

Achievement in Yoruba Oral Poetry: The Place of Pupils' Attitude

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between pupils' attitude and achievement in Yoruba oral poetry among public primary school pupils in Ona-Ara local government area of Oyo state. The study adopted the survey research design. The participants were 250 primary five pupils randomly selected from five public primary schools (50 per school) in Ona-Ara Local Government Area, Oyo State. The instrument used was Yoruba oral poetry questionnaire($r=0.81$) and Yoruba oral achievement test was carried out ($r=0.82$). Findings revealed a significant positive correlation ($r=.66$, $p<0.05$) between attitude and achievement. Pupils with positive attitudes demonstrated higher achievement (mean score=42.9) than those with negative attitudes (mean score=16.8). Factors influencing pupils' attitude include interest in Yoruba culture, teacher's teaching method, and parental support. The findings underscores the crucial role of attitude in the learning Yoruba oral poetry. It was recommended innovative teaching methods, parental support and cultural relevance to enhance pupils' engagement with and achievement in Yoruba oral poetry.

Keywords: Yoruba oral poetry, Attitude, Achievement, Engagement, Cultural relevance

Introduction:

The primary education level is the key to the success or failure of the whole educational edifice because the rest of the educational systems is built upon it. Primary education according to the National policy on education (NPE 2013) is likened to the key which opens to success or failure of the whole educational system. Atanda (2018), supporting Opoola(2021) regarded primary education as a very vital and fundamental to all types of education any person can receive in life.

The federal government of Nigeria stated and clarified the objectives of primary education in section 4 page 12 of the national policy on education in section (2013) for the benefit of all citizens in terms of kind of society desired in relation to the environment and the realities of the modern world. Generally, objectives of primary education are:

1. The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively;

2. The laying of a sound basis for the scientific and reflective thinking;
3. Citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society;’
4. Character and moral training and the development of sound attitudes;
5. Developing the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
6. Giving the child the opportunities for developing, manipulative skills that will enable him function effectively in the society within the limit of the capacity;
7. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement inducing preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

Looking at the above objectives, it could be seen that language is one of the key means through which the objectives could be achieved, hence the first objectives “The inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively” (NPE, 2013) Language is a vital tool for the unity of a society. It does not only integrate inhabitant of the society, but also gives them an identity. Babalola (2022) sees language as an instrument for communication; a symbol of social identity and an emblem of group membership and solidarity. Also, according to Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2022) language is culture-bound, that is, a language is a product of a particular culture which serves as an underlying factors in the determination of words and the meaning given to such words in that particular language. Therefore, in the education of an individual, language concerns the influence of social life and social relationships on the development of the personality. The whole process of education is the interaction of the individual and social group with certain ends in view for the development of the individual and the community at large. Meanwhile, there is the need to mention that every language has its owns set of rules (literature) which govern the speakers. Literature offers pleasure and entertainment to those who voluntarily attend to it. This benefit, however should not be under estimated because through pleasure and enjoyment that can be obtained from reading of literature certain other fundamental skills and capacities for discrimination, judgment and decision. The inclusion of Yoruba literary studies in the secondary school curriculum is in realization of the immense contribution it has to offer as regards the achievement of the national

goals. Often, apart from the fact that literary studies provide an opportunity for the students to develop their communicative competence in a particular language, it also sharpens their mental skills.

Literature is considered language in action, it also brings about cultural and intellectual awareness of that environment as well as the world beyond, that is, literary studies performs both instructional and educational functions. But in addition, it performs some therapeutic functions like relaxation from stress and tension after the day's work and the provision of deep seated psychological problems encountered by an individual. The primary aim of literature is to give pleasure and entertain those who voluntarily attend to it (Babalola, 2022). Hence every literary work of art takes cognisance of this. However, no literature emerged first as written, as the basis of every literature is its orality.

Literature, therefore, serves as the repository of folklore. In Africa for instance, literature is helping to express the true spirit of the new Africa in which the twenties century and past ages flow into one another against the logic of a space time continuum ever moving towards the future (Awoniyi 2010). Yoruba oral literature accords due respect to children in its poetry which comes in the likes of folktales, lullabies, oriki (cognomen) and mnemonics which serves as aid mnemonics for counting from one to ten (Majasan, 2018). It also serves as the most potent weapon of ensuring continuity and vitality. Lullabies and oriki, according to Isola, serve as origin of literature as they ensure the mental and psychological health of the child thus promoting a robust intellectual development.

Yoruba folktales are of immense value for indirectly introducing the child to the social economic relations in the society because the folktales of a people tend to serve as commentaries on their fears and aspirations. Furthermore, folktales bring joy and instruction to the children through stories and songs. They are meant to give the picture of the society through exposure to examples of life (Olunlade; 1990). For example, in the song:

Òjò n rò, seré ninú ilé

Má wonú òjò,

Kí aso re kó má bà tutù,

Kí otútù má bà á mú o.

Rain is falling, play inside,

Do not enter the rain,

That your clothe be not wet,

That you do not catch cold.

Lullabies, according to Adetunji (2015), are songs for lulling a baby to sleep. Mothers are fond of singing these songs anytime their children feel uneasy or are crying. However, wherever it is observed that a child feels restless and not sleeping after which some lullabies had been sung, mothers, especially elderly women in the home, resort to chanting the oriki, (cognomen) of the child and this, according to Isola Ogundeji (2023) has been proved to be very effective over the years. This is because, no sooner had the cognomen begun than the child slept off. It is however disheartening to note that the more literate a society becomes, the less effective is its morality. Things were not like this before the turn of the twentieth century as most children literary genres in Yoruba were oral and were transmitted orally from generation to generation.

While Fagunwa's novels are embraced by children because of the folktale tradition that be employed, they are equally enjoyed by adults because his works leads themselves to interpretation at two levels- the ordinary (children's) level and the allegorical (adult) level (Adeyemi, 2021). This means that folktales are enjoyed by both children and adults. Isola had earlier observed that the language of Fagunwa is simple but highly patterned.

In the case of Adetunji (2016), his poems have endeared many children to Yoruba language. Some common examples are:

Isé ni òdògùn ìsé

Múra sísé òré mi

Bí a kò bá ré ni fẹ̀yìntì

Bí òlé làárí

Bí a kò bá ré ni gbékèlé

À tera mó isé eni

Which literary translates as:

Work hard my friend

If we had no one to lean on

One is like a lazy person

If we find no one to depend on

One will concentrate on one's work.

This poem reveals the high respect that the Yoruba people attach to hard work. It encourages a child to work hard and not to rest on his or her oars if such a child does not have a very wealthy parent. The summary of this poem is to encourage every child to depend on his or her own ability to work hard and be able to sustain him or she as human confidence is vanity. Beyond hard work, they also promote the values of skills competencies virtues etc.

Isé àgbè ni sé ilè wa

Eni kò sisé

Á mà jalè

Ìwé kíkó

Láísí oko àti àdà

Kò ì pé o

Kò ì pé o

Which literary translates as:

Farming is our national occupation

Whoever does not work?

Will steal

Formal education

Without hoe and cutlass

Is incomplete

The poem above reveals the major occupation of the Yoruba which is farming. It also points out the fact that formal education should be combined with farming in order to bring about a balanced man in the society. The poem is a reminder to every child to cultivate habit of practicing agriculture, in whatever little way the child can. Most of these poems in Odunjo's Alawiye series are noted for their moral qualities based on the Yoruba beliefs about child education. These poems, according to Isola (2015) are designed to help children understand the way the society is organized and to make them behave in a way that is acceptable in Yoruba culture.

Other study on children literature like Babalola's *akojopoaloiyapa* (1979; 2022), Sosanya's *Ewimode* (2006), Atanda's *Ewi fun awonomode* (1972 cited in Babalola, 2022), Abiodun's *Arofoawonomode* (1971 cited in Adetunji, 2016) are geared toward building moral and character training in the Yoruba child and making him or her fit squarely into the culture of the society. It is on the basis of this that attempt is made in this paper to examine the features of children literature.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of pupils to Yoruba Oral Poetry?
2. What is the influence of pupils' attitude on their achievement in Yoruba Oral Poetry?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in many ways. First, it provided empirical information on the attitude of primary school pupils to Yoruba oral poetry. Also, findings from the study revealed the extent to which pupils attitude influences their achievement in Yoruba oral poetry. In addition, the study reawaken the interest of pupils and Yoruba teachers on the need to teach Yoruba oral poetry in primary schools.

Methodology

This study employs descriptive survey research design, i.e. this survey design involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. The participants were 250 primary five pupils randomly selected from five public primary schools (twenty per school) in Ona-Ara local government area, Oyo State. The instrument used was Yoruba oral poetry questionnaire ($r=0.81$) and Yoruba oral poetry achievement test ($r=0.82$). Data collected from the study were analyzed using pearson product moment correlation and t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: summary of PPMC showing relationship between attitude and achievement in Yoruba oral poetry.

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev.	R	P-value	Remarks
Achievement in Yoruba oral poetry	250	4.3650	4.3650	.664	.301 ($p<0.05$)	Significant
Attitude to Yoruba oral poetry	250	42.9560	3.9212			

*Denotes significant at $P<0.05$

It is shown in the above table that there was a significant influence of attitude on achievement in Yoruba oral poetry ($r=.664, N=250, p<.05$). Pupils with a positive attitude towards Yoruba oral

poetry performed better compared to those with a negative attitude. That is, attitude seems to influence the variations on achievement in Yoruba Oral Poetry. This finding was in line with the study of Ogunbiyi (2022) and Adeniran (2023) that attitude had significant influence on pupil's achievement in Yoruba Poetry (Abiodun, 2021) also asserts that attribute to learning or teaching process could be positive or negative. The teacher's instructional strategy can influence learners' disposition towards a subject positively or negatively. The findings suggest that attitude plays a crucial role in learning Yoruba oral poetry.

Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of pupils' attitude on achievement in Yoruba Oral Poetry. The findings shows that attitude significantly influenced pupils' achievement. It can be concluded from this study that for effective teaching and learning of Yoruba Oral Poetry in schools, teaching and learning and other activities,they could engender pupils' positive attitude to it, should be used.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

1. To promote the teaching and learning of Yoruba Oral Poetry, teachers should adopt strategies and various activities that engender pupils' interests.
2. Teachers and parents should foster a positive attitude in pupils by making learning engaging , relevant and culturally connected,By doing so, pupils will develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of Yoruba oral poetry, ensuring its preservation for future generations.
3. Informal Yoruba Oral poetry clubs should be established in schools to enable pupils practice Yoruba Oral poetry regularly.
4. Resource persons in the area of Yoruba oral poetry should be invited to school to give learners a first hand information on Yoruba Oral poetry.
5. The school management should create time on the time - table for Yoruba Oral poetry to encourage pupils to learn it regularly.

6. Recommendations include incorporating Yoruba oral poetry into the curriculum, using innovative teaching methods, and providing opportunities for pupils to showcase their skills.

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