

IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGE PROVISIONS IN NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION: CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine various challenges affecting the implementation of language provisions in National Policy on Education in Nigeria. The study made use of the survey research design. The population for this study comprised of all the primary school pupils, secondary school students, their parents, teachers, head teachers and principals in Southwestern Nigeria. A sample of 1,620 pupils, 1,620 students, 54 head teachers, 54 principals, 300 English language teachers and 500 parents in Southwestern Nigeria totaling 4,148 were drawn from three senatorial districts in each of the six states (Ekiti, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ondo and Lagos) in Southwestern Nigeria for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select both public and private schools in the senatorial districts. An instrument titled "Challenges and Factors on Language Implementation Questionnaire" (CFIQ) was developed for the study. One research question and three research hypotheses emanated from the study. The study recommended among others that government should sponsor the development of curricular and instructional materials for teaching and learning of various languages in the country, especially those that have been recognized in the language provisions.

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KEYWORDS: Challenges, Language Provisions, National Policy on Education, Nigerian Schools

INTRODUCTION

In spite of government deferential plan concerning the language provisions in the NPE, a number of challenges arise, which tend to influence the concerns of the language policy. These include: classroom congestion, unavailability or poor libraries in schools, inadequate instructional and enrichment materials, insufficient and incompetent language teachers, inadequate training and retraining of teachers, over-reliance on English textbooks, insufficient fund and computer assisted language learning,

The phenomenon of large classes resulting from population explosion of school age children is fast becoming one to be contended with in schools. Classroom congestion and low utilization rate of classrooms are common features of secondary school classes in Nigeria. Such large classes have negative impacts on both secondary school teacher productivity, student learning input, and students' academic performance. According to Martins (2002), class factors are very important in the teaching-learning activities, particularly when students' academic performance is being considered. The lower the class size or teacher-pupil ratio, the better the performance since students' achievement decreases as class size increases.

Many studies have pointed out the significance of teacher pupil ratio to cognitive learning in the school

(Krauss, 1992; Ojoawo, 1989; Fabunmi, 2000; Okoro, 2000). The National Policy on Education (2004, section 2, p. 6) states that "for effective teaching and learning at the basic education level, the teacher-student ratio shall be 1.35." In emphasizing the importance of class size to the learning-teaching process, the All Nigeria Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools (ANCOPSS) recommends a maximum of forty students per class for effective management and better control. However, these are common phenomenon both in urban and rural secondary schools where 50 or 60 students may be in a class.

Omojuwa (1983) in his own study found that class size had a negative coefficient with examination performance of students. The lower teacher-pupil ratio allows for more effective communication between the learner and the teacher though the opinion of Bolton (1988) "larger is sometimes better". Edge (1980) however identifies two of the problems which large classes pose; they are (1) the provision of an opportunity for discussion or for any kind of oral input to the written work is difficult, and (2) the amount of noise-making involved can dissuade even the most enthusiastic teacher from setting the amount of written work that he/she feels would benefit the students. Both federal and state governments should be conscious of these factors while allocating resources to education. Educational planners and policy makers have to take these factors

into consideration while conducting school mapping exercises and policy formulation.

The quality and availability of libraries in schools are also factors in learning English language. Numerous researchers such as Nwoke (1987), Ajayi (2002), Adegbite (2005) confirm the educational gains that school library programmes provide in students' learning. The library provides avenues for learners to be exposed to different reading materials and information that can positively boost their language skills. Through the library, learners can have access to larger collections of prints and electronic resources that can develop in them skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and communicative ideas. In spite of the many benefits derivable from the library, many primary and secondary schools lack this provision.

Ajayi (2002) in support of this view discusses the issue of the discouraging state of libraries in schools. At present, many schools do not have libraries. Even those who have can not afford to buy new books. Where the books and novels are available, they are too few to cope with the ever-increasing student enrolment in school. He further enunciates that the poor performance in English among primary and secondary school learners arises from the absence of enrichment materials in the school library. Consequently, learners' interest in reading has dwindled since most of the libraries in schools are stocked with obsolete reading materials.

The onus thereby lies on the government to furnish the school libraries with recent reading materials so that the objectives of the language provision in the NPE can be realised. Moreover, the teachers should be able to motivate the pupils and stimulate their interest in learning and reading so that their communicative competence can be enhanced.

Instructional materials are essential tools in fulfilling the objectives of the language provisions as depicted in the NPE (2004). They allow learners to interact with words, images, and ideas in ways that develop their abilities in reading, listening, viewing, thinking, speaking, writing and in using media and technology. The range of instructional and enrichment materials has broadened considerably to include tape-recorder, video tape, camera, pictures, charts, diagrams, debates, excursions, radio, resource persons, newspapers, magazines, supplementary books, maps, projectors, films etc

These materials which enhance appropriate language learning are not provided in most primary and secondary schools. In schools where some of these materials are provided, they are not adequately utilized. This invariably affects language learning and as a result hampers learners' performance. Ajayi (2002) affirms that enrichment constructional

materials and activities indicate initiative to either recommend or provide or improvise to support and facilitate robust academic activities in order to achieve desirable educational goals or objectives even beyond schools.

Newspapers are among the relevant instructional materials that can be used in the classroom. Ajayi (2002) states

The newspaper can be a great language enrichment material, particularly in ESL writing/reading classroom. For instance, it is easy to adopt, it can be marked, cut, pasted, coloured and discarded easily and new issues appear daily. Finally, photographs, paintings, drawings, graphics, maps, cartoons and sketches serve as comprehension aids because they provide context clues working with the newspaper.

Emphasizing the importance of newspaper/magazines as enrichment materials in schools, Roe et al cited in Umoh (1991) say that: "Newspapers and magazines are excellent media for reading instruction... they treat a wide variety of subject matters. They are interesting to students who have been turned off by formal reading materials" (p. 84).

Umoh (1991), therefore, provides differences between a novel (or English textbook) and a newspaper/magazine in terms of volume cost, production, readership, care and handling and contents. It is clearly indicated that the cost of newspapers and magazines is lower than novels or English textbooks. Also, while the production of textbooks is at one time or reproduced (reprinted) after sometimes, newspapers and magazines are produced daily, weekly or monthly. In terms of utilization or readership, newspapers and magazines satisfy the academic and life beyond school purposes.

Insufficient and incompetent language teachers also pose as a challenge to adequate implementation of the objectives in the language provision in the NPE. The language teachers play significant roles in disseminating appropriate information that will assist the learners in recognizing the similarity between the old situation and the new, so as to transfer the training received during lessons to other fields. All learning must proceed from the known to the unknown. If a child cannot correlate an unknown thing with something familiar to him, he cannot get at its meaning. Therefore, the teacher must use the learner's apperceptive mass in order to teach. The apperceptive mass is the sum of the experience contained in the phantasms, concepts and emotional associations which have been registered in the consciousness. The teacher is expected to draw upon the learner's apperception, in such a way that when

he proposes a new idea of a new object, the learner will be able to associate it with some idea or mental image he already has (Awobuluyi, 1991).

Considering the indispensability of teachers to proper implementation of any language provisions, it is evident that most primary and secondary schools don't have sufficient and competent language teachers, thus school heads entrust the teaching of English language to graduates from other specialization. According to Babatunde (2011), the role of the teacher as a major determining factor in the quality of education cannot be ignored. As a curriculum implementer and guide to the learner, it is necessary for the teacher to know what to teach, how to teach it and to ensure that learning takes place.

There is a dearth of retraining of language teachers all through the school system. In English, the practicing teachers are poorly motivated, incompetent, overworked, unevenly distributed, and abysmally insufficient in numbers. Most teachers of English are unqualified to teach the English language, sometimes redundant teachers are drafted to teach it. Just anybody with a degree or diploma is a potential English teacher, after all such a graduate was taught in English. How then can the learners achieve communicative competence that is the vision of the government in such a situation? The lack of trained and committed teachers affects the performance of students. It is a known fact that the teacher is the fulcrum around which the entire teaching learning process revolves. A competent, qualified, dedicated, resourceful, well-motivated, and well paid teacher is the greatest asset in realizing the set objectives of any educational policy.

In the manual for the re-training of primary and secondary school teachers which was sponsored by National Teachers' Institute (2011), it was stated that there has not been any systematic attention to update regularly the knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers in the light of changes in the curriculum and the wider society. This neglect has, in turn, affected the quality of teaching in schools. It is on this basis that the Federal Government, through the Ministry of Education, directed the National Teachers' Institute to retrain both primary and junior secondary school teachers. Training for teachers has been used to widen access to learning opportunities for teachers. Through regular re-schilling of teachers, their knowledge and skills are upgraded in order to meet new standards of education that are geared towards the improvement of the entire education system (Pradilla 2001, Turell, 2001). Since re-training workshops focus on innovative technique of teaching, the language teachers should be adequately trained to improvise and utilize various activities to enhance the communicative efficiency of the learners.

Over-reliance on English textbook poses a challenge to appropriate implementation of the language provision. According to Ohia and Adeosun (2002), it is not uncommon among teachers to get into the class and ask the students to 'open to page...of ...text and rely entirely on the text throughout the duration of the lesson. English Language course books exhibit a characteristic of over-emphasis and superiority of a particular teaching method over the other(s), forgetting, according to language experts, that there is no best way of learning and that learners learn best when different learning methods and approaches/strategies are used.

English language course books writers should shed their preference to particular method(s) and employ what Rivers (1964) calls informed eclecticism, which is a combination of teaching methods/approaches designed to strike a balance between linguistic competence and communicative competence. Teachers should remember that language production and comprehension are normally carried out in varieties of knowledge: conscious knowledge acquired from other people, from books, mass media, at school etc, and tacit knowledge, which is unconscious and cannot normally be verbalized but forms the basis of many skills, including verbal ones (Klein, 1986:40-41).

It is the responsibility of the government to provide adequate fund for managing the school. In a situation where there is non-provision or insufficient fund for the running of the school, the necessary instructional materials and needs for language teaching and learning will be affected. Much of the difficulty in education lies in the fact that the sector is poorly funded. This results in shortages of material and human resources for education. There are instructional inputs, shortage of classrooms and a host of other problems. These difficulties have been most pronounced at the foundation levels of education. Both primary and school levels have been negatively affected. In 1997, the Federal Minister of Education, following a nation-wide tour of the schools stated that the basic infrastructure in schools such as conducive classrooms, laboratories, workshops, sporting facilities, equipment, libraries were in a state of total decay. Even the physical condition of most schools was reported to be pathetic (Moja, 2000).

Computer Assisted Language Learning is succinctly defined in a seminal work by Levy (1997) as "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (p.1). Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) embraces a wide range of Information Communication Technology (ICT) applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages. The current philosophy of CALL puts a strong emphasis on student-centered materials that allow learners to work

on their own. Such materials may be structured or unstructured, but they normally embody two important features: interactive learning and individualized learning. CALL is essentially a tool that helps teachers to facilitate the language learning process. It can be used to reinforce what has been already learned in the classroom or as a remedial tool to help learners who require additional support (Davies, 2011). Over the years, more and more technical inventions have taken their place among the educational aids with which teachers surround themselves, so as to make their teaching more effective. What distinguishes the computers from other pieces of equipment, such as tape recorders and film projectors, and what forms the basis of its being an educational aid is its interactive capability.

Having identified and discussed some of the challenges encountered in implementing language provisions in the National Policy on Education, it is exigent to examine how these variables empirically affect the policy.

Research Question

What are the challenges encountered by teachers and school administrators in implementing the language provisions in the NPE?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by teachers and school administrators in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE.
2. There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered at private and public schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE.
3. There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered in rural and urban schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the survey design. The population for this study comprised of all the primary school pupils, secondary school students, their parents, teachers, head teachers and principals in Southwestern Nigeria. A sample of 1,620 pupils, 1,620 students, 54 head teachers, 54 principals, 300 English language teachers and 500 parents in Southwestern Nigeria were drawn from three senatorial districts in each of the six states (Ekiti, Ogun, Osun, Oyo, Ondo and Lagos) in Southwestern Nigeria for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select both public and private schools in the senatorial districts. Thus, two public and one private schools were selected from each senatorial district. From each of the primary and secondary schools, 90 students were selected using stratified random sampling technique with class level as

stratum giving a total of 3,240 students. All the 54 head teachers and 54 principals of the selected primary and secondary schools were used. 300 certified English Language teachers and 500 parents were selected using convenience sampling. In each senatorial district, six streams of classes, primaries 4, 5, 6, JSS II, JSS III, SS 1 were selected using stratified random sampling. An instrument titled "Challenges and Factors on Language Implementation Questionnaire" (CFIQ) was developed for the study. The instrument was designed by the researcher to elicit information on the challenges encountered in implementing the language provisions as well as factors affecting the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE. This was intended to find out whether factors such as inadequate instructional materials, insufficient language teachers as well as students' level of proficiency influence the implementation of the language provisions. This questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A was on personal information like work experience, qualification, sex, and class. Section B of the instrument consisted of 45 items which was meant for teachers and school administrators on the challenges encountered in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE. The respondents were expected to respond to each of the items of "CFIQ" on a five point Likert-type scale ranging from Great Extent to Not at all. The instrument was scored 0 for Not at all; 1 for Undecided, 2 for Little Extent, 3 for Some Extent and 4 for Great Extent.

Section C was meant to get information on the factors affecting the implementation of the language provisions such as students' learning environment and students' level of proficiency. The questionnaire was for teachers only. It was divided into two parts, Part A was on contextual factors which consisted of 15 items. Part B dealt with cultural factors that equally consisted of 15 items. The respondents made selection from the five options ranging from Great Extent to Not at all. Scoring of the instrument was: 0 for Not at all; 1 for Undecided, 2 for little Extent, 3 for Some Extent and 4 for Great Extent. The instrument yielded 0.77 using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, Relative Significance Index, One-Way ANOVA and t-test statistics.

RESULTS

Research Question

What are the challenges encountered by teachers and school administrators in implementing the language provisions in the NPE?

To answer this question, data on the question items of section 'B' on challenges encountered in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE were used. The data were analyzed using the percentages and RSI statistics.

The results are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Challenges Encountered in Implementing the Language Provisions in the NPE

	Statement	Great Extent		Some Extent		Little Extent		Undecided		Not at all		RSI
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1	My English language class is overcrowded	192	47.1	145	35.5	29	7.1	4	1.0	38	9.3	0.7960
2	There are inadequate strategies for recruiting language teachers to my school	261	64.0	81	19.9	16	3.9	40	9.8	10	2.5	0.8143
3	Instructional materials in my school for teaching English language in schools are not adequately provided	228	55.9	86	21.1	19	4.7	61	15.0	14	3.4	0.7488
4	I am faced with the pressure to cover the course content within a limited time frame	170	41.7	153	37.5	16	3.9	60	14.7	9	2.2	0.7230
5	Language teachers are not adequately motivated to put in their best in teaching in my school	11	2.7	13	3.2	99	24.3	229	56.1	56	13.7	0.2065
6	Language teachers are trained and retrained to meet with challenges in language classes in my school	6	1.5	104	25.5	199	48.8	83	20.3	16	3.9	0.4596
7	There is over-reliance on English language course books in teaching and learning in schools	13	3.2	206	50.5	156	38.2	29	7.1	4	1.0	0.6042
8	There is the absence of well-defined objectives for the teaching of language in the language provisions	238	58.3	80	19.6	14	3.4	66	16.2	10	2.5	0.7537
9	Instructional materials such as tape-recorder and diagrams are provided in teaching English language in my school	11	2.7	36	8.8	109	26.7	81	19.9	171	41.9	0.3315
10	I improvise teaching aids for language learning	13	3.2	103	25.2	182	44.6	37	9.1	73	17.9	0.4890
11	Sufficient fund is provided for taking care of needs in my school	67	16.4	98	24.0	209	51.2	18	4.4	16	3.9	0.6103
12	Libraries in my school are supplied with good reading materials	12	2.9	74	18.1	296	72.5	13	3.2	13	3.2	0.5362
13	Language teachers are not properly monitoring of the language teachers	12	2.9	68	16.7	152	37.3	154	37.7	22	5.4	0.3542
14	Competent language teachers are posted to my school to teach	11	2.7	41	10.0	268	65.7	80	19.6	8	2.0	0.4357
15	Learners have adequate time to read up after language classes in my school	34	8.3	82	20.1	152	37.3	83	20.3	57	14.0	0.4553
16	Co-curricular activities are organized in my school to assist learners' interactions	43	10.5	94	23.0	198	48.5	37	9.1	36	8.8	0.5429
17	Many of the buildings in my school are not conducive for language learning	21	5.1	112	27.5	152	37.3	71	17.4	52	12.7	0.4755
18	There is insufficient provision of furniture for learners in my school	29	7.0	97	23.8	193	47.3	81	19.9	8	2.0	0.4908
19	Language teachers are effectively monitored and evaluated in my school	35	8.6	56	13.7	41	10.0	83	20.3	193	47.3	0.3572
20	Head teachers and principals serve as internal supervisors to monitor language teaching and learning in my school	10	2.5	92	22.5	119	29.2	98	24.0	89	21.8	0.3940
21	Media and computer assisted instruction are provided in teaching and learning English in my school	15	3.7	12	2.9	88	21.6	183	44.9	110	27.0	0.2341
22	I incorporate the mother tongue in teaching English language in the upper classes for learners' better understanding in my school	139	34.1	108	26.5	95	23.3	56	13.7	10	2.5	0.6618
23	There are inadequate language teachers in schools in my school	99	24.3	163	40.0	95	23.3	8	2.0	43	10.5	0.6850
24	Most learners in my school find it difficult to express themselves in English	104	25.5	118	28.9	100	24.5	67	16.4	19	4.7	0.6060
25	Language teachers motivate learners to cultivate reading habit in my school	41	10.0	129	31.6	91	22.3	106	26.0	41	10.0	0.4743
26	Language teachers' welfare is not adequately considered in my school	116	28.4	153	37.5	84	20.6	37	9.1	18	4.4	0.6795
27	Most learners in my school participate more actively in Yoruba classes than in English Language classes	80	19.6	116	28.4	77	18.9	78	19.1	57	14.0	0.5386
28	The methods language teachers' employ in teaching in my school is boring	5	1.3	202	49.5	112	27.5	73	17.9	16	3.9	0.5386
29	Learners in my school are exposed to English language at school, not outside the school	205	50.2	134	32.8	32	7.8	30	7.4	7	1.7	0.7923
30	The students population in my English language class adversely affects learning	83	20.3	79	19.4	242	59.3	2	0.5	2	0.5	0.6464
31	Learning activities within the school system are properly coordinated in my school	7	1.7	79	19.4	196	48.0	121	29.7	5	1.2	0.4056
32	Available resources are properly managed so as to achieve the objectives of the language provisions in my school	6	1.5	155	38.0	241	59.1	3	0.7	3	0.7	0.5968
33	Language teachers are not selected for training programmes on the principle of reasonableness, justice and fair play in my school	198	48.5	145	35.5	18	4.4	2	0.5	45	11.0	0.8015
34	Language teachers are offered stipends for attending retraining programmes in my school	199	48.8	185	45.3	16	3.9	5	1.2	3	0.7	0.8493
35	I have little time for planning and preparation of English language lessons	5	1.2	146	35.8	26	6.4	2	0.5	229	56.1	0.4528
36	My school obtains relevant information on in-service training for language teachers' development from the Ministry of Education	190	46.6	145	35.5	26	6.4	42	10.3	5	1.2	0.7672

Item	Description	6	1.5	34	8.3	272	66.7	89	21.8	7	1.7	0.4148
37	Instructional materials are not consistently updated in my school	6	1.5	34	8.3	272	66.7	89	21.8	7	1.7	0.4148
38	As head teachers and principals we understand the goals and objectives of the language provisions	8	2.0	51	12.5	116	28.4	189	46.3	44	10.8	0.2825
39	Short and long range plans are made to accomplish the specific objectives of the language provisions in my school	5	1.2	138	33.8	107	26.2	121	29.7	37	9.1	0.4197
40	There is proper communication between the language teachers and school heads for proper planning and implementation of language provisions in my school	7	1.7	78	19.1	200	49.0	120	29.4	3	0.7	0.4075
41	Seminars on selected language topics are organized as part of the school programme in my school.	41	10.0	55	13.5	231	56.6	79	19.4	2	0.5	0.4859
42	The allocations in the school budget are spent accordingly in my school	15	3.7	194	47.5	121	29.7	35	8.6	43	10.5	0.5680
43	Language learning activities are reviewed in order to make improvement in necessary areas in my school	28	6.9	65	15.9	204	50.0	66	16.2	45	11.0	0.4657
44	Responsibilities relating to language learning activities such as quiz, debate, etc are properly organized and delegated in my school	36	8.8	113	27.7	223	54.7	30	7.4	6	1.5	0.5729
45	There is support, cooperation and dedication among the English language teachers in achieving the objectives of the language provisions in my school	12	2.9	91	22.3	230	56.4	60	14.7	15	3.7	0.4877

Table 1 depicted the challenges encountered by teachers, head teachers and principals in implementing the language provisions in the NPE. The most prevalent challenges confronted by the respondents as revealed by the RSI analysis were

	SS	df	MS	F	Sign
Between Groups	180.427	2	90.213	0.811	.445
Within Groups	45054.689	405	111.246		
Total	45235.115	407			

lack of concern for language teachers' welfare (0.8493), inadequate strategies for recruiting language teachers (0.8143), inappropriate selection of language teachers for training programmes (0.8015) and overcrowded classes (0.7960) with percentage scores of 48.8%, 64.0%, 48.5% and 47.1% respectively. This implied that teachers and school administrators were unable to appropriately implement the language provisions as a result of the various challenges they confronted. In a situation where the appropriate instructional aids needed for the teaching of languages were not provided adequately in primary and secondary schools, implementation of educational policies would be affected.

Table 3: t-test Summary Table showing difference in the Challenges Encountered in Private and Public Schools on the Implementation of Language Provisions in the NPE

Variable	School type	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	T	p	Remark
Challenges	Public	257	87.0078	27.68827	406	0.427	0.670	>0.05
	Private	151	85.8079	26.93714				

The results in table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered in both public and private schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE ($t = 0.427, p > 0.05$). This implied that the same challenges were encountered in both public and private schools as regards the implementation of language provisions in the NPE. This was to say that challenges such as inadequate instructional materials,

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered by teachers and school administrators in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE.

Table 2: Challenges Encountered by School Administrators in the Implementation of Language Provisions in the NPE

The results in Table 2 showed that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered by teachers, head teachers and principals in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE, ($F = 0.811, p > 0.05$). This indicated that both

teachers and school administrators faced with the same challenges in implementing the language provisions. These challenges ranged from inadequate teachers, poor school structure and over-reliance on English Language course books.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered at private and public schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE.

insufficient language teachers, over-reliance on English language textbooks had direct influence on the implementation of language provisions in the NPE.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the challenges encountered in rural and urban schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE

Table 4: t-test Summary showing the difference in the Challenges Encountered in Rural and Urban Schools on the Implementation of the Language Provisions in the NPE

Variable	School location	N	\bar{x}	Sd	df	t	p	Remark
Challenges	Rural	155	87.1226	25.63336	406	0.322	0.747	>0.05
	Urban	253	86.2213	28.45015				

The results in table 4 showed that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered in both rural and urban schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE ($t = 0.322$, $p > 0.05$). This implied that the same challenges were encountered in urban and rural areas as regards the implementation of language provisions in the NPE.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results obtained from the study showed that teachers and school administrators encountered diverse challenges in implementing the language provisions. The challenges ranged from: overcrowded classes for language teachers to cope with, inadequate provisions of instructional materials and textbooks for learners, unequipped libraries and lack of concern for the welfare of teachers. The frequency of the high percentage at which the needed support for implementation of the language provisions was indicated in the responses showed that for effective implementation, these challenges must be surmounted if not eradicated. The goals and objectives of the language provision were not clearly understood by the head teachers, principals and teachers. This supported the views of Emenanjo (1998) that there was still some lack of awareness of language provisions on the part of highly placed ministry officials, supervisors/inspectors of education, principals/headmasters of schools and practicing language teachers as stated in the NPE. This lack of awareness, on its part, was responsible for the relatively inferior status accorded Nigerian languages in the school system in particular and the society in general. In addition, in most primary and secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria, adequate language activities such as quiz, debates etc were not organized. Kolawole (2002) emphasized that various extra-curricular activities in schools helped learners to learn. These activities were press club, literary and debating societies and others. The shortage of trained language teachers was a challenge to language provision implementation. Alaku (1997) blamed teachers for not having sufficient command of the language as well as sufficient techniques to successfully teach language.

The results also indicated that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered by teachers, head teachers and principals in the implementation of language provisions in the NPE. ($F=0.811$, $p > 0.05$). This implied that the same challenges were witnessed by all the stakeholders.

This study was in support of Oladipo (2007) who was of the view that, as long as the mother tongue remained underdeveloped, English would continue to be used as an indispensable medium of instruction while the mother tongue would have little or no role to play in the country's educational system.

The results revealed no significant difference in the challenges encountered by private and public schools in the implementation of the language provisions in the NPE ($t = 0.427$, $p > 0.05$). The public schools used Nigerian languages as medium of instruction while from mid-primary, English became the major. This was unlike the private school where the medium of instruction was wholly English which gave little or no room for the teaching of indigenous languages. This supported Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) who depicted the challenges to implementation and reasons why implementation failed in actual practice on the part of teachers and implementers. To them, unavailability of required instructional materials, incompatibility of organizational arrangements with the innovation, lack of staff motivation, among others posed as challenges to the implementation of language provisions.

The results indicated that there was no significant difference in the challenges encountered by rural and urban schools in the implementation of language provisions in the NPE ($t = 0.322$, $p > 0.05$). The relative influence and envisaged development of the indigenous languages remained the same in both rural and urban. In the rural area, the tendency to use the mother tongue as medium of instruction was high. English was also taught as a subject whether or not it was used as a medium of instruction. This agreed with that of Oladipo (2007) who was of the view that appropriate medium of instruction should be utilized at the different stages of learners' learning in both rural and urban areas.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study indicated that there was difficulty in implementing the language provisions as stipulated in the National Policy on Education in primary and secondary schools in Southwestern Nigeria. The results depicted that the objectives of the language provisions were not implemented in schools. The various factors and challenges confronting the implementation of the language provisions showed that the extent of implementation was far from meeting the stated objectives of the language

provisions. It was therefore concluded that if the factors and challenges identified in the study were addressed, implementation of the objectives of language teaching as stipulated in the NPE in primary and secondary schools would be better implemented in Southwestern Nigeria.

Government should sponsor the development of curricular and instructional materials for teaching and learning of various languages in the country, especially those that have been recognized in the language provisions. There should be a forum where teachers, school administrators and inspectors would be informed of the objectives of language provisions in the NPE.

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