

## **CURRICULUM ACROSS LANGUAGES.**

**Grace Chibiko Offorma Ph.D**  
**Professor of Curriculum Studies**  
**Department of Arts Education,**  
**University of Nigeria, Nsukka.**

### **1.0. Introduction**

I must appreciate my creator for this beautiful opportunity given to me today to present my inaugural lecture to this august audience. I believe that God has charted my path to choosing teaching as my career. I still remember the discussion I had with my father in 1974, when he saw my West African School Certificate Examination. He tried to persuade me to choose nursing as a career. I rejected that offer and respectfully explained to him why I preferred teaching to nursing or any other profession. I told him that I love teaching because it would give me opportunity to guide younger people to learn my subject, good behaviour, respect for elders and constituted authorities. It would also give me opportunity to stay with my own family, when I got one, and avoid night duties which are demanded of nurses. Again, I believe that teachers go on holidays whenever schools are on vacation. So, I could always go on holidays three times a year.

1974 was the year the Federal Government introduced one year teacher training for WASC holders, as a measure to produce enough teachers for the teeming population in the Primary schools as a result of the newly introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy. The same year, I got dual admissions to do 'A' level in English language and literature and to train as a teacher in Queens College, Enugu and Holy Rosary College, Enugu, respectively. Because of the love I have for teaching, I chose HRC, where I became a pioneer student of that

experimental teacher training programme. I earned Teachers' Grade Two certificate the following year (1975). I believe that the performance of the 1974/75 set encouraged the Government to continue with the one-year teacher training programme of the UPE. It was stopped when the Government changed the minimum teaching qualification from Teacher's Grade Two Certificate to Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE).

Then in 1976/77, I gained admission into the famous Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri, now Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, to read French. There I got a friend and both of us took entrance examination to the prestigious University of Nigeria. My friend opted for foreign languages, while I went for Education/ French. Both of us received our admission letters during the long vacation, so we abandoned our programme at Alvan, and came to this great university. My friend continued to persuade me to change my degree programme to Foreign Languages but to no avail. We both graduated in 1981 and earned Second Class (Hons) Upper Division. She later became an untrained class room teacher in a secondary school. Few years after that, she returned to the university to do Post Graduate Diploma in Education to qualify as a teacher and became my student. I said to her, 'thank God I resisted your temptation to drag me out of Education'.

I would say that God ordained that I would be a teacher and I am proud to be one because it is a noble profession and the mother of all professions. Since my career, I had taught at all levels of education. I taught in Community Primary School, Ezioewe, College of Education (College of Education, Katsina-Ala in Benue State), during my Youth Corps service, Nsukka High School, Nsukka and finally today I am a teacher in the university, the job I started in 1983 as a Graduate Assistant.

I believe that the love I have for teaching and language (I had A'S in WASC English and French and Geography) has motivated me to opt for specialization in Curriculum studies so as to keep abreast of my teaching subject, which is French language. Every subject teacher is an implementer of the curriculum of his/her discipline. Therefore, for effective implementation of any curriculum, the teacher factor is paramount. I use to let my students understand that they are the architects of the nation's educational standards. If the standard falls, they have the greater share of the blame. I also guide them to appreciate and differentiate between teaching and cheating, because I believe that one is either a teacher, when one effectively guides, directs, motivates and facilitates learning, or a cheat, if one neglects the teacher's responsibilities.

Mr Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, this lecture focuses on four parts:

1. Fundamental Concepts
2. Language and Language Skills
3. Language in the School Curriculum
4. Language Teaching Methods and Techniques
5. Future Research Focus
6. Conclusion

## **2.0 Fundamental Concepts**

### **2.1 Concepts of Curriculum.**

Curriculum was derived from a latin word 'currus' which means to run a race, courir in French (to run). It is believed that one starts a race once one begins to learn. Originally, it was regarded as a track through which people ran to reach a goal. The course or track always had a starting point, the runway and a goal, which was the end. This race is on, until the end of one's career. This concept is broad because as one runs the race, one is bound to gather a lot of experiences which may be cognitive,

(intellectual ability) affective (interest, emotion, disposition) and psychomotor (ability to manipulate the muscles to acquire some skills or perform some actions).

The curriculum of any school consists of all the situations that that the school may select and consistently organize for the purpose of bringing about changes in the behaviours of the learners and as a means of developing the personality of the individuals. It is the total experience involving the school in the process of educating young people. It includes the teacher, subjects, content, method of teaching and evaluation as well as the physical and psychological dimensions of the experience (Offorma 1994(a), 2002).

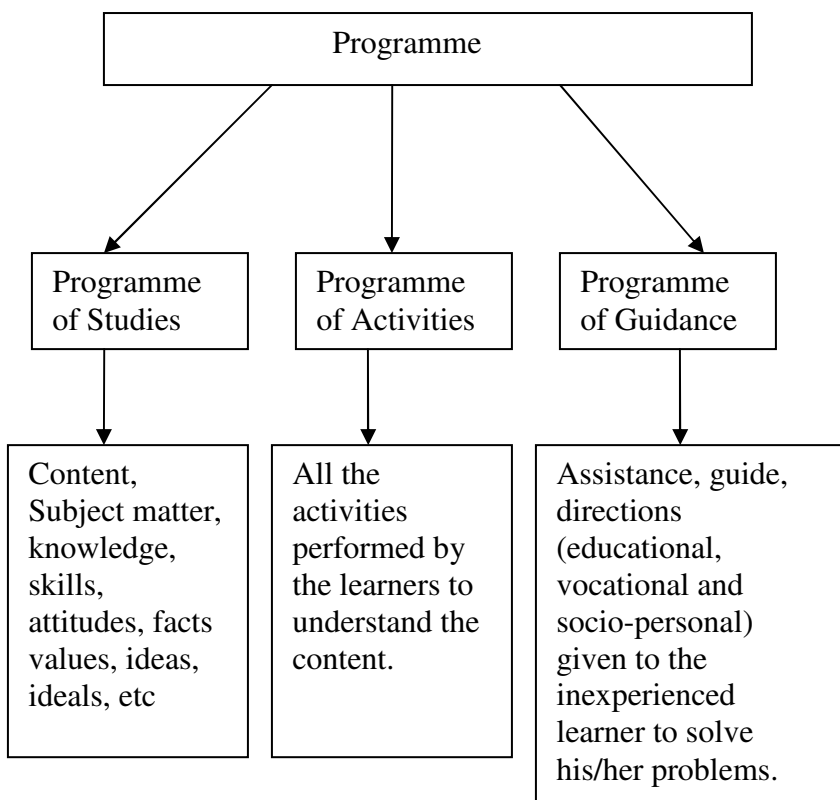
It is a course of study which undertaken by learners to in order earn s certificate, diploma, degree or any other forms of academic awards. It can also be seen as a collection of syllabuses. It is an educational plan by a social group for the training of their children to become functional members of their society.

Curriculum can be defined as the document, plan or blue print for instructional guide which is used for teaching and learning to bring about positive and desirable learner behaviour change. It can be regarded as the road map for the education of the learners.

Curriculum can be taken to mean the instrument by means of which schools seek to translate the hopes of the society in which they function into concrete reality (Offorma, 2006). It is planned and sequenced. It is a vehicle through which education is attained. The essence of education is the ability to transfer the knowledge, facts, skills, values and attitudes learnt from one situation to solve problems in another situation, and this is done through curriculum.

Curriculum according to Wheeler (1978), is a sequence of potential experiences set up in schools for the purpose of disciplining children and youths in group ways of thinking and acting. This implies that curriculum is planned and arranged in such a way that simpler things come before more complex ones. Sequencing is interpreted by the dictum, “start from known to unknown, from simple to complex, and from concrete to abstract”

The simplest but very comprehensive concept of curriculum is a programme. This is comprehensive because a programme has three components: programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance. The programme of studies deals with the content or body of knowledge to be presented to the learners. The programme of activities involves all the activities presented to the learners to facilitate understanding. It is the means while the programme of studies is the end. The activities can be mental or physical, overt or covert. They are always learner and goal oriented. The programme of guidance entails directing, guiding and helping the learner to solve his/her educational, vocational and socio-personal problems.

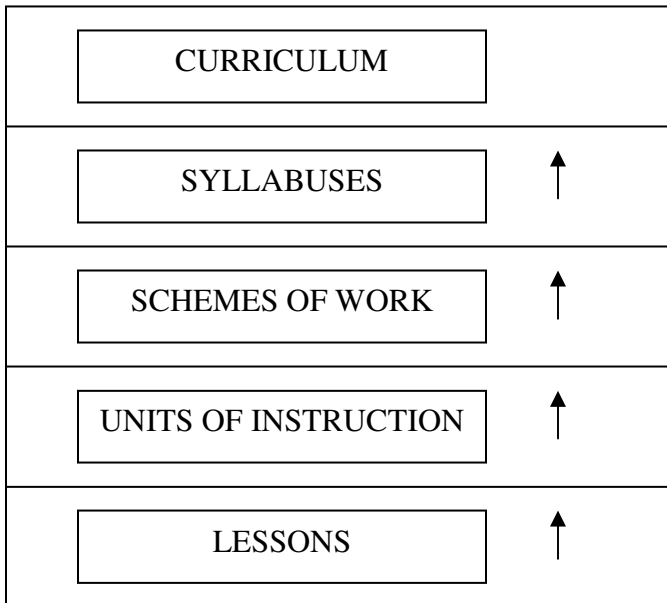


**Fig 1:** Curriculum as a Programme

## 2.2 Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum implementation is sometimes regarded as curriculum development. This entails the arrangement of the preplanned curriculum through assessment of the facilities, resources and environment to ensure that the planned curriculum will be implemented without problem (Offorma 1994b). Curriculum implementation is putting into action the planned curriculum. It is the execution of the planned curriculum in the

classroom through the efforts of the teacher and the learners. This implies that curriculum implementation takes place in the classroom. That is why Mkpa (1987) sees curriculum implementation as the classroom efforts of the teacher and the learner in executing the planned curriculum. When the teacher is delivering a lesson, he/she is implementing the curriculum because several lessons make up a unit of instruction and several units make up a scheme of work, several schemes of work make up the syllabus and several syllabuses make up the curriculum (Offorma, 1994). So in the long run, the first lesson that is taught in the class room is the beginning of the implementation of the curriculum in the course.



**Fig 2: Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum implementation is the interpretation of the planned curriculum by the teacher, who is the implementer. After planning the curriculum, it is downloaded to the teacher, who

will then interpret it for execution. According to Amadi (1993:17), curriculum implementation can be defined as:

that stage in the curriculum process and system whereby all the relevant curriculum input are brought into direct contact with the learners through a wide variety of activities, so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized at a minimal cost.

For Obasi and Ajeka (2007) curriculum implementation is the weaving together of the subject matter and method to produce desired learning activities which lead to the relevant learning outcomes. They believe that the main focus of implementation is the learner, while the most important person in curriculum implementation is the teacher.

Implementation is the instructional phase of the curriculum. After the selection of the objectives, content, method, resources and evaluation procedures, the teacher puts into action his/her plans. The teacher selects the activities and strategies he/she would use to execute the plan. This is implementation and it is at the classroom level.

All the activities engaged in by the teacher and the learners for the attainment of the stated objectives are classified as implementation. During implementation, the teacher employs various pedagogical materials such as textual materials, pictures, real objects, recorded cassettes, video and television, computer and internet facilities to mention but a few. He/she also applies some strategies such as songs, drama, simulation, demonstration, use of examples, questioning, excursion etc, to ensure effective implementation of the plan.

The main purpose of implementation is to promote learning. Each time the teacher engages in some activities which focus on the attainment of the objectives, he/she is implementing the



curriculum. It is very important to monitor the learner's behaviours during implementation to ensure that the learner's interaction with the learning environment is purposeful and leads to acceptable change in behaviour (Offorma, 1994)

Curriculum implementation is a process of determining the total programmes for the learners. For Nicholls and Nicholls (1980:14) 'curriculum implementation is the planning of opportunities intended to bring about certain changes in pupils and assessment of the extent to which these changes have taken place' Curriculum implementation as seen by Offorma, (1994), is the term used to describe the creation of curriculum materials that are products of curriculum planning for use by the learners.

### **2.3 Curriculum Development**

Curriculum development is the mapping out of what ought to be covered, within a stipulated period and at a certain level of education. It involves the why, what and how of education. Other considerations in curriculum development include education for whom, by who and where? All these questions border on the objectives, the content, the method, required resources and evaluation. They constitute the curriculum. Curriculum development calls for considerations of the learner, and his characteristics, the teacher who is the actual implementer of the curriculum, the environmental factors, which include the social, economic, political and educational values of the programme. From the above, it is evident that curriculum development specifies what is to be achieved, how to achieve what, who should achieve what, and how to achieve it so as to produce functional members of the society. Indeed curriculum development deals with the vision and mission of school programmes.

### **3.0 Language and Language skills**

#### **3.1 Language**

Language is a form or style of expression. Expression can be verbal or non-verbal. It is a system of signs and symbols and rules for using them that is used to convey thoughts, feelings and information. That is why each language has its lexis and structure, stylistics, orthography and phonology. Language is made up of words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them, used and understood by a community. For example, Igbo language, French language, English language, etc. These have their peculiarities because they developed from different cultures.

Language is an aspect of culture. Indeed, it conveys the cultural universals of the milieu.

It is a human characteristic that differentiates man from lower animals. It is very crucial to learning for all learners. People who are good in languages are generally good in other school subjects because the experiences they gain in the language contribute to their development of higher order cognitive skills. Language correlates with intelligence. Offorma (2004). This implies that people who are intelligent do well in languages.

Every educational system has a language policy, which guides the curriculum development at different levels. Governments have realized the benefits of languages in different human endeavours and that is why they emphasize languages in the school curricula. Language is an invaluable instrument in communication, commerce, politics and education. Culturally, language provides to the learners insights into cultural differences and opportunities to relate these to their own experiences and to consider different cultural and linguistic traditions, attitudes and behaviours.

Brumfit (1995) called for a new prominence to be given to teaching and learning of languages. The former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, as reported by Trafford (1999:8), recognized the importance of language teaching and learning when he said, ‘our young people must develop the competence, confidence and contact which will secure their place and influence in an increasing global society’. This is true especially today that the world is seen as a global village.

While the most obvious function of language is to communicate information, language also contributes to at least two other equally important, but less often recognized functions: to establish and maintain social relationships; and to express and create the social identity of the speaker.

### **3.2 Language Skills**

There are four major language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These are taught to the learners in that order, because language learning is developmental and cumulative. Listening is the basic language skill which entails paying attention. It involves two things: hearing and understanding. People who hear without understanding have not acquired the listening skill. You may have noticed that some people hear without understanding. For one to understand what one has heard, one must encode the information in the long term memory. Things encoded in the short memory are very ephemeral.

The speaking skill is second in the order of language skills. It means to utter words or to express oneself orally. It entails using a language in talking. Students who listen acquire the right speech skills. Without adequate knowledge of speech skills, learners may have difficulties in pronunciation, spelling, and intonation (Marjah, 2008). Adequate acquisition of speech skills leads to fluency in speech and reading. Politzer (1965) states

that language involves habit formation and for one to cultivate that habit, one must be given the opportunity to practice it.

Reading is understanding language by interpreting written symbols for speech sounds. It entails uttering aloud written or printed symbols. It is a complex process which involves active interaction and negotiation between the reader and the author. It requires adequate decoding skills and leads to reading comprehension, which is the processing of written language to get ideas, relate ideas to experiences, organize such ideas, evaluate and make use of them when needed. Comprehension is necessary in reading and when each of the skills is badly taught, comprehension suffers.

Writing is the process of making graphic symbols from oral symbols. It involves forming characters, letters or words on a surface. It is the highest and most complex of the language skills. In writing, thoughts and ideas are recorded using socially acceptable graphic symbols. According to Uzoegwu (2004:2), “writing is a means of expressing feelings, and thoughts, using the appropriate graphic symbols that are acceptable to the target language” It is one of the most important activities of a literate society and it has an incalculable influence on humanity because it is a common instrument for the dissemination of knowledge (Otagburuagu, 1997). This skill requires intensive teaching and practice. Writing as a language skill is purposive and it requires the writer to use correct grammar, spelling and punctuations (Offorma, 2004). Reading and writing ability are fundamental to every branch of education and especially to self-education all through life.

## 4.0 Language in the School Curriculum

### 4.1 Reasons for Language in the School Curriculum

This section discusses the essence of languages in the school curriculum. The languages discussed are English, French and Igbo. Let us briefly touch on their essence, especially for Nigerians. English language is Nigeria's official language because it is used for administration and official communication. It is also the major medium of instruction in schools. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society made up of different ethnic groups, languages, cultures and religions. Therefore, a common medium of communication was sought and English, the language of the colonial masters of Nigeria was adopted. Efforts were made to introduce either **WAZOBIA or Nigerian English, (wetin you carry)** but we are yet to get there. Baldeh (1990) and Mgbodile (1999) strongly accept that every Nigeria child and adult need to have a working knowledge of the English language. It is also the language of commerce, politics and diplomacy.

Nigeria is an Anglophone country surrounded by French speaking nations: Cameroon in the east, Chad in the North-east, Niger in the north, République de Benin in the west, and then the Atlantic Ocean in the south. So Nigeria can be described as a "linguistic island" surrounded by "French Seas" There is need for neighbours to live in harmony with one another and this harmonious co-existence is enhanced if the parties have a common medium of communication. The co-existence of Nigeria and these countries revolves around economic, political, social and cultural exchanges. Nigeria is a member of regional and international organizations such as Economic Communities of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union, United Nations Organization (UNO) and its various agencies.

Again we live in a polyglot world. Today we talk about the Global Village. There are more and more exchanges at the

economic, political, educational, cultural, social, scientific and technological levels enabling people from various countries to come together to discuss issues, solve problems, share ideas and plan for the future. Language is an important medium through which these enterprises can take place. The world is becoming smaller and smaller due to technological advancement and Nigerians must fall in line and maintain a relevant and significant place in international circle. Therefore a cultivation of the languages used by the group in their interactions is necessary.

The Addis-Ababa Conference on Education and the Yaoundé Conference of 1961 recommended that Anglophone Africa introduced French as a mandatory subject in its school system and Francophone Africa, English, as a second European language, as a means of communication and understanding between the people of these two linguistic sectors. That was important for African countries more so as no African language was developed to meet the purpose. The two most developed African languages are Hausa and Swahili which are still regional languages spoken in West Africa and East Africa respectively. The Federal Government of Nigeria realizes the importance of this language and so writes:

For smooth interaction with our neighbours, it is desirable for every Nigeria to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria and it shall be compulsory in primary and Junior Secondary Schools but Non-Vocational Elective at the Senior Secondary School (FRN, 2004:10).

The 1969 National Curriculum Conference in Lagos gave birth to a new system of education which introduced a new language policy pertaining to indigenous languages. The need for Nigerians to understand themselves was the drive to the

introduction of the policy. Three Nigerian languages were recognized as major are: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (F.R.N. 1977, 1998, 2004). They were introduced in the school curriculum. The policy states that “every Nigerian 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” (FRN, 2004:10).

The aim of the policy is to promote unity in the country. It is believed that language is a veritable vehicle for understanding. If Nigerians can speak a common language or people from different ethnic backgrounds can speak a common language, peace will reign. Okonkwo, (1972) see language as the greatest transmitter of human intelligence. According to him, philosophies, ideologies, concepts, feelings are mere meaningless abstractions it there is no language to transform them to forms that could be digested by the human understanding.

Igbo language like every other language is an instrument which binds the people together, identifies them, and endows them with distinct entity. It is a medium of expressing in its own peculiar way and manner, the features of the group of people who speak the language.

## **5.0 Language Teaching Methods and Techniques**

### **5.1 Language Teaching Methods**

Most curriculum planning theories emphasize organization of the content and learning experiences Wheeler (1978) or what Nicholls and Nicholls (1981) call methods in the implementation of the school programmes. A curriculum implementer may select beautiful objectives, subject matter (content), good instructional materials and evaluation

procedures, but if the method of delivery is faulty, the objectives will not be achieved and even evaluation will be invalid and unreliable. Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, this was the basis for our concentration on methods and techniques of teaching languages.

Language teaching in Nigeria is faced with a number of problems and issues. Some of the problems include: linguistic interference, dearth of instructional resources, poor teaching methods, large language classes, students' poor language and overloaded curriculum content, drop-out rate and insufficient time allocation in the school time table (in French), (Offorma, 1993); Offorma (2002), Offorma and Ogah (2002). Our research mission was to study such bottlenecks and proffer solutions to alleviate or completely eradicate the problems, so as to show language teachers and learners how to jump the hurdles to become proficient in their different languages. Most of our research works emphasized error analysis, interactive teaching and learning methods and techniques/strategies at different educational levels across the three languages: English, French and Igbo.

### **5.1 Error Analysis**

Diagnosis of errors committed by language learners was part of the study embarked upon so as to begin to find the correct therapy to language problem. This was done using French at the university undergraduate level and English at the secondary school level. Table 1 shows errors in written French of FRE 101 undergraduate French, while Table 2 portrays the frequency of errors committed by secondary school students in written English language as identified by Uzoegwu, (2004), using 299 Senior Secondary School class II students in Nsukka Educational Zone.



**Table 1: Errors in French Language.**

Error Type	Wrong	Right
Conjugation	Tu veniras; Vous va restez	Tu viendras; Vous allez rester
Vocabulary	La chambre est mauvaise	La chambre est sale
Preposition	Le professeur parle aux ses étudiants	Le professeur parle à ses étudiants
Syntax	Vous buvez pas; Je ne vais aller pas.	Vous ne buvez pas.; Je ne vais pas aller.
Agreement /accord	Ils sont sorti ; Elle prend sa bateau	Ils sont sortis ; Elle prend son bateau.
Spelling	Capital ; Visit ; Progress	Capitale, Visite ; Progrés.

**Table 2: Frequency of Error Occurrence in Students' Essay.**

	Frequency		
Error Types	Experimental	Control	Examples
<b>Spelling Errors</b>			
Confusing words of similar sounds	160`	300	Gate /get; had/heard
Wrong placement of the alphabets that make up a word	180	290	He is callying a road.
Accent	100	150	It would be good.
Vocabulary	100	200	Open the computer (boot).
<b>Punctuation Errors</b>			
Omission/wrong use of question marks	80	100	Where are you going.

Omission/wrong use of quotation marks	60	70	Joy says I am coming.
Omission/wrong use of full stop	50	60	He ate my fruits.
Omission and wrong use of comma	100	150	Nonso loves apples grapes, and mangos.
Omission/wrong use of capital letters	50	90	The <u>B</u> usiness was a big success.
<b>Grammatical Errors</b>			
Errors of concord	150	230	This days, one of my friends.
Wrong verb form	100	250	We <u>see</u> him yesterday. Since we leave school
Wrong use of to + infinitive	120	300	My brother wanted to went away.
Omission/wrong use of articles	110	218	They saw <u>a</u> man you talked about.
Wrong tense sequence	140	310	If you came, I will be ready to go.
Wrong choice of words	100	213	The aircraft jumped down gently (landed).

**N=299 SSII Students**

Analysis of errors in French language was also studied but at the university level using French 101 students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, (Offorma, 1998). French and English have a lot of words which look alike but which are different in meaning. The learner often tends to transfer the meaning from English to French. It is called negative transfer. For example *addition* (bill), not addition and *actuel* means current not *actual*. Such words are called *les faux amis* (false friends), because they mislead the learners.

An Anglophone beginner of French language encounters difficulties in the areas of syntax and grammar. For example *J'ai faim* in French means *I am hungry*. A French language beginner may translate it as *I have hunger* because of the verb 'avoir' (ai), which means 'to have' as used in the expression. Again, in French, all objects, animate and inanimate are classified under either masculine or feminine gender whereas such does not exist in English. Conjugation and concord also present some problems to the learners. Below is a Table showing some examples of errors committed by some beginners of French language.

These errors can be ascribed to linguistic interference or inhibition. This is mainly proactive because the previous language (English) is influencing the new language. Retroactive interference occurs when the new language interferes with the already learnt language. For example, some times when one writes in English, one writes French spelling. These occur in a bilingual or multi-lingual situation. Insufficient practice and inappropriate teaching methods may also contribute to these errors. In this study, language students committed more lexical errors than non-language students. The result is explained by Brook (1964), who stated that knowledge of another language could be a hindrance as well as an advantage.

Offorma and Anizoba, (1998) in analyzing errors in written English of secondary school students in Anambra State further identified the following blemishes in the scripts of the students.

### **Wrong Expressions**

There are mostly literary translations (Transliteration) of the vernacular to English e.g.

1. I have now credited six subjects (made six credits).
2. I will do my final exam next year
3. We did our marriage last year etc
4. There are many people who now uses sports to feed themselves.

To curb these language anomalies, it is recommended that students be taught how to crosscheck what they write. Therefore a proof-reading checklist should be provided to the students to assist them in editing their writing. The checklist contains ten questions to be posed and answered by the writer as presented below.

1. Did I spell all words correctly?
2. Are the words used correctly?
3. Did I write each sentence as a complete thought?
4. Did I begin each sentence with a capital letter?
5. Are the sentences clear?
6. Did I use capital letters correctly in other places?
7. Did I indent each paragraph?
8. Does the diction fit the audience and occasion?
9. Are there mistakes in grammar?
10. Is the writing neat and easy to read?

## **5.2 Language Methods**

When Nigeria introduced French in the secondary schools, a major problem of qualified teachers of French emanated. Therefore, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and the University

of Ibadan introduced a pilot course in French in 1962. Candidates who had no knowledge of French were admitted and taught through audio-visual method in their first year and French civilization and literature in the second year. They were not trained to teach French and so when French was introduced in the secondary schools, the problem persisted. The curriculum content was foreign-based e.g. **le nierge, l'hiver, le printemps, la glace, le concierge, le metro**, etc. and the traditional method of grammar-translation was used. Students were required to translate from English to French and vice versa. A number of language teaching methods has been introduced, used and dropped ranging from the traditional grammar/translation, the Direct, audio-visual, audio-lingual, to communicative Approach, which is mainly used today.

We have experimented on the following methods to find out their efficacy/effectiveness in language learning. Some of the methods are: Contextual Clue Exposure, Cooperative learning method, Writing Process method, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Communicative Approach, Cloze Procedure and Guided method.

### **5.2.1 Contextual Clue Exposure**

The child reared in an English-speaking country like Nigeria, is surrounded by a complex language situation. He/she has to acquire a thorough command of the English language besides having to master his/her own and often a third indigenous language, if he/she is to be 'educated' in the modern sense of the word. (Tiffen, 1969).

Many learners come from homes and environments in which English is not used. Therefore, they have a lot of difficulties mastering the language situations. Proficiency in English requires structural competence and vocabulary large enough for them to understand and produce utterances on a wide variety of

topics. The WAEC Chief Examiners' reports over the years showed students' weaknesses as follows:

- Inability to re-state, briefly, ideas contained in the passages.
- Sticking slavishly to the direct words of the passages.
- Lifting and presenting as answers, chains of words that do not convey any meaning.
- Attaching unthinkable meaning to the words in the test on synonyms

According to Akabogu (2002), the students can not read, understand and paraphrase the relevant sentences that contain the answers; rather, they lift lengthy portions of the passage. In most Nigerian secondary schools, the conventional method of teaching Reading Comprehension is based on the background knowledge of text method whereby the teacher emphasizes the following:

- Setting purpose for reading.
- Building background experience of the reading passage.
- Vocabulary treatment using dictionary or by the teacher's explanation of unfamiliar words.

This method does not adequately prepare students for the task of reading and comprehension. It assumes that the students all have the necessary background information and skills needed to understand the text. Contextual clue exposure to English registers (Akabogu, 2002) is a method that exposes the reader to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words in a text using clues from other words or sentences surrounding such words. It is a step by step procedure involving the following steps:

**Step 1:** Decide if the word is important for;

- Understanding the passage
- Answering the question

**Step 2:** Think about the context

- The main idea

- Where is it from
- The audience

**Step 3:** Think about the aim

- Main objective
- Other objectives

**Step 4:** Look for other clues

- Grammar
- Morphology
- Antonyms and synonyms
- Prefixes and suffixes

**Step 5:** Try to guess the meaning using the clues identified in morphology, etc.

Then, answer the questions set on the reading passage.

The finding was that contextual clue exposure to English registers significantly enhanced students' achievement in reading comprehension than the conventional method of background knowledge of text. There was no significant effect of gender on students' achievement in reading comprehension, but location of school had significant effect. Urban students achieved higher than rural students. This can be explained by the more enriched environment in urban areas. Learners in rural schools have limited access to reading materials and so lack reading culture. They are also not exposed to modern communication facilities and literate home environment. Most graduate teachers are found in urban schools.

We therefore recommend contextual clue exposure for teaching reading comprehension in English. Teachers should endeavour to transfer ownership of learning to the students by giving them opportunity to explore their learning environment.

### **5.2.3 Cooperative Learning Method**

Cooperative learning method is basically student-centred which uses small heterogeneous group of ability levels of high, average and low achievers. (Kagan, 2003). In small heterogeneous groups, students are responsible not only for the learning materials, but also for helping their group mates to learn. It is guided by the philosophy that knowledge is a social activity in which the teacher takes the role of a facilitator of learning. As a result of the emphasis placed on the social nature of learning, high, average and low achieving students are challenged, encouraged and assisted to do their best because the contributions of all group members are valued.

It makes use of positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, equal participation, face-to-face simultaneous interaction and group processing. Group members are linked with each other in such a way that one can not succeed when every one fails. If one fails, all fail. Group members realize that each person's efforts benefit not only the person but all the other group members as well.

The effect of cooperative learning method on students' achievement in English essay writing was embarked upon by Uzoegwu (2004). We explained essay writing as an act of creatively and imaginatively putting down one's ideas, feelings, and opinions using the correct words. We used the non-equivalent, pretest-posttest control group design, and analyzed the data through Analysis of co –variance to partial out the initial differences of the research subjects. The results were that the students taught essay writing skills through Cooperative learning method achieved higher than those taught by the product method. Female students performed better than male students. Students in rural schools achieved higher than that those in the urban setting. This is an interesting result which is contrary to other research findings on location and achievement



in schools. The implication of this result is that cooperative learning method can be used even in the rural setting to enhance achievement.

With Marjah (2008), we went to another level to study the effect of cooperative learning method on students' achievement in reading comprehension at College of Education Level. This was motivated because of the poor proficiency level of students in English in reading and writing. As teacher trainees, they need to imbibe effective methods of teaching to attain the set goals of NCE English language curriculum. NCE holders are expected to be involved in curriculum implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE). Language classes are large as English is a core subject. So, cooperative learning method should be used to facilitate learning.

So he used 132 NCE Year 1 students in Taraba State. The result of the study showed that Cooperative learning method significantly enhanced students' achievement in Reading Comprehension. The significant effect was consistent across gender and ability levels. It also significantly enhanced the achievement of Pre-NCE students more than their Direct Entry counterpart. It is therefore recommended that the National Commission for Colleges of Education, should include Cooperative Learning method in their curriculum of the Colleges of Education to acquaint the pre-service teachers of the method which is very effective for large classes.

#### **5.2.4 Writing Process Method**

The Writing Process Method is a step-by-step procedure involving the learners in the different phases of writing process. It creates opportunity for the learners to practise the pre-writing, writing and rewriting activities and by so doing imbibe the writing skill. This method is similar to guided or controlled writing. (Uzoegwu,(1995), Ejembi (2002), Akuma (2006). It is

interactive and involves the active participation of the teacher and the learners as they work through the phases.

**Pre-writing** includes

- understanding the topic,
- the kind of writing it is,
- materials needed,
- organization and
- audience.

**Writing** is the second stage which includes:

- working out the plan in detail
- writing the first draft

Rewriting is the final stage and it entails:

- review of the draft
- improving the draft by considering where to revisit and how to do it.

Anizoba (2004) taught English composition to 225 Senior Secondary class two students of Awka Education Zone using the writing process. The findings showed that the Writing Process Method significantly enhanced students' achievement in composition writing more than the conventional method; there was no significant effect on gender and location. Male students and urban students had higher mean scores than their counterparts, though the difference was not significant.

It was therefore recommended that composition should be taught using the Writing Process Method. The students will be able to write effectively by making full and proper use of the many activities that make up the art of writing. In addition, teachers should create student-centred class rooms by giving the students regular opportunities to practise pre-writing, writing and rewriting.

Guided method is a controlled writing whereby the learner is led to produce a piece of writing. It has been observed that writing is a form of problem-solving in which the writer faces two main tasks, namely, generating ideas in language and composing these ideas into a written structure adopted to the need of the reader and the goals of the writer. Good writing involves not only the accurate use of language but also effective organization of information. These are lacking in our students. Therefore, Uzoegwu (1995) studied the effectiveness of two teaching methods: guided and non-guided on students' achievement in essay writing. The result indicated that the students taught essay writing through guided method achieved higher than those taught with non-guided method. Male students performed better than their female counterpart but the difference was not significant. We therefore recommended the use of guided method in teaching essay in schools.

### **5.2.5 English for Academic Purposes**

Research has shown that students write poorly Anasiudu (1983 and Anyanwu, (1990). Anasiudu expressed disappointment in the performance of undergraduate students in the Use of English course and wondered what would have become of them if there were no such course. To contribute to this knowledge area, Oluikpe (2004) researched on the effect of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) method on the achievement of University of Nigeria first year Education Arts and Science students in Expository writing in the use of English course.

Expository writing is eclectic in nature because it combines the characteristics of the descriptive, argumentative, narrative writing styles aimed at informing, explaining, defining, interpreting and analyzing. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a component of English for Special Purposes (ESP), and it employs the principles of **Authenticity, non-triviality and reality control**. (Robinson, 1991).

**Authenticity** means that the resource materials for teaching must reflect the content of the students' course books in various subjects. This is so because language classes are expected to focus on the language needs of different subject areas which are derived from the language needs of the students identified through Needs Analysis. This explains why students are organized according to their disciplines in the Use of English in this University.

**Non-triviality** implies that each given language task must reflect the students' area of specialization.

**Reality control** means that students must be conversant with the way language is used in a given discipline (technical) which governs the language tasks set before them, before they are given the opportunity to interact verbally or to write.

EAP employs team teaching and collaborative learning, whereby students are organized in small groups to perform various language tasks with the teacher as a facilitator. It also makes use of peer assessment.

In the quasi-experimental research carried out in this area, Expository Essay Achievement test (EEAT), of a reliability coefficient of 0.96 and inter rater reliability index of 0.73 was administered on 110 students. The data collected were analyzed through ANCOVA to partial out their initial differences as there was no randomization of the students. The findings were:

There was a significant effect of EAP method on students' achievement in expository writing at 5% level of significance.

Gender was not a significant factor in the use of EAP in expository essay. Female students achieved higher than the male students.

Area of specialization was also not significant. Arts Education students achieved slightly higher than their science counterpart.

Based on the findings it was recommended that the Use of English teachers be trained in the EAP method as that would enhance students' achievement in the course.

### **5.2.6 Communicative Approach**

It has been identified that students' major weaknesses in Igbo language are inability to express themselves very well in the standard Igbo, poor knowledge of grammatical rules, inability to put diacritic marks where necessary, inability to understand questions, use of dialects in writing by many of them, and lack of seriousness on their part. (WAEC Chief Examiner's Report, 2005).

The mastery of any language implies correct usage at the grammatical, phonological and semantic levels. Letter writing is an important aspect of Igbo language study, which exposes students to those aspects of language skills namely: grammar, phonological, and semantic rule. It is important that these aspects of Igbo language study should be taught well in schools by the teachers if students are to improve their achievement and interest in the subjects. This is very necessary because it has been posited that the lack of interest shown by students towards the study of Igbo language is not inherent in the language itself. (Umo, 2001), but could be traced among other factors, teachers' use of inappropriate methods and materials in teaching.

The dominant method in Igbo language teaching is teacher-oriented and not learner focused. The conventional method is subject-matter oriented and makes the learners to be passive listeners instead of active language users. It encourages memorization or rote learning. Rote learning is the situation whereby the learner commits to memory information which is regurgitated without understanding. To seek a solution to these problems of the conventional method, Omeje (2009),

experimented on the effect of communicative method on students' achievement and interest in Igbo letter writing.

Communicative teaching method according to Offorma (2000), emanated from the understanding that the essence of learning a language is for communication and not for learning of grammatical rules. The communicative method tries to bring into the classroom the learners' life-experiences and relates what they experience outside the school to what they do in the school. The learners' needs guide the selection of the content of the lesson. In communicative method, the linguistic forms such as vocabulary and grammar are no more the focus of study but they become instruments used to achieve speech acts. Thus the learners learn how to use the relevant grammatical forms of the language before even knowing their functions.

Omeje used senior secondary class two students (male and female), selected from both urban and rural environments. She used two instruments for data collection: Letter writing achievement test (LWAT) and Igbo language Interest Inventory (ILII) for data collection. The reliability indices of the two instruments were 0.6 and 0.8 respectively. The analysis was through Analysis of Co-covariate (ANCOVA).

It was found that students taught letter writing with communicative teaching method achieved higher than those taught with conventional method. Male students achieved higher than their female counterparts though the mean difference was not significant. Urban students performed higher than rural students. Male and female students showed equal mean score in interest than their counterparts. Therefore gender had no significant effect on students' achievement and interest in Igbo letter writing.

Boys and girls from both urban and rural schools have the same level of interest in Igbo letter writing. This has shown that gender is not a factor in the determination of interest of the students in Igbo letter writing. Urban and rural students are stimulated differently by their environments. The fact that the urban students' interest is not statistically significant from that of the rural students, has proved that while location may be a factor in achievement, using communicative method, it is not a factor in the determination of interest.

### **5.2.7 Cloze Instructional Procedure**

The Law of closure in Gestalt psychology deals with perception of the field or environment. In education it encourages leaving some gaps in the teaching/learning process for the learner to solve the problem himself or herself. Simply put, the learner should not be spoon fed. The cloze originated from the Gestalt learning theory of closure in educational psychology, founded in 1880s by Max Wertheimer et al. Taylor (1953) defined a cloze unit as any single occurrence of a successful attempt to produce accurately a part deleted from a message by deciding from the context that remains what the missing part should be.

There are two types of cloze: the fixed ratio whereby the ---nth word in a passage is deleted. The 5<sup>th</sup> word is the standard deletion. The variable ratio is the type whereby the words that are rich in meaning are deleted e.g. nouns, adjectives, verbs or any other parts of speech. This type is very useful for teaching particular structures. Therefore cloze procedure deals with systematic deletion of words from a reading passage which is replaced with blanks of uniform length. It is different from ordinary filling in the blanks (completion) tests. This involves blanks that are contextually interrelated, not isolated blanks. From the context (understanding), the deleted words can be replaced. This procedure is very useful in testing the readability

of prose and construction of exercises for teaching remedial reading.

Ene (2002) researched on effect of Cloze Instructional Approach on senior secondary school students' achievement in English reading using one hundred and sixty (160) students in Enugu Education Zone. The instrument was English Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (ERCAT) made up of five comprehension passages with five questions for each passage. The passages were selected from the students' literature texts.

The Law of Closure shows the natural tendency of human beings to perceive unfinished or incomplete figures as complete. This implies that they fill in the gaps in broken patterns. According to Schoenfeld (1980), attempts to inculcate the cloze technique into instructional processes were neglected. Omojuwa (1989), Hill (1992) showed dissatisfaction with the methods of teaching reading comprehension. So we set out to determine the effect of the cloze procedure.

The results of the study showed that students taught English reading comprehension using the cloze instructional approach improved in their achievement. Gender was not a significant factor in the achievement of students in English reading comprehension. Location was a significant factor in the achievement of students in English reading comprehension.

Houston (1994) revealed that there is no pronounced difference in the psycho-cognitive characteristics of males and females except at the infant stage.

We therefore recommend review of instructional procedures to accommodate the cloze approach in the school curriculum to curb the mass failure in English language. English language teachers should be trained on the use of cloze approach to achieve the objectives of teaching reading comprehension.



Agada, (2008), also experimented on the effect of cloze procedure on secondary students achievement in English language grammar using 2, 953 students from 21 co-educational institution in Kogi State. English Grammar Achievement Test (EGAT) was the instrument used for data collection after validating it and calculating the reliability index through Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, which was 0.60. Statistical package for the Social Sciences was used to analyse the data collected. The hypotheses were analysed through the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

The findings indicated that secondary school students committed errors of concord, tenses, and spellings; that more in the conventional group committed the errors than those in the cloze group. Others were that the students in the cloze group learnt determiners, adverbs, prepositions, adjectives conjunctions, verbs, pronouns and nouns with ease compared to those in the conventional group. Significant differences in the mean achievement scores existed in favour of the students taught English grammar with the cloze procedure as opposed to those taught with the conventional method.

Location also has significant effect on the achievement of students taught with close procedure. Students in the urban setting achieved higher than those in the rural schools. We therefore recommended that proper and detailed teaching of English grammar through the cloze procedure irrespective of their sex. The cloze procedure lends itself to the universal use which implies that it would be unnecessary to different curriculum materials and teaching methods for different sexes in the schools. Curriculum developers in English should continuously review the curriculum to incorporate this procedure.

## **6.0 Language Teaching Techniques**

Some techniques or strategies have also been tried out in language teaching and learning to find their applications and effectiveness. Such techniques include: Games, Song, Large class management, use of resources and group assessment of learning.

### **6.1 Games**

Umo (2001), researched on the effect of game strategy on the achievement and interest of junior secondary school students in Igbo grammar, using JSSII class. The sample was 197 students from Nsukka education zone. Games were used to teach the experimental group while the control group was treated with the conventional method. Five games were developed in line with the common games children play. They are:

1. Game 1 deals with the identification and arrangement of alphabets.
2. Game 2 aims at identification, classification and arrangement of words.
3. Game 3 involves the formation of harmonized words and disobeyed words.
4. Game 4 has to do with the formation of words (verbs) using infinitive.
5. Game 5 focuses on formation of verbs in simple past tense using *rv* suffix. The basic attributes of the games are:
  - Objectives of the game.
  - Human and instructional materials for the game.
  - Outline procedure for the game.
  - The game proper indicating how the winner or the loser emerges.
  - De-briefing, highlighting the educational implications.

The games appeared in two phases. The teacher guides the students in phase one by demonstrating how to play the game.

Then the second phase is the actual playing of the game by the students in groups. Before playing, the ground rules and timing are presented to the learners.

The results show that the experimental group achieved slightly higher than the control group, but the difference was not significant. Gender and location had significant influence on achievement and interest of the students. Females and urban students achieved higher than their counterparts.

Teachers should be able to guide the learners to focus on the content of the lesson and not to be carried away by the games. Games enable students develop positive attitudes and values relevant knowledge and skills that allow the learner to get along in the world and to discover and assimilate information more. Therefore games used in a pedagogical setting allow a balanced development in the learner's psycho-mental and social skills. Games facilitate development of the total man.

## **6.2 Songs**

A study by Offorma, (1987(b), on the influence of songs on students' performance in secondary school French was carried out using 169 boys and 144 girls. Two sets of instrument containing 15 and 20 items respectively were used for classes one and two. The experimental group was taught with songs while the control group was taught with conventional method. The findings showed that the students taught with songs performed better than those taught with conventional method. Though class one students were found to show enthusiasm in learning French, probably because of its newness (since most of them are introduced to the language at that stage, the influence of songs was evident.

Surprisingly the class three students taught with songs did not achieve higher than those taught without songs. This may be

attributed to their level of mastery of the language. Class three students have received instruction in French for three years and must have acquired more vocabulary than their beginner counterpart.

The female students taught with songs also achieved higher than those taught without songs. This finding is in agreement with the psychological principle concerning the acquisition of language skills and competence which indicates that adolescent girls acquire the skills more rapidly than adolescent boys. It was therefore recommended that songs be applied in teaching French, especially in the junior secondary school. This would help in capturing their interest early, thereby motivating them to continue with the study.

A resourceful teacher of French can formulate simple songs based on the content of their lesson Ikeme and Offorma (1990(d)). For example a lesson on **Présentation** can be taught through this song:

Bonjours mes amis, je m'appelle Grace  
Je suis nigériane, J'habite Nsukka  
Je parle Igbo, anglais et français,  
Enchanté, au revoir.

We can also teach the months of the year and the days of the week in French through songs, e.g.

Janvier, février mars, avril, mai, juin, juillet,  
août, août, avril, mai, juin  
Septembre, octobre, avril, mai, juin, juillet,  
août, août, avril, mai, juin  
Novembre, décembre, avril, mai, juin, juillet,  
août, août, avril, mai, juin.

This song can also be used to teach grammar and French expressions.

Papillion jolie Papillion (2 fois)  
 Toi qui as des ailles  
 De si jolies ailles  
 Viens danser dans ma maison  
 Papillion, papillion.

These songs can be used to teach vocabulary, concord, gender, expression such as **J'habite Nsukka, Enugu, Owerri , Lagos; not J'habite a Nsukka**, which is commonly spoken by learners. **Toi qui as, de si jolies ailles, viens danser** can be used to teach such expressions. These can be done by replacing some words and expressions with meaningful others in extended language exercises/activities after learning the song. We have found them to be very interesting, motivating and effective in the teaching and learning of French language (Offorma, 2005).

### 6.3 Large Class Management

Class room management is an important issue in curriculum implementation as it affects the extent of goal attainment in teaching learning endeavour. Factors involved in class room management are: arrangement, grouping, questioning and organization of teacher –learner interactions.

It is observed that language classes are over crowded because today English, French and Igbo enjoy a core curriculum status. The three are all compulsory in the primary and secondary schools. The teachers are complaining of too much work, because the four language skills must be presented to the learners. In French, the population dwindles as they move to higher class. This is when language learning becomes analytical and less intelligent students opt out of the subject. There are fewer learners of French in Senior Secondary classes, when the language becomes an elective subject. The following techniques were identified as means of handling large classes effectively:

pair work, small group, dialogue, target setting for the class, (Offorma, 2001; 2002; 2006).

### **Group Work**

Group Work can be used in large class management to encourage participation and effective learning. This is one way of catering for the individual differences of the learners. Grouping can be fixed or flexible depending on the type of activity or task given to the learners and the set objectives (Obiefuna, 2002)

Group work is organized in four stages: presentation, process, ending and feedback. During presentation, the teacher gives clear instructions before giving out the materials. a full class preliminary rehearsal is carried out.. In the process stage, the teacher goes from group to group to monitor and either contribute or keep out of the way depending on which is more useful. He pays individual attention to the learners who have problems. He encourages them to use the target language. For the ending, the teacher sets a time limit to help draw the activity to a close at a certain point. At the end of the activity, there is a full class interaction. Feedback may take any form: giving the right answer, listening to and evaluating suggestions, putting ideas on the board, displaying materials the groups have produced.

### **Pair Work**

Well organized pair work is one on the most effective way of achieving learner-talking time. It is very effective if the teacher divides the class into pairs and ensures that every learner understands what he/she is working with and the role to play. The learners should be clear about what they are expected to do, while the teacher should stop the activities when it is clear that everyone has finished. The teacher should follow up the pair

work with demonstration or summary from each group. Corrections should be done if necessary.

### **Dialogue**

This technique is mainly used in oral work. The pairs may be group pairs or individual learners. Sometimes the dialogue can be between the teacher and the learners. The essence is to give opportunity for the learners to talk. First of all, the teacher presents the dialogue and demonstrates the task to be performed by the learners. He/she goes round to monitor and correct them. They are given the time and scope of the task.

### **Target setting**

Every language class must have the target set. This directs the activities in the class. The target serves as an advanced organizer to give focus to the learners. It is one of the strategies identified as a motivational factor by language learners (Offorma, 2001). It is important that the teacher informs the learners about the target may be for the week or month or even the term or the year. This will help the serious student to plan their work and try to meet the target.

## **6.4 Use of Resources**

Innovations in the language introduced the four language skills and so oral French examination became compulsory. Emphasis changed from writing to speaking and so the method of instruction reflected the change. Direct, Audio-visual and Audio-lingual methods were used. With the new methods there came the problem of instructional resources. Usefulness of resources depends on what use the teacher makes of them. The teachers lacked the competence to apply the available resources. (Echetabu, 1984). Echetabu (1985), identified inadequate human resources for teaching of French and relatively negative use of resources by the teachers. Some of the resources which can be employed in the French class to facilitate learning

include: textbooks, overhead projector, flash cards, authentic documents (les documents authentiques), realia, audio cassettes, video cassettes, multi-media projector, computers, electronic white board, etc (Offorma, 2001, 2005).

Teachers are regarded as manipulators and organizers of the learning environment to effect changes in the learners' behaviours. They are also required to understand the learners they teach so as to be able to provide the appropriate learning experiences. All these can be achieved if the teacher is resourceful. Offorma 1990(a) and 1990(b) found out that teachers' use of resources has significant impact on students' achievement in French language; but that the students taught by the teachers who used resources less effectively had the highest mean score. An explanation of this result can be sought in the nature of language acquisition at the beginning stage, which is mechanical, more of memorization and recall than analysis which is inevitable at later stage.

A significant mean difference occurred in the achievement of urban and rural students, whereby, urban students performed better than rural students. The availability of amenities in the urban setting can account for this finding. Though male students had higher mean score than female students, the difference was not significant. The impact of teachers' use of resources on students' achievement, attitude and psychomotor behaviour was significant. The students' motivation to learn French was not dependent on teachers' resource use. This confirms that intrinsic motivation is more effective than extrinsic one, which comes from the teacher (Obiefuna, 2002). Teachers are advised to try to employ extrinsic motivation very effectively to raise it close to the intrinsic motivation (Offorma, 1990a), (1997). The students showed higher mean score in the affective behaviour (attitude and motivation) than in the achievement and psychomotor behaviour. The implication of this is that use of



resources promotes attitude and motivation to learn French because the students were given the opportunity to interact with the instructional materials.

### **6.5. Group Assessment of Learning**

Curriculum implementation is incomplete without assessment of learning. Assessment of learning outcomes enables both the teacher and the learner to obtain information about the adequacy or not of the learner's behaviour. Based on this information, the teacher takes a number of vital decisions. If the learner shows a good mastery of the task the teacher concludes that the lesson has been successful, otherwise, the teacher goes back to re-teach the lesson or unit with some modifications. The purpose of evaluation therefore is to answer such questions as: what did the process set out to do? How far have the objectives been achieved? What steps in the process have either helped or hindered the achievement of the objectives? What next should the process embark upon?

Evaluation is an integral part of the teaching learning sequence. And active learning entails active participation of the learners in the learning activities. Group assessment of learning therefore is the cooperation in the assessment of the learning outcomes of students by the teacher and the students. It combines the teacher's, self and peer evaluation (Nwana, 1979). Self evaluation is essential in any educational endeavor because no one has intimate knowledge of a person as that person himself, because He is aware of hopes, aspirations, worries and concerns that may be well hidden from the outsider.

Continuous assessment was introduced to replace the one shot examination system but the question is who should assess the learning outcomes of the learners? Should the burden be borne by the teacher alone or should he/she solicit the learners' participation in assessing themselves and their peers. Can group

assessment be applied to French language? Offorma (1990) applied nine step process at the secondary school level to answer this question. The steps are:

1. Finding out what the students would want to learn,
2. Finding out what they have learnt.
3. Finding out what they have not learnt
4. Finding out what difficulties the encountered during the lesson.
5. Asking the students to evaluate themselves (Self-evaluation).
6. Asking students to evaluate their peers (Peer assessment)
7. Asking the students to set five questions from he lesson.
8. Administering teacher-made test on the students.
9. Marking of the test by the students.

The above nine steps were employed using secondary school class one and three students. Step seven was difficult for them because of their French language level. There was a positive correlation between their peer assessment and their actual performance. It was recommended that this technique be used in assessment of learning outcomes in French and other languages. Teachers should ab initio, select achievable objectives in collaboration with the students to help them have a focus.

Pachler, Norman and Field (1999) listed a number of principles to be considered when dealing with assessment in MFL teaching and learning. These include making assessment an integral part of teaching and learning and relating it to the curriculum objectives. It deals with the validity. Another is to use the feedback to plan for the future learning and provide data about the learner to relevant parties. The learner should be involved in the process. It should employ a variety of methods to cater for the reliability of the data. It should be manageable and continuous.

The four language skills should be equitably weighted (25%) for each. It should be criterion-referenced, rather than norm referenced. Criterion referenced assesses what the learner has learnt based on the set objectives. Norm referenced assessment is evaluation based on the relative performance of other members of the class in a task. Pachler and Field recommended that learner, peer- self-assessment should be used so as to allow students to feel ownership of and take responsibility for their learning.

### **7.0. The Future Focus**

For the future we have identified some research areas to be focused on. We are interested in ICT in language teaching. The Faculty of Education is ready to partner with the University Innovation Centre to launch e-learning programmes, is one sure way of handling large class problem in the implementation of the languages. One of my post graduate students is already working on the effect of mnemonic (design to assist memory) on English language Stress. Another is working on Learner Autonomy in French language learning. Our aim is to continue to make quality contribution to teaching and learning so as to produce functional members of the society.

### **8.0 Conclusion**

The influence of gender in language learning has been a controversial issue as there has been disagreement among researchers (Offorma, 2001). Cooperative learning method can be applied in the rural setting to achieve competence in essay writing. Two or more individuals can solve problems of different kinds better when they work in groups than when they work independently. It is a very effective method to teach reading and writing skills.

Secondary school students can be exposed to the cloze procedure without gender discrimination since there was no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students taught English grammar through the cloze procedure.

We have been calling on the Nigerian Government to up-grade the French language which was left as an elective language in the school curriculum. Despite the fact that the Nigerian government appreciates the potential values to be derived from the language, its status as an elective course in the National Policy on Education was disturbing. Thanks to President Abacha's Government, who in 1998 listened to our clarion call through research work to up-grade French language to a core status. Today French language is a compulsory school subject at the senior primary and junior secondary school levels.

The Nigerian government wants to benefit from French language and so allows some diplomatic, political and economic outfits such as ECOWAS bilingual school, ECOBANK, etc to be instituted in the country. Her dreams may not be realized if the well planned curriculum is not effectively implemented. There is dire need of French teachers for the French language curriculum to be effectively implemented.

The indigenous languages are also encountering the same problem as French, especially in their non-linguistic environments. For example, Schools in the north have more Hausa teachers than Igbo teachers and less Yoruba teachers in the east than in the west. Unless the problem of teacher availability is solved, curriculum implementation in these languages will continue to be problematic.

Effective methods as demonstrated by our studies abound. We call on language teachers to employ these methods in the language classes. Gender and location exert some effects in

language learning and so, should be taken cognizance of in the language class.

### **Appreciation**

.Let me commence by first of all appreciating my Creator for His blessings, mercies, protection and guidance. I would have been a dead person if the bullets shot on me at Nnewi Ichi in 1987 during data collection for my Doctoral research, had hit me. God saved me and my driver. Again, we lost our first two babies in a sequence, in 1987 and 1988. Our son, Nonso actually is the third in the series. God saved me from the hands of the medical team in UNTH in 1988 during the caesarean operation because my baby cord problem. I was awake though knocked off, throughout the operation, and under excruciating pains. The pain was enough to kill me, but I was shouting Jesus! Jesus!! Jesus!!! I tried to kick the doctors, but my legs were very heavy. I tried to hit them, but I could not lift my hand. It was after stitching me up that they noticed that my Blood Pressure was very high; they then gave me an injection, which sent me into a deep slumber and when I woke up, the pains were drastically reduced.

I also owe a lot to my late parents who instilled discipline in me. I now appreciate them more for bequeathing me with entrepreneurial skills, which have always helped me to survive, even when we were owed salary for months. Thanks to God such a situation is a thing of the past.

My father was a sergeant in the police, not the police of today. Every night after dinner he would invite all my siblings and line us up and taught us irrespective of our different classes. What did he teach us, the eight parts of speech, times table, oral English (because he worked with the colonial masters).

My mother was a very humble and peace loving woman. She would always tell us not to retaliate any evil done to us and to forgive people who hurt us because God will fight for us.

To my husband, Chi, I owe all my achievements. He is always ready to support me in my academic endeavours. I had free flights by Jets, Helicopters, Military Hercules (C130), from Enugu to Makurdi en route Lagos to attend conferences, when he was working at the Enugu air port. As an Air Traffic Controller, he would request the Pilot to board me and his requests received positive answers. Some times, I sat in the cockpit with the pilot and the co-pilot. The day I flew in a herculus, I thought I was going to die, because it was so rough. There were no seats, but strings dropped from the roof, which one held onto for support. That was the good old days. Such fringe benefits are no more today.

When we got married in 1987, I was a Graduate Assistant and he told me that the sky was my limit. He is very understanding and plays both my and his roles whenever I was away from home on official duty. The one that touched me most was when he took leave of absence, abandoned his salary for one year and accompanied me to Britain during me Common Wealth Fellowship programme in 2000/2001 academic session. That gesture relieved me of domestic chores, promoted my research work and my acquisition of Computer skills, because he was at home looking after the children, taking them to school, doing all the shopping, etc. I wonder how many men that can do that for there wives. Chi, I thank you immensely.

My children have learnt to cope when I am not there. I thank them for learning early to be independent. That has helped me to be what I am today. In Britain they were very supportive, helping Daddy to cook, keep the house and go for shopping. I love you all, especially, my special Kenny.

To my elder sister, I owe a lot. My father asked her take up teaching, after her PTC training so that she could contribute to the education of her younger siblings. She did that obediently and relinquished her secondary education to me. I am happy that today she has a Masters degree in Early childhood Education, the degree she earned from this great University. Sister, thank you a lot. You were like a mother to me.

My immediate elder brother widened my horizon. When he was studying in Britain, I would always go on holidays to London for the eight years he lived there. He would accommodate and make me very comfortable, even though he was a student. In 1980, he supported my going to France on summer course, from London, by sea. I caught sea sickness en route, and thought I was going to die, and I went back to London. He quickly took me to his doctor who treated me. Umeadi, may God richly bless you for your kindness to me and the encouragement you gave to me.

My younger siblings are like my children, because we (my Chi and I) trained them. They all lived with us. I thank God that they are all graduates, married and have their families. I am today enjoying the fruit of my labour, because they will always send one thing or the other to ‘Sister’, that is what they call me.

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