EXTENT OF THE UPPER BASIC EDUCATION FRENCH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM CONTENT-DELIVERY WITH TECHNOLOGIES IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

KENNETH O. EZE[1], CHRISTIAN S. UGWUANYI[2] & CHINEDU I.O. OKEKE[3]

[1]Department Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

[2]Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Education Studies, Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 9300, South Africa

[2]Department Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

[3]Host, Professor, and Head, School of Education Studies, Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, 9300, South Africa

ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent of the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery with technologies in South East, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study using sample 817upper basic education French teachers. A 27-item questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two specialists in the teaching of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) and one specialist in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The data for the first research question were analysedusing frequency counts and percentages, while those of research questions two and three were analysedusing mean. The results showed that audio compact disc, computer, radio and video compact disc (VCD) were available, while audio books, Internet, motion pictures, overhead projector, television and video recorder were not available. Only audio compact disc and radio were being used by the French teachers. One of the challenges facing the content-delivery with technologies was the inability of the school administrators to provide enough technology facilities for teachers. It was recommended, among others, that the government should ensure adequate provision of technologies for more effective Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery.

KEYWORDS: French Language Curriculum, Content Delivery with Technologies, Upper Basic Education

INTRODUCTION

The Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content is a rich and varied set of topics, ideas, ideals, knowledge, values and skills which are carefully prepared to develop the learners' ability to understand, speak, read and write the language. In the curriculum, the content is given a pride of place as it occupies three out of the six columns into which each unit is divided. Those content columns have such things as possible language expressions, vocabulary, grammar, phonetics and orthography (National Educational Research Development Council, 2012). They are designed for the students to learn in order for the communicative objectives that are set in the curriculum to be achieved. This is clear as the main purpose of the curriculum is to teach the learners to communicate in the French language. That may have informed the planners' choice of simple, interesting and attractive contents which have the quality of stimulating and sustaining the interest of the learners. This is particularly important as most of

the learners may be coming into contact with the language for the first time.

To assist the teachers in the facilitation of the learning of the content by the students, the planners devoted the fifth column of each of the units to some suggested classroom activities and teaching aids. These represent some examples of the learning experiences which the students may engage in, in the process of learning the content. In this column, language learning exercises such as role plays, hang-man exercises, games, group work, songs, nursery rhymes, use of pictures and written activities were suggested for the teacher for a better and more effective content-delivery. Using these activities in the teaching of the content will definitely motivate the students to learn French, but it demands the work of a devoted and committed teacher. This becomes more evident when one considers the finding of Anyika (2009) that the activities are above the linguistic competence and mental development of the intended learners. The present researcher believes that the effective learning of the content through these suggested classroom activities is a challenging, but attainable objective. However, as Mbakwem and Chukwuma-Nosike (2018: 204) have it, our educative practices " must continuously evolve to meet the challenges of the fast-changing and unpredictable globalized world".

The above scenario requires that French language teachers have to be abreast of the latest developments in their profession. This may be in form of participation in professional development opportunities where they learn about innovative strategies and the use of modern tools for French language teaching and learning. These will enhance their capacity to engage the learners in relevant and meaningful exercises. Such exercises, according to Offorma (2019), lead to proficiency in the target language. If the exercises are not expertly used, they may not motivate and inspire the learner to learn the language. Their effectiveness depends on the imagination and resourcefulness of the learner-teacher partnership. So, more innovation, resourcefulness and flexibility are expected in the learning process. This reinforces the idea of teaching as a creative and intellectually demanding job. It shows that for French teachers to do well in the content-delivery of the Upper Basic Education curriculum, they should not only have the sufficient mastery of the content, but also be very knowledgeable about where the rest of the world is heading in terms of education.

The requirement above calls for the productive application of technologies in the teaching and learning of the French language at the Upper Basic Education level. Technologies are tools and machines that can be used to solved real-life problems. According to Onyeke (2018), they are material and immaterial entities created by the application of mental and physical efforts in order to achieve some values. They include all instruments, communicating and transporting devices and skills which people make and use. Today, they are playing important roles in every sphere of life. Their use in various professional fields in a country leads to accelerated development of the country to enable it to stand at par with other progressive nations. They include the traditional and emerging hardware and software such as radio, television, motion picture, overhead projector, camcorders, computer, mobile phones, e-book readers, audios books, e-learning, video conferencing, interactive white board, audio compact disc, video compact disc, digital versatile disc, video recorder, internet, etc. In a study on the effectiveness of technologies in school, Sivin-Kachala (1998) discovered that students in technology-rich environments had more positive effects in achievement in all major subject areas and showed increased achievement in pre-school through higher education for both regular and special needs children.

Such noticeable improvement in students' achievement that results from the integration of technologies in the teaching-learning process (Ugwuanyi et al., 2019a, 2019b; Ejimonye et al., 2020a, 2020b; Onah et al., 2020; Ugwuanyi et al., 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Ugwuanyi & Okeke, 2020), may be as a result of the fascination they bring into the exercises which serves as a source of fruitful motivation that makes the students ready and enthusiastic for learning. They bring

about a powerful learning environment in which the learners deal with knowledge in an active, self-directed and constructive ways. However, in a study on teachers' access and preparedness to use some technologies, Adimora et al. (2014) discovered that majority of the teacher in Enugu state had no access to them and were not prepared to use them in teaching. Similarly, Ezekokaet al.(2017) report that a visit to most public secondary schools in Nigeria shows that most of the teachers do not have the basic foundation of computer literacy. Yet, computer is one of the most potent technologies that is revolutionizing the teaching-learning process.

It was against the above backdrop that the present researcher sought to investigate the extent of the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery with technologies in South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. This is reinforced by the observation of Eze (2016) that there is a chronic apathy towards the learning of the language in the area. That may be because of the possibility that the French language teachers are not making effective use of technologies that are designed to help them to cope with the challenges of the rapidly changing society and ensure the interest and enthusiasm of the learners toward the language. The possibility of the non-utilization of technologies in the content-delivery of the curriculum may be a manifestation of the discovery by Agarwal (2010) that the way an average teacher is teaching, and an average learner is learning is still largely uncharged. Hence, in an effort to find out the extent of the content-delivery with technologies the researcher formulated three research questions to guide the study, namely:

- What are the technologies available for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery?

- To what extent are technologies being utilized for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery?

- What are the challenges facing the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery with technologies?

METHODS

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of all the 884 French language teachers in the public secondary schools in South East, Nigeria. The South East, Nigeria is one of the six zones into which the country is divided. It has five out of the 36 states of the federation. The states are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. There was no sampling as the population was manageable. However, only 817 of the teachers were actually used for the study as the researchers could not reach 67 of them. The instrument for data collection was a 27-item questionnaire. The questionnaire had three clusters. The first cluster which had 10 items sought to find out the available technologies for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery while the second cluster with equally 10 items was on the extent of their usage. The third cluster which had seven items was on the challenges facing the content-delivery with technologies. For the second cluster, the respondents were instructed not to respond to items that were not available in their schools.

The response mode of the first cluster is Available (A) and Not Available (NA) while that of the second cluster is High Extent (HE) 3.50 – 4.00, Moderate Extent (ME) 2.50 – 3.49, Low Extent (LE) 1.50 – 2.49 and No Extent (NE) 0.00 – 1.49 point. The third cluster which is structured on a 4-point scale like the second one has the response mode of Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by two specialists in the teaching of French as a Foreign Language and one specialist in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The first cluster

of the instrument was analysed with frequency counts and percentages to answer research question one, while the second and the third clusters were analysedusing mean to answer the research questions 2 and 3.

RESULTS

The data collected for the study were presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 according to the research questions.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Scores of the Availability of Technologies for the Upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum Content-Delivery

S/N	Technologies	Available	%	Not Available	%
1	Audio books	304	37	513	63
2	Audio compact discs	779	95	38	05
3	Computers	437	53	380	47
4	Internet	228	28	589	72
5	Motion pictures	00	00	817	100
6	Overhead projectors	00	00	817	100
7	Radios	646	79	171	21
8	Televisions	247	30	570	70
9	Video Compact Disc (VCD)	551	67	266	33
10	Video recorders	00	00	817	100

From Table 1, motion pictures, overhead projectors and video recorders are not available at all for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery. In addition, audio books, Internet and television have less than 40% availability rates, indicating that they are not available. The available technologies for the content-delivery are audio compacts discs, computers, radio and video compact discs with 95%, 53%, 79% and 67% availability rates respectively.

Table 2: Extent of Utilization of Technologies for the Upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum Content-Delivery

S/N	Technologies	HE	ME	LE	NE	$\overline{X}$	Decision
11	Audio books	0	19	114	171	1.50	Low Extent
12	Audio compact disc	209	361	76	133	2.83	Moderate Extent
13	Computer	0	57	76	304	1.43	No Extent
14	Internet	0	19	76	133	1.42	No Extent
15	Motion pictures	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Overhead projectors	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Radio	133	190	171	152	2.71	Moderate Extent
18	Television	0	38	38	171	1.46	No Extent
19	Video Compact Disc (VCD)	38	76	114	323	1.68	Low Extent
20	Video recorders	-	-	-	-	-	-

From the data on the extent of the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery with technologies in Table 2, audio compact disc and radio have mean scores 2.83 and 2.71respectively, showing that they are being use to a moderate extent. On the other hand, audio books and video compact discs have respective mean scores of 1.50 and 1.68 which show that they are being used to low extent. All other ones, from the above data, are being used to no extent. For this cluster, the respondents were instructed not to respond to the items that were not available in their schools.

Table 3: Challenges Facing the Upper Basic Education French Language Curriculum Content-Delivery with Technologies

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\overline{X}$	Decision
21	Using technologies for French language teaching is time consuming	0	152	532	133	2.02	Disagree
22	I do not have access to technologies for French language teaching and learning	513	266	38	0	3.58	Strongly Agree
23	I am not well experienced in the use of technologies for French language teaching	342	266	171	38	3.12	Agree
24	Power supply is not constant to access technologies that enhance French teaching and learning	171	437	76	133	2.79	Agree
25	Funds are not available for the procurement of technologies for the teaching and learning of French language	133	399	114	171	2.60	Agree
26	I am not interested in the use of technologies in the teaching of French	0	0	285	532	1.35	Strongly Disagree
27	School administrators are not doing enough to provide the necessary technologies for French teaching	76	456	228	57	2.67	Agree

From Table 3, the teachers strongly agree that they do not have access to technologies for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery. The item has a mean score of 3.58. They also agree that lack of experience in the use of technologies, lack of constant power supply, unavailability of funds and insufficient efforts by school administrators are the challenges facing the content-delivery with technologies. The items have the mean scores of 3.12, 2.79, 2.60 and 2.67 respectively. However, time consuming and lack of interest on the part of the teachers are not parts of the challenges. The items have the mean scores of 2.02 and 1.35 respectively.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first finding of the study indicates that technologies like audio compact discs, computers, radios and video compact discs are available for the Upper Basic Education curriculum content-delivery. On the other hand, motion pictures, overhead projectors and video recorders are not available at all. Similarly, audio books, internet and televisions recorded availability rates of less than 40 percent. This finding is in agreement with that of Adimora et al. (2014) that teachers in Enugu state do not have access to technologies. The unavailability of technologies for teachers to use in the work may be related to the widespread rot in the country's educational system. It is clear that the country is afflicted with all forms of corruption in the way that government establishments are run. So, it is possible that the funds that are being earmarked for technologies to help the teachers in the curriculum content-delivery are being tampered with by those who are in change of them. This is worsened by the fact that Nigeria has never reached the United Nation's 26 percent benchmark for budget on education.

Another finding of the study shows that technologies like audio compact discs and radios are being used to a moderate extent while audio books and video compact discs (VCDs) are being used to a low extent. The finding also shows that computers, Internet and television are being used to no extent. It is surprising that even the available computers, televisions and video compact discs are not being used to a reasonable extent. This result is in line with Agarwal (2010)'s finding that the way an average teacher is teaching has remained largely unchanged. The inability to use the available computers may be related to the lack of basic foundation of computer literacy among teachers that Ezekoka et al. (2017)

reported. This shows that teachers may not be making sincere efforts to attend to the urgent need for new orientation and emphasis on global best practices that they need in order to accommodate what is required for transformation.

The last finding of the study reveals that the challenges that teachers face in the use of technologies for the content-delivery include their lack of access to them, their inexperience in their usage, lack of constant power supply and insufficient efforts by school administrators to provide the necessary technologies. The teachers do not believe that using technologies for French language teaching is time consuming and are interested in their usage. Most parts of the findings are in consonance with the findings of Adimora et al (2014) that some teachers are not prepared to use technologies in their teaching. The crux of the matter seems to be on funding because if funds are readily available, the technologies can be procured and adequate power supply provided. If the technologies are available and there is constant power supply, the teachers may not find it very difficult to learn how to use them in their teaching as they are very emphatic in their belief that they are interested in them.

CONCLUSIONS

Most technologies that are very important for the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery are still nonexistent in public secondary schools in South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. That is likely affecting the students' chances of experiencing the quality education that is envisioned in the curriculum. Under such circumstance they may not acquire the necessary experiences that they need in the changing world. Also, the teachers are not making enough efforts to acquaint themselves with the requisite skills that they need to make technologies their daily tools in the curriculum delivery endeavours. With such disposition, they may not be able to get the learners equipped with the necessary skills that they need to thrive in today's knowledge based society. The challenges facing the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content-delivery are many, but the most demanding one has to do with lack of funds as almost all other ones are attributable to it. If the chronic financial constraints are not tackled, the country's dream of innovative and creative forms of teaching and learning may still remain what it is, a dream.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- State Ministries of Education should provide the schools with technologies so that the teachers will have access to them for a better and more efficient delivery of the Upper Basic Education French language curriculum content.

- Workshops and seminars have to be organized for French language teachers to train them on how to make use of the available technologies in their teaching.

- All stakeholders in the educational enterprise should rise against corruption to ensure that all funds that are supposed to be used for the procurement of technologies in schools are being prudently utilized.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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