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PILOT TESTING OF THE LEARNING MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT FOR IGBO LEARNERS AT THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on Pilot Testing of the Learning Materials Development for Igbo Learners at the Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. Four purposes and four null hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was a descriptive survey research design. The population and the sample of the study was 150 Igbo learners and teachers. The instrument for data collection was researchers structured questionnaire designed in 4-point rating scale to elicit responses from the respondents. The data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation and t-test statistics. Analysis of findings indicate no significant difference in the perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers as to the adequacy and appropriateness of the learning materials for the target group. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made.

Keywords: learning material, validation, Igbo L_2 Learners, upper Basic Level

Introduction

The Federal Government policy statement in the National policy on Education (2004, 2014) that: Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion and preserving culture. Thus, every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity, it is expedient that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages; Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (Section1:10). The above policy by the Federal Government has resulted in the teaching and learning of these languages as the first and second languages (L_1 and L_2) in our secondary schools. There are two categories of Igbo learners at the Upper Basic level; the native and non- native speakers of Igbo. The non- native speakers of Igbo are the students from other ethno-linguistic group such as Yoruba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, who study Igbo as their second language. The second group of Igbo learners are those whose parents are Igbo but many of who hardly speak Igbo in their homes; rather, they speak English. These groups of Igbo learners could hardly express themselves properly in Igbo language. Thus, their competence in Igbo language is very marginal. Igbo has become merely their heritage language. These group of Igbo learners are therefore categorized as the second language learners of Igbo and should be treated as such in the use of methodology and instructional materials. The relevance of suitable learning material (textbook) in teaching and learning can hardly be

emphasized. A good language textbook can be said to organize pupil's learning while contributing to the improvement of the teachers' teaching skills, Ihebuzor in Nwigwe (2012). Linguapax (1997) views a language textbook as a book that is specifically produced to teach some or all of the four language skills and more (culture and civilization). It is meant to be used by learners engaged in some form of instruction. The ideal language textbook can serve the following functions among others. It usually serves indirectly as form of syllabus since it contains a listing of the content of instruction. This is particularly so when such textbook is based on approved syllabus. It transmits the content of instruction presenting this to learners in manageable portion usually in form of units and chapters. It also contains periodic revision exercises and activities which both the teachers and the learners can use to access learning outcomes, monitor instructional progress and evaluate instructional efficiency.

Almost three decades after the introduction of the curriculum for the teaching and learning of Igbo as a second language in our secondary schools, it is observed that the curriculum has not been promoting the major objective assigned to it, namely, to inculcate in the students communicative competence in Igbo language. Nwigwe (1999) found that this inability of Igbo L_2 students to express themselves in Igbo was as a result of teachers instructing with difficult and inadequate learning material which did not provide opportunities for genuine communication among the students, nor were they relevant to the needs, interest and aspirations of Igbo L_2 learners. It was apparent that the Igbo L_2 curriculum could not be properly implemented until the relevant course materials that are essential for Igbo L_2 learners have been produced and introduced in our schools. Thus, the need for this study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to Pilot Testing of the Learning Materials Development for Igbo Learners at the Junior Secondary Schools in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. Perception of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the suitability of the objectives of Igbo L_2 learning material.
2. Perception of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the suitability of the topics/contents of Igbo L_2 learning material.
3. Perception of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the appropriateness of the methods of presentation and evaluation of Igbo L_2 learning material.
4. Perception of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the interesting and motivating qualities of the Igbo L_2 learning material.

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the suitability of the objectives of the Igbo L_2 learning material.
2. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the suitability of the topics/contents of Igbo L_2 learning material.
3. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the appropriateness of the

methods of presentation and evaluation of the Igbo L_2 learning material.

4. There is no significant difference between perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the interesting and motivating qualities of Igbo L_2 learning material.

Research Method

This study was carried out in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 150 Igbo language teachers and students in the state.

The sample for the study was 150 as the entire population was used due to its small size. 130 students and 20 Igbo language teachers were involved in the study. The instrument for data collection was the researchers' structured questionnaire designed in 4- point rating scale, to elicit responses from the respondents. The instrument is titled: Learners' questionnaire for trial- testing the Igbo L_2 learning material (LQTILM) and Teachers' questionnaire for trial- testing the Igbo L_2 learning material (TQTILM). The questionnaire sought the opinion of learners and teachers to validate the developed communicative learning material for Igbo L_2 learners. The response options were; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree(D) and Strongly Disagree(SD) respectively. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbachs Alpha statistics which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91 which was considered highly reliable.

Procedure:

The 150 copies of the questionnaires for trial-testing the developed material were administered to the respondents with the help of vice principal academics who served as research assistants. The developer sought the opinions and suggestions of teachers as well as the learners who received instructions from the L_2 learning material. The essence was to collate their views on the essential curriculum components of objectives, topics/contents, methods of presentation and evaluation procedures, other interesting and motivating qualities of the learning material which they felt would be adequate for this level. Due to the nature of the data, t- test statistics was found relevant and adequate in analyzing opinions of the teachers and students. t- test was significant at 0.05 %. Mean and standard deviation were used. A mean of 2.50 and above indicates the benchmark for acceptance while rejection is any mean score below 2.50.

Presentation of Results:

HO_1: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L2 learners and teachers on the suitability of the objectives of Igbo L_2 learning material.

Table 1: t- test Results of Teachers' and Learners' perceptions of the suitability of objectives of Igbo L_2 learning material.

Variable	Groups	No	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-critical
Suitability of the objectives of the learning material	Teachers	20	9.30	0.67		
	IgboL_2 learners.	130	9.15	0.76	0.63	2.00

ns= not significant at P <0.05
The result indicate that t – calculated is less than t –tabulated (0.63). The null hypothesis is accepted

HO2: There is no significant difference between the perception of Igbo L_2 learner and teacher on the suitability of the topics/ content of Igbo L_2 learning material.

Table 2: t-test result of teacher and learners perception of suitability of topics / content of Igbo L_2 learning materials.

Variable	Groups	No	Mean	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.
Suitability of topics/ content of learning materials	Teachers	20	9.10	0.74		
	Igbo L_2 learners	130	9.11	0.79	0.38	2.00

ns = not significant at p < 0.05. The result indicate that t- calculated is less than t-tabulated (0.38 < 2.00).the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

HO3: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L_2 learners and teachers on the appropriateness of the method of the presentation and evaluation of the learning material.

Table 3: t-test result of teacher and learners perceptions of the appropriateness of the method of presentation and evaluation of the Igbo L_2 learning material.

Variable	Groups	No	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-critical
Appropriateness of the method of presentation and evaluation	Teachers	20	18.30	1.16		
	Igbo L_2 learners.	130	18.25	1.34	0.11	2.00

ns = not significant at p < 0.05. The result indicate that t- calculated is less than t-tabulated (< 2.00).the null hypothesis is therefore accepted.

HO4: There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Igbo L2 learners and teachers on the interesting and motivating qualities of the learning materials.

Table 4: t-test result of teachers and learners perceptions of the interesting and motivating qualities of the learning materials.

Variable	Groups	No	Mean	SD	t-cal	t-critical
Interesting and motivating qualities	Teachers	20	15.20	1.61		
	IgboL_2 learners.	130	15.55	1.47	0.71	2.00

ns = not significant at $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis is therefore not accepted.

Findings

The findings from this study revealed that the views of the Igbo L_2 learners and teachers were not different as to the suitability of objectives, topics/contents, method of presentation and evaluation procedure, interesting and motivating qualities of the material as the findings from the test of hypotheses 1,2,3,4 revealed.

Implication of the findings of this study is that the Igbo L_2 learning material adequately addresses the communicative needs of the learner of Igbo as a second language and therefore be considered as an appropriate and adequate learning material to address the needs of Igbo L_2 learners in the teaching and learning of Igbo as a second Nigeria language.

Conclusion

For the goal of teaching and learning of Igbo as a second Nigeria language to be achieved, learners should be provided with appropriate learning materials that are specifically designed and produced for their level, interest and which enhance their communicative ability, rather than frustrate them. From the above findings, it is crystal clear that learners are more interested in and strive to achieve whatever they considered relevant to their needs, interest and level of aspirations. The Igbo L_2 learning material, having been pilot –tested in some schools for appropriateness and found significantly complaint, is being recommended for teaching and learning of Igbo as a second Nigerian language in the junior secondary school level in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that the development of learning material for Igbo L_2 learner should include topics /content that are of interest and relevant to their needs.
2. Government should ensure a better relationship between the textbooks and teachers' development through courses, seminar, workshops and conferences. Teachers should be taught how to select and use textbook effectively. This means helping them to be able to evaluate textbooks properly, exploit them in class, adapt and supplement them where necessary.
3. Government should encourage and sponsor the development of textbook and other learning materials for teaching and learning of Igbo as a second Nigerian Language.

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