the medium of instruction must be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment. The quality of the Yoruba used by the teachers was observed to find out if it conformed to the stated standards in the language policy statement. Learners were observed to determine how they use Yoruba as a language of communication while teaching and learning was taking place in the class. The researcher spent six months on the collection of data, conducting three hour-long observations on a bi-weekly basis in each classroom.

### **1.10.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) was analysed to confirm whether the stipulation on the use of the mother tongue to teach at the lower primary classes was strictly adhered to by teachers. The primary school curriculum was also analysed to examine its formulation of performance objectives for every aspect of learning to guide teaching and learning, and the generation of learners' learning activities designed to lead to the achievement of the objectives, thereby getting learners actively engaged in class activities. The textbooks were analysed to confirm how the values, traditions, norms and cultures of the Yoruba language were explained and how these values were transmitted through songs rhymes proverbs stories and many others.

### **1.10.4 FIELD NOTES**

Field notes were used to record personal observations, reflections and perceived body language shown while interacting with the classroom teachers during the period of data collection for this study. In the field notes, other observations relevant to the study were noted during the semi-structured one-on-one interview with the teachers in their settings, namely the classrooms after lessons. The feelings and thoughts of participants were recorded in the field notes during the period of data collection at schools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **1.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was analysed according to themes emerging from the study. These themes were further subdivided into categories that were analysed. Creswell (2007) claims that data analysis in qualitative research involves the preparation and organisation of the data for analysis; arranging the data into themes through a process of coding and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion. Nieuwenhuis (2010) claims that the data analysis in a qualitative study tends to be an ongoing process which means that data collection, analysis and reporting are interwoven.

As the data collection progressed, the researcher continually consulted his field-notes to verify conclusions and obtained feedback from the participants to clarify gaps which might have occurred. The objective as a researcher was to summarise

what was seen in terms of teaching using Yoruba as a medium of instruction, and what was heard in terms of phrases, words or themes used in teaching to keep the researcher focused. This qualitative research process allowed the researcher to move in analytical circles during the data analysis. The theoretical framework and related concepts pertinent to this study guided my analysis.

## **1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Before embarking on this study, permission from the Ministry of Education, State Universal Basic Education and the Local Government Education Authorities was sought. The researcher also obtained permission from the participants, and assured them of their confidentiality and safety. They were assured that they could withdraw while the research was ongoing. Henning, Rensburg and Smit (2004) argue that participants need to give their consent to participate; thereby making sure that their privacy and sensitivity is protected.

The researcher respected the confidentiality and took the vulnerable nature of the young learners involved in this study into consideration (Grodin & Glantz, 1994; Lansdown, 1994; Nicholson, 1986). Letters to the parents were written, seeking permission to involve their children. The letters contained information on the nature of the research and stated that the children would only be observed during teaching and learning in class. The parents were informed that the learners could withdraw at any time without prior notice and that their identity would not be revealed. The researcher went to the primary schools used in the study to address the primary 3 learners involved and inform them of his intention to observe them during teaching in class and to assure them that they were free to withdraw at any time they wanted to without any prior notice.

Ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria was sought before the researcher finally proceeded to the field to collate the data.

## **1.13 DELIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

This study was limited to primary 3 teachers in two primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the study was restricted only to the school environments that

were used for the research. It should be noted however that the results of this study cannot be generalised but may be transferred to similar cases.

## **1.14 OUTLINE AND ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

The following is an outline of the chapters that made up this study.

### **CHAPTER 1**

The problem necessitating this research is discussed, mentioning the rationale for the study, outline the research questions. The study is contextualised, explaining the core concepts, giving an outline and organisation of the study.

### **CHAPTER 2**

A review of empirical literatures on teachers' experiences using the mother tongue (Yoruba) as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria is presented. The review includes literature on the importance of the mother tongue, the mother tongue as a springboard for learning a second language, the mother tongue and politics/economic power, the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in international context, and studies on the implementation of the mother tongue instruction. The purpose of the chapter is to situate the study within previously conducted studies on mother tongues. Gaps and strengths are identified to help delineate the study in terms of what is available and what is not available in the literature.

### **CHAPTER 3**

Theoretical framework and related concepts upon which the research is premised are discussed. The theoretical framework of the study is based on two schools of thought that argue for and against the importance of the mother tongue to learners.

This study is also based on Erikson's theory of identity as well as Freire's theory of empowerment. These theories influence and shape how identity is formed. Teachers lived experiences were investigated and how these experiences are shaped by their cultural background.



#### **CHAPTER 4**

The choice of qualitative research design is explained, as well as the methodological strategies used to accomplish this study. Justification is also provided. The data collection methods and the instruments used to accomplish this study are described.

#### **CHAPTER 5**

The chapter presents data and analyses findings according to themes, which are subdivided into categories dealing with values in Yoruba and how these values are transmitted to learners. The challenges faced by teachers during teaching in class were also identified in the study.

#### **CHAPTER 6**

This chapter is the synthesis of the study and contributions towards knowledge in the field. The significance of the study is mentioned, and recommendations are made of what can be done to raise the bar as far as language is concerned. It also provided answers to the research questions that have been outlined with statements made in the literature review. The data interpretation was premised on the literature review and the theoretical frameworks and related concepts.

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## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a description on the preliminary literature review on aspects relating to mother tongue instruction. Teachers' experiences using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary 3 classes and the implications to learning in Lagos State, Nigeria were explored. The literature consulted was used to form a premise for understanding teachers' experiences of language use and how this shapes learning. This literature review is discussed under the following categories:

- The mother tongue and its importance to in second language learning;
- Factors that influence perceptions formed on the mother tongue;
- International, regional and national experience on the mother tongue;
- Inhibiting/successful uses of the mother tongue;
- The Nigerian language policy landscape.

The importance of the literature review is that it foregrounded this study against what has been researched before on the mother tongues as a medium of instruction. Gaps will also be identified and how to deal with them indicated. The researcher will premise this chapter against the definitions of the mother tongue.

### 2.2 WHAT IS A MOTHER TONGUE?

A mother tongue can be described as the language a person acquires from birth and this can be regarded as the language a child acquires first and in which he/she establishes the first verbal contacts. This is regarded as a definition based on origin, that is, the language-speaking population into which the child is born and grows up with right from birth (Yadav 1992) Gupta (1997) links the mother tongue to a person's early experiences, defining it as a language learnt before any other language has been learnt. Hence, the mother tongue of a preschool child will be a language the child speaks. The mother tongue can be described as the first language acquired in childhood (British Columbia Census Fast Facts 1996). Le

Page (1988) defines a mother tongue as an ancestral property determined for a child by patrilineal ancestry. Yadav (1992) mentions that the mother tongue is the channel through which people first attempt to express their ideas about themselves and the world around them. UNESCO (1953) defines the mother tongue as the language that a child acquires from birth and which becomes his/her natural tool of linguistic interaction.

## **2.2.1 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MOTHER TONGUE AND FIRST LANGUAGE**

The Kenya Institute of Education (2002) describes the mother tongue as the initial language a child acquires within a particular community. However Gupta says that the mother tongue is often linked to ancestral background (Gupta 1997). In the case of a Yoruba-speaking couple, their daughter would learn Yoruba first, then English later. If she grows up in the United States, she is likely to be more fluent in English than Yoruba; hence, her first language becomes English while her mother tongue would be Yoruba. However for this study, mother tongue and first language should be understood as synonymous. The mother tongue has been described by many scholars from different points of view and these views are examined below.

### **⌘ The language a person identifies with**

This is regarded as a definition based on internal identification. This means that a person can be born into a particular indigenous language population but it will depend on that person being internally convinced to identify with such a language and speak it. Buck (2001) views the mother tongue as a language a child learns before any other language or languages. Therefore, a child acquires the mother tongue automatically and naturally from the speakers within his social environment. Pokharel (2001) affirms that the first language, the mother tongue and the native tongue are common terms for the language that a person acquires first in his childhood because it is spoken amongst the family members, and it is also the language spoken within the country where the child lives.

### **⌘ The language other people identify you with**

This definition is based on external identification, for example, if a person is from a Yoruba-speaking population but was born and grew up in the Hausa-speaking state of the North, such a person might not be able to speak Yoruba, but may speak

Hausa fluently. Hence he/she will be externally identified as a Hausa person. This means that whatever language one speaks fluently can be regarded as the mother tongue of that person. Scholars such as Baker (2001), Engen and Kulbrandstad (2004), and Romaine (1995), view the mother tongue from different perspectives. Thus, genetically, mother tongue is regarded as the language that the mother or other caretakers expose the child to right from birth through communication. Chronologically, mother tongue is the language that a speaker acquires first and he is competent in it. Mother tongue is the language that a speaker knows best (competence). From a functional perspective, the mother tongue is the language that a speaker use most. Finally, the mother tongue is the language that the speaker identifies with.

#### ⌘ **The language a person uses most often**

The mother tongue can be regarded as the language used by a person most of the time, regardless of whether he is a Yoruba, Hausa or Igbo. If that language is English then this is the mother tongue according to this definition. The mother tongue can be referred to as the language the child acquires first within the cultural setting where he is born and brought up (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008; Herrlitz, Ongstad & Van de Ven, 2007).

Sollid (2008) describes the mother tongue as the language a child acquires and uses in communication with the surroundings. Explaining further, Sollid (2008) affirms that a child is the product of a family, whether immediate or extended, and the child acquires the language of the surroundings where he is brought up or the language of the immediate environment which automatically becomes his mother tongue.

### **2.3 IMPORTANCE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE**

Language is a crucial factor in teaching and learning. Araromi (2005) argue that language is the vehicle of communication and that without it human beings would find it problematic to exist. Osagie (1985) emphasises that language is crucial to all forms of transmission of knowledge, values and socialisation processes. Language is an essential tool in the education of the child and achieving better understanding in a class depends on the language of instruction used by the teacher (Ejeh, 2004;

Leung, 1998). Zhang and Alex (1995) argue that language acquisition is a natural process for children that occur almost without effort. Although the ability to speak increases with age, this does not mean that such growth will lead to perfection.

Corson (1999) affirms that language is central to cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning. It is an instrument for building a human being's knowledge of the world and his place in it. Language is therefore central to learning which develops the ability of reading and writing and this is linked to linguistic achievement in school (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2008).

UNESCO (2008a) affirms that the medium of instruction and knowledge of language is vital to learning. UNESCO (2008a) recommends that, to encourage quality in learners' learning, the value of mother tongue instruction in early childhood and primary 1 to 3 classes of primary school must be pertinently identified. Furthermore, UNESCO (2008b) advocates protecting children's indigenous languages and preserving the linguistic diversity stating that it needs serious efforts to make sure that learners can be educated in their mother tongue. Current issues in language acquisition and the goal of Education for All (EFA) call for urgent attention to encourage the provision of quality education in their home language for learners (Ball, 2010).

The significance of language in any society cannot be overemphasised. Hence, Yadav (1992) presents language as an emotionally charged issue which can promote or obstruct national development. It can also be advantageous and disadvantageous to an individual. Formal education was introduced into Nigeria through Badagry by the Wesleyan missionaries led by Thomas Birch Freeman and William de Graft in 1842 (Awobuluyi, 1996). For about four decades after that initial date, language education and development in Nigeria was controlled by the various mission groups (Awobuluyi, 1996). The Christian missionaries initially came to Nigeria to evangelise and convert people to Christianity, but they realised that their aim of evangelisation would not be achieved unless the would-be converts could hear sermons in their local languages. It became pertinent for missionaries to embark on the education and training of people in indigenous languages to facilitate easy communication and promote evangelism. It is not surprising that the teaching

and learning of local languages received serious attention during the colonial era in Nigeria.

In an address delivered by the former Oyo State Commissioner for Education, Youth and Sports in Nigeria, it was noted that using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools was based on the fact that learners comprehend better when they can communicate well in these local languages and can easily use the experience gained from the language to solve emerging problems (Adegbija 2004).

Khati (2011) observes that in Nepal, Nepali serves as a lingua franca in education, mass media, administration and in society. Nepali has been given the status of an official language hence Nepali (as mother tongue) is therefore very useful in translating some English words quickly and easily by the teacher to the learners in class for greater comprehension. Khanal (2004) opines that moderate and judicious use of the mother tongue (Nepali) enhances the learning and teaching of the target language. The classroom teacher believes that it is necessary to use Nepali in the English classroom to explain some complex concepts and phrases to learners.

Early education in indigenous languages is necessary and can be lasting and valuable when it is used as a language of instruction for children between the ages of six to eight years in primary education (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh & Wolff 2006). Reading and writing in the mother tongue need to be developed beyond narrating of stories in the first three years of school. Education in the mother tongue needs to be developed to the level that written texts and oral language used for learning and teaching mathematics, science, history and geography can be understood and used by the learner (Alidou *et al.*, 2006). This study examined the question if teachers were of the opinion that the mother tongue could be taught beyond primary classes. Reasons were sought for this thinking.

Research carried out on mother tongues has revealed that learners' find it easier to read and acquire other academic skills when instruction is in the home language than when they are taught in a foreign language (Langer, Bartolome, Vasquez & Lucas 1990; UNICEF, 1999). These findings have prompted a global concern on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction particularly in the lowest

classes of primary education (Mchazime, 1995). It is important that the language of instruction at the start of a child's education should be the mother tongue (UNESCO, 2001). Learning through the home language provides an easy stepping stone for the transition from home to school. Mathooko (2009) posits that an indigenous medium is educationally preferable because it links teaching with the home life of the child. However, it must be based on cognitive ideas formed during the learners' preschool experiences.

Apart from preserving the cultural heritage of the people, mother tongue education (a) facilitates smooth transition from the child's home to school; (b) inculcates permanent literacy in the learners; (c) prepares the learners' to be ready for learning; (d) gives the learners the opportunity to transfer learning correctly (Bamgbose, 1995). Bamgbose (1995) further posits that initial reading and writing should be done in a language with which the learner is familiar and this should continue to be used as a medium of instruction for a long time in primary schools. Adeniran (1995) mentions that the continued dominance of English at the primary level of the education system can only impede learning more so as the majority of the learners enrolling into the primary schools come from different mother tongue homes and neighbourhoods.

My study specifically sought to determine if the use of the mother tongue facilitates literacy in schools.

## **2.4 THE MOTHER TONGUE AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Studies have shown that the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schooling improves teaching and learning of a foreign language as a subject of learning and will eventually make it a better medium of specialised learning at all times. Hence, this can bring about significant social change in the society in which the learner finds himself/herself (Alidou *et al.*, 2006).

Scholars argue strongly that learners should not be instructed in a second language until they have acquired the basic academic competence in the first language, at the end of primary 6 in schools (Lindholm, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006).

Learners in mother tongue-based education achieve higher proficiency in the majority language than learners in transitional bilingual programmes (Ramirez, Yuen & Ramey, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 2002). This effect is prominent in programmes that have continued to use indigenous language as the primary language of instruction in the primary school.

Findings have shown that continued development of a first language in bilingual education for minority language children, leads to the development of competency in second language (Cummins, 2000). Ajiboye (1987) argue that the learning of the first language promotes the learning of a second language, thus facilitating readiness of the second language and developing inquiry ability in learners for linguistic purposes.

Cummins (1981), while emphasising the importance of the mother tongue as a springboard for the learning of a second language, argue that the instruction in the first language promotes the development of academic proficiency which can later be used to develop competency in the second language.

Literacy in the mother tongue establishes an intellectual platform for learning other languages. When learners are well educated in their home language during primary education, they transit easily to the second language learning due to their academic competence in the home language (Ball, 2010). However, if learners are forced to switch abruptly from being educated in the home language to a second language, their acquisition and linguistic competence in the first language may be affected. Significantly, the learners' self-esteem and their enthusiasm may be dampened leading to a loss of interest in academic learning and increasing the dropout rate in schools (Ball, 2010).

Kraft (2003) opines that learners who were taught for a long period in their first language and did most of their normal academic and cognitive instructions in that language, will have a greater opportunity to learn the second language.

It should be noted that being educated in the first language develops literacy abilities in learners in that language. Therefore, these abilities lead to better academic achievements in the home language as well as concrete and rewarding



learning and results in second language education (International Reading Association, 2001; Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006; Palmer, Chackelford, Miller & Leclere, 2007).

Teaching in a child's mother tongue, however, means that the learning of new concepts in the mother tongue must not be delayed until learners are well grounded in the second language. Hence, teachers and learners should be able to negotiate meanings together, and thus competency in the second language is gained through interaction rather than memorisation and rote learning (Gacheche, 2010). Learners who understand the language they are instructed in are more likely to engage meaningfully with content, question what they do not understand and even enjoy the challenge of new things. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL, 2006) notes that learners comprehend well when they are taught in a language they are familiar with.

Learners' need to be taught for a longer period for them to be able to comprehend well in a second language and able to perform rigorous academic tasks. However; requiring learners' to transit quickly to education in a second or foreign language can be harmful to their literacy achievement and academic outcomes (Porter, 1990; Rossell & Baker, 1996). Wigglesworth and Simpson (2008) affirm that a learner's initial acquisition of language is vital to his learning how to think, hence when an education system imposes a foreign language on learners, disregarding their initial contact with language and pattern of processing new information, it inhibits their development of cognitive function. Mother tongue education allows learners to express themselves, contribute to discussions and develop their intellectual capabilities as conversations are carried out in a familiar language in classroom. This assists learners to keep up with what is going on around them (Benson, 2004).

Afolayan (1999) affirms that maintaining first language literacy has been associated with better overall academic performance and mastery of English. Brock-Utne and Alidou (2005) explain that mother tongue education promotes meaningful teaching of the foreign language in schools. Linguistic expertise acquired over a certain period in the first language can be transferred to the second language to aid development of such skills in the language. This has a positive effect on the linguistic growth and competence of the learners in a second language (Lanauze & Snow, 1989).

Cummins (2006) asserts that children's home and cultural background can be used as a basis for formal learning in class. This experience must be used by the teacher to establish a long lasting linguistic comprehension in class and should not be treated with levity. It should be noted that the child as an entity, possesses the right to display his/her academic prowess within the classroom. Cummins (2001) notes that rejecting the learners' based on the language that they speak or bring from home is to reject the learners as a whole. Therefore, teachers should try to bridge the gap between the learners' identities, which are related to their home language and the school tradition.

Lao's (2004) study of English-Chinese bilingual preschoolers evaluates the significant contributions of parents' home language behaviour in enhancing preschool learners' first language development. She argues that mother tongue development cannot be attained by children without the influence and contributions from the parents. To encourage parents' to be involved in the learning and development of their children's mother tongue and literacy skills, she recommends a child friendly environment in the home and proper guidance from parents and their collaboration with schools; support for parents who need to improve their own oral language skills in their first language. Children's opportunities to excel in a social context are determined by the similarities and differences between home and school linguistic practices (Carrington & Luke, 2002).

## **2.5 THE MOTHER TONGUE AND POLITICS**

In countries, such as South Africa and Nigeria, bilingual education has been politicized. Some indigenous languages like Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria have been elevated to the status of official languages for transacting official business. Such indigenous languages have been designated official languages of instruction in schools to facilitate teaching and learning (Alexander, 1989; Hakuta, 1986). In Nigeria, the government recognises only three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) amidst other minority languages, and English is the main official language.

In South Africa, during the Apartheid era, language education practice promoted the use of mother tongue in schools against the wishes of the people. The indigenous African languages were used as languages of initial literacy and this enabled the

transition to the learning of English to take place as smoothly as possible. In 1976-1977, when the Bantu Education ministry insisted that Afrikaans must be used as media of communication and instruction in the senior primary and junior secondary schools for black children, this resulted in mass revolts by school children. This forced the apartheid government to withdraw and have both English and Afrikaans as medium of instruction in senior classes. Indigenous languages remained and were entrenched as media of instruction in the first three to four years of primary education however they did not enjoy the official status. In redressing the injustices of the past, the new democratic government officially recognised 11 languages which include nine indigenous languages (Heugh, 1995).

The politics of which indigenous language should be used as the official language of business in the National Assembly in Nigeria led to acrimonious debates among members of the Constitutional drafting committee. This issue was removed from the draft Constitution. Later however, the then Supreme Military Council, reviewed and amended the draft Constitution to include the earlier provision which related to the language of official business in the National Assembly by decree and provided the following rationale (New Nigerian, 1979):

At this point in our development as a nation, it is unacceptable to make English the only language of business of our national Assembly and to proceed even further to enshrine it permanently in our Constitution. Section 51 of the Constitution has therefore been amended to ensure that Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba shall be additional languages of business to the National Assembly and shall be so when appropriate arrangements can be made for their use.

The promotion of multilingualism in education therefore requires the collective efforts of all stakeholders, to mobilise the required materials for its successful implementation (Heugh 1998; LANGTAG, 1996). Moreover, the mobilisation of the needed resources can be encouraged only when the language has economic viability outside the school (Heugh, 1995; LANGTAG, 1996).

It is a matter of concern why mother tongue instruction in South Africa was prosperous during apartheid days when it did not have any support from the government. Moreover Heugh (1995) maintains that a language only becomes important when it has economic viabilities. The state of affairs makes it even more

imperative to find if the stated facts hold any truth in terms of Yoruba. Do teachers still value the Yoruba language and in what way do they show this?

## **2.6 THE MOTHER TONGUE AND ECONOMIC POWER**

Beginning schooling in the mother tongue has been adduced to developing the cognitive development of the child (Cummins 2000). However, when the indigenous language of a country is not recognised as the official language for communication and economic transaction, the language is relegated to the background and is not economically viable (Gupta, 1997). The Nigerian situation is a good example where candidates do not enrol to study indigenous languages in the colleges of education and universities if their use leads to poor economic rewards after graduation.

Producing textbooks and other instructional materials for mother tongue instruction can be expensive; yet mother tongue instruction can only be viable economically when the needed materials are available to provide effective teaching and learning (Urevbu 2001). Yoruba as the indigenous language used in this study has potential to become a tool for economic sustainability if the culture and values attached to the language are internalised well. Global growth and the development of the teaching and the learning of Yoruba as a Foreign Language in the United States of America (USA), Brazil, Cuba and countries in Europe have helped to stimulate people to study Yoruba in Nigeria (Arohunmolase, 2000). Would-be Yoruba language teachers are encouraged when they know that they can get jobs when they graduate from school within and outside the country. Yoruba language graduates become economically relevant and are prepared to compete with graduates in other fields.

## **2.7 THE USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS**

Mother tongue as a concept has attracted attention in international contexts with comments from many scholars (Cummins, 2000; Lao & Krashen, 1999).

The Danish government that came into power in 2001 amended the law on school instruction in the mother tongue. The amendment law stopped government financial

aid in terms of the subsidy the use of the mother tongue in schools. From 1975 until 2002, mother tongue instruction was used in teaching to teach all learners irrespective of their home and cultural backgrounds for three to five hours weekly. This amendment affected instruction in the mother tongue negatively and was felt keenly by learners' from the developing countries living in Denmark. In another change in legislation in 2008, a population of 62,000 of these learners' from the developing countries lost their former linguistic rights to develop their home language in the public educational system. This had an adverse effect on their educational achievements.

Lao and Krashen (1999) mention that most primary schools in Hong Kong use the mother tongue (Cantonese) as a medium of instruction, while English is used as a medium of instruction in secondary schools and universities. The Hong Kong Department of Education reported that while learners in English-medium classrooms were more passive in classes, those in the Chinese-medium classrooms were more active. It was also reported that learners in the Chinese-medium classes performed better than the learners in English-medium classes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Examination (Lao & Krashen, 1999). The learners in the Chinese classes performed better than those in the English classes because learners comprehend lessons taught in the mother tongue better than when taught in English, which is a second language.

In a study conducted by Kocakulah, Ustunluoglu and Kocakulah (2005) in Turkey, it was revealed that learners who were taught "Energy" in a second language, could not comprehend as well in class as those in the Turkish language classes. This was because the learners did not understand the foreign language well and it was believed that learners would have performed better if they were taught in their mother tongue. Therefore, the home language of the learners seems to be more effective in comprehension and application of science concepts than a non-indigenous language. This is because the basic concepts in science and other related subjects are better taught and understood in the mother tongue of the learners.

Cummins (2000) posits that the use of learners' home language in school will develop a good relationship between the home and the school. This relationship can

help to reduce the psychological stress learners face during teaching and learning. Learners can express their ideas and communicate well in the classroom using the mother tongue. Scholars have argued that learning in a language different from the mother tongue of the learners puts learners under intellectual pressure because they have to learn new concepts in the second language. This can create a difficult situation where the learners have to cope with the problems that emerge from the foreign language used as a medium of instruction in schools (Banks & Banks, 2010; Gay, 2010; Nieto, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, 2010).

Scholars noted that in the Philippines, Lubuagan was a culturally based community located in the northern end of the Cordilleras in Kalinga Province. In 1998, it recorded the First Language Component multilingual education pilot project initiated through a partnership of teachers from the immediate community, the local government, the Department of Education (DOE), and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) International Philippines (Ann & Llaneta, 2010). The multilingual programme encouraged the use of the learners' home language in their basic education experience. The Philippines Bilingual Education Policy (BEP) supported education in Filipino and English, thereby giving official recognition to the two languages as language of instructions in schools and recorded tremendous success.

Learners in grade 1 to 3 in the Lubuagan public schools were instructed in their home language, Lubuagan, and were then instructed to learn the same subject matter using the two major languages. The outcomes were overwhelming. Teachers recorded high levels of participation among the learners, and the teachers themselves started to use the indigenous language orally to promote a child friendly learning environment in the schools. In the 2006 National Achievement Tests for Third Grade Reading, Lubuagan learners performed better than all other schools in the province by up to 30% for both Filipino and English. In 2007, Grade 1 to 3 learners from Lubuagan repeatedly performed better than the other schools in Mathematics and other subjects like Filipino and English by over 20% (Anne & Llaneta, 2010).

In this study, Yoruba is the language of learning and teaching. However, what is not known are the effects of the use of Yoruba on learning. Therefore the researcher seeks to find out if Yoruba had any positive impact on the learning of children.

## **2.8 STUDIES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION: AN AFRICAN EXPERIENCE**

In Zambia, the Molteno Project (Duncan, 1995), which highlighted the use of Ibibemba as a medium of instruction in schools, formed part of the discussion at the Pan-African conference (Tambulukani, Sampa, Musuku & Linehan, 1999). The use of Ibibemba as a medium of instruction in 25 primary schools was a success and resulted in the introduction of a reading programme that was used for a long time in the schools in Zambia. The implication of this is that, the project supports the use of English language in the schools with the impression that the indigenous languages form the foundation for learning English and other subjects in primary schools in Zambia.

Buhmann and Trudell (2008), mentioned in a report while on a UNESCO project on the mother tongue that in Mali, the problems facing education and the development of indigenous languages could be ascribed to the inherited French education policy. The policy stipulated that French had to be used in schools as a medium of instruction and this resulted in poor academic achievements. The government introduced the indigenous languages as media of instruction into the schools in 1979 to correct the poor academic achievement of learners.

An approach called “convergent pedagogy” was introduced in Mali in 1987. This approach allowed for an interactive system of learning which brings together the different methods that are used in the first and second languages. It also encouraged the use of the mother tongue as a language of instruction throughout the primary education alongside the use of French so that learners effectively become bilingual (Buhmann & Trudell, 2008).

Traore (2001) mentions that in 1993, the first set of convergent pedagogy learners completed the six years of primary education and a 77% pass was recorded in the national entrance examination to the seventh grade. This pedagogical approach

revealed that learners' academic performance was higher in the indigenous language schools than in French language schools. Based on these results the government extended the programme to other primary schools in Mali in 1994. By 2005, the convergent pedagogy approach was used in 2,050 public schools in Mali (UNESCO, 2006).

Papua New Guinea is a linguistically diverse country with a population of about 5.4 million people and 820 languages. Port Moresby is the capital of the country where the national government and the civil service are situated (Buhmann & Trudell, 2008). By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, schools in Papua New Guinea were established and controlled by the churches and the indigenous languages were used as media of communication. Subsequently the government implemented a national education system where English was used as a medium of instruction in the schools (Buhmann & Trudell, 2008).

In 1991, an education reform took place in Papua New Guinea that gave relevance to the use of indigenous languages as media of instruction in the lower primary classes in schools. The 'Tok Ples Pri Skul' preschool programme was introduced in 1994 and promoted the use of over 200 indigenous languages for teaching in these schools (Buhmann & Trudell, 2008). The programme was a huge success because learners who were literate in the local languages before starting school performed better than those learners who were only proficient in English (Wroge, 2002). The education reform brought about changes in the education system whereby the mother tongue was used in the first three years of primary education as a language of instruction, while English was taught as a second language.

Williams and Mchazime (1999) examined the success of Malawi's early literacy instruction system, in which ChiChewa, the indigenous language, officially became a language of instruction, while English was only used as an additional language in schools. The outcome of the study revealed that learners performed excellently in comprehension, reading, listening and speaking while using the local language when compared with learners who used English.

Heugh (2009), writing about apartheid South Africa, says that during the period of Apartheid, most of the English speaking Southern African countries use either a



single African language or English as a medium of instruction in schools. Using Namibia and South Africa as examples, Ball (2010) mentions that after the end of the apartheid regime, the primary school curriculum was changed from Afrikaans and English to include many Namibian languages and nine South African indigenous languages respectively. African languages are being given prominence—we still have to wait to see whether the introduction bears good academic results.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) stipulates the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in the lower primary classes in schools. However, the curriculum for teaching in the mother tongue, as well as the textbooks, were all written in English. Furthermore, many scholars in the Nigerian context reported on the discrepancy between the benefits for the learners to be instructed in their home language and the situation in the classrooms where this practice was not evident (Adegbija, 2004; Bamgbose, 2001; Fakeye & Soyinka, 2009).

In addition, teachers have been reporting about the challenges they face while using the Yoruba language to teach in classroom, as noted by Ejieh (2004), that resources needed to teach other subjects in Yoruba are not available while some terms and expressions in some subjects like science and mathematics could not easily be translated into the indigenous language (Yoruba). Chumbow (1990) suggests that the mother tongue enhances continuity in the child's learning process and maximises his intellectual development. However, this study interrogated and documented teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as the medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study examined the positive or negative values teachers attached to Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching in class.

## **2.9 STARTING SCHOOLING: ADVANTAGES OF USING THE MOTHER TONGUE AS LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING**

Mother tongue instruction in the first years of schooling has been lauded as beneficial in using and understanding the classroom context. Dutcher (2003) argues that children who begin their education with the mother tongue as the language of instruction perform better than those who begin their schooling in a language other than the indigenous one. Explaining further, Dutcher (2003) mentions that academic

achievement can be attained when the mother tongue is used as a basis for learning additional languages.

The successful use of mother tongue instruction in the classroom depends on the teachers and the support they receive from other stakeholders within and outside the education system (Chilora & Harris, 2001). Teachers played significant roles in the implementation of the mother tongue instruction policy and other educational reforms at the classroom level (Littlewood, 1981; Wright, 1987). Discussion on the use of the mother tongue as an instrument for teaching and learning in schools was espoused by Ross (2004). It was mentioned that mother tongue education develops the cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of learners in class.

Many studies have confirmed the advantages of using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools (Alidou, 1997; Alidou & Mallam, 2004). There are indications that the use of the mother tongue in primary education leads to positive achievements of learners in schools. These include better communication skills and improved interactions in the classroom as well as the infusion of African cultural values into the formal school curricula. (Alidou, 1997; Alidou & Mallam, 2004; Bamgbose, 2005; Brock-Utne, 2000; Brock-Utne, Desai & Qorro, 2004; Chekaraou, 2004; Heugh, 2000; IDRC, 1997; Traoré, 2001; Ouédraogo, 2003).

Brock-Utne and Alidou (2005) outline the benefits of the indigenous language education to pupils:

- Learning progresses from simple to complex and from the known to the unknown.
- Studies confirm that mother tongue education, leads to better communication among teachers and learners. It also facilitates better teaching and learning.
- Mother tongue education enhances the teaching of mathematics and sciences in schools (Mwinsheikhe, 2002; 2003; Prophet & Dow, 1994).

Mathooko (2009), discussing the advantages of mother tongue education, outlines the following reasons to support its usage:

- It provides the foundation for the learner's ability to learn, thus making it easy for learners to learn a second language and other school subjects in their mother tongue.
- Mother tongue education promotes the learners' skills in singing, drawing, playing, cutting and gluing, playing games, reading nursery and primary stories. It also enhances traditional songs, dance and games.
- It develops the learners' self-esteem and personal identity improving their performance in school.
- Mother tongue education acts as a link between the language spoken at school and that spoken at home. It provides more effective formal education to learners, building on the language skills and aptitudes they have already developed at home.

Fakeye and Soyinka (2009) argue that learning through the mother tongue allows for a good transition from home to school. While outlining the advantages of the mother tongue in teaching and learning, the scholars explain that the mother tongue helps to promote cultural norms and traditions and enable learners to fit into the school system. It has been affirmed that the mother tongue should be used as a language of instruction from the primary 1 to 3 in schools (Bamgbose, 1995).

## **2.10 NIGERIAN NATIONAL STUDIES ON THE MOTHER TONGUE**

### **2.10.1 POLICY LANDSCAPE: ITS SUCCESS AND FAILURES**

The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) defines primary education as the education given in institutions for children aged six to 11 plus. The goals of primary education as stated by the policy are:

- Inculcating permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
- Giving citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;
- Moulding the character and developing a sound attitude and morals in the child;
- Developing in the child the ability to adapt to their changing environment;

- Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity;
- Providing the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

The policy specifies that the curriculum must include languages such as the mother tongue (Yoruba), English, French and Arabic, together with mathematics, sciences; physical and health education, religious knowledge, agriculture/home economics, social studies and citizenship education, cultural and creative arts, and computer education. The policy specifies that the language of school instruction must be the language spoken by the community in which the school is located and that it must be used in the lower primary classes.

One of the crucial reasons advanced for the integration of the major Nigerian languages in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), is the preservation of people's culture. It recognises the fact that language is one of the key factors in expressing a people's cultural identity and autonomy (Makinde, 2007). Ayodele (1985) asserts that for a child to function effectively in his community, he is compelled to acquire his home language or the language of the immediate environment early in life.

Arohunmolase (2006) maintains that if learners in Nigerian primary schools are appropriately taught in Yoruba, they would begin to understand the cord that links the Yoruba language to other indigenous languages. It creates a bond between Yoruba and other language scholars, reminding them of their shared origins. Alao (2006) emphasises the fact that no individual can acquire language in isolation from his cultural background, because language is acquired at home and prepares the child for future literacy and numeracy education at school.

Oderinde (2005) affirms that introducing the child early to a foreign language can disconnect the child from his home language and culture. Such disconnection can confuse learners culturally and linguistically. Afolayan (1999) recommends the use of Yoruba as a language of instruction for the first six years of a learner's education

and the use of English thereafter. Fakeye and Soyinka (2009) mention that children should be brought up using the mother tongue in order to adjust quickly to the school system. With the objective of facilitating high levels of literacy and numeracy at the primary school level, the Policy on Education of 2004 declared that education was the right of all Nigerian children, and must be relevant to the child's environment.

### **2.10.2 THE USE OF YORUBA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

Ojo (2006) posits that in Nigeria, one of the reasons for the growth of Yoruba as a medium of instruction is the implementation of the national language policy which requires every Nigerian child to learn one of the three national languages, viz. Yoruba, Hausa or Igbo. In the African Diaspora, the Yoruba language is spoken and learnt as part of the African socio-cultural heritage of the many descendants of Africans that were relocated to the new world during the slave trade era. In Europe and the rest of the world, Yoruba is offered as part of various foreign language educational requirements. Yoruba plays an important part in moulding the child's early concepts. The use of Yoruba as the child's first language at school in the first three years of schooling therefore enhances continuity in the child's learning process and maximises his intellectual development (Chumbow, 1990).

To prevent poor academic achievement in class, a learner must possess a sound linguistic and communicative ability in the language of instruction (Yoruba) in primary schools in Nigeria (Makinde, 2004). The language of instruction should be the child's mother tongue.

### **2.10.3 THE ILE-IFE SIX-YEAR PRIMARY SCHOOL PROJECT**

The Ile-Ife six-year project was introduced by Fafunwa in 1970 and was meant to cater for the education of the learners in the mother tongue for the six years of primary education in Nigeria. This project was aimed at giving the child an all-round education that should cut across the three domains of learning. The English language was taught as a subject throughout the six years of education in the mother tongue.

The steps taken to achieve for the implementation of the programme included the designing of curriculum relevant teaching aids and the use of Yoruba as the medium of instruction throughout the six years of primary school (Ejeh, 2004). Primary school teachers were trained in the use of home language instruction in schools. The experiment was carried out between 1971 and 1983; it was discovered that the experimental group of schools performed better than the control group in all school subjects at the end of primary 6 (Fafunwa, 1986).

The result attracted much publicity in Nigeria especially in both the print and electronic media and it was suggested that the language of the immediate environment that is Yoruba (home language) be used as the medium of instruction throughout the six-year period of primary education (Fafunwa, 1986).

Studies reveal that 6 to 8 years of education in a language are important to develop the cognitive and literacy competence of learners needed for achievement in secondary school. Education in mother tongue develops reading and writing skills and also exposes the child to good parental support as a cultural identity for other meaningful purposes (Ball, 2010).

## **2.11 TEACHING OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE IN THE MOTHER TONGUE**

The teaching of Science and Mathematics in primary schools in Nigeria is compulsory as stipulated by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) in Section 4, (19) b. The curriculum for primary education includes:

Languages: (a) language of the environment; ( b) English (c) French (d) Arabic  
Mathematics, Science, Physical and Health Education, Religious Knowledge, Agriculture/Home economics, Social studies and Citizenship Education, Cultural and Creative Arts, Computer Education.

Primary mathematics, like any other school subject, must be taught in a language best understood by the learners if the basic concepts, principles and laws of mathematics are to be meaningful to them (Charanchi 2011). The language that is used to convey mathematical ideas to learners has become a concern to

mathematics educators (Bolaji, 2007), because that language must be familiar if the learner is to comprehend the rudiments of mathematics.

The results of the study conducted by Charanchi (2011) on the influence of the home language in the teaching of mathematics in the Katsina State of Nigeria revealed a major difference in achievement between learners who were taught in their home language and those who were taught in mixed language environments (English and Hausa). This finding tallies with that of Fafunwa (1977) on the success recorded on the Ife Six Year Project. The result was also in line with the findings of Bolaji (2007) where he argued that the use of English as the language of the test was one reason for the low achievement scores of Hispanic learners. Therefore, with effective communication, learners stand a better chance of comprehending what is taught, making teaching more effective and results-oriented (Lassa, 1980).

The use of the mother tongue in the teaching and learning of mathematics in primary schools in the first four years was more effective than the use of English language especially in the rural areas (Ali, 2000). Emphasising the importance of mother tongue in the teaching of primary mathematics, Ali (1984) opined that learner's language of common familiarity such as mother tongue offers a sustainable, realistic and better opportunity to understand and appreciate the structure and function of mathematics at learner's particular level of operation. Charanchi (2011) while making his suggestions and submissions in the study conducted in Katsina State of Nigeria said that there should be dictionary of mathematics in Hausa language for the primary school level for learners to understand the meaning, concepts and principles of Mathematics.

Chilora and Harris (2001) carried out a study in Malawi on the role played by teachers' home language in the mother tongue policy implementation. The performance of Chiyao-speaking children taught mathematics, English and Chichewa by Chiyao-speaking teachers was compared to that of children taught by teachers speaking other languages. Learners were assessed at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year. The results revealed that Chiyao-speaking learners who were taught by Chiyao-speaking teachers performed better in mathematics in grade 2 than Chiyao-speaking learners who were taught by speakers of other languages.

This study sought to find out if Yoruba could be used to teach mathematics successfully by the Yoruba speaking and language teachers, as was the case with Chiyao-speaking teachers and the learners in Malawi.

Andoh-Kumi (1998) commented that learners performed better in mathematics and science when taught in the local language than in English, debunking the erroneous assertion by some educated citizens of Ghana, that subjects such as mathematics and science could not be taught in the local languages. He reported that not only could mathematics be taught in these indigenous languages, but learners could also even achieve better results with it than with the use of English as the medium of instruction.

Wilmot (2003) explained the benefits of learning in a familiar language in the study that he carried out. It was discovered in the study that a learner assessed by the teacher as average learner got answers to the mathematical problems right but could not to explain how he arrived at the answer in English, which was the medium of classroom instruction. However, when the language of instruction shifted to the learner's mother tongue (Ewe), he was able to give better explanations and demonstrated high intellectual competence in class. Wilmot (2003) noted that the so-called fairly average learner was equally competent in mathematics and could solve mathematical problems at the same level of difficulty as above-average learners. The language of learning made the difference. The language of instruction was changed from the dominant classroom language (English) to the learner's mother tongue.

In another study conducted by Olarewaju and Akinwumi (1988), involving some secondary school learners, the participant learners were divided into two groups namely, the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught integrated science in Yoruba while the control group was taught in English. The researchers discovered that the experimental group performed better than the control group. Another study by Olarewaju (1991) revealed that some senior secondary school learners were taught Mathematics in Yoruba and English language. It was discovered that the learners taught in Yoruba performed better than those taught in English.



Ehindero (1980) also compared the performance in elementary science between learners who were taught in Yoruba and those who were taught in English. It was again discovered that learners who were taught in Yoruba performed better than those taught in English.

Abdullahi (1980) is appalled by the deplorable state of science teaching by primary school teachers and the comprehension of the learners. He posited that one of the problems confronting the effective teaching of science in Nigeria is the use of a foreign language (English) as medium of instruction. He argued that learners found it difficult to comprehend lessons in the science subjects because they were taught in English rather than in their mother tongue. Oshokoya (2005) reports that science teachers believe that learners are not performing well due to the use of English as a language of instruction instead of the mother tongue (Yoruba). Language, as a medium of communication largely determines the success of any educational programme. Therefore, language is the vehicle of thinking that assists learners to understand the knowledge being imparted to them. Language and thought are closely related (Umoru-Onuka, 2002).

Olarewaju (1991) notes that science teaching involves scientific procedures which can increase learners' cognitive ability and the best way to teach science to the learners is to use the mother tongue to explain the science concepts. Science teaching and learning can only be achieved when learners are able to express themselves and comprehend the lessons taught by the teacher.

Makinde and Olabode (2006) conducted a study on the use of Yoruba and English to teach Biology in schools. The study revealed the positive effect of teaching Biology in Yoruba. This study supports the use of indigenous language to teach science in class to facilitate better achievement of learners. It was also revealed that when learners were taught in their mother tongue, they were likely to perform well in an achievement test written in a second language.

The study was not confined to language teaching but was also found relevant to science, mathematics and other primary school subjects.

## **2.12 REASONS INHIBITING THE MOTHER TONGUE POLICIES FROM SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION**

The preceding discussion focussed on the success of mother tongue teaching. However, there are also instances where the mother tongue did not succeed.

### **2.12.1 THE KENYA CASE**

Mathooko (2009) mentions that despite the use of the mother tongue in the kindergarten and lower primary school classes in Kenya, some problems still affected the successful implementation in some areas. There was the problem of poor sale of books written in mother tongue by the publishers, writers and booksellers which discouraged them from investing in publishing books in the mother tongue. Reading in the mother tongue is a far cry from reading in English. It was erroneously believed that producing materials in the mother tongue for teaching in schools was expensive and a waste of time.

Secondly, some mother tongues lack a developed orthography, while others have no written form. There are difficulties in representing some aspects of the mother tongue in writing such as the tones synonymous with African languages. Parents fear that their children may be left behind by children in urban areas where English is used as a medium of instruction. There is also the fear of the mother tongue going into extinction due to the declining numbers of competent users.

Thirdly, a misconception exists that teachers can use the mother tongue in teaching in schools without undergoing any formal training; it is coupled with the idea that mother tongue instruction is not useful, because no examinations are written in mother tongues. This has adversely affected mother tongue instruction in Kenya. Parents are unwilling to buy the few books available in the mother tongue for their children. The erroneous belief that mother tongues do not ensure a good job after graduation, coupled with the practice which favours the use of foreign languages in the corporate circle, adversely affects the mother tongue usage in schools (Mathooko, 2009).

Lastly, Mathooko (2009) affirms that most mother tongues have more than two dialects. Choosing and promoting one over the other may create problems. Also, the terminology for some concepts in science and mathematics has not been developed in these mother tongues, which compounds the problem.

### **2.12.2 THE GHANA CASE**

The discussion about which language to use as the language of instruction in schools in Ghana, at the lower primary level, dates back to the missionary era (Owu-Ewie, 2006). The 2002 enactment of the use of English as the language of instruction in schools and the neglect of the use of indigenous languages in education therefore contradicts Nkrumah's ideology of promoting the mother tongue in schools (Owu-Ewie, 2006). Presently, the policy stipulate that English should be used as the language of instruction from primary 1, with an indigenous language studied as a compulsory subject up to the senior secondary school (Ameyaw-Akumfi, 2002). The pronouncement of the change in policy has generated reactions from all stakeholders in the education system (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

Owu-Ewie (2006) discusses the reasons given by the then Minister of Education in Ghana for why an indigenous language was not being used as the official language of instruction at the lower classes of primary education. These reasons are outlined below:

- The former policy of using an indigenous language as language of instruction in the lower primary classes was abused, mostly in the rural schools where teachers never spoke English in class.
- Learners were unable to read and write simple and correct English sentences by the time they completed secondary education.
- The multilinguistic nature of the country, made instruction in an indigenous language difficult. Owu-Ewie (2002) mentioned that a study conducted by the Ministry of Education revealed that between 50% to 60% of learners in each class in the urban schools spoke a different language. It would therefore be difficult if the government insisted that all learners be instructed in Ga, Twi, or Dagbani, depending on where they live within the country.
- There was a lack of textbooks in the indigenous languages.

- There was a lack of indigenous language teachers trained to teach content subjects in the local language.

This study examined whether teaching of Yoruba in a multicultural and multi linguistic state like Lagos would make learning in primary school classes difficult or not as was the case in Ghana. Also, the researcher was able to find out if there were lack of instructional materials and how this could affect teaching and learning.

### **2.12.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE**

The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB, 2000) states that learners in South Africa are bilingual or multilingual, and attend school in a language that is not their first language because South Africa has 11 official languages, comprising nine indigenous languages together with English and Afrikaans as Western languages. This situation creates logistical problems (Adler, 2001). In addition, there is a preference for education in English (Vesely, 2000). For these reasons, the Revised National Curriculum Statement's (RNCS) (DOE, 2002) language policy has only been implemented partially.

The factors mentioned above, such as the lack of well trained indigenous language teachers, lack of instructional materials to teach Yoruba and the multilinguistic nature of Nigeria also feature in my study. However, it primarily examines teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria and its implication for learning despite all these challenges.

### **2.13 LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Language can never be divorced from culture and identity. The three are intricately interwoven as the language influences and shapes identity and the culture it comes from. It should be noted, however, that in this section I will only discuss how language, culture and identity develop and exist side by side. In chapter 3, I will give a detailed explanation of identity, language and culture.

Language is an instrument for personal development, cultural identity and intercultural understanding and it is therefore regarded as the significant medium of

communication linked to intellectual growth (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2008). UNESCO (2008a) recognised that any language to be acquired must be done so along with the culture in which the language is embedded. Using an indigenous language preserves cultural identity, while acquiring a second language, promotes intercultural communication and interaction. In situations where a society is battling to maintain threatened indigenous language, proper and progressive education in this language can have very positive linguistic effects. Young (2009) states that the use of local languages in schools means that members of a community can play a more active role in the education of their children, discussing concepts and ideas negotiated in the classroom. It also provides an opportunity for community members to participate in preparing instructional materials for learners thus preserving their cultural heritage. Language is regarded as an important aspect of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group (Ball, 2010).

Language is such an integral part of the life and social system of societal groups that it cannot be missing from ethnic attitudes and behaviours (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) showed ethnicity and language to have similar conceptual and behavioural connections. Kuper (2003) mentions that between 5,000 and 20,000 languages are spoken in the world and each of them reflecting a unique view of the world, pattern of thought and culture. A mother tongue-based system therefore allows learners to articulate their heritage, helping them appreciate their history and raising the status of their linguistic group.

Culture, according to Umoren (1995), is a description of the holistic nature of a human being's way of life. It is an expression involving a complex, holistic look at society. Hence, the culture of a people is expressed through beliefs, knowledge, language, rituals, dances, mode of dress, and vocations (Makinde, 2005). Language is the channel through which we are socialised into our culture. The cultural heritage of the past is transmitted through language, and transferred on to the next generations (Tannenbaum & Berkovich, 2005). Ukwuma (2004) argues that language is part of the society and the culture of a people is duly transmitted through their language. Therefore, culture is expressed in language and language communicates culture.

International studies support the preservation of the indigenous language as a way to maintaining traditional values and cultural identities (Ross, 2004). While defining socialisation, Garrett and Lopez (2002) argue that it is the process through which a person acquires the knowledge, orientations and practices that enables effective and appropriate participation in society. Hence, language is germane to this process because it is the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated, negotiated and contested, reproduced and transformed.

Ross (2004) asserts that mother tongue education is regarded as germane to the sustainance of traditional cultures and national heritage by preserving and valuing indigenous identities. It is also seen as an essential educational pedagogy, enabling better building of basic cognitive abilities and facilitating faster acquisition of a second language. Adegaju (2008) mentions the recognition given to the teaching of the three officially recognised Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004). This is in recognition of the importance of mother tongue as an instrument for promoting national identity and preserving the people's cultural heritage. Ukwuma (2004) observed that language is part and parcel of society, and the culture of a people is duly transmitted through their language. In other words, culture is expressed in language and language communicates culture.

In a recent study conducted by Genc and Bada (2005) it was suggested that a culture class is beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies, and contribution to the teaching profession. Furthermore, the study has implications for a culture class in the curriculum of language teaching and if incorporated in the curriculum, a culture class would prove to be a vital component of language learning and teaching, since it has a great deal to offer to the development of communicative competence as well as other skills in the instruction of any language.

Ball (2010) posits that many of the world's language and cultures are going into extinction due to the effect of colonialism and other contemporary factors like political, economic and social. In order to correct this linguistic and cultural loss, it is necessary to educate parents to teach their children the indigenous languages in the homes, and to instruct pre-primary and primary education classes in the mother

tongue. Furthermore, research on language acquisition provides a reason for using the mother tongue as a language of instruction in pre-primary and lower primary classes of primary education. Scholars argue that when there is linguistic discontinuity between home and school, minority language learners may think that language and culture are not respected; this could lower their self-esteem and interrupts with their learning (Baker & Prys Jones, 1998; Covington, 1989).

Using the learner's home language as medium of instruction promotes the integration of culture into the school curriculum, thereby providing a culturally sensitive curriculum and developing a positive perception of the culture. Furthermore, integrating the learner's culture and language into curricular activities encourages the involvement of parents into school activities (Brock-Utne & Alidou, 2005).

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) explains that through language, human beings receive the cultural heritage of the past, and by language the cultural heritage is shaped anew, reworking, selecting, rejecting, recreating it together with other people. Language is also used to pass on to a large extent this culture that have been received to our own children and grandchildren, and to those of others. Emphasizing further on the importance of language to the preservation of the cultural heritage, Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) argues that language binds us together, both in the historical perspective and in the present. The further we are removed from close physical contact with our immediate physical environment in time or space, the more exclusively dependent we are upon language to preserve between us and others any kind of ties. Home language can be viewed as the language through which in the process of socialization one acquires the norms and value systems of one's own cultural group and that the language passes on the cultural tradition of the group thereby giving the individual an identity which ties her to the in-group, and at the same time sets her apart from other possible groups of reference (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981)

An education system which does not take into account local culture and language is characterised by low intake, high repetition and high dropout rates (MacKenzie, 2008). Arguing further while citing India as a case study, MacKenzie (2008) noted that the dropout rates are high because education has little perceived relevance;

achievement levels are low because concepts and competencies are difficult to learn in an unfamiliar language.

The mother tongue has been described as a deep, abiding, even cord-like connection between speakers and their cultural identity (McCarty, 2008). Indigenous scholars in Canada (Kirkness, 2002), the United States (Greymorning, 1997), and New Zealand (Harrison & Papa, 2005) made frequent reference to connections between language, community, place, and time. As parents want their children to get a good education, they also hope that their children will maintain their love and respect for their heritage language and culture, and for their home community. It is necessary to educate children on how to read and write, but is more important to let them know the benefits involved in identifying with one's cultural background (Delpit & Kemelfield, 1985). Ball (2010) observes that lack of academic achievement of minority children in class was due to having to adjust to schooling in a foreign language, coupled with the need to accept that their language and culture are not recognised within the school setting. Arguing further, he mentions that scholars affirm that respecting learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds in educational settings is germane in fostering their self-confidence as members of the community thereby encouraging them to be active and competent learners.

Bringing the culture and practices of children's homes and communities into classroom instructional and curricular processes can enhance learning experiences and, therefore, the academic success of children from the non-dominant culture (Christian & Bloome, 2004; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). In a recent study conducted by Sanagavarapu and Perry (2005), it was discovered that offering curriculum and instruction in the home language is critical to building school relationship and to learning. It was further mentioned that early childhood teachers should emphasise the importance of using the home language through their daily instruction and care practices. In order for linguistically and culturally diverse learners to feel secure in the school environment, allowing them to fully and successfully experience the educational process, their teachers must accept and use their home language and culture within the classroom setting (Chavez-Chavez, 1984; Cummins, 1994).



However, my study sought to find out the value and identity of teachers in using mother tongue. It was however necessary to show the importance of mother tongue on identity formation and that lack of it could lead to a number of disadvantages. Therefore, my study focused on how teachers facilitate and understand mother tongue instructions and its benefits on the learners. Positive identity with Yoruba according to research could motivate teachers to teach the language with compassion and dedication (Fafunwa, 1984).

## **2.14 GLOBAL POLICY LANDSCAPE ON THE MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTIONS**

This section discusses the conventions, constitutions and policies of countries on mother tongue. UNESCO (2008b) mentions that there exist some constitutional clauses and educational policy documents that give recognition and protection to the rights of minority groups to use their home languages and promote their own cultures; some of these conventions, constitutions and policies are examined below.

### **2.14.1 CONVENTIONS ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND MOTHER TONGUE**

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1953) has emphasised support for children's right to learn their mother tongue, and for the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity through language-in-education policies (LEP). The CRC (UN, 1989) specifies the right of Indigenous peoples to use their own language in schooling and also specify the right of the children to enact their cultural identity and the right of parents to set and pursue goals for their children's development (Article 5, Article 29 & Article 30).

The CRC (UN, 1989) states that parties shall undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law, without unlawful interference. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, states parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to speedily reestablishing the child's identity (Article 8, 29, 13 and 17).

Article 30 of the CRC (UN, 1989) mentions that in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

The CRC (UN, 1989) convention on the rights of the child supports the use of mother tongue in the training and upbringing of the child in whatever he finds himself and that his identity should be protected. In this study I attempted to observe the self-efficacy of the learners in Yoruba while teaching and learning was taking place in class to confirm if it conformed to the CRC conventions. Nigeria is a member of the United Nations in which Lagos State the study location is situated, this convention is relevant to the study because Yoruba which is the predominant language used in Lagos and I am investigating teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a language of instruction in primary schools.

#### **2.14.2 CONSTITUTIONS OF COUNTRIES ON THE USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE**

Constitutions of countries have largely been influenced by the CRC (UN, 1989). The examples of these constitutions discussed below are those of South Africa and Nigeria.

##### **2.14.2.1 Nigerian Constitution**

The Nigerian Constitution, Sections 51 & 91 of 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, stipulate the use of English as an official language in Nigeria.

- The use of the three indigenous languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) as co-official languages with English; these three indigenous languages can also to be media of communication at the National Assembly.
- The use mother tongue (Yoruba Igbo and Hausa) as a language of instruction in the first three years of primary education, and English thereafter.
- The elevation of selected indigenous languages in each State to be co-official languages with English. Thus making them to become states lingua franca.

Constitutions after 1985 and the revised versions of the National Policy on Education produced to date, have retained the above provisions that may be seen as the core elements of Nigeria's language and literacy policy.

#### **2.14.2.2 South African Constitution**

The South African Constitution stipulates the role the 11 official languages should play in the daily affairs of governance and media of instruction in schools the Republic. The official languages are Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu.

A Pan South African Language Board established by national legislation also stipulates conditions for the development and use of all official languages and other languages like the Khoi, Nama, San and sign languages (PANSALB, 2000).

Relating to education, the constitution of South Africa specifies that every citizen by right shall have access to basic education and to further education, which the state must make available. Every citizen has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions.

On language and culture, the South African constitution stipulates that every citizen has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice which must be consistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

On cultural, religious and linguistic communities, the South African constitution specifies that persons belonging to a particular cultural, religious or linguistic community should be allowed to exercising the right with other members of that community without any molestation.

The study attempted to find out if primary school teachers were aware of the stipulations on the importance of home language and if this had influenced their perceptions on how they value Yoruba.

### 2.14.3 LANGUAGE POLICIES IN WORLD COUNTRIES

Determining a sound and solid language policy depends on the unique economic, cultural, political and linguistic factors in each country. However, available research evidence indicates that, in many developing countries, it is most effective to begin with the home language as a medium of instruction and later to switch to the necessary second language (World Bank, 1990).

The significance of a country having a clearly spelt out language policy cannot be over emphasised. The President of Malaysia while commenting on the importance of national language policy to a nation says: “A nation without a language policy is a nation without a soul and a life” (Mutasa, 2003).

#### ⌘ **Kenya**

In Kenya there is no clear and elaborate language policy except reports by education commissions constituted since independence. The first recommendation made in the Beecher Report of 1949 proposed the use 20 indigenous languages in the lower primary classes in schools. This recommendation posed a serious problem though, because with over 40 indigenous languages, it was difficult to use only 20 for teaching. Secondly, the country was faced with lack of instructional materials (Musau, 2003). Kenya became independent in 1963 and the government constituted Ominde Commission (1964) to examine all aspects of education. This commission recommended English as a medium of instruction from primary 1. However, it recommended that mother tongues can be used for a daily period of storytelling from primary 1 to 3.

There was another education commission chaired by Gachathi (1976) which recommended that mother tongues be used as languages of instruction from class one to three in Kenya (Mbaabu, 1996). The report of this commission rekindled some hope to the teaching of indigenous languages in Kenyan schools. The commission emphasised that the language of instruction from primary 1 to 3 should be the language of the catchment area and this is the policy to date.

## ⌘ **Ireland**

The call for a new language policy in Ireland was prompted by two main reasons: First, there was an increasing concern for the teaching and learning of Irish. This was reported by the Irish Language Commissioner in his first annual report (2005) where he mentioned that many learners had not even attained basic fluency in Irish despite being taught the language for 13 years. This made the commissioner to call for a review of how the language was being taught in primary and secondary schools (Irish Language Commissioner, 2005). Secondly, due to high influx of immigrants into Ireland, increase in the number of learners in primary and secondary schools for whom English was a second language or even third language, heightened the concern for the handling of language issues for the substantial communities of immigrants in Ireland.

## ⌘ **South Africa**

The language-in-education policy for public schools in South Africa after 1994 as announced by the Education minister in July 1997 was developed for a democratic South African society. The new policy centrally seeks to promote multilingualism as the optimal way of utilising the country's linguistic resources (DOE, 1997). The significance of this policy is that it seeks to elevate the status of those languages spoken by the majority of the people. As documented, the 'other nine' official languages now have full equality with Afrikaans and English, formerly the country's only two official languages. The principle underlying the language policy for schools recognises cultural diversity as a national asset, and appreciates the need to promote multilingualism and develop the 11 official languages thus giving the learners the right of choice with regard to the language of learning and teaching (DOE, 1997).

The underlying principle of the language-in-education policy for public schools in South Africa is to maintain home language(s) whilst providing access to, and the effective acquisition of, additional languages (DOE, 1997). The South African Schools Act (1996), in terms of which the school's governing body shall determine the language policy of the school, supports the use of the nine indigenous languages alongside English and Afrikaans as language of learning and teaching.

## ⌘ **Tanzania**

Julius Nyerere was famous for his “Education for Self Reliance” philosophy in which he emphasized the need for mother tongue education in the local language, Kiswahili. In 1967 Kiswahili was made the sole language of instruction for primary education, and it was planned to extend in secondary education as well. The Ujamma family villages were to be governed by those living in them, and Kiswahili was made the language of instruction for all seven years of primary schooling. Birgit Brock-Utne (2008) argues that President Julius Nyerere implemented the education policy in Tanzania that revived the Kiswahili language and developed it into a national language, which flourishes today, even beyond Tanzania’s borders.

Appropriate language-in education policies that enable teachers to instruct in the language a child speaks most at home and understands well enough to learn academic content improves learners’ critical engagement with content, foster an environment of mutual learning and improve inclusion in the classroom (Gacheche, 2010).

Chilora and Harris (2001) mention that if the language policy is to be achieved, necessary measures should be put in place and there must be the political will and the adequate resources to support the policy.

Bamgbose (2001) observes that language policy in Nigeria is rarely documented, but its effects can be seen in action in various domains, such as using it as a national language, as language of instruction in schools, as language used in the media, and in the legislature. Because language issues in Nigeria are often quite controversial and crisis ridden, censuses never have items or questions on languages. Therefore, reliable statistics relating to issues like number of languages, their spread and the number of speakers of each are not available (Adegbija, 2004).

## **2.15 CONCLUSION**

Literatures have been reviewed in this chapter on the factors affecting the use of mother tongue in different countries of the world such as in the western world, Africa and in particular Nigeria. The aspect of literatures include: what is a mother tongue; importance of the mother tongue; the mother tongue as a springboard for learning a

second language; the mother tongue and politics; the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in international context; studies on the implementation of the mother tongue instruction: African experience; Nigerian national studies on the mother tongue; teaching mathematics and science in mother tongue; reasons inhibiting the mother tongue from successful implementation; starting schooling: advantages of using the mother tongue as language of learning and teaching; language and cultural identity; review of international conventions, countries language policies, constitutions and the mother tongue.

My study was dictated by the experiences expounded in the literature. The context where mother tongue succeeds had strong support from the governments. It will be seen in this study whether the same can be said with Yoruba especially within the political conditions prevailing in the country.

Chapter 3 will examine the theoretical framework and related concepts underpinning this study. It examines two schools of thought that argue for and against the importance of mother tongue to learners. This study is underpinned by the concepts of culture, funds of knowledge and lived experiences; and the theories of empowerment and identity and how these concepts and theories are related to mother tongue. The literature said very little of teachers' experiences. However, this study will address this gap, that is, the strengths and weaknesses of mother tongue.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED CONCEPTS**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter posits the conceptual and theoretical perspectives deemed relevant for the study. The chapter will first examine concepts dominant in the discussion of mother tongue instruction and the lived experiences of teachers, including experiences acquired over the years while teaching Yoruba as a subject and using Yoruba as a language of teaching and learning in class. The two schools of thought that argue for and against mother tongue instruction will first be explained. These schools of thought partly influence how teachers conceive the teaching of the mother tongue thereby influencing and shaping the teachers' identity and cultural background in relation to the mother tongue. Although there are numerous theories related to my study, I limit my discussion to those that are most appropriate and that underpin my study.

#### **3.2 DISCOURSE FOR THE MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION**

The first school of thought opines that mother tongue education is seen as essential in the maintenance and promotion of traditional cultures and national heritage by preserving and valuing indigenous identities. It is also seen as an important educational pedagogy which enables better building of basic cognitive abilities and facilitating faster acquisition of a second language (Ross, 2004). Adegaju (2008) mentions the recognition given to the teaching of the three major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) in the National Policy on Education (2004). This is as a result of the important roles the indigenous languages play in the promotion of national identity and preserving the people's cultural heritage. Ukwuma (2004) observed that language is part and parcel of society, and the culture of a people is duly transmitted through their language. In other words, culture is expressed in language and language communicates culture.



UNESCO (2007) points out some arguments put forward by scholars in support of the use of mother tongue in the early years of schooling. Kosonen (2005) argued that when children are offered opportunities to learn in their mother tongue, they are more likely to enrol and succeed in school. The parents of learners are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in supporting their children's learning in school (Benson, 2002). Mother tongue based education can benefit disadvantaged groups, including children from rural and Indigenous communities (Hovens, 2002). In the majority world, mother tongue based education can especially benefit girls, who tend to have less exposure to an official language and have been found to stay in school longer, achieve better, and repeat grades less often when they are taught in their mother tongue (UNESCO Bangkok, 2005). In addition, research reveals that learner's ability to learn a second language is not obstructed when their mother tongue is the primary language of instruction throughout primary education.

### **3.3 DISCOURSE AGAINST THE MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION**

The second school of thought mentions that mother tongue is not needed to promote identity, culture and cannot be a springboard to learning the second language because, making one indigenous language an official language in a multi linguistic country can pose a threat to national unity (Yadav, 1992). It was also identified by Yadav (1992) in the case of Nepal that to produce textbooks in various indigenous languages is expensive and Herculean, hence mother tongue education may be a mirage. Bamgbose (2011) posits that to maintain two or more indigenous languages in a multi linguistic society is a difficult task and more expensive when compared with the use of one official language that may be foreign to the people.

The nine South African indigenous languages are able to function as media of communication at the levels of interpersonal conversation, narrative and cultural practice as they currently exist. However, the standard written forms of the languages have not yet been developed to the point where they are able to carry academic discourse effectively and therefore function as fully-fledged languages of learning and teaching, even at the Foundation Phase. Mackey (1992) is of the opinion that a language should be well standardised in written form for it to be regarded as an empowered language.

Speaking against the use of indigenous language in Kenya, for instance, Gupta (1997) mentions that the diversity of these languages makes it very expensive to provide each child with education in her/his mother tongue. He argues that home language education can cause disunity in a country which may result in extensive separation of ethnic groups in the education system.

Some scholars describe indigenous languages as primitive idioms with limited communicative value, only to be spoken by illiterate hunters, farmers or cattle rearers and for highly restricted cultural matters only; African languages are not to be used for any advanced nor written communication pertaining to the political, economic, cultural, and social matters of our times, in particular not for anything to do with modern technology, science, and political philosophy (Woolman, 2001; Wolff, 2005).

Home language education has been said to be the cause of failure in effectively learning a second language (Fasold, 1984). For example in Kenya, poor performance in English and Kiswahili compositions has been attributed to indigenous language interference. To address this, opponents of mother tongue education argue that to learn a second language well, it is important that it be used as a language of instruction right from the beginning (Fasold, 1984).

Phillipson (1992) affirms that a sound focus on the mother tongue as medium of education does not in itself a guarantee towards enlightened education. This is because; the provision of mother tongue education has been linked with denial of access to the privileged language, viz, English. Africans living in the Anglophone countries seem to feel that support for African languages is intended to confine them to an inferior position. Although the imposition of an ex-colonial language, which is now the language of an elite can be seen as a continuation of colonial dominance, the formerly colonised people should not be construed as victims.

### **3.4 ERIKSON'S THEORY OF IDENTITY**

The discourse of the above schools of thought has implications for an individual's identity about the language. Identity as a concept is predominant in studies pertaining to mother tongue instruction. Identity can be defined as the unique

character belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular community or social group. The term emphasises the sharing of a degree of oneness with others in a particular area (Rummens, 2001). This study will premise the understanding of identity against theories of identity; in particular, Erikson's theory of identity in relation to this study will be discussed.

Erikson (1968) defines identity development as “a central task of adolescence that (a) optimally results in a coherent and self-constructed dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs, and personal history and (b) functionally guides the unfolding of the adult life course”.

Erikson (1968) conceptualizes identity as resulting from a dynamic interplay between individual and context. He assumed that this interplay was a universal phenomenon, but he also argues that the historical actuality of the wider cultural context sets parameters on what individuals can count on during the process of identity development.

#### **3.4.1 DEFINITIONS OF IDENTITY**

Identity is a legal concept within the CRC. It is every child's entitlement from birth. Article 7.1 stipulates that: ‘The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.’

The right to an identity is activated and safeguarded by birth registration. Also from birth, every child begins the journey of constructing a unique personal and social identity, which is characterised by a growing awareness of the importance of markers such as gender, ethnicity, age and status within the child's immediate community. Prior to their starting school, many children demonstrate a clear understanding of their role and status at home, at preschool and in their neighbourhood, and of the impact of how they are treated on their sense of who they are. Early identities are themselves complex, and they continue to change and grow as children experience new settings, activities, relationships and responsibilities. In the process, children may form positive, negative and ambivalent feelings about aspects of their changing identity (UN CRC, 1989)

Schwartz (2001) argues that identity is a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions. Personal identity refers to the goals, values and beliefs that an individual adopts and holds. Social identity refers to the social group with which one identifies, including its self-identified ideals, mores, labels, and conventions (Erikson, 1968) and the extent to which this identification leads one to favour the social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Hogg and Abrams (1995) and Tajfel (1972, 1982) explain social identity as the individual's knowledge of belonging to certain social groups, as well as the emotions and values it conveys to him or her. Social identity therefore depends on the quality of the groups or entities we belong to or have as a positive reference, such as nationality, culture, religion, family, neighbourhood etc. The social identity we acquire as a member of social groups might produce group behaviour.

Hauge (2007) mentions that identity develops as children learn to differentiate themselves from people around them while place-identity develops as a child learns to see himself as distinct from, but related to, the physical environment. Relating this to early childhood, Hauge (2007) maintains that identity determinants are those rooted in the child's experience with toys, clothes and rooms. The home, the first point of call for the child when he is born, is regarded as the environment of primary importance, followed by the neighbourhood and the school. Here, social and environmental skills and relationships are developed and imbibed, and the parameters are formed through which the child later will recognise, evaluate and create places. Okebukola (2000) opines that the child identifies with a conducive environment both at home and in school and this helps in enhancing his cognitive competence especially when the home language is used as a medium of instruction (Cummins, 2000).

According to Gonzalez and Moll (2002) in a study of Puente teachers and learners, scholars opines that many local funds of knowledge can be utilised to validate learners' identities as individuals who can use such knowledge as a basis for future learning. Identity cannot be acquired in isolation as it is often associated with a specific cultural background and because it is believed that identity strengthens cultural connectivity (Hauge, 2007).

Djite (2009) on the shift in linguistic identities argues that individuals and nations around the world are taking in languages which are not their indigenous languages, thus making the individuals shift away from their own mother tongue. This situation alienates the individuals involved from their cultural identity. However, the best scenario is for the individuals or speech community to communicate and operate in their own mother tongue (Djite 1993, Djite 2006). Arguing further, Djite (2009) affirms that the language situation prevalent at any point in time in a speech dictates the process of information exchange upon which issues like identity, education, health and economic development are handled. There is no way that identity and culture can be separated when discussing mother tongue, hence the two go together. The next section will discuss culture as it relates to the mother tongue.

### **3.5 MEANING OF CULTURE**

Culture means whatever it is that a human being has to know in order to operate in a manner acceptable to the members of a particular community in which he finds himself (Geertz 1984). Miller (1999) defines culture as the accepted patterns of behaviour, customary beliefs and assumptions. Gollnick and Chinn (1986) view culture as the blueprint that determines the way a human being thinks, feels and behaves in society. Fennes and Hapgood (1997) mention that culture includes everything that determines interaction, relationships and social life within a society. Coombs (1985) refers to culture as a society's value system, ideology, life view, norms, technology, political and economic systems, religion, myths and social structures. These aspects are expressed in different forms such as language, education, literature, art, architecture and the like. Temanie (2004) argues that culture encompasses the norms, standards, beliefs, values, religion, mores, customs and social structures within an individual context.

Cultural identity is a peculiar case of social identity (Padilla & Perez, 2003; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind & Vedder, 2001) and can be defined as the interface between the person and the cultural context (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Cultural identity, according to scholars, can be viewed as a sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group and with the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours manifested toward one's own and other cultural groups as a result of this solidarity (Jensen, 2003; Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts & Romero, 1999). Cultural identity

refers to values, ideals, and beliefs acquired from a given cultural group, and to one's sense of belonging to that group (Jensen, 2003).

Adefuye (1992) describes culture as the totality of a people's way of life which includes the values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that underlie a people's behaviour and which are shared by members of a particular society and it contributes to the way these people perceive themselves as well as others. It is that aspect of our existence that makes us similar to some people, yet different from other peoples of the world.

Scholars argue that when learning a second language, learners cannot separate themselves from their cultural backgrounds where they rely on the knowledge source constructed from their home society to interpret the meaning of linguistic information of the target language (Hinke, 1999; Peirce, 1995; Tseng, 2002). For learners, home culture depicts personal allegiance to their cultural heritage and has been chronically infused in their minds therefore, while learners undergo the process of second language learning, it cannot be denied that they addictively rely on their mother tongue which acts like a vehicle for affirmation of group identity toward their culture (Lin, 2009).

Every society has a unique culture that contains the norms and values of its people that are different from those of other peoples. The people, therefore, see things differently from those people from another culture. Culture is reflected through the language, song and works of art of the people and it affects their action to situations (Makinde, 2004). Wenger (1998) explains that people interact in a range of activities to learn the accepted beliefs, knowledge and practices of communities and cultures in which they live. Well-experienced and established community members support younger ones in an apprentice-like fashion to learn expected patterns of behaviour and practice, and the knowledge involved in such cultural practices.

Tizard and Hughes' (1984; 2002) study of learner's language in England focused attention to learner's interest in their homes in a cultural context. The study revealed that everyday experiences at home are valuable learning opportunities and that through conversations, questions, arguments and stories, children and their mothers investigated their world. Researchers suggested ways in which children's learning

experiences contribute to their growing interests and understandings; these ways include engaging in meaningful conversations, family stories, shopping experiences picnics playing games and watching television (Cullen, 2002; Cumming, 2003).

The role of culture in the Spanish Heritage Language curriculum as espoused by Beaudrie, Ducar and Relano-Pastor (2009) cannot be overemphasized. Scholars argue that to develop a culturally relevant curriculum that addresses Spanish Heritage Language learners' connections with their home and community in order to foster cultural awareness in the Spanish Heritage Language classroom, the language must be familiar to the learners (Samaniego & Pino, 2000; Valde's, 2000; Webb & Miller, 2000). The researchers stress the importance of keeping a good balance of cultural activities in the curriculum that reflect both the understanding of culture as a heritage product and culture as a community practice.

The above mentioned literatures explain the relevance of cultural values to both teachers and learners in the classrooms and these cultural values must be reflected in the teaching and learning in class. My study examined the experiences of teachers while teaching Yoruba in class in a multi linguistic society like Lagos and observe how the teachers valued the Yoruba language as well as how they transmitted these values to the learners in class. Transmitting the culture to the learner through learning in class was supported by Vygotsky (1978; 1986) when he wrote that learning should be authentic; that is, it should be relevant to the daily life and practices of a child in a community or culture.

Adegbija (2004) argues that the first language has many natural resources which are rich in oral culture that can be tapped to achieve maximum understanding in the classroom. The learner is already acquainted with such natural artefacts and so reference to them in the classroom can stimulate teaching and learning. Wenger (1998) argues that learning is a process of meaning-making and participating in the experiences and practices of knowledge communities. His idea places learning within participation in the context of social experience that are integral parts of daily human life.

Ngwaru (2011) argues that primary school teachers need to ensure that learner's home and family experiences should be seen to be meaningful, valued, and

appreciated in the classrooms. The primary school teachers equally need to avoid making learners feel that their everyday practices and cultural resources are inferior. For learners to be more confident and less docile, they are to be encouraged to feel sufficiently adequate and influential so that they can determine the nature of the pedagogy in their classrooms.

Sylvester, Richards, Bartlett and Thompson (1998) presuppose that learners are able to distinguish between their own language and culture and those of others, and to reflect on these differences in their interaction with other learners. This can be achieved through mother tongue education.

Baker (2001) argues that research has shown mother tongue education to be effective for the following reasons; (a) learners outside their countries maintain their mother tongue which enables them to go back to their home countries for further education; (b) learners who have mother tongue education perform as well as comparable learners in mainstream education and there is evidence that they perform better; (c) learners' attitudes are particularly positive, especially by enhancing their sense of identity, self-esteem and self-concept through mother tongue education; (d) when learners are educated in mother tongue, their English language performance is generally comparable to that of mainstream learners. The study explored the Yoruba teaching and learning whether it enhanced the teachers and learners sense of identity self esteem and self concepts

### **3.6 FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE**

Funds of knowledge as a concept is predominant in mother tongue language discourses. Funds of knowledge, according to Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) refer to the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for individual functioning and well-being therefore. In Spanish Heritage Learning pedagogy, the funds of knowledge approach suggests we look at Spanish Heritage Learning learners as competent members of a community who come to our classes with linguistic and cultural knowledge based on their life experiences as members of the community they belong to (Zentella, 2002).



The African adage that ‘it takes a whole village to raise a child’ explains what funds of knowledge are in simple language. The traditional African society believes in communal living, hence when a child is born he or she becomes the responsibility of the whole community, namely older children, aunts, and uncles, grandparents, cousins and family friends. When this child raised by all members of his or her community comes to the classroom, he or she will possess many experiences, which can be regarded as funds of knowledge that can be shared with other learners and the teachers in class (Hills 2012).

Funds of knowledge according to Moll and Greenberg (1990) refer to knowledge acquired through historical and cultural interactions that are important for people to function appropriately in a particular society. Funds of knowledge include knowledge about any interactions that take place in homes, such as cooking, farming, cultural practices and many others. Studies of Hispanic learners and teachers have also mentioned that funds of knowledge are abundant and diverse in children because children actively participate in many activities in their community (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Researchers argue that classroom teachers and learners can use funds of knowledge to engage in critical pedagogy based on learners’ resources (Gonzalez & Amanti 1992; Gonzalez & Moll 2002; Moll *et al.*, 1992; Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Rivera, Rendon, Gonzales & Amanti, 1993; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

Hedges (2007) mentions that funds of knowledge are a form of family capital that creates informal learning opportunities for learners. It provides a framework to reorganize how learner’s knowledge and interests are stimulated by the contexts of their intent participation in everyday activities and experiences. It is believed that if teachers established understanding of local funds of knowledge as a form of professional knowledge, it could lead to the curriculum being organised around learner’s interests and questions, thereby improving learner’s educational experiences and outcomes (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Describing funds of knowledge as a term which include cultural traits, Riojas-Cortez (2001) mentioned that such traits like parents’ language, values and beliefs, ways of discipline and the value of education are the sources for funds of knowledge. Moll (2005) described funds of knowledge as a dynamic concept that changes with each relationship in each family and evolves to new circumstances and cultures.

The families, friends and communities contribute to the child's funds of knowledge. A good class teacher in the classroom takes on a role as a learner in order to learn from the funds of knowledge which learners possess which have been acquired from other learners, families and cultural backgrounds. The information the teacher gathers from the learners contributes to meaningful lessons in the classroom thus connecting the learner's home life with the lessons taught in the class. Each learner's funds of knowledge are different and the teacher should be able to tap into these differences to make the lessons culturally interesting and meaningful (Hill 2012). It is the responsibility of teachers to learn something special about each learner they teach in class.

Loveridge (2004) supports teachers' application of the residual knowledge acquired by learners within a socio-cultural context to make teaching and learning meaningful. This will bring the home cultural values acquired by learners closer to the school curriculum because learners learn valuable information from family and friends and teachers should not overlook this in their teaching practice. Failing to utilise learner's own knowledge and experience acquired in informal context like home would negate any socio-cultural approach to curriculum and pedagogy (Brooker, 2002; Loveridge, 2004).

Learner's families provide their first, formative learning experiences and build their sense of identity as a learner through participation in everyday experiences acquired over time. This knowledge acquired by learners can assist classroom teachers to describe, interpret and utilize observation of children as learners (Hedges, 2007). When classroom teachers are disconnected from the roots of learners' funds of knowledge, classroom instructions tend to be less informative and participatory (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Classroom teachers, who are disconnected from learners' funds of knowledge, assume that learners from poor families bring scanty and low quality experiences in the classroom. Teachers who are able to link learners' funds of knowledge with classroom instructions provide the most meaningful learning experiences to them. Teachers who are familiar with learners' home experiences tend to use the learners' funds of knowledge as resources to prepare and deliver their classroom instructions (Moll *et al.*, 1992; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002).

Teacher's ability to identify and connect with the societal resources of the learners helps to avoid the problems of exclusive curriculum (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Tobin Roth & Zimmerman, 2001; Eisenhart, Finkel & Marion, 1996). Scholars believe that when a teacher applies learners' funds of knowledge to a lesson plan, it helps to transform an exclusive curriculum into an inclusive one (Moll *et al.* 1992; Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Learners' knowledge thereafter becomes an everyday instructional practice of the teacher. A teacher may allow learners' lived experiences to take place in the language lessons when learners bring in new ideas that necessitate explanations of new language concepts. A language teacher's decisions are important because during teaching, learners bring many experiences, ideas, questions, and knowledge from beyond the classroom; teachers have to include these experiences in ways that help learners understand, participate, and experience language in meaningful ways (Barton & Yang, 2000; Oakes, 1985; 1990; 2000). New knowledge acquired through communal sharing of ideas, experiences, and prior knowledge in an environment (Lave & Wegner, 1993), such as the language classroom.

### **3.6.1 LINKING FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE WITH LEARNER'S INTEREST**

It is believed that learners' interest is driven by their awareness of the world and a desire to act with knowledge and competence within the world (Brennan, 2005; Wood, 2004). Researches on learner's learning is interpreted from funds of knowledge perspectives to support the argument that these are germane to explaining learner's interests and discussing both every day and early conceptual learning.

Pollard's (1996) study describes the contributions of Hazel's parents towards the development of her interests in drawing influential funds of knowledge into the development of Hazel's interests and learning. Hazel's father was a designer with an engineering company and her mother was a talented artist, so the funds of knowledge she acquired from her home background formed her funds of knowledge. Katie's background experience of music and literacy provided by her parents as well as Katie's access to her sisters' dancing and music classes assisted her to perform well in another knowledge domain (Hedges, 2004). Cullen and Allsop (1999) confirmed that the knowledge learners brought with them in the study of

outdoor play influenced the learners' interest; similarly, the works of Maddock (2006) and Rich and Davis (2007) confirm that learners transform learning outcomes from the experience they gathered from their families into meaningful achievements due to their interests. Learners use their funds of knowledge to negotiate between the home and family settings in ways that maintain their identity.

### **3.6.2 LINKING FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE WITH CLASSROOM TEACHING**

Funds of knowledge as a concept provide a genuine way for teachers to discover the richness in learners' lives and interests while collaborating with parents in learners' learning, thereby reducing the disjuncture between homes and school (Aubrey, 1997; Cumming, 2003; Fler, 1997; Loveridge, 2004). The teachers' understanding of each learner's prior knowledge and interests; learner's home background and his funds of knowledge can create a collaborative avenue for the teacher and learners to extend the learners' knowledge in meaningful ways (Moll *et al.*, 1992).

Learners' interests do not emerge in vacuum because learners themselves are products of families which belong to particular communities. The experiences gathered from the parents, cousins, aunts, uncles and other members of the communities form the learners funds of knowledge and the teacher can use this to achieve meaningful teaching and learning if properly managed (Wright, Ryder & Mayo, 2006). Early educational experiences of learners are embedded in societal values and beliefs of the culture (New, 1999). He noted that the contributions of parents, teachers and the community in the negotiation of educational expectations of the learners are essential for meaningful learning in class. Hence New (1999) argued that a meaningful curriculum which the teacher will use to teach the learners should emphasise the relationship between goals for learners and societal expectations. Teachers need to find ways to identify the themes of learners' interest and curiosity in their families, so as to build a meaningful and relevant curriculum which will develop culturally valued and conceptual knowledge (Hedges, 2007).

Grundy (1994) defines curriculum as a series of phenomena constructed on a moment-by-moment basis during pedagogical relationship. Decision-making by the

teacher on his understandings about learners, curriculum pedagogy and context is a conscious process (Nuttall, 2004).

Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden and Bell (2002) argue that effective pedagogy provides guidance on essential elements of teacher's professional knowledge. Teachers has to be knowledgeable about learners' assessment of learning preceded by planning of a wide range of learning experiences; child development and curriculum; and the involvement of parents in learners learning.

This study sought to find out how teachers use the knowledge acquired during training and also their experiences over time while teaching Yoruba and other related subjects effectively using Yoruba as the language of instruction as stipulated by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004).

### **3.7 LIVED EXPERIENCES**

Van Manen's (1990) work on temporal nature of lived experience helped me to understand how teachers' experience the use of Yoruba as a language of instruction in schools in primary school classes. Van Manen (1990) noted that lived experience has a temporal structure meaning that it can never be grasped in its immediate manifestation but only reflective as past, present and future. Explaining further, lived experience breathes meaning thus making it to have certain essence, that is, possessing qualities that is gained in retrospect.

Lived experience referred to a number of temporal, spatial organizations that involves our immediate consciousness of life prior to reflection (Dilthey, 1985; Sartre, 1957). Lived experience exists only in its representation and does not exist outside of memory (Denzin, 1992). The relationship between memory and the lived experience is at the center of knowledge production in order for us to understand people's important places. However, to understand peoples' lived experiences and how their important places are represented through the sharing of their stories, the role of memory and processes of remembering need further explanation (Barkley, 2008). Lived experience, as a philosophical orientation toward knowledge and identifying reality, believes that through the actual experience of an event, its essence may be felt and understood as reality (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

People understand their lived experiences through acts of remembering and share stories of their lived experiences through process of telling and retelling (Bartlett, 1932/1967; Durkheim, 1924/1974; Halbwachs, 1941/1992). Engaging people in memory making processes of their lived experiences shape their memories and stories. It is through social interaction that lived experiences are narrated to a broader audience (Schwartz, 1989).

Based on the works of Britzman (1994) and McCarthy (1998), it is argued that one's identity and contexts of power determine how experiences are understood so that experiences in themselves have no essentialist meaning. The use of stories in narrating ones experience brings together the nature of the person and what he has experienced as a living being (Merryfield, 2000). People narrate their lived experiences in story form to make sense of the world as they perceive and experience it and they use them to inform other people what they have experienced (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Scholars argue further that a story has a sense of being full; a sense of coming out of a personal and social history and that experience is the stories people live and while narrating these stories, people reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994).

### **3.7.1 INFLUENCE OF MEDIA AND SOCIETY ON LIVED EXPERIENCES**

The interaction of identity, culture, media society, politics and experience is central to this study. Their influence on how a language is experienced by teachers is central to this study. The role of the media as well as the political situation prevalent will be studied in relation to teachers' experiences in schools. The media, regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, has a significant impact on the society. The impact can either be positive or negative. Media is a tool that can be used to direct and govern our society. Media can be used to transform the society through cultural and social values. It can bring about a change in the attitudes and beliefs of people within a particular societal context. Media has a direct impact over the lifestyle of society. Teachers are human beings who belong to a particular tribe in any society and identifying with a particular tribe emphasizes the sharing of a degree of oneness with others in a particular area, as mentioned by Rummens (2001).

There have been many changes in the social and cultural practices that characterize people's media interactions. Media culture has expanded rapidly over the last decades. There is also a cultural reality that is shaping the ways new technologies are used in schools and how learners and teachers interact with them (Hart 2002).

Many schools are also culturally and ethnically diverse; hence, learners bring their home culture into the class to make sense of their learning. Teachers need to accommodate these lived experiences for effective teaching (McCarty, Wallace Lynch and Benally 1991). For a meaningful lesson to be taught and comprehended, teachers should teach using concrete examples which learners are familiar with in their society (Bouillion & Gomez, 2001). In their submissions, McCarty et al. (1991) and Michaels (1981) suggested that learners who develop a meaningful context for absorbing new information based on their personal experiences also improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Fusco (2001), argues that learners learning will not be a high priority unless it is an extension of their community activity. Teachers have to think about what learners want to learn so that learning makes a useful contribution to their social environment and personal experiences. Teachers as members of the larger societal community need to use their lived experiences gathered over time to teach and also must be able to tap from the lived experiences of the learners in class who are from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The next section discusses Freire's theory on empowerment.

### **3.8 FREIRE'S THEORY ON EMPOWERMENT**

This section discusses empowerment as a theory; what is it to the learners and how the learners can be empowered through education in mother tongue. Freire theory of critical curriculum and empowerment is discussed in relation to this study.

Paulo Freire (1972), a Brazillian educator believed that education possesses social and political consequences. He also believed that teachers have a moral, social and political responsibility to be involved in education for social transformation which creates an equal social world.

Empowerment, according to Freire (1972), is to give ability to or to delegate authority or power to another person. Empowerment refers to increasing the

spiritual, political, social, educational, gender or economic strength of a person or community. Chamberlin (1997) described empowerment as having both individual and group dimension. He mentioned further that empowerment is having decision making power; making an individual to have access to information and resources; having a variety of options from which an individual can make a choice. Explaining further Chamberlin (1997) maintained that empowerment means to be assertive; having a feeling of hope and aspiration; learning to think critically and act accordingly; learning skills that the individual defines as important.

Empowerment can be referred to as the transfer of cultural, political, economic and social power between people. It is the process of giving greater economic, social, cultural and political to people who have little access to such opportunities (Freire, 1997; Wasserman, 1991; Darder, 2002).

Empowerment as a teaching technique has both general and a specialist usage. Examining empowerment from the perspective of general usage, it is a teaching technique which involves giving learners the power to decide which experiences they want to participate in. Explaining empowerment from the general perspective, the New Zealand Ministry of Education in its curriculum guidelines for early childhood stipulates that empowering learners means teachers will provide them with the following abilities (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1996:22):

... take increasing responsibility for their own learning and care; continue learning with an enhanced sense of self-worth, identity, confidence and employment; contribute their own special strengths and interests; learn useful and appropriate ways to find what they want to know; and understand their own ways of learning and being creative.

Empowerment is associated with critical, transformative or emancipatory approach to education. Darder (2002) describes the teacher as a cultural worker who is actively involved in the transformation of the society into a just and conducive one devoid of discrimination and its effect on learners. He suggested some alternatives to the traditional beliefs regarding the act of teaching. He suggested that teachers should view learners as integral human beings; dialogue should be regarded as a pedagogy; there should be proper negotiation of power and authority between the



teacher and the learners; teachers should be conscious of his own cultural identity as well as the cultural identities of the learners in the class (Darder, 2002).

According to Darder (2002), the language used in the class as a medium of instruction should be a familiar language to the learners and must reflect the lived experience of the learners. Learning is a social phenomenon and it is believed to take place in the learners when there is permanent change in behavior. Therefore, meaningful and effective teaching and learning in class can be achieved where positive dialogue is allowed by the teacher. Learners must be allowed to express themselves in a language they are familiar with and the teacher should use this opportunity to tap on the learners funds of knowledge which eventually can lead to the learners' emancipation and empowerment (Cummins, 2000; Darder, 2002; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002).

### **3.8.1 SKILLS FOR EMPOWERMENT**

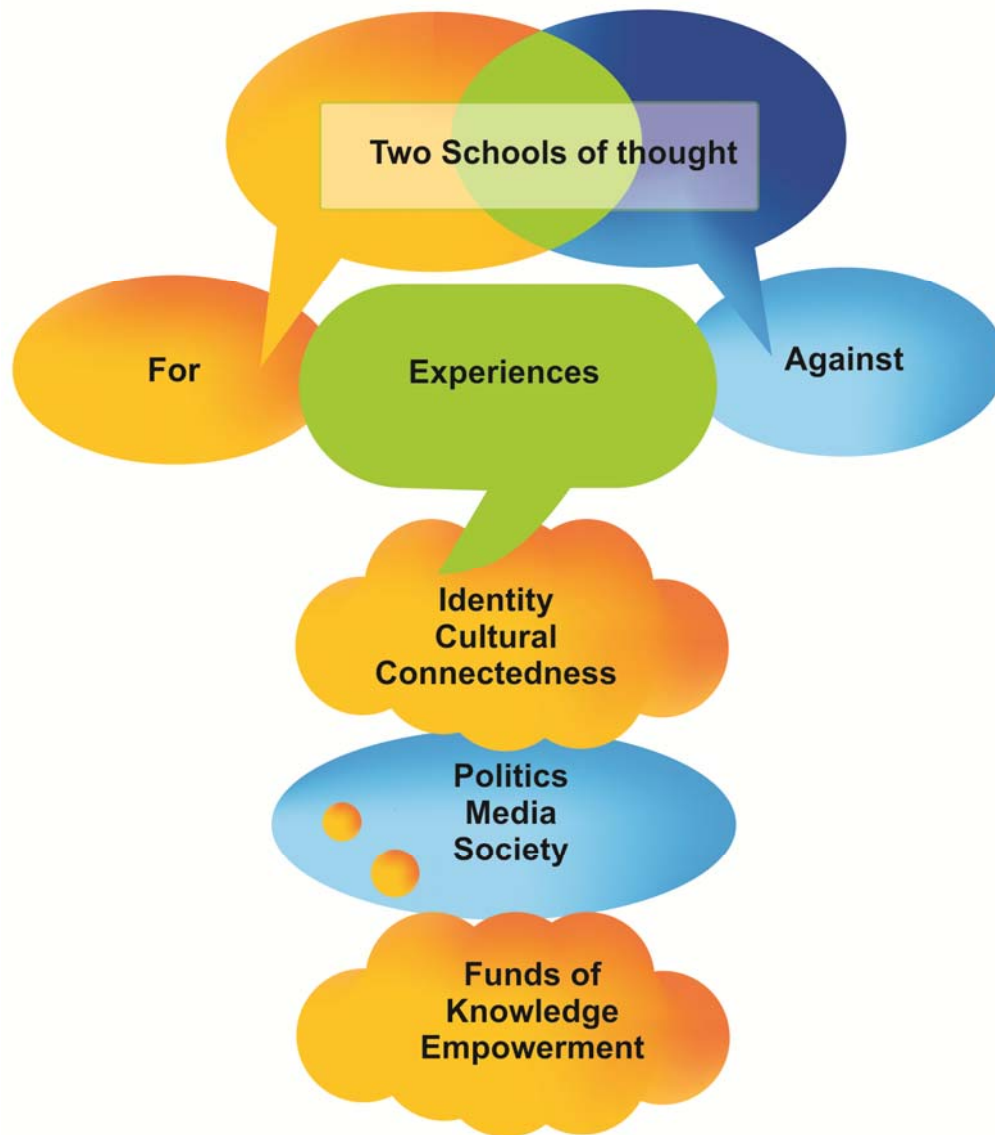
The aim of empowering learners within the school setting is to enable them to acquire the intellectual and emotional abilities to face challenges and work together to create a just and conducive environment for effective learning (Dermon-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989). He argues further that learners can acquire these when classroom teachers assist learners to feel good about themselves; build learners' capacity to participate in the class activities (program) to their fullest potential; develop learners' ability to have positive relationships with others and build learners' capacity to think critically.

Through applying these abilities of learners to my study I attempted to find out through observation if learners felt good and attentive in class while the teacher was teaching using Yoruba as a medium of instruction (Cummins, 2000). Through observation, I also sought to find out if teachers used their experiences to develop learners' capacity to participate in class activities to their fullest potential. Darder (2002) notes that dialogue is an important teaching technique in class because learners learn more when they engage in discussion. Learners need to develop the skills of asking questions, offering feedback, expressing and justifying their ideas and actions in class.

The teacher as a facilitator needs to develop learners' ability to have positive relationships with others. Relating this to my study, I attempted to find out through observation and interviews with teachers what value they attached to Yoruba and how these values were transmitted to the learners in class. Wenger (1998) argues that people interact in a range of activities to learn the accepted beliefs, mores and practices of the peculiar communities and cultures in which they live. Well-experienced community members support younger ones in an apprentice-like fashion to learn expected patterns of behaviour and practice, and the knowledge involved in such cultural practices.

Developing in the learners the ability to think critically will help them to acquire critical skills of asking questions to solve cognitive, affective and psychomotor problems in class, especially when learners are allowed to communicate in their mother tongue. Darder (2002) supports this, saying that critical thinking can be achieved when 'students' are given authentic voices in classrooms'. I observed during teaching, the teachers' use of Yoruba to teach the learners and their response in terms of asking critical questions germane to the lesson.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the theoretical framework and related concepts underpinning the study.



**Figure 3.1: Theoretical framework and related concepts**

Figure 3.1 summarises the theoretical framework and related concepts of the study. The study is premised on the two schools of thought, which argue for and against mother tongue instruction. Teachers' experiences reveal one of the two schools of thoughts. Their experiences are influenced by societal factors, which include economic and political, that shaped their identities.

Funds of knowledge are said to be imperative in language learning as both teachers and learners bring vast experience of language use from home. The teachers also can tap from the funds of knowledge of the learners which they brought from their various home and cultural backgrounds. The learners can be empowered to develop skills which they can use for future endeavours. This becomes possible if the

language of learning and teaching is accessible to them. Using the child's home language is an appropriate medium for successful empowerment.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the two schools of thought for and against the use of the mother tongue as a language of learning and teaching in class. These schools of thought are used to understand the teachers' experience on mother tongue teaching. Personal background was recognised as an important factor in the development of teachers' perspectives in the teaching of the mother tongue in class (Adler, 1984; Goodman & Adler, 1985). Foster (1995) argues that teachers' lived experiences acquired from cultural backgrounds and the societal values which they identify with, shape their view of teaching the language. The media as a tool for transmitting cultural values within the society helps to shape the experiences of the teachers in class. Research has shown that the teachers' understanding of each learner's prior knowledge and interests and home background and his funds of knowledge can create a collaborative avenue for the teacher and learners to extend the learners' knowledge in meaningful ways (Moll *et al.*, 1992).

The way teachers build funds of knowledge amongst learners and how they use funds of knowledge that learners bring into the class will determine the success of such intervention. Learners must be allowed to express themselves in a language which they brought from home to the class (mother tongue) and the teacher should use this opportunity to tap into the learners funds of knowledge which eventually can lead to the learners' emancipation and empowerment (Cummins, 2000; Darder, 2002; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002). The next chapter discusses the research design and the methodology used in conducting the research.

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## CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research design and the rationale of the research methods employed. In addition, it provides a detailed explanation and justification for various data collection methods, the selection of research subjects and the research sites for the study. The ethics and limitations of the study are presented.

This research project is qualitative in nature and I employed an inquiry and interpretative paradigm. The data was interpreted against the literature review to situate it within the language discourses that have been recorded and acknowledged. In qualitative research, the best way to understand the phenomenon is to view it in its context. Creswell (2007) argues that qualitative research is a form of research in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear and understand. I investigated teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes and its implications for learning in Lagos State, Nigeria. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret them in terms of meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

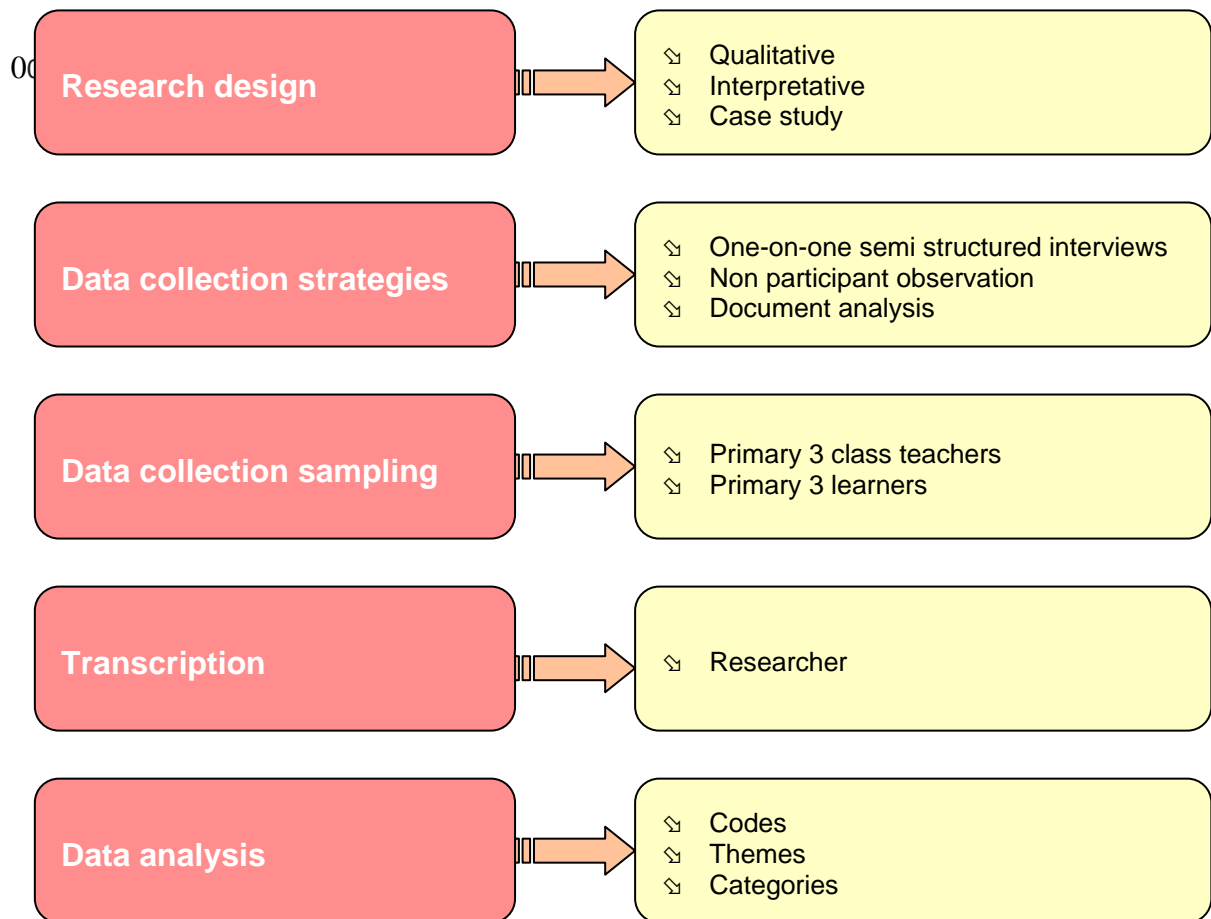
The qualitative approach assisted me to understand the occurrence of events in their natural settings (school) while investigating the experiences of primary school classroom using Yoruba as a medium of instruction and its implications to learning in Lagos State, Nigeria. It enabled me to develop a significant level of detail about the primary 3 teachers who were qualified Yoruba language teachers, and to observe the teaching and the primary 3 learners' response to the medium of instruction used by the teacher. I attempted to understand the multiple realities constructed by participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2003). Garcia (2005) asserts that cognitive development is closely linked to language learnt within the context of the unique cultural paradigm.

The literature review in chapters 2 and 3 is aimed at giving trustworthiness to this study, while Chapter 4 discusses the interpretative paradigm and the qualitative study as a research design. The study took into account the concepts and theories predominant in the literature review on mother tongue instruction: the two schools of thought for and against the mother tongue, factors that contributed towards a conceptualisation of lived and the living experiences, funds of knowledge and culture. The theories of identity and empowerment were also beneficial in understanding how teachers acquire experiences and their impact on learners' self-identity and empowerment in using the language.

In this chapter the selected semi-structured one-on-one interview and non-participant classroom observation are discussed. The interview was used to identify information from the teachers on how their lived and living experiences influenced their teaching of Yoruba in class. The observation schedule was used to observe the learners on how they comprehended in class. An explanation of the coding format of the transcribed data follows and an outline of my research approach to the data is given. I used content analysis to analyse the policy documents in the study. The policy documents were analysed to confirm whether teachers teach according to the stipulated guidelines. The documents analysed included the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), primary school curriculum (2007) and textbooks (2001) used in class.

Ethical consideration is necessary in a research project involving human subjects. Care was taken not to infringe on the rights of the participants throughout the investigation of the research problem.

Figure 4.1 outlines the methodological representation of the research design employed in the study.



**Figure 4.1: Research methodology overview** (Adapted from Chabilal, 2010)

## 4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). I decided to use a case study (Stake, 1995; 2000). I purposely selected a case as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which I was interested and considered to contain the largest number of characteristics of the population (Strydom & Venter, 2002). The case study involved 10 primary school teachers teaching primary 3 learners. These 10 primary school teachers used as samples responded to the interview questions asked by the researcher. The teachers were graduates with qualifications in Yoruba. An interview was used as the main instrument for data collection while observations and documentary evidence supported it. The researcher also used two primary schools in Apa, Badagry and Agege in Lagos State as the study locations.

A case study design was employed to describe, explain and explore teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implication for learning in Lagos State, Nigeria (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Case studies can penetrate situations in many ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010). Robson (2002) remarks that a case study develops a theory which can help researchers to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) a case study design provides a unique example of real people in real situations. Case studies are set in temporal, geographical, organisational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case; they can be defined with reference to characteristics defined by individuals and groups involved; and they can be defined by participants' roles and functions in the case (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010).

Yin (1994) mentions that a case study is an empirical inquiry in which the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and boundaries between phenomena. The case study approach involves many variables of interest, multiple sources of evidence, and theoretical propositions to guide the collection and analysis of data. My case study design involved 10 primary 3 teachers and their learners and investigated how Yoruba was used as a medium of instruction in classes. The multiple sources of evidence included an interview schedule, observation schedule and documentary evidence. The theoretical proposition that guided this study was Erikson's theory of identity and Freire's theory of empowerment. Other related concepts include the discourses for and against mother tongue education; meaning of culture; funds of knowledge and lived experiences.

#### **4.3 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

My study focused on primary 3 classroom teachers in schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Lagos State was chosen as the study area because it is located in the South-West Geo-political zone of Nigeria and the language of the immediate environment is Yoruba. The researcher used two primary schools in Lagos State where Yoruba is used as a language of learning and teaching. The number of primary 3 teachers was determined by the number of classes found in the schools.



## **4.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Research questions in qualitative research narrow the purpose statement to specific questions that researchers seek to answer (Creswell 2012). Research questions are important in understanding the choice of research methodology used in the study. Furthermore, formulating the research questions helped me to understand the complexity of the study field and other factors that affect the course of study.

The research questions are derived from the purpose of the study, which is to investigate teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes and its implications for learning. The data collection process involved the use of observation and interview methods. Policy document analysis was used in the data collection. These research questions will be dealt with and linked to the methodology used in the collection of the data.

### **4.4.1 WHAT ARE THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS WHEN USING YORUBA AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSES?**

This question sought to determine the experiences of primary 3 teachers while teaching in their classrooms using Yoruba as a medium of instruction and how this translated into learning in class. The aim was to find out about teachers' experiences over a period and the value they attached to the language. This question reveals the importance of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in schools and what this meant to the primary 3 class teachers.

### **4.4.2 HOW DO THE TEACHERS VALUE THE TEACHING OF YORUBA?**

This research question sought to find out from the primary 3 class teachers the value they attach to Yoruba, especially as these teachers belonged to the Yoruba speaking population in Lagos State. Secondly, it sought to find out how the teachers transmitted these values of the Yoruba language in their teaching and the importance of these values to the learners. Through interview and observation I was able to observe how much the teachers valued Yoruba as a language and the effect of these values to learners. The policy document was also analysed to confirm whether the teachers conformed to the policy stipulation which specifies the use of

the language of the environment as a medium of instruction in the first three years of primary classes.

This gave me an in-depth understanding of the strategies used by primary 3 teachers during teaching. The researcher was able to find out the various methods the primary 3 teachers used during teaching using Yoruba as a language of instruction. All the primary 3 teachers used for this study were from the Yoruba tribe and due to their experience in the teaching profession they made use of relevant strategies during teaching.

#### **4.4.3 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING YORUBA?**

This research question was intended to give insight into the effects of the challenges on learners' learning. Through observation and interview schedules, I was able to determine whether the challenges facing the primary 3 teachers while using Yoruba as a medium of instruction had any effects on the pupil's learning. This research question found out if these challenges were related to the language or not.

#### **4.4.4 WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF TEACHING YORUBA?**

This question sought to find out what the teachers conceived as the benefit of teaching in Yoruba. Through the interview schedule I was able to gather information on what primary 3 class teachers perceived as important in teaching Yoruba. This question was used to find out if all ten teachers used in this study had the same understanding of the benefits of teaching Yoruba. It sought to confirm how they conceived these benefits; that is, whether they related to self-conception, politics and many other factors.

#### **4.4.5 WHAT ARE THEIR EXPERIENCES IN TERMS OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES THEY RECEIVE IN TEACHING YORUBA?**

This question was intended to determine the support available to teachers for them to teach successfully using Yoruba as a medium of instruction. In particular, the support given to the teachers by government was a factor. This support can be human and material support, such as attendance at workshops and seminars, in service training for teachers as well as support given by parents.

#### **4.4.6 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING YORUBA?**

This research question was instrumental in finding out the implications of these experiences of the teachers using Yoruba as a medium of instruction for the primary 3 learners in classes. This research question was used to **discern** how teachers valued the teaching of Yoruba in class. Also it was used to find out how these values were transmitted to the learners through teaching and learning in class. Thirdly, this research question sought to find out the importance of these values to learners.

#### **4.5 PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE SELECTION**

The researcher used purposive sampling in choosing primary 3 teachers who had received training in Yoruba and were teaching Yoruba in schools. Primary 3 learners were selected because they had received two years' mother tongue instruction. This enabled the researcher to determine if Yoruba's language development is significant for any learning to take effect. Also, primary 3 falls within the lower classes which the national policy on education stipulates that the mother tongue be used in teaching.

The primary school chosen for the research in Badagry Local Education District (LGEA) has a population of 10 teachers including the head teacher and two assistants. Due to the large population of the pupils the head teacher with the assistants also teach the learners. The researcher confirmed that there was only one primary 3 teacher in the school chosen in Badagry LGEA, specifically the school in Apa, a suburb area in Badagry. The population of the learners in primary 3 class is 72 and only one teacher attached to the class. During an interview with the teacher, I gathered that he is 58 years of age and has been teaching for about 32 years. He possesses a bachelor's degree in Yoruba. In Nigeria the primary school teachers teach all subjects irrespective of their subject specialisation in at the degree or certificate level.

The primary school chosen for the research in Agege Local Education District (LGEA) has a population of 21 teachers including the head teacher and the two assistants. The primary school is located at the centre of Agege which falls within

Ikeja Division of Lagos State. Lagos State is divided into five divisions namely Ikeja, Badagry, Ikorodu, Lagos Island and Epe (IBILE). There are three primary 3 teachers in the school with a population of 66 pupils in the primary 3 class. For this research, the researcher gave the primary 3 class teachers pseudonyms to enable me discuss their qualifications, years of teaching, sex, and their experiences in chapter 5.

Table 4.1 shows the summary of participants according to schools and districts chosen.

**Table 4.1: Summary of participants**

<b>Badagry Local Government Education Authority</b>	<b>Agege Local Government Education Authority</b>
School A	School B
Classroom A	Classroom B
1 Teacher	3 Teachers
72 Pupils	66 Pupils
1 Head teacher & 2 Assistants	1 Head teacher & 2 Assistants

#### **4.5.1 STUDY SAMPLE A : BADAGRY**

Apa is the seat of an ancient Yoruba kingdom and the oldest village in the entire Badagry division. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century the founders migrated from Ile-Ife, an ancient city in Osun state in the South-West region of Nigeria. The old Apa kingdom which used to extend westwards up to Jeregbe near Port-Novo, northwards as far as Agada and Akere in Ilaro Division, and eastwards roughly to Ibeshe, has been greatly reduced in size and importance. Today, the villages of the Apa area are almost wholly Egun-speaking and only the Oba's (king) family and a few others in three or four villages are of Yoruba origin.

Badagry township is a significant location in the history of Nigeria regarding education and civilisation. In 1842, the first set of missionaries led by William de Graft and Thomas Birch Freeman, both Wesleyan Methodists, introduced Christianity to Nigeria through Badagry. Later on, other denominations arrived and spread into other parts of Lagos State and the entire country. The first school in

Nigeria was established in Badagry and was named the 'Nursery of the Infant Church' by the missionaries. The major challenge faced by the various missions was the barrier of language. To spread the gospel, some of the natives had to be educated and later became interpreters. The significance of the mother tongue during that era cannot be overemphasised; the missions needed the native converts as interpreters to spread the gospel in the local languages. I chose Badagry as one of the study locations because of the significant role it played for the introduction of western education into Nigeria through Lagos State.

#### **4.5.2 STUDY SAMPLE B: AGEGE**

Agege is centrally located in the Ikeja division of Lagos State. Agege of old was a village occupied predominantly by the Aworis and they were mostly farmers. Currently it is a commercial centre for many activities and home to different tribes and nationals from different parts of the world. The language of the environment is Awori, a Yoruba dialect.

The location of Agege allowed for other tribes to be assimilated into the community. The Hausa people were prominent in Agege as early as 1925 and formed the core Muslim community, which established mosques. The major tribes in Nigeria are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

Various Islamic missions established primary and secondary schools, among others the Ahmadiyya college, established in 1943. The Christian missions also established schools to cater for the education of their children among which was the Lagos African Church Grammar School established in the 1960s.

The present Agege community has over 30 primary schools with a population of 15,000 pupils and this study location was chosen for this research because it is a multilinguistic community accommodating many tribes and nationals from the neighbouring countries in Africa. It should be noted however that the language of the environment at Agege is Yoruba. . Figure 4.2 is a map of Lagos State.



**Figure 4.2: Map of Lagos State**

#### 4.5.3 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This section sets out the biographical information of the participants used in the study. The research participants' details enabled me to carry out an analysis of their personal and professional backgrounds as it relates to their experiences of using Yoruba as mother tongue and as a language of learning and teaching in schools.

Lagos State, which is the study location, is a cosmopolitan state where different people from different ethnic groups live and they have to send their children to school, hence the multilingual nature of the learners. The language of the environment in Lagos is Yoruba, hence the need to use Yoruba as mother tongue and as a medium of instruction in primary schools. It should be noted that all ten teacher respondents who participated in this study come from the Yoruba ethnic background.

Table 4.2 gives an overview of the teacher participants in the two schools used in this study, schools A and B. It lists their pseudonym, gender, age, ethnicity, professional qualifications, length of service, number of learners in each of their classes. I used pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of participants in the study.

Information on age and gender confirms the participants' maturity and experience in the teaching and learning of Yoruba in school. Information on academic and professional qualifications of research participants confirms their level of professional development and the training they have undergone to determine their experiences of using Yoruba in class.

**Table 4.2: Biographical information of teacher participants**

Participant and pseudonym	Gender (Male / Female)	Age	Ethnicity	Qualifications	Length of service	Number of Learners in class	Number of languages learners speak in classrooms
School A							
Teacher Jide	M	58 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Yoruba	32yrs	72	10
Head teacher Bisi	F	56 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Educational Management & Yoruba	28 yrs	72	10
Assistant head teacher Bayo	M	55 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Educational Management & Yoruba	29 yrs	72	10
Assistant head teacher Gbenga	M	58 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Guidance and Counseling & Yoruba	29 yrs	72	10
Teacher Kemi	F	52 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Science Education. <u>Major:</u> Mathematics; Teachers' Grade 2 Certificate Primary Education Studies & Yoruba	21 yrs	66	15

Participant and pseudonym	Gender (Male / Female)	Age	Ethnicity	Qualifications	Length of service	Number of Learners in class	Number of languages learners speak in classrooms
School B							
Teacher Titi	F	50 yrs	Yoruba	Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). <u>Major:</u> Yoruba & Igbo	21 yrs	66	15
Teacher Bimbo	F	54 yrs	Yoruba	Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). <u>Major:</u> Yoruba	28 yrs	66	15
Head teacher Bimpe	F	59 yrs	Yoruba	Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). <u>Major:</u> Christian Religious Studies & Yoruba	34 yrs	66	15
Assistant head teacher Dupe	F	55 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Yoruba	22 yrs	66	15
Assistant head teacher Gbemi	F	51 yrs	Yoruba	Bachelor of Education. <u>Major:</u> Yoruba	21 yrs	66	15

The description of the schools and the respondents follows in the next section. The teacher respondents will be referred to by their pseudonyms and the school where they teach, for example: Jide SchA, Bisi SchA, Gbenga SchA, Bayo SchA, Kemi SchB, Titi SchB, Bimbo SchB, Bimpe SchB, Dupe SchB, Gbemi SchB.

### SCHOOL A

School A which was chosen for the study, is located in Apa a suburb location in Badagry (one of the five administrative divisions in Lagos State) and one primary 3 class teacher was observed and interviewed along with the head teacher with two assistant head teachers. A total number of four respondents were interviewed. In the following paragraphs, I describe these respondents in school A in Badagry.



Teacher Jide SchA (pseudonym) is a male teacher aged 58 years and a native of Yoruba who has put in 32½ years in service. He possesses a Bachelor's degree in education with bias in Yoruba. The population of the learners is 72 in class while the total population of pupil in the school is 400.

The head teacher, Bisi SchA is a female teacher aged 56 years and a native of Yoruba who has put in 28 years in service as a teacher. She has a Bachelor's degree in Educational Management with specialisation in Yoruba as a teaching subject. The head teacher was part of the study as she also teaches periodically.

The assistant head teacher 1, Bayo SchA is a male who is 55 years of age and possesses a Bachelor's degree in Educational Management with specialisation in Yoruba as a teaching subject. He is a native of Yoruba who has been in the teaching profession for 29 years. He teaches primary 3 classes.

The assistant head teacher 2, Gbenga SchA is a native of Yoruba with a Bachelor of Education in Guidance and Counselling with specialisation in Yoruba as a teaching subject. He is a male teacher aged 58 years and has put in 29 years in service. He is a class teacher too.

## **SCHOOL B**

Six respondents were interviewed in school B in Agege (a location in Ikeja which is one of the five administrative divisions of Lagos State). These respondents included three teachers, one head teacher and two assistant head teachers. All the respondents were female and only the three teachers were observed while teaching. In the following paragraphs, I describe these respondents in school B in Agege.

Teacher Kemi SchB is a female who has put in 21 years in service. She is a native of Yoruba and has been teaching in primary schools during these years. She has a Bachelor's degree in mathematics which is one of the core subjects in primary education and a Teacher's Grade Two Certificate (TCII) with specialisation in Primary Education Studies/Yoruba. She is 52 years of age and she has been teaching primary 3 classes for three years.

Teacher Titi SchB is a female teacher with 21 years of teaching experience. She possesses the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) with specialisation in Igbo/Yoruba, which is the minimum teaching qualification for any primary school teacher in Nigeria. She is a native of Yoruba and her age is 50 years. The learner population in her class is 66 and the total population of the pupils in school B is 520.

Teacher Bimbo SchB is also a female teacher with 28 years of teaching. She possesses the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). She is a native of Yoruba and her age is 54 years.

The head teacher, Bimpe SchB, is a female teacher who possesses the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) with specialisation in Christian Religious Studies/Yoruba. She is 59 years old and has put in 34 years in service. She is a native of Yoruba. She teaches periodically.

The assistant head teacher 1, Dupe SchB, is 55 years old and has been teaching in the primary school for 22 years. She is a female teacher from the Yoruba tribe and has a bachelor's degree in Education with specialisation in Yoruba. She is also a class teacher.

The assistant head teacher 2, Gbemi SchB, is a female teacher aged 51 years and has been in primary school as a teacher for 21 years. She is a native of Yoruba and possesses a bachelor's degree in Education with specialisation in Yoruba. She teaches the primary 3 class.

In this study, 10 respondents were used and all the respondents were professional teachers who possessed certificates in Yoruba at different levels of education. The respondents were from the Yoruba speaking population and only one could speak Igbo. The majority of the respondents are females with over 20 years' experience in teaching and all are over 50 years of age. The number of learners in the classes indicates a challenge, especially the class of 72 in school A, Badagry. The aim of the biographical analysis is to see if age or gender, length of service and qualifications has any influence in how the teacher participants experience teaching Yoruba and use it as a language of instruction. The experiences are analysed according to themes and categories.

## **4.6 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES**

The research questions and the scope of study determined the data collection strategies that were employed. The researcher used multiple methods of data collection including interviews to gather information from the teachers of the primary 3 learners and observation to discern how the teachers used Yoruba in teaching. The researcher used semi-structured one-on-one interviews to gather information from 10 primary 3 teachers. The researcher also used non-participant classroom observation of the learners and the teacher while teaching using Yoruba as a medium of instruction. The researcher used also the document analysis. The instruments explained below assisted me in answering the research questions. This enabled me to present richly descriptive and detailed data on the challenges of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications for learning in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **4.6.1 INTERVIEWS**

The use of interview in research signifies a move away from viewing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individual, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans often through conversations (Kvale, 1996). Interviews enable participants (interviewers or interviewees) to engage in discussion about their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010) further argues that interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard.

The researcher used semi-structured one-on-one interview to gather information from the teachers of the primary 3 children meant for the study (Creswell, 2007). The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed after permission has been sought from the respondents. The researcher interviewed primary 3 teachers as well as the head teachers and their assistants to elicit from them their experiences in teaching using Yoruba as a medium of instruction. The study also examined the strategies used by the primary 3 teachers in the class while teaching Yoruba and the challenges as well as benefits of teaching Yoruba was examined. This afforded

an opportunity to have an in-depth understanding on how teachers use Yoruba as a medium of instruction. The interview schedule was the main instrument used for the collection of the data while observation schedule and documentary evidences were used to corroborate the interview schedule. It should be noted that all the 10 teacher participants were interviewed to gather information on their experiences while using Yoruba as a medium of instruction.

#### **4.6.2 OBSERVATION**

The peculiar feature of observation as a research process is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010). Robson (2002) argues that what people do may differ from what they say they do therefore, observation as a research instrument provides a reality check.

Observational data are sensitive to contexts and demonstrate strong ecological validity (Moyles, 2002). This enabled the researcher to understand the context programmes, to be open-minded and inductive, to enable the researcher to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed while conducting the research and to discover things that participants (teachers) might not freely talk about in interview situations.

The researcher used non-participant classroom observations to enhance understanding of teachers' experiences using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications to learning in Lagos State, Nigeria. Since the subjects were primary 3 teachers, they were observed while teaching and learning was taking place. An observation schedule was employed to determine the efficacy and the number of times the mother tongue was used in communication in the classroom. The schedule comprised criteria from the curriculum statement that indicated benchmarks in as far as the language development of primary 3 children is concerned, that is, the policy statement which says that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment. The researcher observed the quality of the Yoruba language used by the teachers to find out if it conforms to the stated standards in the language policy statement. Learners

were observed to find out the way they used Yoruba as a language of communication while teaching and learning was taking place in the class.

Observation assisted the researcher as follows:

- He observed events (teaching and learning) as they occur in their natural setting (classroom) while the data was being collated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2010).
- He observed the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction by the teacher while teaching the primary 3 learners.
- During teaching and learning in the class, he observed the learners' use of Yoruba in the class among themselves.
- He was aware of his own feelings and behaviour and as the conducting of observations is flexible (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001), he sometimes shifted focus when he noticed other things emerging that were different from my initial activities.

However, not all the teacher participants were observed because some of them were assistant head teachers and head teachers who had to attend to other administrative matters when I was available in the schools chosen for the study to observe lessons taught. The observation schedule was used to cross check the teacher participants' claim regarding their responses to the interview questions.

#### **4.6.3 POLICY DOCUMENTS**

The researcher used content analysis to confirm whether the teachers conform with the policy guidelines regarding the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school classes. The documents analysed include the national policy on education, primary school curriculum and the textbooks used in teaching in class.

#### **4.6.4 FIELD NOTES**

The researcher maintained a field notes to record personal observation, reflections and perceived body language shown while interacting with the teachers during the period of data collection for this study. In the field notes taken, the researcher made other observations relevant to the study during one-on-one interviews with the

teachers which took place in their settings, which are the classrooms after the lessons. The researcher also recorded feelings and thoughts in the field notes during the period of data collection in the schools (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher used field notes to record activities observed in the school settings, which assisted in the study, and he was able to draw inferences that could not be obtained during the interview. Using field notes helped the researcher gain insight into participants' views that they could not express verbally during the cause of the interview. The notes, according to Mosia (2011), constitute the descriptions of the who, what, where and how of the research context.

The field notes make the validity of the research stronger and although methods and procedures do not guarantee validity in a research work like this study, the notes are necessary to the process of ruling out validity threats and increase the credibility of the research.

The table 4.3 gives a summary of the data collection process. It contains the research questions, data collection tools, participants, and the purpose.

**Table 4.3 Data collection schedule table**

Questions	Data collection tools	Participants	Purpose
How do the teachers value the teaching of Yoruba?	Observation Interviews Policy documents	Teachers and learners	This research question gave me an in-depth understanding of how the teachers value the teaching of Yoruba in the class. The policy document was also analysed to confirm if teachers teach according to the stipulated guidelines.
What are the challenges of teaching Yoruba?	Interview Observation Schedule	Teachers Head teachers	This research question gave me an insight into the effects of the challenges faced by teachers using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary 3 classes.
What are the strengths of teaching Yoruba?	Interview Schedule	Teachers Head teachers	This question revealed what the teachers conceive as the strengths of teaching Yoruba.

Questions	Data collection tools	Participants	Purpose
What are their experiences in terms of support and resources they receive in teaching Yoruba?	Observation Interviews Documents	Teachers Head teachers	This question afforded me the opportunity to know the support available to teachers for them to teach successfully using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in class.
What are the implications of these experiences on learning Yoruba?	Observation schedule	Learners	This question helped me to confirm the level of comprehension of the language by learners within and outside the class.

#### 4.7 DEALING WITH VALIDITY

Validity is an important key to effective research; it is therefore a requirement for both qualitative and quantitative research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2010). The truth value as viewed by Merriam (2001) is the extent to which the researcher's findings match reality. Validity refers to the credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account (Maxwell, 1996; Wiersma, 2000). The researcher addressed issues of validity as a standardised component of the process of a qualitative research (Merriam, 1998).

The data for this study was collated according to the research design. There were occasions during the course of the research that I needed to adjust and change to accommodate some information not initially included in the study in order to ensure that necessary and important details were added to make the research meaningful (Creswell, 2002). Each step was documented in order to give a full picture of the trajectory taken during the cause of collating data for the study. It should be noted, however, that deviation from the research design and plan was restricted as much as possible in order not to lose focus.

#### 4.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The result of the study cannot be generalised for all situations, but will be valuable in understanding and interpreting experiences of primary 3 teachers in using Yoruba as a medium of instruction to teach primary 3 learners.

The following limitations were identified in the study.

- Only two schools were used in the study
- The study did not include the voices of parents and government officials
- The three months spent during the collation of the data was too short to make credible recommendations.

#### **4.9 ETHICAL ISSUES IN THE STUDY**

The researcher wrote a letter through the Dean, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria to the Lagos State Ministry of Education seeking approval for the use of the primary schools before the commencement of this study. The Ministry of Education forwarded the letter to the State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) Lagos, which is the establishment controlling and supervising primary schools at the state level. The last stage was the Local Government Education District (LGEA). The LGEAs control and supervise primary schools at the local government level. The researcher took SUBEB letter of approval to the LGEAs, which in turn issued their own letters. The two LGEAs involved in this study are in Badagry and Agege.

The researcher also sought permission from all participants involved in this study before the study was carried out by explaining the purpose of the study to them and letting them know that they could withdraw any time they wish to while the research was being conducted. The researcher assured the participants of no harm during the cause of conducting this research while informing them that they would have the opportunity to read the results of my thesis prior to its publication.

A high level of confidentiality was maintained on the information gathered from the participants and in transcribing the interview; pseudo-names were used to conceal the identity of the respondents.

The researcher wrote letters to the parents informing them of the intention to observe the children in their classes during teaching and learning. The researcher requested their permission and explained what the research was all about, letting them know that the identity and confidentiality of the children would be safeguarded. The children could also withdraw from the research any time they wished, without



prior notice. The researcher visited the two schools used in the study prior to the commencement of data collection to speak to the learners about his intention to observe them in class during teaching and assuring them of their confidentiality and safety. The researcher informed them also that they could withdraw whenever they wanted to during the course of the research. The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria before embarking on the data collection and only proceeded with the data collection after getting approval.

#### **4.10 LITERATURE CONTROL**

Relevant literature used in the study gave a strong validation to it. Through the use of literature control, the researcher understood his findings which improved his knowledge as a researcher which informed the study (Mosia 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In order to sustain confidence as a researcher, the researcher conducted concurrent literature control when formulating the conceptual and theoretical framework underpinning the study (Woods & Catanzaro, 1998). The concepts were formulated according to literatures and the researcher verified his findings by reviewing the literature cited after completion of fieldwork and analysis of data to indicate literature that supports my findings (Burns & Grove, 1997).

In order to enhance the credibility and reliability of the study, the researcher matched the findings with the reviewed literature. The reviewed literature strengthened the study to make it a valuable cumulative knowledge-building research in line with the research inquiry and the research topic (Rubin & Babbie, 2001): Teachers' experiences using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary school classes: implications for learning.

#### **4.11 DATA ANALYSIS**

Creswell (2007) claims that data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organising the data for analysis of content, then categorising the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables or a discussion. The four themes that emerged from the study are: values embedded in Yoruba, enjoyment teaching Yoruba, benefits of Yoruba and challenges for Yoruba. Each theme has three

categories. These themes emerged from the interviews conducted with the teacher participants and from the data gathered from the observation and the policy document statements. Nieuwenhuis (2010) asserts that the data analysis in a qualitative study tends to be an ongoing process which means that data collection, analysis and reporting are interwoven.

The data analysis was guided by what has been expounded in the literature as teachers' experiences while using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and the implications of this for learning. The Nigerian National Policy of Education (NPE, 2004) stipulated that the first three years of primary education should be taught in the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment.

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the unit of analysis, the research approach and the research methods were summarised and described. The data gathered from the interview, observation and the policy documents were analysed. In Chapter 5, these are discussed under the themes and categories, together with the data analysis and outline of the results.

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## CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, the researcher described the research design, sampling technique, instruments for data collection and the data collection processes. In this chapter, I analyse and interpret the data collected with the aim of making sense of the empirical data (Charmaz, 2000; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The data gathered from the instruments used for the data collection was analysed in line with the research topic and questions. The focus of my study was to investigate teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction and as mother tongue in primary classes in Lagos State, Nigeria. Yoruba is examined as both the mother tongue (because it is the language of the immediate environment spoken in Lagos which is a Yoruba speaking state) and the medium of instruction for learning and teaching other subjects at the lower primary classes in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study looked at the interaction between teachers and learners and learners among themselves.

I used both content and thematic analysis to analyse my data. Content analysis can be defined as a research technique that can be used to understand texts and the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2004). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010) argue that content analysis can be undertaken with any written material, from documents to interview transcriptions. Content analysis involves thematic analysis through coding, categorising and comparing, to draw theoretical conclusions from the text (Eze, 2002). I made use of content analysis for policy documents (Eze, 2002) and thematic analysis for the data gathered through interviews and classroom observations (Creswell, 2007).

Data was collected through interviews, observation, document analysis and field notes. In interviews, I gathered the data related to teachers feelings about teaching in Yoruba. Some responses were negative and some were positive. The positive voices were determined to work against all odds to ensure the survival and use of

the language. The observation was used to corroborate the findings from the interviews. I observed 8 lessons in school A and 14 lessons in school B. The observed lessons were in fulltime class teachers' classrooms. As indicated in the previous chapter I was not able to observe some of the lessons taught in the Head teacher and assistant head teachers classrooms due to their involvement in other administrative matters. Whilst observing lessons I realised that some of the things mentioned in the interviews were not apparent or visible. Some of the teachers mentioned that they were passionate about Yoruba, but their classrooms were tense and unfriendly. These observations therefore contradicted some of the data. Field notes were kept throughout to note some of the messages that came through actions or body language. The interview, observation and field notes used are explained below.

*Interview:* This is the main instrument used to collect the data and it contained 18 questions (see Appendix 7). The questions asked were pertinent to the experiences of teachers on the use of Yoruba as a language of teaching and learning and as a medium of instruction. All 10 teacher participants were interviewed and all of them expressed their views on their experiences using Yoruba as a language of teaching and learning and as a medium of instruction in classes. Some of the teachers in their responses expressed their passion for the Yoruba language as a language of pride (*ohun amu yagan ni*). However, some of the responses of the teachers to the interview questions were found contradictory when I observed the teachers during lessons taught.

*Observation:* The purpose of this instrument was to observe the interaction between the learners and teachers during lessons using Yoruba as a medium of instruction (see Appendix 8). The observation schedule contained 13 questions that were used to guide the observation while in the field. This instrument was used to corroborate what the teachers had said in response to the interview questions, viz. to determine whether their practice reflected what they had said. However, during observation I discovered that what some of the teachers say were contradictory to what was observed. These contradictions are discussed in the data analysis.

*Field notes:* I kept field notes to record observations and reflections of body language displayed during the period of data collection. The field notes helped me

to record activities observed in the schools and this was used to gather more information, which enriched the study.

All the data is presented in an integrated way. Themes are going to be used to present all data simultaneously. However, I will first give an outline of the documents studied, the reason why they were chosen and their key features.

In the next section I explain these methods of analysis and provide the findings of the data analysis.

## 5.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

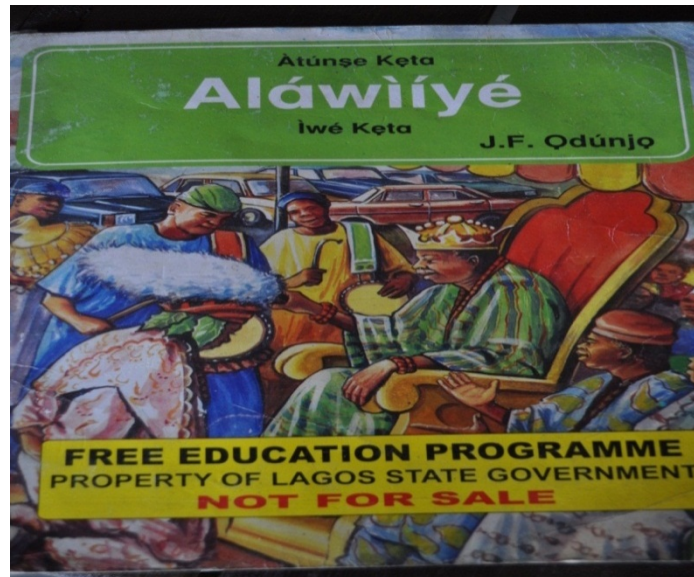
The policy documents were analysed to explain the stipulation of government on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school classes. The three documents analysed include the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), Primary School Curriculum (NERDC, 2007) and textbooks (Odujio, 2001). Table 5.1 describes the documents and their key features with interpretations.

**Table 5.1: Documents and key features with interpretations**

Documents	Key features	Findings
National Policy on Education (2004)	<p>It specifies the guidelines on how education at all levels from Pre-primary to the University should be administered with special reference to the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools.</p> <p>Some of the guidelines relating to primary education include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching shall be by practical, exploratory and experimental methods;</li> <li>• The medium of instruction in primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years.</li> <li>• For effective teaching and learning, the teacher-pupil ratio shall be 1:25</li> </ul>	<p>This policy document promotes the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and as a language of learning and teaching.</p> <p>The mother tongue recognized by the government are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. These are the three major Nigerian indigenous languages officially recognized.</p> <p>For this study. Yoruba was used due to the study location and the values embedded in the Yoruba language were revealed.</p> <p>In each of the schools used for this study, a copy of the policy was provided by the government to serve as guide to teachers.</p>

Documents	Key features	Findings
Primary School Curriculum (Primary 3) 2007	The correct use of the primary school curriculum modules is bound to usher in a new classroom environment. This is so because of its formulation of performance objectives for every aspect of learning to guide teaching and learning, and the generation of learners' learning activities designed to lead to the achievement of the objectives, thereby getting learners actively involved in their education.	<p>It creates a new classroom environment for learners for them to achieve the objectives as stated in the curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives were stated that at the end of the lesson pupils must be able to name the months of the year sequentially in Yoruba; state or identify the cultural significance of each month.</li> <li>• Content/learning activities include the following: pupils must be able to repeat the name of each month in Yoruba after the teacher; write down from the chalkboard the correct names of the months.</li> <li>• Teaching methods used by the teacher included the drilling of pupils on spellings and correct sequence of the months in Yoruba; using question and answer method to make pupils answer to the names of the months of the year.</li> </ul>
<p>Textbooks (2001)</p> <p>a. Reading books</p>	<p>Textbooks are prescribed print materials that are used by the teacher to aid teaching and learning. These include materials in grammar, composition, comprehension and literature.</p> <p>These include story books, poems and proverb textbooks, comprehension and grammar books.</p>	<p>They contain knowledge about Yoruba.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation of words in Yoruba like <i>iwa</i> (attitude), <i>ewa</i> (beauty) <i>ibowo fun omolakeji</i> (respect for others)</li> <li>• Writing an essay on how a holiday was spent.</li> <li>• Reading a passage in the textbook and answer the questions that follow.</li> </ul> <p>It explains the values, traditions, norms and cultures of the Yoruba language.</p> <p>Poem like " Ja itana to tan/ To tutu to si dara/ Maduro dojo ola/ Akoko sure tete" , explain the value of time in human life and that opportunity comes but once so pupils should make hay while the sun shines.</p>





**Photo 5.2:** Yoruba textbook for primary 3 learners (Odunjo, 2001)

Textbooks such as the one depicted in photo 5.2 are written in Yoruba and describe the indigenous way of living of the Yoruba people. Therefore, textbooks could sustain the Yoruba culture.

### 5.2.1 NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) came about as a result of the 1969 National Curriculum Conference (NCC) which was attended by a cross section of Nigerians. It was first published in 1977; the second and third editions were published in 1981 and 1998 respectively. The fourth edition was published in 2004. The policy document stipulates guidelines on how the various levels of education should be administered while emphasising the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction from primary 1 to 3 classes. This document was analysed according to the stipulations which include the following:

- Teaching shall be by practical, exploratory and experimental methods;
- The medium of instruction in primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject;
- From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of the immediate environment (Yoruba) and French shall be taught as subjects;
- For effective teaching and learning, the teacher-pupil ratio shall be 1:25.



For this study, these stipulations are important because Yoruba, which is one of the indigenous languages, is used in teaching and learning in primary 3 classes in Lagos State which is a Yoruba speaking state of Nigeria.

### **5.2.2 PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (PRIMARY 3)**

This document was developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007) as directed by the National Council on Education (NCE). The NCE approved a new curriculum structure namely: Lower Basic Education Curriculum (Primaries 1-3), Middle Basic Education Curriculum (Primaries 4-6) and Upper Basic Education Curriculum (JSS 1-3) with subject listing. Since the curriculum represents the total experience to which all learners must be exposed, the contents, performance objectives, activities for both teachers and learners and an evaluation guide are provided. However, teachers are encouraged to enrich the content with relevant materials and information from their immediate environment, by adapting the curriculum to their needs and aspirations. Teachers in this study can adapt the curriculum to teaching Yoruba as a subject and as a language of learning and teaching while using the cultural values and artefacts in teaching the learners. Hence, the curriculum contains the content or subject matter, objectives, pupils' activities, teaching aids, suggested assessment techniques and time frames relating to Yoruba.

### **5.2.3 TEXTBOOKS**

These are prescribed printed materials used by teachers in teaching and learning in class. They include reading books, learners workbooks and teacher guides.

- Reading books are storybooks, poems and proverbs books, comprehension and grammar books. The storybooks are on hygienic living and importance of education to the child for him/her to become a responsible person.
- Learners' workbooks include work books written in Yoruba language to teach Yoruba lexis and structures. It also includes mathematic workbooks and other subjects written in Yoruba.
- Teacher guides help the teachers to know the content and strategies to be used in class to teach Yoruba and other subjects in Yoruba. It is a step-by-step guide on how to teach proverbs, stories, poems and other aspects.

### 5.3 THEMES

The data was analysed with the research questions in mind. The analyses of the interviews, classroom observations and field notes, provided four broad themes; each theme with its distinct categories. The themes and categories that emerged are summarised in table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Summary of themes and categories**

Themes	Categories
Theme 1: Values embedded in Yoruba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Culture embedded in Yoruba.</li> <li>2. Identity as a Yoruba speaker.</li> <li>3. Citizenship and morals as a Yoruba speaker.</li> </ol>
Theme 2: Enjoyment when teaching Yoruba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Content knowledge of Yoruba.</li> <li>2. Strategies of teaching Yoruba.</li> <li>3. Attitude of teachers towards Yoruba.</li> </ol>
Theme 3: Benefits of Yoruba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learners' empowerment in Yoruba.</li> <li>2. Code switching as an effective strategy.</li> <li>3. Parents collaboration strengthening Yoruba.</li> </ol>
Theme 4: Challenges for Yoruba	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers' fear against the extinction of Yoruba.</li> <li>2. Attitude of government towards the development of Yoruba.</li> <li>3. Dire teaching conditions.</li> </ol>

The next section analyses the themes and relevant categories in the study. The following tables 5.3-5.6 explain each of the themes and the relevant categories while evaluating each category against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were the criteria I employed to examine the data gathered from what the teachers responded during the interview and observation sessions that are relevant to the theme and categories. The exclusion criteria I used were the traits and comments in the data collected that were not relevant to the theme and category.

**Table 5.3: Theme 1: Values embedded in Yoruba**

Categories	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
1.1 Culture embedded in Yoruba	Teachers' and learners' ways of portraying the Yoruba culture and tradition.	Traits that do not relate to the teachers' and learners' expression of culture.
1.2 Identity as a Yoruba speaker	Teachers' comments and my observations on the various ways teachers identify with Yoruba.	Teachers' comments and my observations that do not relate to participants identifying with Yoruba language.
1.3 Citizenship and morals as a Yoruba speaker	Teachers' explanations on how they promote good citizenship and imbedding moral values.	Teachers' explanations that have no relevance to citizenship and moral values.

**Table 5.4: Theme 2: Enjoyment teaching Yoruba**

Categories	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
2.1 Content knowledge of Yoruba	Teachers' knowledge of what to teach and how to teach the Yoruba language and using the language to teach other primary school subjects.	Teachers' knowledge that do not include what the teacher is to teach and how he/she teaches the language.
2.2 Strategies for teaching Yoruba	Methods of teaching the learners in class such as resource person's methods question and answer methods.	Other methods used by the teachers that do not relate to the methods used by the teachers in this study like resource person's methods, question and answer methods.
2.3 Attitude of teachers towards Yoruba	Attitudes of teachers towards the teaching of Yoruba and how passionate they were when teaching.	Attitudes of teachers that did not show passion for teaching Yoruba.

**Table 5.5: Theme 3: Benefits of Yoruba**

Categories	Inclusion	Exclusion
3.1 Learners' empowerment in Yoruba	Benefits of using Yoruba as a language of instruction politically, economically and socially thus empowering the learners	Exclusion of benefits that do not relate to the use of Yoruba as a language of instruction for learners' empowerment.
3.2 Code switching as an effective strategy	Teachers' comments on roles played by parents in imparting the societal norms and moral into the children through the use of Yoruba as a language of instruction.	Teachers' comments on roles played by parents that do not include the imparting of societal norms and mores into the children through the use of Yoruba as a language of instruction.

Categories	Inclusion	Exclusion
3.3 Parent collaboration strengthening Yoruba	Teachers' comment on role of parents and the implications of speaking and learning Yoruba at home to the benefit of the learners and the society at large	Teachers' comment on role of parents which does not include the implications of speaking and learning Yoruba.

**Table 5.6: Theme 4: Challenges for Yoruba**

Categories	Inclusion	Exclusion
4.1 Teachers' fear against the extinction of Yoruba	Teachers' fears of Yoruba going into extinction, presence of under aged learners in class; lack of language of learning and teaching in classroom.	Teachers' fear that do not include Yoruba language going into extinction; discussion that do not include issues pertaining to under aged learners; discussion excluding issues on language of learning and teaching.
4.2 Attitude of government towards the development of Yoruba	Government's attitude towards the implementation of the policy document statements.	Discussion not related to attitude of government towards the implementation of the policy statements.
4.3 Dire teaching conditions	Classrooms situation regarding in-service training, lack of resources, meagre salaries; dilapidated buildings; lack of toilet facilities.	Issues not relating to classroom situation like in-service training, lack of resources, meagre salaries, dilapidated buildings, lack of toilet facilities.

### 5.3.1 THEME 1: VALUES EMBEDDED IN YORUBA

Values include the norms and traditions of a particular society which are expressed through the culture of the people in that community or society (Geertz, 1984). They also manifest in the way and manner people identify with the traditions within the society (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997). This theme discusses the values teachers attach to the teaching of Yoruba in the classroom, which are reflected in the way they teach. It also emerged when these values are transmitted to learners through a language such as Yoruba. It reveals the ways learners internalise the culture and traditions transmitted to them by the teachers. In this theme, I dealt with different ways in which the values are expressed relating to Yoruba. They are culture, identity and citizenship. In many instances, the data is integrated but I have attempted to deal with each in a separate category.

### 5.3.1.1 Culture embedded in Yoruba

The teacher respondents (Jide SchA, Bimpe SchB, Bimbo SchB and Titi SchB) said that teaching and learning Yoruba will provide learners the right to study their culture which will lead to preservation of family ties and eradication of cultural conflicts between people within a society. The cultural values mentioned by the teachers above include mode of greetings in Yoruba which are their expressions of pride for Yoruba and the use of Yoruba to transfer morals. The greetings explain the way a young girl can greet her elders and also the way a boy can greet the elders. When I observed teacher Jide SchA, teacher Bimpe SchB, teacher Bimbo SchB and teacher Titi SchB during teaching, they practicalised this mode of greeting. As a man or boy in a Yoruba setting, Teacher Jide SchA said that when he wants to greet the elders, he must prostrate and wait for the elders response to acknowledge the greeting before he stands up. I observed this while teaching was going on. Teacher Bimpe SchB, Bimbo SchB and Titi SchB also taught the girls how to greet by kneeling down with their two legs to say ekaro (good morning), ekasan (good afternoon), ekurole (good evening) (Observation of school A; 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012; primary 3 class and school B; 13<sup>th</sup> July 2012; primary 3 class). Emphasising different modes of greetings in Yoruba was a sign of showing the importance of the language and its place in their everyday lives.

Teacher Kemi SchB mentioned that:

*It is a language of pride (ohun amu yagan ni Yoruba) and I attach so much importance to it.* (Interview schedule, 13 July 2012; primary 3 class)

Teacher Gbenga SchA responded to the importance of culture in Yoruba by saying:

*I attach great value to the teaching of Yoruba even outside the class. During morning devotions in school, I pray in Yoruba language and also ask some learners to pray sometimes to get them accustomed to the use of the language. It is a language of pride.* (Interview schedule, 12 July 2012; primary 3 class)

Teacher Jide SchA said:

*These values are very important in shaping the orientation of learners towards living a better life. When I teach Bible Knowledge using Yoruba as a language of instruction for example, I tried to let the learners know the importance of the moral values embedded in it which they ought to emulate. (Interview schedule, 12 July 2012; primary 3 class)*

Teacher Kemi SchB in support of the sentiments above said:

*These values will assist in moulding the character of learners and develop sound attitude and morals in them. These values must reflect in the way they dress, address elders when talking and also when they greet. (Interview schedule, 13 July 2012; primary 3 class)*

Learners outside the classrooms tried to imitate among themselves how the teachers in the classroom during teaching taught them how to imbibe the culture and traditions in Yoruba (Observation: field notes school A, 12 July 2012). I observed that one learner (boy) was standing and the other learners queued up behind one another to prostrate in front of the one standing greeting him one after the other saying good afternoon sir in Yoruba (ekasan oluko).

Through observation (13 July 2012), I gathered that teachers used the way they dressed in the Yoruba traditional attires to transmit the cultural values to learners. While comparing the traditional way of dressing with the modern way, teachers Bimbo and Titi in school B (Agege) taught learners the values embedded in the traditional way of dressing. The modern way of dressing sometimes exposes some parts of the body that are supposed to be covered; but the traditional dresses cover all of these essential parts of the body. The teachers (Bimbo SchB and Titi SchB) explained to learners that exposing the body can be unhealthy because one can catch pneumonia and get sick so it is always better to dress decently. Dressing in a responsible manner is part of the Yoruba culture (Bimbo SchB and Titi SchB).

Two samples of the mode of dress by teachers depicting the Yoruba culture are displayed in photos 5.3 and 5.4.



**Photo 5.3: Male teacher's mode of dress**

This mode of male dress is peculiar to the Yoruba speaking population in Nigeria who can be found in the South West Geo-political region. It can also be found in the Republic of Benin, Ghana and Togo. The attire is called 'ankara' consisting of the upper material called 'buba' and the lower material called 'sokoto'.



**Photo 5.4 Female teacher's mode of dress**

This mode of female dressing is peculiar to the Yoruba speaking population in Nigeria in the Southwest geopolitical region. This mode of dress can also be found amongst the people living in Togo, Benin and Ghana. The attire is called 'Ankara' and the upper material is called 'buba' and the lower material is called 'iro'.

Yoruba is rich in culture and tradition which the teachers displayed through their modes of dress (Bimbo SchB and Titi SchB). On the day I observed (13 July 2012), the classroom teacher Bimbo SchB was wearing Yoruba attire. She asked learners to say what they knew and could observe about the attire. Her lesson started with the elevation of values/culture in Yoruba before content teaching. Teacher Bimbo used her dress to teach the learners about the Yoruba traditional attire and the moral and societal values attached to it. She used herself as an example of morals in class. The way and manner of dress in Yoruba land depicts how responsible you are as a man or woman. The photos above are examples of the Yoruba mode of dress in Nigeria. In my field notes I observed that teacher Bimbo really loved the way she was dressed in the Yoruba attire as she was free to move around in the class freely and closely to the learners for them to have a closer look at the dress. The next category to be discussed is the teachers' identity as Yoruba speakers.

The prescribed books and the curricula highlighted the importance of the culture and values of Yoruba. In particular, the prescribed book for social studies emphasises citizenship education, humility and honesty. These aspects were intertwined with the teaching of other subjects. This showed that the teachers were living the culture and values of Yoruba.

### **5.3.1.2 Identity as a Yoruba speaker**

Erikson (1968) describes identity as the result from a dynamic interplay between individual and context. He mentions that this interplay is a universal phenomenon, but he also argues that the historical actuality of the wider cultural context sets parameters that individuals can count on during the process of identity development. During the interview with the respondents, teacher Dupe SchB, Bayo SchA, Titi SchB and Bimbo SchB identified with Yoruba in different ways such as being proud to identify themselves as Yoruba people through the traditional tribal marks (Bayo SchA) and the mode of dress and hairdo (Bimbo SchB). The teacher guide and textbooks were documentary evidences used by the teachers to support their claim of identifying with Yoruba during lessons.

Teacher Dupe SchB (Agege) responded that:



*These values will assist learners to understand their roots as Africans and make them to be proud and identify with their cultural backgrounds.* (Interview schedule, 17 July 2012)

Teacher Bayo SchA (Badagry) while responding to the interview question on the values he attached to teaching Yoruba, he said:

*I am a Yoruba man with the tribal marks on my chick as an identity. I am very passionate and emotional about keeping the values alive especially teaching the learners these values which they must imbibe.* (Interview schedule, 16 July 2012)

Teacher Titi SchB (Agege) expressing her own mind on the values attached to the teaching of Yoruba said:

*It is a language of pride and I attach so much importance to it. I identify myself with Yoruba culture and tradition with the way I dress most of the time. I put on my “buba and iro” (native dress).* (Interview schedule, 17 July 2012)

Indeed on this day, teacher Titi SchB had put on her Yoruba attire. Most of the days when I visited the school, she was always in her Yoruba attire. She maintained that being passionate about the language starts first with the identification towards the people and their culture.

Teacher Bimbo SchB while responding to the interview question on the value attached to teaching Yoruba said:

*It is a language of pride and I attach so much importance to it. I identify myself with Yoruba culture and tradition with the way I dress most of the time and also the way I make my hair. I don't go to the saloon to do attachment to my hair, I do my hair in the traditional way. Like the hairdo am having on, it is called “ipako eledé”.* (Interview schedule, 17 July 2012)

During observation and field notes (school A and B; 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012), I confirmed that some of the teachers were dressed in Yoruba traditional attire and use this mode of dress to teach the Yoruba identity to the learner. This is in conformity with their response to the interview question on the values teachers attached to teaching Yoruba in class. I observed that the teachers were mostly dressed in their traditional attire mostly on Fridays. This is shown in photos 5.3 & 5.4 above.

In doing this, teachers (all) believed that the love for Yoruba started with identification. Identity and pride in being a Yoruba is closely related to citizenry. Pictures of Yoruba in the class were a testimony that indeed pride in being a Yoruba was paramount in how they valued the language. The learners' workbook was used to teach learners identification with the customs and traditions of Yoruba. During the teaching of some concepts in mathematics like additions and subtractions, the traditional game 'opon ayo' was used in the class. Values like tolerance and respect for other people were part of the values embedded in the playing of the traditional game 'ayo' apart from other cognitive development. The next category to be discussed is therefore citizenship and morals as a Yoruba speaker.

### **5.3.1.3 Citizenship and morals as a Yoruba speaker**

Osler (2005) described citizenship education as essentially being about belonging, about feeling secure and being in a position to exercise one's rights and responsibilities. Citizenship education is essential for the maintenance and enhancement of the required skills, knowledge, understanding and the values needed in a democratic structure of civil society (Pring, 2001; Joubert, 2007).

Teacher participants said that inculcating good citizenship education helps to prepare learners to be responsible and patriotic members of the society. These are explained by the teachers' comments.

Teacher Bisi SchA (Badagry) said:

*These values will assist learners in inculcating good citizenship education as a basis for effective participation and contribution to the life of the society among other values stated in the policy document. (Interview schedule, 18 July 2012)*

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) commented:

*The richness in culture of Yoruba language can make the learners to be responsible citizens in future. Citizens, who are honest, patriotic, show respect for law and order, will contribute meaningfully to the development of a nation. (Interview schedule, 18 July 2012)*

I observed (18 and 19 July 2012) that citizenship education was taught effectively in the subject Social Studies using Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching in class. For example, the teacher explained to learners the values embedded in citizenship education. This was done through a story of a man who was patriotic and honest. He was very dedicated to his work and he paid his tax dutifully. After serving the government honestly and diligently he retired and was highly honoured with gifts and encomium. Yoruba as a language of instruction helps to increase learners' cognitive comprehension of the subject matter (Cummins, 2000). Using Yoruba to teach other subjects like Social Studies helps learners to inculcate the habit of good citizenship because they will understand better their rights and privileges within the society. In particular becoming aware of these rights at that tender age might make them become good and responsible citizens in future (Cummins, 2000).

#### **5.4.2 THEME 2: ENJOYMENT WHEN TEACHING YORUBA**

This theme discusses the way and manner teacher participants enjoyed teaching Yoruba in primary 3 classes. Teachers lauded the importance of enjoying teaching Yoruba but on condition that content knowledge is known. The theme is divided into three categories namely: content knowledge of Yoruba; strategies for teaching Yoruba and attitude of teachers towards Yoruba.

#### 5.4.2.1 Content knowledge of Yoruba

Scholars mention that teachers and learners can use funds of knowledge to engage in critical pedagogy based on learners' resources rather than on their deficits (Gonzalez & Amanti, 1992; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Moll *et al.*, 1992; Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). New (1999) argues that a meaningful curriculum should emphasise the relationship between goals for learners, societal expectations and teachers' knowledge. Teachers need to find ways to identify the themes of learners' interest and curiosity in their families, to build a meaningful and relevant curriculum which will develop culturally valued and conceptual knowledge (Hedges, 2007).

The teachers used in the study agreed that they needed to impart the knowledge and values embedded in Yoruba into learners and also when they taught other subjects in Yoruba. This is expressed by teacher Jide SchA, teacher Gbenga SchA and teacher Gbemi SchB.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) commented:

*When I teach Bible Knowledge using Yoruba as a language of instruction for example, I tried to let the learners know the importance of the moral values embedded in it which they ought to emulate. (Interview, 20 July 2012)*

Teacher Gbenga SchA (Badagry) described her experience thus:

*My experience as a teacher can be described as interesting, stressful and documentary. I do attend seminars whenever I am selected by the authorities. Attendance at such seminars helps in updating teachers on the current pedagogy used in teaching. (Interview, 20 July 2012)*

Teacher Gbemi SchB (Agege) also expressed her mind thus:

*Whenever I teach, I enjoy teaching Yoruba because it gives me joy and opportunity to share my knowledge and experience acquired over time with the learners. (Interview, 23 July 2012)*

During my interviews (20 and 23 July 2012) with the participating teachers, I realised that the current pedagogy in teaching is essential if effective teaching and learning is to be achieved. Knowing the content and passing it across to learners is the responsibility of the teacher in the classroom.

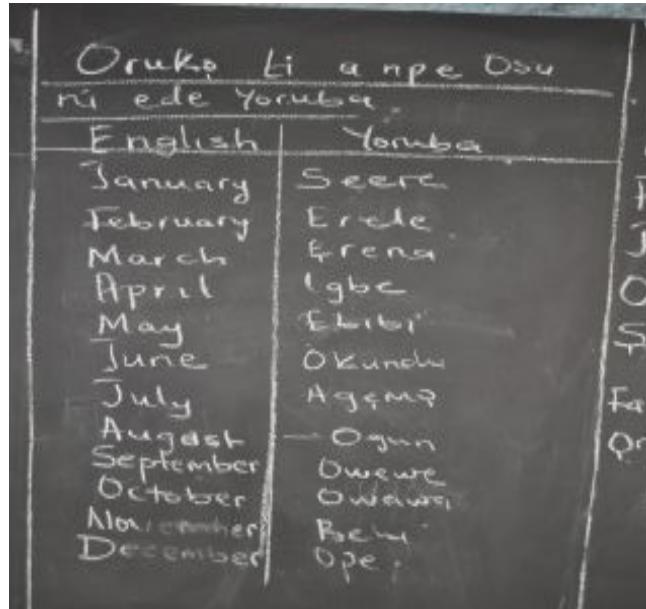
During observation (20 and 23 July 2012), I noticed that some of the teachers were knowledgeable about the content of the Yoruba language and other subjects due to the way they taught learners. The teacher guide that contained the step-by-step guide on how to how to teach poems, proverbs and stories in Yoruba was used during the lessons. However, in school B (Agege) teacher Dupe (observation, 23 July 2012) found it difficult to teach learners effectively and make them understand, despite the fact that she was knowledgeable about the subject matter. She had a problem in coping with the multilingual nature of the class and was very restless and impatient with learners.

My observation about the teacher's restlessness and impatient attitude was corroborated by the comments made by some of the learners outside the class about teacher Dupe SchB (field notes, 23 July 2012). Some of the learners tried to imitate the way and manner teacher Dupe SchB behaved in the class during lesson. The learners would arrange themselves into groups with one learner acting as the teacher while others acted as learners. They even described teacher Dupe SchB as being wicked and hard on them due to her impatient attitude. This was contrary to what the teacher said about her passion for the language as a good medium for teaching and learning the values of the Yoruba in class.

The above category revealed that teachers' knowledge of the subject matter assisted in making learning and teaching valuable and interesting. The knowledge acquired by the teachers from the cultural backgrounds and their professional and academic achievement helps to form their funds of knowledge. However, sometimes the teachers found it difficult to impart content knowledge to learners. The multilingual nature of the class could be a hindrance in teaching Yoruba.

Photographs 5.5 to 5.8 explain the teachers' display of the content matter by using the chalk board to teach the learners about the various names attached to the twelve months of the year (photo 5.5) and the Yoruba vowels (photo 5.6). This is an

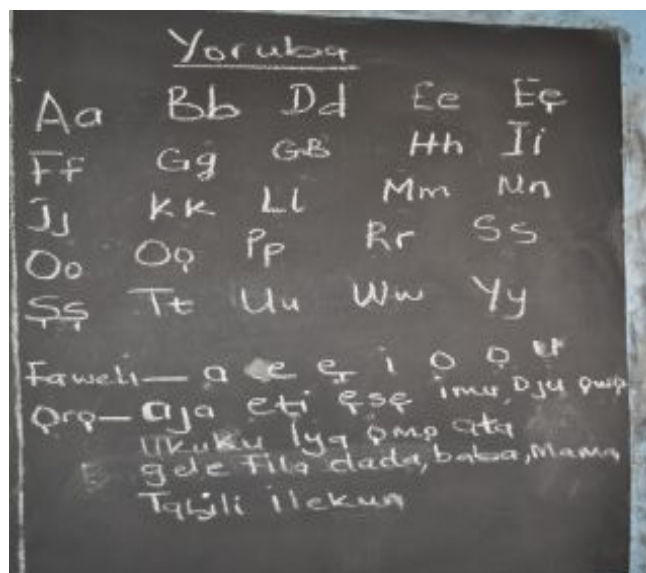
indication that content knowledge is not only verbally transmitted; pictures and photographs are used for incidental learning. The diagram in photo 5.5 explains the 12 months both in Yoruba and English to be able to help learners from different ethnic groups understand better. January is 'seere' and February is 'erele'.



Oruko Li a npe Oso ni ede Yoruba	
English	Yoruba
January	Seere
February	Erele
March	Erena
April	Igbe
May	Ehibi
June	Okundun
July	Agemo
August	Ogun
September	Owele
October	Owewe
November	Belu
December	Ope

**Photo 5.5: The names of the 12 months in Yoruba and English**

Photo 5.6 explains the Yoruba alphabets in Yoruba dividing it into consonants (Konsonati) and Vowels (Faweeli). This will help learners to identify the differences in the alphabets when comparing them with the English alphabet.



Yoruba

Aa	Bb	Dd	Ee	Ee
Ff	Gg	Gb	Hh	Ii
Jj	kk	Ll	Mm	Nn
Oo	Oo	Pp	Rr	Ss
Ss	Tt	Uu	Ww	Yy

Faweeli — a e e i o o u

Qq — aja eti ese imu, Dje pup

ukuku Iya pup ata

gole fila dada, baba, Mama

Tajili ilekun

**Photo 5.6: The Yoruba alphabets and vowels**



**Photo 5.7: The instructional materials improvised by teachers (Ilu ati Sekere)**



**Photo 5.8: Pictures of different domestic animals**

Photos 5.7 and 5.8 show the instructional materials used by teachers in the study. Photo 5.7 contains the traditional drums used to teach in class. The importance of the drums in the traditional Yoruba setting was explained by the teacher during lessons. According to teacher Jide SchA Badagry drums can be used during traditional marriages to provide music for the entertainment of guests; They can also be used to gather people together in a community for an important meeting. Photo 5.8 shows the various domestic animals and their names. Teacher Titi SchB code switched to explain the names of each animal in both Yoruba and English. The English names are predominantly used both inside and outside the classroom.



**Photo 5.9: The sign of the cross used in Bible Knowledge teaching**

Photo 5.9 was used by teacher Bimbo SchB when teaching Bible knowledge to learner on the topic “crucifixion of Christ and lessons to learn”. The humility of Christ was discussed by teacher Bimbo SchB right from when Christ was arrested until he was crucified. The humility was the value which teacher Bimbo taught the learners. Learners seemed to understand the concept of humility especially as this was used together with examples of humility coming from their environment. Pride and arrogance according to the teacher are two concepts negative to the progress of any human being, it is referred to as “igberaga”. No matter how highly placed you are in life, always relate well with other people. A good example was seen in the way and manner the head teacher interacted and related with other teachers as noted in my observation which were recorded on my field notes.

#### 5.4.2.2 Strategies for teaching Yoruba

Some of the strategies used by the teachers to teach Yoruba as revealed in this study included song, proverbs, rhymes, poems and dance. This was supported by the literature which explains that values can be transmitted to the child through oral tradition, proverbs, songs, rhymes, poems, dance and stories (Adeosun, 2008). In the next section I elaborated on teachers’ strategies used for teaching Yoruba by outlining teachers’ expressions when interviewed on their strategies and examples of these strategies observed.

The comments of teachers Jide SchA, Bisi SchA, Kemi SchB, Gbemi SchB and Dupe SchB are outlined as follow.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) explained that:

*Values are transmitted through proverbs, idioms stories and dramatic play. I realized that learners learn well when they are involved so most of the time I teach using dramatization and storytelling to transmit the values to learners. (Interview, 24July 2012)*

Buttressing teacher Jide SchA comment above, teacher Bisi SchA (Badagry) said:

*Values are transmitted through proverbs, idioms stories and dramatic plays. I use “alo apamo” which are riddles in Yoruba to*



*teach and evaluate learners' cognitive knowledge and cultural awareness. For example "oruku tindi tindi, oruku tindi tindi, oruku bi igba omo gbogbo won lo le tiro? Kino oo. This example of idiom teaches a lot of values and concepts in subjects like Elementary Science and Mathematics. (Interview, 24 July 2012)*

Teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) in talking about strategies she uses for teaching songs and rhymes to learners said:

*I transmit the values in Yoruba through songs and rhymes. Once in a while with the permission of the head teacher and the secretary to the Local Government Education Authority, I invite resource persons to speak to learners on the importance of Yoruba as a language of instruction and the values embedded in it. Yoruba songs connote much information about Yoruba cultural values and traditions. (Interview, 25 July 2012)*

Teacher Gbemi SchB (Agege) also supported the use of songs and rhymes as a strategies to be used in teaching Yoruba in class:

*I transmit the values in Yoruba through songs, dance, stories and rhymes. Yoruba stories connote much information about Yoruba culture and traditions. The school organizes excursion to historical places like Osun Osogbo shrine in Osun State of Nigeria to make the learners get familiar with the Yoruba cultural norms and traditions. (Interview, 25 July 2012)*

Teacher Dupe SchB (Agege) explained that:

*I transmit the values in Yoruba through songs, dance, stories and rhymes. At the end of the session I organize cultural dance for the learners to teach the various traditional dresses in Yoruba land and also the various traditional dances available. Yoruba songs and dance connote much information about Yoruba culture and traditions. (Interview, 25 July 2012)*

I observed (SchA and SchB, 24 and 25 July respectively) that the teachers made good use of the chalkboard during teaching while using the question and answer methods of teaching learners. I was invited to witness the resource person's lecture organised and coordinated by teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) and observed that it was fulfilling, the learners participated well by asking questions while the resource person responded. The resource person was a lecturer in a university in Nigeria who has been teaching Yoruba as a course for many years in the university. He used songs, proverbs, stories and film show on documentary program on Yoruba culture and tradition to educate learners on the values embedded in the Yoruba culture and tradition.

I noted (field notes, SchB, 25 July 2012) learners' comments about the excursion to Osun Osogbo shrine describing the experience from different perspectives which led to arguments among them. This however was not part of my study. Some learners commented in support of the excursion to such historical places in the nearest future for them to know more about the Yoruba culture and traditions while some other learners did not like the experience on religious grounds. A particular learner mentioned that her parents are Christians and were against going with other learners on an excursion to Osun Osogbo "shrine". To her parents it is a sin and that Almighty God forbids Christians to worship idols in shrines. This was the comment of the learner based on her parents' opinion on religious grounds however, excursion to the learners was a good experience because it afforded them the opportunity to have a first-hand information and real experience of what the teacher has taught in class.

This explains that not all parents however are accepting the Yoruba traditions, values and norms. Listening to the comments of the learners suggests that it is not easy to teach the language and culture to all learners. The background learners come from might make it impossible to realize the aims of teaching as expounded in the curriculum document.

Listening and watching these young learners arguing was very interesting and it has gone beyond the transmitting and imbibing the norms and traditions of the Yoruba culture. The learners brought religion into the discussion which made it more interesting but collectively, all the learners involved in the discussion agreed that the

experience was a worthwhile venture and would love to go for more of such excursions in the nearest future.

### 5.4.2.3 Attitude of teachers towards Yoruba

Horenczyk and Tatar (2002) opined that teachers' attitude towards culturally multi linguistic class population do not exist in isolation; rather, it tends to reflect and be affected by the values of the larger society and the school setting in which the interaction take place. Teacher participants in the study argued that when teachers internalise societal traditions and norms, they bring them directly into their classes, thus creating classroom norms that reflect the values of the larger society.

In the next section, teacher participants interviewed commented in different ways on how they value their teaching of Yoruba language.

Teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) expressed her opinion that:

*It is a language of pride (ohun amu yagan ni Yoruba) and I attach so much importance to it. (Interview, 25 July 2012)*

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) expressed his passion towards Yoruba thus:

*Yoruba is rich in culture and tradition. It is a language that must be accorded respect at all times so I have passion for it. (Interview, 24 July 2012)*

Teacher Bisi SchA (Badagry) expressed mixed feelings toward teaching Yoruba said:

*My experience can be described as both interesting and frustrating. But I give God the glory and I am happy to be in this profession... (Interview, 24 July 2012)*

Teacher Bayo SchA (Badagry) said:

*Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching in class is a veritable medium to promote our cultural background. I enjoyed teaching Yoruba language because of its richness in culture and tradition*

*especially when I teach “orisirisi asa ni ile Yoruba” meaning teaching different traditions and customs in Yoruba land.* (Interview, 24 July 2012)

I observed (18, 20 and 24 July 2012) that teachers (Kemi SchB, Jide SchA, Bisi SchA, Bayo SchA) were passionate about teaching the Yoruba language from the way they teach Yoruba and other subjects in class. I heard passion in their voices and the manner in which the integrated subjects were taught in Yoruba in class. Teachers' passion for teaching Yoruba and other subjects brought out their attitude towards the language and other subjects. However my observation in class revealed that not all the teachers were passionate about the teaching of Yoruba. Teacher Bisi SchA expressed mixed feelings towards the teaching of Yoruba. Bisi SchA, despite being passionate about the language, also had her doubts about the language going into extinction.

### **5.5.3 THEME 3: BENEFITS OF YORUBA**

Teachers Jide SchA, Bisi SchA and Gbenga SchA, while extolling the benefits of mother tongue to the learners, said that if learners are encouraged to develop curiosity, initiative, manipulative ability and coordination of the hand and eye right from the beginning, they should acquire these skills through their mother tongue (Yoruba) which is regarded as the natural learning medium. The benefits of teaching and learning in mother tongue have been researched by many scholars (Cummins 2000; Kosonen, 2005; Benson, 2002; Ball 2010; Fafunwa, 1982). The benefits of teaching in Yoruba language in school was discussed in this section. The teachers expressed their thoughts on the benefits that accrue to the learners in future.

#### **5.5.3.1 Learners' empowerment**

Empowerment is referred to as the transfer of cultural, political, economic and social power from one person or persons to another (Darder, 2002; Freire, 1997; Wasserman, 1991). Here, the teachers transfer their own knowledge which they have acquired overtime to learners to empower them for future tasks ahead. The National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) while outlining the goals of primary education in Section 4 (18), c, d ,e, f and g, that primary education should be able:

“to prepare the learners towards citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society; mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child; develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child’s changing environment; give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child’s capacity; provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation trades and crafts of the locality”.

These are the values which learners are to imbibe after going through the primary education system in Nigeria so that at the end the benefits will be for learners and the society at large.

The comments of the teachers on the benefits of teaching Yoruba are outlined below against the guidelines of the policy document stipulation.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) said:

*Yoruba language is rich in cultural, economic, political and social values. All these will benefit learners in future. (Interview, 26 July 2012)*

Teacher Bisi SchA (Badagry) while responding to the interview question on the high lights of teaching Yoruba said:

*It also serves as a good platform for learning English. (26 July 2012)*

Here, the teacher mentioned the importance of Yoruba as a spring board when learning a second language.

Teacher Gbenga SchA (Badagry) expressing his own opinion argued that:

*These values will assist in moulding the character of learners and develop sound attitude and morals in them. (Interview 26 July 2012)*

During observation (SchA, 26 July 2012) I gathered that learners benefit from the values learnt from the language. This reflected in the way they dress to school in clean and neat uniforms, shoes, neatly plated hair do, and the way they relate within

the class and outside the class. It also reflected in the way they greet the teachers with respect and courtesy. I observed also those learners especially those from other ethnic backgrounds trying to speak the Yoruba among themselves.

### **5.5.3.2 Code switching as an effective strategy**

Hymes (1974) defines code-switching as “a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles” while Bokamba (1989) defines the concepts as the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event. Code-mixing can be defined as the embedding of various linguistic units such as bounded morphemes and unbounded morphemes, phrases and clauses from a co-operative activity where the participants must reconcile what they hear with what they understand.

Code switching is both beneficial and challenge in this study but in this section, I am going to outline teachers’ explanations on the benefits of code switching as a veritable strategy in class. The challenges of code switching will be discussed in theme 4.

The teachers interviewed expressed their minds on the importance of code switching in class in order to achieve meaningful teaching and learning. They agreed that they code switched due to the multilingual nature of the class so that all learners will be involved and learning and teaching will be meaningful and interesting. However, I found that it was not only learners coming from a background other than Yoruba who benefitted; Yoruba children too benefitted from code switching as some Yoruba words are not used as frequently as they used to be.

Teachers Jide SchA (Badagry) commented on code switching in class thus:

*I have to code switch if the learners are to comprehend what I am teaching. Some of the learners are not from the Yoruba tribe; we have learners that are foreigners attending the school so there is need to teach both in English and Yoruba. (4 October 2011)*

Teacher Titi SchB (Agege) while expressing her mind on the multi linguistic nature of the community in which the school is located said:

*The multi linguistic nature of Agege does not permit us to teach only in Yoruba language so I must code switch (5 October 2011)*

Teacher Bimbo SchB (Agege) described her experience in class thus:

*I use my discretion to teach in class. Agege is home to many ethnic groups like the Ijaws, Hausas, Igbos, Efiks and many people from neighbouring countries. I must code switch if I have to be effective as a teacher in class. (5 October 2011)*

Teacher Bayo SchA (Badagry):

*Code switching is essential while teaching in this part of the world due to the ethnic backgrounds of the learners. In order to achieve effective teaching and learning, a good teacher must use both Yoruba and English to teach. The diversity in the class makes the class interesting. (4 October 2011)*

While the teaching was going on, I observed (SchB, 5 October 2011) that learners were able to see differences and similarities in what was written especially in words which have the same spellings but connote different meanings. For example, words like, “ayo” (name of a person), “ayo” (joy), “ayo” (favourite). This was possible due to code switching strategy used by the teachers.

My field notes (SchA, Badagry, 5 October 2011) corroborates my observation. The learners from other ethnic backgrounds were fully integrated in the teaching and learning in class and the impact was felt by learners. This was done despite code switching not being given prominence as an alternative method of teaching by the state.

### **5.5.3.3 Parents' collaboration strengthening Yoruba**

Parents are the first 'teachers' the children come into contact with at home and they teach them the culture, norms and traditions, moral values existing within a

particular society (Cummins, 2006). The teachers interviewed for the study mentioned the important role parents play in the teaching of the child on moral values embedded in Yoruba language. They said that parents are the custodians of language and culture and therefore it is their rights to train them accordingly. They felt that children should come to school proficient in speaking Yoruba. Their duty as teachers is to teach the language structure to learners.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) said:

*The duty of teaching and training the child primarily lies with parents since the family is the first point of contact for the child. The child should have been well grounded in Yoruba language and other cultural norms and traditions, upon which the teacher can build.* (18 July 2012)

Teacher Bisi SchA (Badagry) while corroborating what teacher Jide SchA said regarding the roles of parents in teaching the child values embedded in Yoruba commented that:

*Parents have a major role to play in the moral and cognitive development of the child. They are supposed to tutor the child right from birth till he or she starts schooling. The language used in communication at home must be Yoruba if learners are to comprehend well in class.* (18 July 2012)

On his part, teacher Bayo SchA (Badagry) opined that:

*The essence of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) is to allow contributions from parents in the education of their wards and keep themselves abreast of the academic achievements.* (18 July 2012)

I attended one of the PTA meetings to observe the proceedings although this was not part of the research. I gathered that the language used to address the parents was English but during the course of the meeting some parents expressed their displeasure towards the teachers for excluding them from the discussion by addressing them in English. They stood up to speak in Yoruba and insisted that they



would work out of the meeting if all what they have said is not interpreted into Yoruba. This led to the use of both English and Yoruba. It was very interesting to watch. Some parents wanted Yoruba to be used in public meeting; however, some are contented to be addressed in English. The attitude by parents is bound to reflect on their children's learning and disposition towards the language.

Parents seemed to be adamant on the use of Yoruba as a medium of communication for them to understand the issues affecting their children in school so as to know how to deal with such problems from home.

#### **5.6.4 THEME 4: CHALLENGES FOR YORUBA**

Teachers, despite a positive outlook towards Yoruba are however challenged in how it should be taught.

##### **5.6.4.1 Teachers' fear against the extinction of Yoruba**

The teacher is a major role player in the educational sector because he holds the key to the door of success hence the need for highly qualified teachers to be employed by the government. The shortage of teachers in the primary school system particularly indigenous language teachers in Nigeria calls for concern. The school chosen for the study in Badagry has only one primary 3 teacher to teach 72 pupils. This is contrary to the policy recommendation of ratio 1:25 of teacher to learners. All the respondents interviewed in the school complained that government should employ more teachers to teach in the school. The shortage of teachers made the head teacher and the two assistants to also teach everyday as if they were classroom teachers.

Teacher Bayo SchA (Badagry) stated:

*I love teaching Yoruba but the shortage of teachers makes me to be overworked, I am not supposed to teach due to my position as an assistant head teacher but I have to be involved.* (Interview, 20 July 2012)

Teacher Gbenga SchA (Badagry) also added his own voice by saying that:

*The major challenge facing us as teachers in this school is that we lack personnel. We are only ten teachers so we need more teachers to assist in teaching. Availability of Yoruba teachers is essential to be able to teach the learners. (20 July 2012)*

Some of the teachers (Kemi SchB and Bimbo SchB) interviewed complained of under aged learners in class, attitude of some teachers towards the use of Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching and fear of Yoruba language going into extinction.

Teacher Kemi SchB chosen for the study when asked about the challenges facing teachers in school she stated that:

*The first problem I am facing as a classroom teacher is that of under aged situation of the learners... (23 July 2012)*

Still commenting on the challenges facing her as a teacher in class, teacher Kemi SchB said:

*The Yoruba language is dying despite its richness in culture and traditions. Some teachers do not believe in the use of Yoruba as language of learning and teaching. (23 July 2012)*

Teacher Bimbo SchB (Agege) commented on Yoruba going into extinction:

*My concern is the way and manner Yoruba is going into extinction. The children don't speak the language fluently because it has been replaced with English. (23 July 2012)*

I observed (SchA and SchB; 20 and 23 July 2012) that the code switching strategy used by the teacher has its positive and negative effects on learners. The negative effect is that learners could not speak both languages (Yoruba and English) fluently. This attitude might affect the children's attitude towards Yoruba. The parents not collaborating with teachers might affect the teaching of Yoruba negatively. Simple Yoruba terminologies might seem far-fetched for children and might make the understanding of the language difficult.

In my field note I noted that learners commenting among themselves said that their parents forbade them to speak vernacular at home. They only communicate with their parents in English. This corroborates the interview comment gathered from teachers on Yoruba language going into extinction. On the enrolment of underaged pupils in schools, I noted that this problem can be tackled if the government officials in charge of monitoring and supervision of schools do their jobs effectively. They need to closely monitor the enrolment exercise in the schools to prevent underage pupils from enrolment into schools.

#### **5.6.4.2 Attitude of government towards the development of Yoruba**

The Nigerian government paying lip service to primary education by not providing resources necessary for teaching the language (Afolayan 1999). The government stipulated the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in lower primary classes (FRN, 2004) but does not monitor its implementation. Secondly, copies of the policy statements are not available to teachers to read and digest the contents in order for them to understand the teaching and learning procedures in classrooms. Some of the teachers like Jide in SchA badagry, Bayo in SchA Badagry, Kemi and Bimbo in SchB Agege commented that only one copy is made available in schools for many teachers to share.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) stated that:

*The policy document needs to be provided to all teachers so that we can be well informed on the stipulation. As at now, there is only one copy available in the school. (11 October 2011)*

Teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) also stated that:

*The school cannot help in this situation due to the reality on ground. The policy document is not available to us to get familiar with. (12 October 2011)*

I confirmed through observation (SchA and SchB; 11 and 12 October 2011) that one copy of the policy document was available for teachers in school and it was kept in the head teacher's office. The copy was very old and some pages missing.

For teachers to be well informed about the stipulations in the policy document, the Nigerian government need to provide more copies of the documents for teachers to use in teaching and learning of Yoruba in class. This was highlighted in the comments of the teachers used in this study but despite all odds, teachers were able to use the few copies to teach effectively in class. The copies were used in turns after one another without any wrangling.

#### 5.6.4.3 Dire teaching conditions

The dire teaching condition in Nigerian primary school classrooms has an effect on teaching and learning in class. Teacher Jide SchA handles 72 learners in a class whereas if the classrooms are many, the learners would be spread on a ratio of 1 teacher to 25 learners (1:25) as stipulated by the policy. The same thing also applies to school B chosen for this study in Agege, where all the 66 learners were sandwiched in a classroom and the three teachers had to teach them one after the other. What this means is that the learners would have been divided into three classes and each class would have been handled by a teacher. There are inadequate toilet facilities, dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs and broken furniture (Situation and Policy Analysis of Basic Education SAPA, 1993).

Teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) commented thus:

*...the classroom environment is not conducive for learning; instructional materials are not available. I made the ones I use myself from my meager salary.* (26 October 2011)

Teacher Bimpe SchB (Agege) mentioned the following factors inhibiting the teaching and learning of Yoruba in schools:

*Lack of funds, lack of furniture, dilapidated school building, shortage of staff and many others.* (26 October 2011)

As I went around school (26 October 2011) in Agege chosen for the study, I saw that only one toilet was available and it was meant for the teachers while the learners were not catered for at all. I also observed that the roofs of the classrooms were leaking and whenever it rained, lessons would be disrupted because learners

would have to go into other classes to seek refuge while their teachers would also seek refuge in other offices.

The teacher respondents (Titi SchB, Bimpe SchB, Kemi SchB, Jide SchA) for this study mentioned the need for the government to provide them with the necessary instructional materials. The teachers through interview complained of lack of instructional materials like instructional aids, text books, and absence of magic boards to write while teaching in this 21<sup>st</sup> century the schools had black boards which were already dilapidated.

Teachers Titi SchB, Kemi SchB, Bimbo SchB, Dupe SchB and Gbemi SchB (Agege) mentioned during interview (26 October 2011) the need for the government to provide them with necessary instructional materials for teaching. Speaking in the same vein teachers Jide SchA, Bisi SchA, Bayo SchA and Gbenga SchA (Badagry) agreed that the government needs to provide teachers with necessary instructional materials.

Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) stated:

*The government needs to provide us with the necessary instructional materials which are currently lacking. (25 October 2011)*

Lack of appropriate textbooks also hinders learning. During the collation of the data for this study I observed that few textbooks were available and shared between two learners to one text book. The few textbooks available were old and torn. Scholars observed that insufficient textbooks to support mother tongue education for the first three years of primary education, as prescribed in the policy on education has been a major setback towards achieving effective teaching and learning (Emenanjo, Alajuruonye, Ikediashi, Okolie, Ugwuoke & Ikonne, 2003).



**Photo 5.10: The dilapidated structure of the classroom**



**Photo 5.11: The dilapidated structure of the school gate (SchB Agege)**

Photos 5.10 and 5.11 above show the dilapidating state of facilities in primary schools in Lagos Nigeria. Photo 5.10 shows the roofs of the classroom in a deplorable state while photo 5.11 shows the bad state of the school gate (SchB Agege). An inhabitable classroom will adversely affect the teaching in the classroom. This is the case too with regards to language teaching. Teachers managed to teach as shown in photo 5.10 where the roof of the class is leaking and could be blown away by a heavy wind. The population of learners in the class too was a challenge. This is an indication that despite adversities and challenges teachers were still willing to teach Yoruba.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

The experiences of teachers in the context of this study reveal the significant role the mother tongue plays in the education of the child. This was supported by both international and local studies (see chapter 2). The multi linguistic nature of Lagos State which is the study location further reveal that teachers had to put in more effort in teaching the learners from various ethnic backgrounds using Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching.

The strength of the study was exhibited in how teachers value Yoruba and how passionate they were in transmitting these values to learners. The low lights were the challenges affecting them while teaching which included government's lip service to the implementation of the policy stipulations and the provision of instructional materials to teach the learners.

In chapter 6, themes and issues are confirmed and disconfirmed against existing literatures on teachers' experiences of using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary classes. The data was also analysed and linked to the research questions to show that the data was generated to speak to the questions.

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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **OVERVIEW, DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research study presented data on teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The methods of inquiry included the analysis of policy documents on the mother tongue, primary school curriculum modules and recommended textbooks. A semi-structured one-on-one interview was used to gather information from the teachers of the primary 3 children meant for the study (Creswell, 2007). The researcher also used non-participant classroom observations to enhance his understanding of teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications for learning in Lagos State Nigeria. Data analysis was guided by what has been expounded in the literatures as key features of teachers' experiences of using the mother tongue as language of learning and teaching in primary schools and the implications of this for learning.

The findings of this study are now described and interpreted against concepts and theories, and the literature on mother tongue instruction. Opportunities for further inquiry are presented. Recommendations are made on how teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes can be channelled towards transmitting the values in the Yoruba language to the learners despite numerous challenges.

#### **6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

A summary of the findings expressing teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes is presented first. This overview gives a holistic picture of the teachers' experiences. These are further explicated in the following section as to their nature. Table 6.1 contains the themes, and the response of teachers from schools A and B.

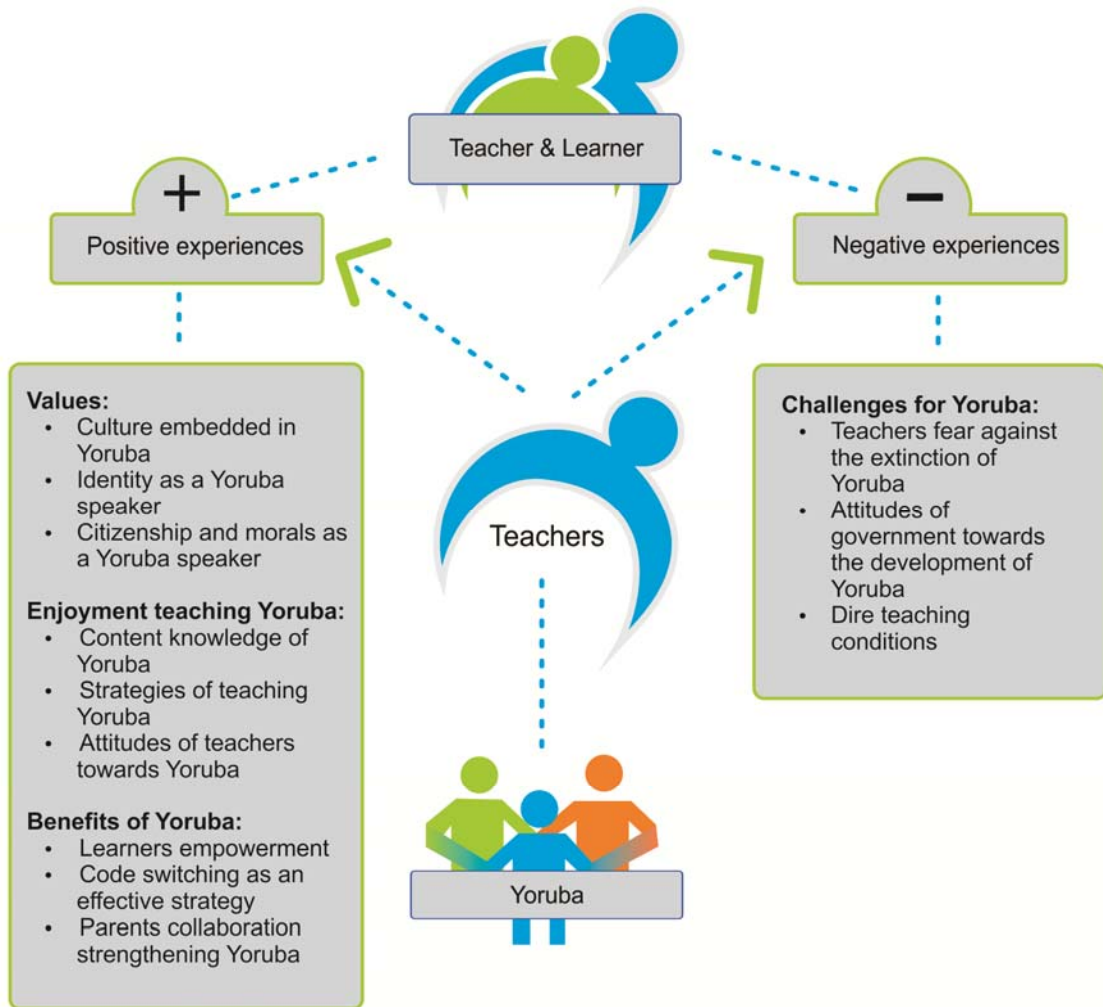


**Table 6.1: Summary: A sample of teachers' views/opinions on their experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes**

Themes	Teachers' Response School A	Teachers' Response School B
Values embedded in Yoruba	I am a Yoruba man with the tribal marks on my cheek as an identity. I am very passionate and emotional about keeping the values alive especially teaching the learners these values which they must imbibe.	It is a language of pride and I attach so much importance to it. I identify myself with Yoruba culture and tradition with the way I dress most of the time. I put on my "buba and iro" (native dress).
Enjoyment teaching Yoruba	My experience as a teacher can be described as interesting, stressful and documentary. I do attend seminars whenever I am selected by the authorities. Attendance at such seminars helps in updating teachers on the current pedagogy used in teaching.	Whenever I teach, I enjoy teaching Yoruba because it gives me joy and opportunity to share my knowledge and experience acquired over time with the learners.
Benefits of Yoruba	Yoruba language is rich in cultural, economic, political and social values. All these will benefit learners in future.	It also serves as a good platform for learning English.
Challenges of Yoruba	The major challenge facing us as teachers in this school is that we lack personnel. We are only ten teachers so we need more teachers to assist in teaching. Availability of Yoruba teachers is essential to be able to teach the learners.	The first problem I am facing as a classroom teacher is that of under aged situation of the learners; secondly, the classroom environment is not conducive for learning; thirdly, instructional materials are not available.

### 6.3 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EXPRESSIONS

The participating teachers' experiences can be categorised into two well-defined groups, namely positive and negative. The positive group includes theme 1, 2, 3 and the categories namely, values embedded in Yoruba, enjoyment teaching Yoruba and benefits of Yoruba. The negative group comprises the challenges of Yoruba and its categories. There was also a subtle challenge that negated what teachers were doing in promoting Yoruba because parents were speaking English to children at home instead of their mother tongue. The themes and their categories are summarised in figure 6.1



**Figure 6.1: Summary of positive and negative expressions of teachers**

#### 6.4 LITERATURE CONTROL

In order to enrich the findings, literature was consulted as summarised and presented in table 6.2. The literature concurs with the findings in the study conducted. The researcher also presented his own interpretations with each of the findings. The discussions below using themes and research questions further explicates the summarised contents in table 6.3.

**Table 6.2: Themes and literature review**

Category	Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
<b>Theme 1: Values embedded in Yoruba</b>			
Culture embedded in Yoruba	Coombs (1985)	Culture is a society's value system, ideology, life view, norms, technology, political and economic systems, religion, myths and social structures. These aspects are expressed in different forms such as language, education, literature, art, architecture and the like.	In the study, the teachers portrayed the societal values in the way they dress and this reflected in their style of teaching.
	Temanie (2004)	Culture encompasses the norms, standards, beliefs, values, religion, mores, customs and social structures within an individual context.	In this study, learners were taught to inculcate the societal morals norms and traditions of the Yoruba language.
	Fennes & Hapgood (1997)	Culture includes everything that determines interaction, relationships and social life within a society.	In this study, teachers tapped on the knowledge which learners acquire from their cultural background and used it along with their own during lessons in Yoruba.
Identity as a Yoruba speaker	Makinde (2005)	Culture is a universal expression involving a complex holistic look at the society. Thus, the culture of a people is expressed through beliefs, knowledge, tools, arts, law, morals, language, literature, rituals, dances, child care, burial rites, mode of dressing, housing patterns, religious practices, and vocations.	In the study, teachers identified with Yoruba language through their mode of dressing and hairdo.

Category	Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
	Hauge (2007)	Identity determinants are those rooted in the child's experience with toys, clothes and rooms. The home which is the first point of call for the child when he is born is regarded as the environment of primary importance, followed by the neighborhood and the school.	In this study, learners knowledge from home in which they identify with helps in shaping their understanding of Yoruba language in class.
	Ukwuma (2004)	Language is part of the society and the culture of a people is duly transmitted through their language hence, culture is expressed in language and language communicates culture.	In this study, the teachers transmit the values embedded in the Yoruba culture and traditions through the Yoruba language during teaching in class.
Citizenship and morals as a Yoruba speaker	Osler (2005)	Citizenship education is basically about belonging, about feeling secure and being in a position to exercise one's rights and responsibilities.	In this study, the teachers used Yoruba language to teach other integrated subjects like social studies to explain good citizenship and respect for law and order.
	Pring (2001)	Citizenship education is necessary for the enhancement of the required skills, knowledge, understanding and the values needed in a democratic structure of civil society	In this study, learners were taught by teachers to be empowered politically socially and economically so that they can be good citizens of Nigeria.
<b>Theme 2: Enjoyment teaching Yoruba</b>			
Content knowledge of Yoruba	New (1999)	Content knowledge involve meaningful curriculum which the teacher will use to teach learners. The curriculum should explain the relationship between goals for learners and societal expectations.	In this study, the teachers used the content in the curriculum to teach learners in class

Category	Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
	Hedges (2007)	Teachers need to find ways to identify the themes of learners' interest and curiosity in their families, so as to build a meaningful and relevant curriculum which will develop culturally valued and conceptual knowledge.	In this study, teachers used their knowledge to teach learners Yoruba language using familiar and concrete illustrations that arose learners interest.
	Gonzalez & Amanti (1992); Gonzalez & Moll (2002); Moll <i>et al.</i> (1992); Gonzalez <i>et al.</i> (1993); Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg (1992)	The knowledge acquired by the teacher from the cultural background and his professional/ academic achievement helps to form the teacher's funds of knowledge.  It was argued that teachers and learners can use funds of knowledge to engage in critical pedagogy based on learners' resources.	In this study, the teachers' funds of knowledge and the learners' funds of knowledge put together resulted to meaningful teaching and learning of Yoruba.
Strategies for teaching Yoruba	Adeosun (2008)	Yoruba language carries the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Values can be transmitted to the child through oral tradition, proverbs, songs, rhymes, poems, dance and stories.	In the study, teachers used various traditional strategies to transmit the values in the Yoruba language to learners.
Attitude of teachers towards Yoruba	Christian & Bloome (2004); Nieto (2002); Osterman (2000)	Bringing the culture and practices of children's homes and communities into classroom instructional and curricular processes can enhance learning experiences and, therefore, the academic success of children from the non-dominant culture.	In the study, teachers expressed their commitment to teaching Yoruba language through the use of traditional examples in teaching e.g. mode of dressing.

Category	Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
	Sanagavarapu & Perry (2005)	It was further mentioned that teachers should emphasise the importance of using the home language through their daily instruction and care practices.	In the study, teachers identified with Yoruba language not only using it as a medium of instruction but it also reflected in their hairdo and mode of dressing as well as traditional marks.
<b>Theme 3: Benefits of Yoruba</b>			
Learners' empowerment in Yoruba	Darder (2002)	Describing the teacher as a cultural worker who is actively involved in the transformation of the society into a just and conducive one devoid of discrimination and its effect on learners.	In the study the teachers used their cultural background to teach learners which eventually led to learners transformation and eventually the transformation of the society.
	Dermon-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Task Force (1989)	The aim of empowering learners within the school setting is to enable them to acquire the intellectual and emotional abilities to face challenges and work together to create a just and conducive environment for effective learning.	In the study, teachers taught learners values in Yoruba language that will make them to be useful to themselves and the society at large.
	Wenger (1998)	Well experienced and established community members support younger ones in an apprentice-like fashion to learn expected patterns of behavior and practice, and the knowledge involved in such cultural practices.	In the study, teachers who are well experienced used their wealth of experience in Yoruba language to impart the knowledge into learners needed to empower them for future challenges.
Code switching as an effective strategy	Hymes (1974)	Code-switching is a term for alternative use of two or more languages.	In the study, teachers code switch to make teaching learning meaningful to learners especially those learners who are not from the Yoruba background.
Parents' collaboration strengthening Yoruba	Bank (2002); Nieto (2002); Osterman (2000)	Instruction shaped by children's home and community culture is vital to supporting children's health self-esteem, strong identity	In the study, parents played a vital role in training the child in the use of Yoruba as a language of communication right

Category	Author and year	Existing knowledge	Interpretive discussion
		development and a sense of belonging characteristics critical to overall academic achievement	from the home before getting to school.
<b>Theme 4: Challenges for Yoruba</b>			
Teachers' fear against the extinction of Yoruba	Fasold (1984)	Mother tongue education has been said to be the cause of failure for effectively learning a second language	In the study teachers expressed their fear on the use of Yoruba as going into extinction.
Attitude of government towards the development of Yoruba	Christopher (2008)	Teachers are insufficiently trained and in short supply and a system characterised by inadequacy of teachers lacks specialists and programmes on mother tongue.	In the study teachers complained that they are in short supply and that government should employ more teachers.
Dire teaching conditions	Oduolowu (2004)	The teaching and learning of a typical Nigerian primary school class environment is not conducive to learning.	In the study, teachers complained of lack of resources to teach, irregular in service training, lack of toilet facilities which has negative effects on teaching and learning in schools.
	Emenanjo <i>et al.</i> (2003)	Insufficient text books to support mother tongue education for the first three years of primary education, as prescribed in the policy on education has been a major setback towards achieving effective teaching and learning.	In the study, teachers complained of lack of text books to teach Yoruba language in class.

## 6.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ACCORDING TO THEMES

### ⌘ Theme 1: Values embedded in Yoruba

Culture is a societal value system which is expressed in language, education, literature, arts and architecture (Coombs, 1985) and it encompasses the societal norms, standards, beliefs, values, religion, mores and customs (Temanie, 2004).

Fennes and Hapgood (1997) opine that culture determines interaction, relationships and social life.

It was evident from the data that teachers portrayed the societal values in the way they dressed and their style of teaching; learners were inculcated with the societal morals, norms and traditions of the Yoruba language. Teachers tapped the knowledge which learners had acquired from their home background and used it along with their own experiences during teaching and learning of Yoruba in class. The data revealed that teachers identified with the Yoruba language through their hair style and the traditional tribal marks some of them had as well as the artefacts they brought to class to facilitate lessons. This was supported by scholars who explained that culture is expressed through belief, knowledge, morals, language, dance, mode of dress and literature (Hauge, 2007; Makinde, 2005; Ukwuma, 2004).

Citizenship education was taught by the teacher in social studies using Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching. Relevant textbooks were used to teach social studies and the topic on citizenship was taught extensively by the teacher. This was done in accordance with the policy document stipulation section 4 (18c) which states that citizenship education must be taught as a basis for effective participation in the society. Learners were also taught to be empowered politically, socially and economically in order to be good citizens of Nigeria. Citizenship is about belonging, feeling secure and in a position to exercise one's rights and responsibilities (Osler, 2005). Citizenship is needed for the enhancement of the skills, knowledge, understanding and values required in a democratic society (Pring, 2001).

Cultural background as described in the literature is a significant concept used to ascribe identity to a language (UNESCO, 2008b). Upholding important values for Yoruba was a sign that the teachers identified with the language.

## ⌘ **Theme 2: Enjoyment teaching Yoruba**

The data revealed how the teachers enjoyed teaching Yoruba in class using various strategies to transmit the values to learners. The strategies used include inviting resource persons to talk to learners, using traditional songs, excursion to traditional places like the Osun osogbo shrine, proverbs, stories and rhymes. The values



embedded in the Yoruba language were transmitted to the children through oral traditions, proverbs, songs and rhymes. This was corroborated by Adeosun (2008).

The attitude of teachers towards the use of the Yoruba language in teaching was revealed in the data in the way the teachers were passionate and identified with the language during teaching. Teachers emphasised the importance of home language through their daily instruction in class to learners and expressed their commitment to teaching the Yoruba language through the use of traditional examples like mode of dress. Researchers support this view by saying that personal identity is a synthesis of personal, social and cultural self-conception (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Schwartz, 2001; Erikson, 1968).

On content knowledge, the data revealed that teachers were well informed about the content of the language. The curriculum and the policy documents were used by the teachers despite the fact that there were too few copies of the policy document available to all teachers. Scholars explain that content knowledge involves meaningful curriculum which the teacher can use in teaching (Hedge, 2007). The curriculum should discuss the relationship between goals for learners and societal aspirations (New, 1999). Teachers need to discover ways of identifying themes of learners' interest and curiosity in order to build a meaningful and relevant curriculum that will develop culturally valued and conceptual knowledge (Hedge, 2007). The teachers' knowledge acquired from his academic/professional achievement and his cultural background helps to form his funds of knowledge (Gonzalez & Amanti, 1992; Gonzalez & Moll, 2002; Moll *et al.*, 1992; Gonzalez *et al.*, 1993; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

### ⌘ **Theme 3: Benefits of Yoruba**

Teachers in the study lauded the benefits of using Yoruba. Some of the benefits they spoke about were that Yoruba built a strong identity and self-esteem. Identity as a benefit for a language speaker is highlighted by Wenger (1998). In the study, teachers identified with the language and used their lived experiences gathered from the cultural background as well as their professional training to teach learners in class. Scholars believe that in empowering the learners, the teacher as a cultural worker must be actively involved in the transformation of the society and that

learners must be groomed for the future task ahead (Darder, 2002; Dermon-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989).

In the study, it was revealed that teachers code switched to make teaching and learning meaningful to learners especially those that were not from a Yoruba background. The researcher also observed that there were some learners who were from the Yoruba background but could not speak Yoruba fluently. This made it pertinent for the teacher to code switch. Code switching is a term for the alternating use of two or more languages (Hymes, 1974).

The data revealed that parents played a vital role in training the child in the use of Yoruba as a language of communication in the home before they started school.

In the data, the researcher confirmed that parents played vital roles in the training of children in the use of Yoruba as a language of communication in the home. Instruction shaped by children's home and community culture is vital for supporting children's health, self-esteem, strong identity development and a sense of belonging, all characteristics critical for overall academic achievement (Bank, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000).

#### ⌘ **Theme 4: Challenges of Yoruba**

Teachers in the study experienced Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching as both positive and negative. They enumerated a number of challenges that affected how they taught Yoruba. However, these challenges were not confined to Yoruba teaching but affected the entire school life. This assertion is supported by Oduolowu (2000) in a study conducted on Nigerian schools. She said that the Nigerian primary school class environment is not conducive to learning.

Another challenge faced by teachers in the study was their fear that the Yoruba was becoming extinct. Christopher (2008) supports this assertion stating that this is due to the training of teachers and also because not enough teachers are available.

The data revealed that there were too few copies of policy documents to go round. Furthermore, some of the teachers complained that there were not enough textbooks available and that what was available were worn. Insufficient textbooks to

support mother tongue education for the first three years of primary education as stipulated by the policy has been a major setback for achieving effective teaching and learning (Emenanjo *et al.*, 2003).

## **6.6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN TERMS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The findings are aligned to the research questions which framed the study. Each research finding is supported by a discussion relating to the literature review and the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study to be able to enrich the thesis in terms of comprehensiveness. The main research question is as follows:

***What are the experiences of teachers when using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary school classes?***

The sub research questions are stated as follows:

1. How do the teachers value the teaching of Yoruba?
2. What are the challenges of teaching Yoruba?
3. What are the strengths of teaching Yoruba?
4. What are their experiences in terms of support and resources they receive in teaching Yoruba?
5. What are the implications of these experiences on learning Yoruba?

In the next sections I will answer the sub research questions before addressing the main research question.

### **6.6.1 HOW DO THE TEACHERS VALUE THE TEACHING OF YORUBA?**

This research question was used to find out how teachers valued the teaching of the Yoruba language and how these values were transmitted to learners in class. The response from the respondents revealed that teachers identified with the Yoruba cultural values in different ways. Teachers Jide SchA, Bisi SchA and Gbenga SchA said that Yoruba was rich in culture and tradition and that it was a language of pride which must be accorded respect. Teachers Dupe SchB, Gbemi SchB, Bimpe SchB, Titi SchB and Bimbo SchB attached value to the Yoruba by identifying with it through their traditional mode of dress to school and their hair styles.

The data revealed that teacher Gbenga SchA attached great value to the teaching of Yoruba outside the class, praying in Yoruba during early morning devotions in school on the assembly ground. He also asked some of the learners to pray in the Yoruba language and this was confirmed during observation. Teacher Bayo SchA was very passionate and emotional about keeping the values alive and the data revealed that he was proud to identify with the Yoruba culture and tradition through his traditional tribal marks.

The data revealed how the values in the Yoruba language were transmitted from the teachers to the learners through proverbs, songs, idioms, stories, dance, rhymes and excursions. The importance of these values as revealed in the study was to assist learners in inculcating good citizenship education as a basis for effective participation and contribution to the life of the society (Osler, 2005). The values would assist in moulding the character of learners and developing sound attitudes as well as developing in children the ability to adapt to their changing environment, thus empowering them for future challenges (Dermon-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989).

#### **6.6.2 WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING YORUBA?**

This research question revealed the various challenges faced by teachers in schools selected for the study. These challenges range from a lack of text books for the teaching of Yoruba; a lack of teachers that was more pronounced in school A (Badagry); dilapidated buildings and leaking roofs of the classrooms; over population of learners in classes; irregular in service training for teachers; the multilinguistic nature of the class due to the different ethnic backgrounds learners come from and government's lip service to the policy implementation.

The study revealed that policy documents were not freely available to teachers according to the response of three teachers (Jide, Kemi and Bisi). In the study it was revealed that government should make copies of the documents available to teachers so that the teachers could read and digest the contents before going into classes to teach the learners.

The teaching and learning environment of a typical Nigerian primary school class is not conducive to learning (Oduolowu, 2004). Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) handled 72 learners in a class; if more classrooms were available, learners would be spread on a ratio of 1 teacher to 25 learners (1:25) as stipulated by the policy. There were inadequate toilet facilities in school B (Agege), dilapidated buildings, leaking roofs and broken furniture (Situation and Policy Analysis of Basic Education, SAPA, 1993).

The teacher is a major player in the educational sector because he holds the key to the door of success hence the need for highly qualified indigenous language teachers to be employed. In the study, it was revealed that in school A (Badagry) only 10 teachers were available to teach the learners as against the 20 teachers that were supposed to be employed. Christopher (2008) argues that teachers are insufficiently trained and in short supply and that the system is characterised by inadequacy of teachers lack specialists and programmes.

Lack of appropriate textbooks also hinders learning. The data revealed that few textbooks were available and one textbook had to be shared by two learners. The few textbooks available were torn and in bad shapes. Scholars observe that insufficient textbooks to support mother tongue education for the first three years of primary education, as prescribed in the policy, has been a major setback towards achieving effective teaching and learning (Emenanjo *et al.*, 2003). The inadequacy of text books and literature text availability ratios, as well as other teaching and learning resources, characterised public primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria (Christopher, 2008).

### **6.6.3 WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF TEACHING YORUBA?**

The research questions elicited information on the benefits of teaching in Yoruba by the teachers. The data revealed that two of the primary school teachers used in this study made the best of the difficult situation in class by making the lessons interesting and educative. Teacher Jide SchA (Badagry) involved the non-Yoruba speaking learners in pronunciation of words in Yoruba. By doing this, the non-Yoruba speaking learners were able to understand the subjects better and also had

a better understanding of the Yoruba culture. This was done during the teaching of pronunciation and spelling of words in Yoruba.

Arohunmolase (1998) opines that we can use the linguistic and cultural evidences in Nigerian languages for our desired national development and unity. If learners are taught Yoruba appropriately, they would know all the things that unite Yoruba language with other Nigerian languages. It will also enable Yoruba and other language scholars to exploit the historical links of the Nigerian languages so as to show Nigerians that they have a common history.

Teacher Kemi SchB (Agege) confirmed that apart from using her money to produce instructional materials used in teaching Yoruba, she also bought textbooks to cater for those learners who did not have any. Using textbooks relevant to students' cultural backgrounds and lived experiences was essential (Wu, Palmer & Field 2011).

The Nigerian government trying to promote the teaching of indigenous languages in schools, established the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), to develop curricula on Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba for the primary and Junior Secondary School (JSS) as a measure to encourage the implementation of the policy statement on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in schools. The Federal Government also established the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba, in Abia State in order to help in the production of Nigerian languages teachers. Learners who studied Yoruba are expected to go to the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) in Aba, Abia State, for their degree courses in Yoruba (Arohunmolase, 2006). This measure is to further encourage the production of Yoruba language teachers thereby promoting the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools; the step taken by the government provided a strong pillar for the promotion of more indigenous language teachers who will be available to teach in the primary schools.

#### **6.6.4 WHAT ARE THEIR EXPERIENCES IN TERMS OF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES THEY RECEIVE IN TEACHING YORUBA?**

This touched on human and material support given to the teachers by government. The teachers regarded the available support and resources with mixed feelings, that is, both positive and negative.

The data revealed that despite the irregularity of the in-service training of the teachers some of the teachers (Jide SchA, Kemi SchB and Titi SchB) confirmed that attendance at such seminars and workshops kept them abreast of the latest happenings in the education field. Adekola (2004) states in his studies on primary school classrooms that essential skills required of primary school teachers include working collaboratively with other teachers and ability of teachers to organise and plan teaching that takes into account learners' learning needs. Such needs include teaching learners to work in groups and being actively involved in learning; providing learners with opportunities to develop creativity and problem solving skills and acquiring language and literacy skills that enable them to learn. These skills can be achieved through regular in-service training of teachers.

Instructional materials are necessary in the classroom because they aid teaching and learning. The use of appropriate and relevant materials and correct teaching methods can help to nurture creativity in learners (Marilyn 1993). Teachers Titi SchB, Kemi SchB, Bimbo SchB, Dupe SchB and Gbemi SchB mentioned that the government needed to provide them with instructional materials for teaching. The response from the respondents regarding the availability and use of instructional materials in teaching Yoruba revealed that the learning resources were made available centrally at the office of the secretary to the local government education authority which was a long distance from the schools used for this study. The implication was that teachers would have to spend money on transport to go to the office of the Secretary to collect those resource materials and after use would have to return them to the office. This discouraged the teachers. However, despite this situation, some of the participating primary 3 teachers in the study used their own funds to improvise some of these materials.

Teacher Kemi SchB chosen in the Agege Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) used the Yoruba textbooks well to teach and educate the learners.

Teacher Kemi SchB confirmed that apart from using her own money to produce instructional materials for teaching in Yoruba, she also bought textbooks to cater for those learners who did not have any.

Effective teaching and learning depends on many factors within and outside the classroom. However the teacher needs some materials to teach as well as conducive environment. Research in classrooms indicates that teachers generally are not well equipped with basic pedagogical skills and understandings for effectively teaching in primary schools, especially in the lower classes (Adekola, 2006). Language policies are poorly implemented and children's learning is impeded by lack of appropriate textbooks and poor teaching in introducing and developing literacy, mathematics and science concepts and use of language across the curriculum (Adekola, 2006). Technology has gone beyond the printed. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made teaching and learning easier. This is corroborated by Nixon and Comber (2001) who state that film and video can be used to bridge popular and classroom culture. They suggest the need to supplement the reading of print fiction in the mother tongue with viewing films and video. They also suggest the use of popular cultural textbooks and the new technologies to facilitate learning in Yoruba.

Literature suggested that instruction shaped by children's home and community culture is vital to supporting children's health, self-esteem, strong identity development and a sense of belonging characteristics critical to overall academic achievement (Bank, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). Parents' use of strategies such as shared reading (Lonigan & Whitehurst, 1998), the use of explanations and expansions of children's vocabulary, the introduction of rare words (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001), teaching of songs and rhymes (Christie, 1998) and introduction of the alphabet (Johnston, 1998; Riley, 1996) during the preschool years have all been confirmed to improve learners literacy learning in schools.

Parental support in training and nurturing the child at home in the Yoruba culture and tradition would help the child to understand better in school. Hedges (2007)



affirms that learners' families provide their first, formative learning experiences and build their sense of identity as learners through participation in everyday experiences over time. The knowledge acquired by learners can assist classroom teachers to describe, interpret and utilise observation of children as learners.

#### **6.5.5 WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING YORUBA?**

This research question elicited information on teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools and its implications for learning.

Through observation while in the field, I gathered that the interaction of the learners among themselves had a lot of implications for their learning of Yoruba. The teachers used for the study had various experiences and they were able to manage the situation well. In the participating school in Agege, teacher Kemi SchB with the support of other primary 3 teachers tried to make the class conducive for learning by making available Yoruba textbooks which they used during lessons. This gave the learners opportunities to be more attentive and ready to learn especially those learners who were not from the Yoruba tribe. The implication of this is that learners were able to understand the Yoruba language as well as the culture and traditions of Yoruba Teacher Jide SchA in the participating primary school in Badagry was committed to the work despite the challenges he faced due to the unavailability of the policy document as well as the lack of instructional materials. During observation, while he was teaching, he tried to involve all the learners more in pronunciation of words in Yoruba as well as making them take turns to read from the textbooks. This strongly encouraged the learners and they were all enthusiastic about reading and pronouncing words in Yoruba correctly. I observed that while on lunch break during my visits to the school for data collection, learners tried to imitate what happened in class during teaching among themselves this showed that the learners were more responsive to learning Yoruba as a language.

After answering the sub research questions, their answers informed me to deal with the main research question, namely:

### ***What are the experiences of teachers when using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary school classes?***

Taking a critical look at the policy document regarding the stipulation on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school classes, teachers' experiences were gathered through interview guided by the above-mentioned research question.

The result of the findings reveals the different experiences encountered by the teachers regarding the use of Yoruba as a medium of instruction in schools. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stipulates the use of the mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment as a medium of instruction in the lower classes of primary schools in Nigeria. However, primary 3 teachers that were involved in this study narrated their personal experiences regarding the implementation of this policy statement. Their experiences ranged from the non-availability of the policy documents to teachers, multi linguistic nature of the classrooms which comprised of learners from different ethnic backgrounds which made them to code switch, lack of instructional materials and irregular in service training of teachers. In conclusion, the data revealed mostly positive experiences of the teachers (see figure 6.1).

## **6.7 CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE**

This study revealed that no matter the difficult situation in class as experienced by the participants for the study regarding lack of instructional materials, teachers can improvise these instructional materials to teach mother tongue in primary classes as was the case with teacher Kemi SchB chosen in Agege Local Government Education Authority. Teachers are resources in their own right. They do not have to depend on government for resources but can improvise.

Lack of professionally trained indigenous language teachers can hinder effective teaching and learning in class. As the majority of the teachers are over the age of 50 years, it is crucial that young teachers have to be trained in Yoruba. There also seems to be a lack of teachers in the schools as observed in school A Badagry. This

aspect might be a threat to the existence of Yoruba as they are not described in literature.

Teaching of mother tongue to a multilingual classroom is possible if necessary resources and strategies for teaching exist. In this study, code switching was successfully used to make the language accessible to all.

Artifacts can be used to enhance and promote identity to a language. Dressing code for Yoruba was used to portray the way of life of a Yoruba man and woman to sustain the cultural identity of the Yoruba people; as described by Erikson (1968).

This study confirms that identity of teachers with regard to the mother tongue does not just depend on their cultural background, but the manner in which it is portrayed in media, its social standing in the community and the support it receives from the government contribute to how teachers are responsive to the language. Parents too cannot be ignored as they shape how their children will learn and respond to the language. Effective mother tongue teaching needs the support of all stakeholders in education. Despite these challenges a resolute teacher can achieve greatness against all odds.

## **6.8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study revealed opinions and information expressed by the 10 primary school teachers who participated in this study on their experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes and the implication of this to learning. The following recommendations were made to improve the use of Yoruba as a language of learning and teaching in primary classes.

- The production of relevant textbooks in indigenous languages for teaching in primary schools in Nigeria despite the multi linguistic nature of the country is very important if successful teaching and learning of Yoruba is to be achieved in class.
- Secondly, training of indigenous language teachers need to be intensified and encouraged. Researchers can research the reasons for the dearth in the availability of indigenous language teachers in Nigeria and the world

over and suggest ways of solving this problem. Those teachers that have already been employed need to attend seminars and workshops on the latest methodologies and instructional materials that can be used in teaching. Such pedagogical materials can be suggested by researchers to effectively teach Yoruba and any other subjects well in classes.

- Thirdly, research should be carried out on the need for the government to produce the policy documents (promoting mother tongue) in large quantity for teachers use. The current situation where teachers do not have copies of such an important document is not encouraging. Researchers can investigate the reasons why these documents were not available and inform the government on how the policy documents can be produced and made available.
- There is no proper monitoring of the implementation of policies. The government therefore needs to establish a task team or committee that will ensure that policies are implemented accordingly.

## **6.9 FURTHER STUDY**

The following are suggested for further studies:

- A study on the use of Yoruba in schools that would include the voices of parents and government officials.
- A longitudinal study that would record the impact of Yoruba teaching on learners.
- How indigenous language teachers can be trained and the type of content to be taught as well as the methodologies to be used that would promote the use of the language.

## **6.10 CONCLUSION**

The debate on the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools has been going on for over a decade. UNESCO and has emphasized the importance of the mother tongue in the education of the child (UNESCO, 2008a). This study is important because it brought out the actual happenings in the class thus letting us know the germane of Yoruba which is the mother tongue in this

context and how the participant primary school teachers were able to use it as a medium of instruction. Although many challenges were identified but the study made us to know that teachers were on top of the situation by making sure that learners irrespective of their ethnic and social background were taught Yoruba effectively. Learning through the mother tongue do not only preserve the cultural values of the people but makes learning permanent in the learners. It develops in the learners' readiness to learn and affords the learners the opportunity to transfer learning appropriately. It therefore strengthens the learners' identity and empowers them.

The youths of today are the expected leaders of tomorrow hence they must be well groomed cognitively, socially morally and culturally; thus, education in mother tongue as highlighted in this study makes this achievable. The teacher as the facilitator of knowledge was examined through interview and observation and the results revealed that participant primary school teachers experienced many challenges while using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in schools but despite these challenges, they were able to teach Yoruba effectively. Learners were also able to cope with learning of Yoruba despite their different ethnic backgrounds.

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## APPENDICES

### **APPENDIX 1**

Sample of letter to schools signed by the Special Adviser on Education

### **APPENDIX 2**

Sample of letter to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education

### **APPENDIX 3**

Letter of Approval from SUBEB

### **APPENDIX 4**

Sample letter of Approval from LGEA

### **APPENDIX 5**

Request for Informed Consent – Teachers

### **APPENDIX 6**

Request for Informed Consent – Parents

### **APPENDIX 7**

Interview Schedule

### **APPENDIX 8**

Observation Schedule

### **Appendix 9**

Copy of Ethical Clearance Certificate



Sample of letter to schools signed by the Special Adviser on Education



**LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT**  
OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON EDUCATION

The Secretariat,  
Block No.:5  
Third Floor, Room 304,  
Alausa-Ikeja.  
PMB No.:2104311  
Ikeja.

Telephone: 01-4979033  
Ext: 4659 - 4006  
Fax No:.....  
E-mail: edunet.lagosstate.gov.ng  
Website: www.lagosstate.gov.ng

11<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

Ref. No:.....

Date:.....

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

I write to introduce **MR. ABIDOGUN, BABAJIDE GBOYEGA** to you as a Staff of the Faculty of Education, Lagos State University which is a parastatal of the Ministry of Education in Nigeria directly under the supervision of the Office of Special Adviser on Education.

He is currently a PhD student at the University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education South Africa.

Kindly give him the necessary assistance he may require.

Accept my warmest regards.

Yours faithfully,

*Elijah Olu Adewale* 11/9/09

OFFICE OF SPECIAL  
ADVISER ON  
EDUCATION

Dr. Elijah Olu Adewale  
Special Adviser on Education.

Sample of letter to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education

OFFICE OF THE DEAN  
**LAGOS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Faculty of Education

RM 409  
22/1

DEAN

PROF. S. OLADAPO OLANIYONU  
B.Ed (Hons)(IBADAN) M. Ed. JCS. Ph.D IFE  
(Professor of Educational Planning)



Badagry Expressway, Ojo  
P.M.B. 1067, Apapa,  
Lagos Nigeria.  
Tel: 08023034597  
Fax: 884648  
E-mail: LASUVC@pinet.net

16 January, 2009

Ref:

The Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Education,  
Alausa, Ikeja.

Through: Director,  
Universal Basic Education Unit,  
Alausa, Ikeja.

Dear Sir,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Abidogun Babajide Gboyega is a Lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations & Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo. He is currently undergoing a Ph.D programme at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and needs a letter of approval to carry out his research in Primary Schools in Lagos State.

Kindly assist in giving him the necessary approval.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

  
PROFESSOR S.O.A. OLANIYONU,

Letter of Approval from SUBEB

**LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT  
STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION  
BOARD (SUBEB)**

Telephone: 4973869/4973870  
All Correspondence to be addressed to  
The Chairman, quoting

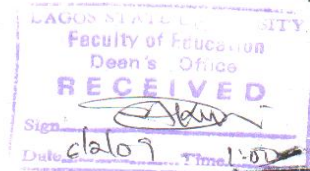


Maryland Schools Complex  
Maryland, Ikeja.  
P.M.B. 21676  
Ikeja.

Our Ref. No. LSUBEB/CON/BSO/496/77

5<sup>th</sup> February, 2009  
Date: .....


The Dean  
Dean's Office  
Faculty of Education  
Lagos State University,  
Ojo, Lagos.



**RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**  
**MR. ABIDOGUN BABAJIDE GBOYEGA**

I have been directed to refer to your letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 2009 on the above subject matter and to convey the approval of the Board for your request accordingly.

Wishing you a successful endeavour.

  
Bodede O. A.  
For: Executive Chairman

*Mr. Abidogun Babajide Gboyega  
for and receiving*

Sample letter of Approval from LGEA

**LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT**  
**STATE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION BOARD.**  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY, BADAGRY.

All correspondence to be Address to:  
The Education Secretary (Quoting)  
08034703471



Muslim Primary School Complex  
General Hospital Road,  
Badagry.

Date: 15th Nov., 2011.

Our Ref No: \_\_\_\_\_

To:

The School Manager,  
-----  
-----


Sir/Ma,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION  
MR. ABIODOGUN B. GBOYEGA

I am directed to introduce to you the above named person from Lagos State University, Ojo to carry out a research work in your School.

Your maximum co-operation is highly needed.

Thanks.

  
Com. Odu, A. C.  
for Education Secretary  
L.G.E.A., Badagry.

## Request for Informed Consent – Teachers



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education

Ms .....  
Primary School

Dear Participant,

I am a doctoral student of the Faculty of Education University of Pretoria, South Africa. My research topic is ‘Teachers’ experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes: Implications for learning”.

I will be coming into your class to observe the way you use Yoruba as a medium of instruction while teaching. I will also want to observe and interview you on the strategies you use as well as the resources available while teaching.

I am assuring you that the information obtained from you will be treated in the strictest confidentiality possible, and it will be used for this research purposes only. I would like to assure you that the data gathered will not be given to the school authorities. Your names will not be revealed instead pseudonyms will be used.

In conclusion I would like to thank you most sincerely in your assistance in this research and I hope that this research makes an impact on you.

Yours sincerely

B G Abidogun  
PhD Student  
University of Pretoria

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i.e that you participate in this project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of interview participants be made known to any parties/organizations that may be involved in the research process.

Researcher's signature .....: Date: .....

Supervisor's signature .....Date.....

Yours Sincerely  
Abidogun B G

Reply slip

I am willing to participate/ not participate in your studies

.....  
Teacher's name

.....  
Teacher's signature

.....  
Date

## Request for Informed Consent – Parents



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

Faculty of Education

Dear Parents of Class 3 learners

I am a doctoral student of the Faculty of Education University of Pretoria, South Africa. As part of my studies I am supposed to carry out a study of which ..... Primary School Agege will be part thereof. I would like to carry out a study titled “Teachers’ experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes: Implication for Learning” in the primary three class where your daughter/son is a learner.

I would therefore like to ask for permission from you to carry out this study while observing your child in class during lessons.

My research is qualitative in nature and I will employ a case study design to describe, explain and explore the challenges of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary schools. I intend to use observation schedules to elicit information.

I would like to promise you the safety of your child’s participation. I shall inform the children about my research project and methodology. The information obtained from your child will be treated in the strictest confidentiality possible, and it will be used for this research purposes only. Your daughter/son name will not be revealed instead pseudo names will be used.

In conclusion I would like to thank you most sincerely in your assistance in this research and I hope that this research makes an impact on the use of Yoruba as a subject in schools.

Yours sincerely

B G Abidogun  
PhD Student  
University of Pretoria

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent, i.e that you participate in this project willingly and that you understand that you may withdraw from the research project at any time. Under no circumstances will the identity of interview participants be made known to any parties/organizations that may be involved in the research process.

Researcher's signature .....: Date: .....

Supervisor's signature ..... Date:.....

Yours Sincerely  
Abidogun B G

Reply slip

I give permission/do not give permission to use my daughter/son in your studies

.....

Parent's name

.....

Parent's signature

.....

Date



### **Interview Schedule**

1. How many years have you been teaching Yoruba?
2. How many years have you been teaching primary three learners?
3. What are the high lights of teaching Yoruba?
4. What are the low lights of teaching Yoruba?
5. What value do you attach to Yoruba Language?
6. How do you transmit these values of the Yoruba language in your teaching?
7. What importance are these values for the learners
8. What is your understanding of the NPE?
9. Do you teach in Yoruba according to the National Policy on Education stipulation?
10. How do you implement the NPE?
11. Are the values clearly stipulated in the NPE?
12. What do you or your school need to ensure that you are able to follow the National Policy on Education stipulation?
13. What are the challenges facing you in your school while teaching Yoruba?
14. How do you deal with diversity in your class?
15. Is there a place for Code switching?
16. Is there a place for parents in teaching Yoruba?
17. What are your experiences in terms of support and resources while teaching Yoruba in class? Seminar answer will come in here
18. Do the Ministry of Education supply your school with learning support materials?
19. What would you recommend to ensure that Yoruba is taught and maintained as LOLT in the schools?

**Observation Schedule**

**Teachers and learners**

The purpose of this schedule is to observe the interaction between the learners and teachers during lessons using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in Primary School classes.

1. Does the teacher have good understanding of Yoruba language?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
2. Can the learner carry out a conversation with the Yoruba language teacher?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
3. Are the learning materials available for teaching the Yoruba and well utilized?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
4. Does the teacher's experiences affect his/her teaching Yoruba?  
.....  
.....  
.....
  
5. Is the learner able to see differences and similarities in what is said and written by the teacher?  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. What are the values the teacher attach towards teaching Yoruba?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. How does the teacher transmit the values of the language? E.g. cultural traits, idiomatic expressions

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

8. Does the teacher have enough vocabulary to enable him/her teach Yoruba effectively?

.....  
.....  
.....

9. How does the teacher address learners coming from other ethnic backgrounds different from Yoruba?

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Do the learners respond appropriately to the lesson?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. Does the teacher use Yoruba to teach other subjects?

.....  
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.....  
.....

12. Do the children follow the lesson easily in Yoruba?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. Can the learners properly express themselves in Yoruba?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. Does the teacher interact with other colleagues using Yoruba as a language of communication?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**15. FIELD NOTES**

## Copy of Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Education

### RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

<b>CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE</b>	<b>CLEARANCE NUMBER :</b>	EC: 10/06/01
<b><u>DEGREE AND PROJECT</u></b>	PhD Teachers' experiences of using Yoruba as a medium of instruction in primary classes: implications for learning	
<b><u>INVESTIGATOR(S)</u></b>	Gboyega Babajide Abidogun	
<b><u>DEPARTMENT</u></b>	Early Childhood Education	
<b><u>DATE CONSIDERED</u></b>	10 October 2012	
<b><u>DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE</u></b>	APPROVED	
Please note: <i>For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years</i> <i>For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.</i>		
<b>ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE</b>	Dr. Suzanne Bester	
<b>DATE</b>	10 October 2012	
<b>CC</b>	Jeannie Beukes NC Phatudi	

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.