



## TEACHERS' SUBJECT MASTERY AS PREDICTOR OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN YORÙBÁ GRAMMAR

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### Abstract

This study examined the relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar in Education District V, Lagos states. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The context of the research comprised 40 randomly selected public senior secondary schools in Education, District V. Participants were drawn from these schools through simple random sampling technique. A total of 40 Yorùbá language teachers and 400 students who offer Yorùbá were randomly selected for the study. Two instruments Teacher's Subject Mastery Observation Schedule (TSMOS) and the Yorùbá Grammar Achievement Test (YGAT) were used to collect data for the study having found to be reliable (with 0.72 & 0.714) using Cronbach Alpha & Split-half correlation coefficient. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Collected data were analysed by using descriptive statistic for the demographic information of respondents while inferential statistics Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' academic achievement in Yorùbá Grammar. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between subject mastery ( $r=.158$ ;  $N=40$ ;  $p< 0.05$ ) and students' academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar. This study concluded that teacher should understand that subject mastery is vital and contributes meaningfully to student academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar. The study recommended that Yorùbá grammar should be distinguished and taught by those who have advance knowledge in it.

**Keywords:** Students' Academic Achievement, Teachers' Subject Mastery, Yorùbá Grammar.

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## Introduction

Education is observed to be an essential tool for skills and knowledge acquisition towards human capital development. There are three major levels of education which include primary, secondary and tertiary education with various teaching subjects including Yorùbá language. Yorùbá language is one of the three national languages in Nigeria with a status of being an indigenous language in Nigeria. Historically, Adéyíńká (2005); Adétòkun (2018) accounted that Yorùbá language is one of the languages made compulsory by the National Policy on Education in Nigeria (NPE 2013). It is the mother-tongue of the people who now occupy what is known as Èkìtì, Kogí, Kwàrà, Ogùn, Òhndó, Òşun, Òyó, and Lagos States. They go further to state that Yorùbá people are also found spread in different parts of the world, such as neighbouring West African countries of the Republic of Benin, Togo, Côte D'Ivoire and Sierra-Leone; South American countries of Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago.

Yorùbá language is said to belong to the West Benue-Congo of the Niger-Congo phylum of African languages, it is been spoken in the western states of Nigeria, Togo, Republic of Benin, Ghana, Sudan, Sierra-Leone and Côte D'Ivoire, and outside Africa, a great number of speakers of the language are in Brazil, Cuba, including Trinidad and Tobago. Yorùbá is regarded as one of the major languages of Nigeria (Fábùnmi & Sàláwù, 2005). Its loanwords are mostly from Arabic, English, Hausa and Igbo languages. Its dialects include: Ègbá, Ìjèbú, Òyó/Ìbàdàn, Èkìtì, Ìgbómìnà, Ìjèsà, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìfẹ̀ and Ònkò. The effective speakers of the language in the country are about 35% of the country's total population. According to the International African Institute (1980) the Yorùbá language "is used by the media for example; the Press, Radio and Television. It is also used as a language of formal instruction and a curriculum subject in the primary school.

In education, the Yorùbá language plays many important roles ranging from being a subject in the curriculum and being language of instruction in specific instance in education. These notions are explicitly sectionalized in different policy provisions available in the National Policy on Education (2013). Being a subject in the curriculum particularly at the secondary school level, different aspects of the language are being taught. These aspects include and are not limited to composition writing, reading comprehension, grammar, literature, culture, phonetic and phonology and the likes. The one of interest in this study is the Yorùbá grammar.

Mart (2013) explains that teacher's primary goal is to cultivate students' curiosity for efficiency in learning. He opines that one of the most significant requirements to teach effectively is good knowledge of subject matter the teacher is teaching. Ferguson and Womack (1993) write: "effective communication of content knowledge is a hallmark of good teachers" which means that for teaching and learning to be successful, a teacher must display good content knowledge in the course of his/her lesson. Deborah Loewenberg Ball; Mark Hoover Thames, and Geoffrey Phelps (2008) states that content knowledge is the key to positive students' learning achievements because it functions in the process of teaching and learning than classroom management, time allocation or planning. Fákéyẹ (2012), Kimberly 2009 and Mullens (1993) states that teachers must be knowledgeable in their area of specialization. In truth, if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes right out the window. Hence, effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teachers' subject matter competence which is regarded as a prime predictor of students' achievements. One of the National Teachers' Institute (2009) publications show that teachers' who lack knowledge and confidence may naturally attempt to avoid or minimise their difficulties through a variety of strategies which include; avoidance of topic, heavy reliance on text and over emphasis on practical activities which over time, may result to negative learning achievements. Amúşan (2014) further states that teachers' lack of



knowledge in science has been documented and frequently identified as a barrier to the implementation of curriculum reform and to students' progress.

According to Bruce and Neville (1979) educational achievement is measured by standardised achievement test developed for school subjects. Notable Researchers have worked assiduously to ensure positive academic achievement in the study of Yorùbá across all levels of education. Mákindé, Oláníyan-Shóbòwálé and Adétòkun (2021), Abatan (2004), pointed out that examples of such researches are the Ife Six-Year Primary Education Project by Aliu Babátúndé Fáfúnwà, the study revealed that children taught using Yorùbá language as a medium of instruction performed better than those that were taught in the English language, which was done to improve the process of teaching and learning of Yorùbá language.

Despite these efforts, low achievement of students at the Senior Secondary School level in Yorùbá has become a recurring decimal as evident in the results of West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) (Onwuka, 2012). An insight into the possible causes of this perennial poor performance can be seen in WAEC chief examiners' annual reports for 2018 and 2019. There, it reported that student's poor performance in the subject is as a result of defective knowledge of grammar. It was further stated that in answering comprehension passages, many candidates exhibited inability to express themselves correctly in their own words. Expressions not taken verbatim from the passage contained either a tense error or grammatical error. Likewise, the West African Examination Council WAEC further reported that students lacked in-depth knowledge of the phonological and grammatical aspects of the subject. Also, that most students could not describe some grammatical words appropriately. The report further showed that most of the students could not identify different types of phrases. The reports accounted that candidate were tasked to explain aspects in Yorùbá grammar and use the aspectual markers in sentences. Many students performed woefully as they misunderstood aspects for occurrence and could not come up with sentences containing each aspectual marker.

Researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for the quality and achievement of learners. These factors according to Mákindé and Adétòkun (2022) are student factors, family factor, teacher factor and peer factor. In addition, Mákindé, Oláníyan-Shóbòwálé, Adétòkun and Hunpegan (2021) equally identified home background, socio-historical, linguistic and pedagogical, attitudinal and economic as factors. But with little or no attention placed on teachers' subject mastery. However, this study investigated teacher's subject mastery as predictor of senior secondary school student's academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar because the future of any nation is in the hand of its teacher; for the qualities they possess today will inevitably reflect in the citizen of tomorrow. If this statement is true, knowledge about teachers' subject mastery is important, particularly in teaching and learning of language.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In Nigeria today, particularly with specific attention to Lagos State, the performance of some Yorùbá teachers in public senior secondary school poses a serious challenge on the academic performance of students in Yorùbá subject. In spite of the importance of Yorùbá grammar instruction in the classroom, teachers' subject mastery is one of the factors that has impeded the effectiveness of language teachers and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar in the Lagos State, Nigeria. Grammar remains an essential aspect of the Yorùbá language curriculum because the knowledge of grammatical rules determines students' academic achievement in the subject. However, perennial poor performance in the Yorùbá language has been traced to the poor knowledge of Yorùbá grammar and teachers' subject mastery (Oşókòyà 2021, Adétòkun 2014, Mákindé and Adétòkun 2022, Akínsólá, 2018) in the



classroom. Interventions to solve the problem of poor academic achievement in the Yorùbá language have prompted researches on the relationship between teachers' subject mastery and academic success in Yorùbá language. Although this study reported that teachers' subject mastery can positively influence students' academic achievement in this subject area, the relationship between teacher subject mastery and achievement in Yorùbá grammar has not enjoyed much research attention in Nigeria.

Teachers' subject mastery has been categorized as predictor of senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar. The school system is bedeviled with some lackadaisical attitude of teachers to work in the area of teaching pedagogy, qualification, and subject mastery. Efforts to improve students' achievement in the Yorùbá language have largely focused on learner-related variables in secondary school classrooms such as language anxiety, cognitive style, and gender to mention but a few. This backdrop has aroused the interest of the Researcher to critically examine Teachers' subject mastery as predictor of senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Yorùbá grammar in education district V, Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research work is to investigate the extent to which Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery serve as predictor of students' academic achievements in Yorùbá grammar. Specifically, the study seeks to; find out the relationship that exist between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievements in Yorùbá grammar in education district V, Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Research Question**

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar in education district V, Lagos State, Nigeria?

### **Research Hypothesis**

For the purpose of this study, the below hypothesis was formulated:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar in education district V, Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The population of the study comprised all Yorùbá teachers and students in public senior secondary school II in Education District V, Lagos State, Nigeria. That gave a total of 440 teachers and students that was accessed for this study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 40 teachers and 400 students as illustrated by Table 1 below. The main independent variable in this study is teachers' subject mastery, and the dependent variables is academic achievement in Yorùbá Grammar. The study employed Convenient sampling technique for the Proximity to the Researcher and the presence of highly qualified Yorùbá teachers. Teacher's Subject Mastery Observation Schedule (TSMOS) and the Yorùbá Grammar Achievement Test (YGAT) were the instruments used for data collection. The instruments were face and content validity, and also was trial-tested on a sample of 5 teachers selected in a school outside the area of this study. The alpha value of the reliability test was correlated by using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis to obtain the reliability coefficients of 0.72 for TSMOS respectively. Some factors served as limitations to



the study, the Researcher would have selected more teachers from each school employed for the study but due to lack of required numbers of Yorùbá teachers in each school made the Researcher to use majorly only one teacher available in each of the selected schools, and also the un-cooperative attitude of some teachers and students to filled copies of the questionnaire post a major challenge.

**Table 1:** The sample size of Yorùbá Teachers and Students in Education District V in Lagos State, Nigeria.

S/N	Education District V Zones	Yorùbá Teachers	Yorùbá Students	Total Number
1	Ajéròmí – Ìfẹ́lódùn Zone	10	100	110
2	Amúwo – Òdòfin zone	10	100	110
3	Badagry zone	10	100	110
4	Òjó zones	10	100	110
<b>Total</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>440</b>

Forty (40) questionnaires and four hundred (400) students' achievement test were the major tools for data collection and data collected were analyzed using the statistical tools of simple percentage, mean, standard deviation and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the formulated hypothesis and the results were interpreted at 0.05 level of significance. The items were developed using the Likert Scale to be responded by choosing from the options Excellent (5) Very Good (4) Good (3) Poor (2) Not observed (1). The obtainable maximum scores in this instrument were 100%. The Researcher personally administered the instruments to the respondents.

## Results

### Analysis of Demographic Information

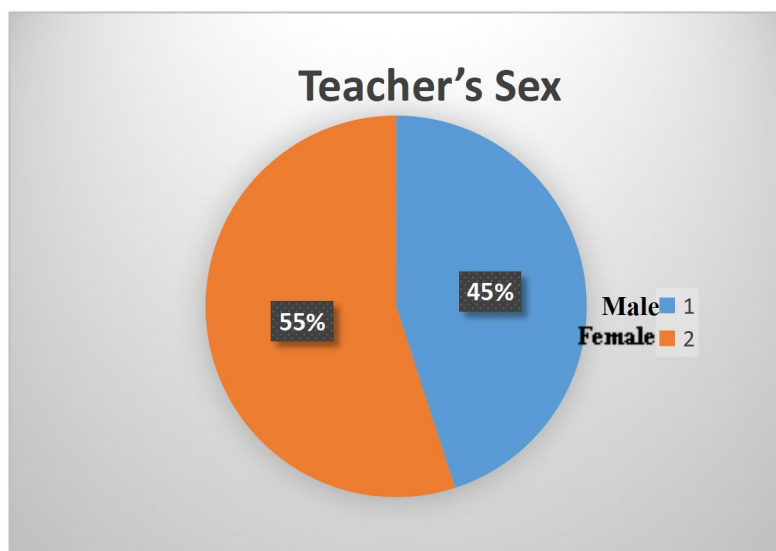
The table below depicts the demographic information of the respondents.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Teachers' Sex**

Respondents	Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Teachers' Sex</b>	Male	18	45
	Female	22	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, (2023).

Table 2 shows that out of 40 respondents, 18 (45%) of them were male while 22 (55%) were female teachers. This means that the male teachers involved in the study were less than the female teacher and that the two sexes were fairly equally represented. The chart representing the sex distribution of the participants based on Table 2 is presented in Figure 1.

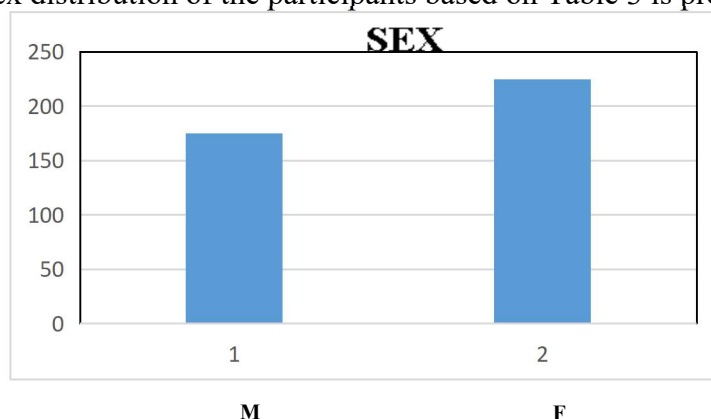


**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Students' Sex**

Respondents	Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students' Sex	Male	175	43.75
	Female	225	56.25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows that 175 (43.75%) of the respondents were male and 225 (56.25%) were female students. This means that the male students involved in the study were less than the female students and that the two sexes were fairly equally represented. The bar chart representing the sex distribution of the participants based on Table 3 is presented in Figure 2.



**H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar.**

The hypothesis was tested using items 1-20 of Section B with the use of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis. In order to address the hypothesis, the data collected from the field were analyzed as indicated in Tables 4.



**Table 4: Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis of relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar.**

		Teachers Subject Mastery	Student's Achievement
Subject Mastering	Pearson Correlation	1	.158
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031
	N	40	40
Student's Achievement	Pearson Correlation	.158	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	
	N	40	100

\* Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed) **Source:** Field Survey, (2023).

The above table reveals that there is a positive and significant relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar ( $r = .158$ ;  $N=40$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , 2-tailed). This means that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar is rejected since  $p < 0.05$ , at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is significant relationship between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar.

### Discussion of Findings

#### Relationship between Yorùbá Language Teachers' Subject Mastery and Students' Achievement in Yorùbá Grammar

From the result gathered by the Researcher in the study, it was obvious that there was positive significant relationship ( $r = .158$ ;  $N=40$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between Yorùbá language teachers' subject mastery and students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar.

The findings above in part, support Adeyinka & Aduroja's (2013) submission that teachers have an important role to play in students' academic achievement and they play crucial role in educational attainment. It is also in line with Fakeye's (2012) opinion that teachers should possess some characteristics which are keys to sealing the gaps in students' achievement. It is obvious from the result, considering Fakeye's claims that effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teacher's subject mastery competence which is regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning outcomes. The result could be fashioned alongside Amusan (2014) that teachers' lack of knowledge has been identified as a barrier to the implementation of curriculum reform and to students' progress. To further discuss this result, Deborah et al. (2008) stance could be upheld as valid because they attest to the fact that content knowledge is the key to positive students' learning outcomes.

Likewise, the submission of Mart (2013) is also in consonance with this study's result. Mart claimed that teacher's primary goal is to cultivate students' curiosity for efficiency in learning and that one of the most significant requirements to teach effectively is good knowledge of subject matter the teacher is teaching. Also, Ferguson and Womack's (1993) advocacy that effective communication of content knowledge is a hallmark of good teachers is greatly supported in the result of the researcher's findings. This connotes that for teaching and learning to be successful, a teacher must display good content knowledge in the course of his/her lesson. The result equates Kimberly 2009 and Mullens (1993) findings that teachers must be knowledgeable in their area of specialization. In truth, if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes right out the window.

The result also supported NTIs (2009) publications that teachers' who lack knowledge and confidence may naturally attempt to avoid or minimise their difficulties through a variety of



strategies which include; avoidance of topic, heavy reliance on text and over emphasis on practical activities which over time, may result to negative learning achievements.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher subject mastery was found significantly related to students' achievement in Yorùbá grammar. This implies that teachers effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teacher's subject mastery competence which is regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning outcomes

The language of instruction is also the only possible way of making the students to learn effectively, and the teacher must have a mastery of it if their teaching is to be meaningful. Most important thing is that teacher must ensure that positive learning outcomes are achieved particularly where not found to be negative.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, analysis and conclusion, the following recommendations are made for the study:

1. Teacher's proficiency in Yorùbá should be examine carefully prior to recruitment if they are to serve in Yorùbá.
2. Yorùbá grammar should be distinguished and taught by those who have advance knowledge in it.
3. Teachers must be exposed to workshop, seminars, training and so on, to improve their teaching skills and classroom interaction, this will also equip them with up-to-date or the latest facts in their subject.
4. Yorùbá language teachers should improve on their teaching competency of Yorùbá grammar and that student as well, should develop positive attitudes and self – concept towards Yorùbá grammar so as to be able to perform well in Yorùbá as a whole in Nigeria Secondary Schools

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study could be replicated using larger sampling. Also, for more understanding and to have more ideas on this research topic, the under listed topics are suggested for further study:

1. Teachers' and school factors as predictors of senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Yorùbá Grammar.
2. A study could be carried out to evaluate the extent of proficiency of the teachers in relation to academic achievement in Yorùbá Grammar.



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