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The Relevance of French Language to Journalism Education in Nigeria

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Simple random sampling technique was used to select a higher institution of learning in Ibadan, Oyo state. A total number of 125 students of mass communication at the Polytechnic, Ibadan participated in the study. Four research questions were raised and answered. The only instrument used for data collection was QMCSAFL. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of PPMC correlation, T. test and Chi- square.

The results show that Knowledge of French language has significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria, at X^2 Calculated (9) = 44.50 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05. There is no relationship between attitude and knowledge at (r=0.065; p>0.05).

Keywords : *french language, journalism, education, relevance.*

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There was significant difference between Students' Knowledge of French and students' career development as prospective Journalist. It was observed that the t- Calculated value was greater than t-Critical values (t-Cal=-8.941 > t=Crit =1.96) (P<0.05).

Self-concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist. X^2 Calculated (9) = 52.11 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05.

It is therefore recommended that students' knowledge of French language should be critically looked into as it has significant effect on their career development as journalist. The self- concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist. Therefore, it must be keenly considered in designing foreign language programme for prospective Journalists.

Keywords : french language, journalism, education, relevance.

I. Introduction

It is not out of place for a journalist to be global in orientation and application, thereby equipping himself with proficiency in a very international language like English. It will however, be out of place for him not to be able to communicate effectively with his very own people (Salawu, 2001). The same assertion is also applicable to French language judging by its global and international status. Proficiency in French language will enlarge his professional horizon and landscape. The inclusion of foreign language such as French into the curriculum of the journalism education will assist the trainee journalists to have adequate international exposure in the course of pursuing their professional career. What is the place of French language in the journalism or mass communication education in Nigeria, most especially in respect of admission requirements?

At the polytechnic, the NBTE requires that special course in English be taught for mass communication students at the National diploma (ND) level (NBTE, 1990). This covers all the four semesters of the programme. It should also be noted that the first year students of ND programme take either one indigenous language or French (NBTE, 1990). This means that French language is optional at this level and does not extend to the Higher National Diploma programme. The optional status of French at the Ordinary National Diploma (ND) level constitutes a set back to the teaching and learning of the language in mass communication education at the Polytechnic.

However, if a language must survive on the national scene, it must be used extensively by the media most especially, the print media (Salawu, 2001). In view of this submission, the survival of French language as a de-facto second official language in Nigeria is highly dependent on its use in the Nigeria media (both print and electronic media).

Akinfeleye (2003) identified the aims and objectives of journalism education in Nigeria when he noted that *the aims and objectives of the journalism programmes in Nigeria are to train journalists, educate them and make them responsible and useful citizens of Nigeria as they use their journalistic expertise to build a new Nigeria*.

It could be inferred from the above quotation that the journalists are enjoined to put their expertise into bear while building a new Nigeria. This could be best done if the so - called journalistic expertise is embellished with the knowledge of a foreign language such as French language.

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Akinfeleye (2003) also gave specific objectives of journalism education while dwelling on the provisions of NBTE and NUC. These specific objectives include:

a) Producing graduate who are to meet the middle and higher level manpower communication requirements of Nigeria.
b) Producing qualified communication / Journalist teachers for the universities, Polytechnics and other similar institutions.
c) Producing technically qualified graduates who can be self-employed upon graduation and
d) Producing socially responsible journalists and communicators.

Looking critically at the first objective: i.e. producing graduates who are to meet the middle and higher level manpower communication requirements of Nigeria: However, meeting the middle and higher level manpower communication requirements of Nigeria goes beyond implementing the teaching and learning of English language or indigenous languages in the curriculum of journalism education in Nigeria. Communication requirement of Nigeria is tied to international and diplomatic communication requirements of the world. Nigeria cannot afford to be an Island to her self in terms of international relations and communication among journalists across the world.

Professor Samuel Olabamji Aje, the Director General and the CEO of the Nigerian French language village, Badagary raised the hope of equipping the Nigerian journalists with the necessary competence or skills in French language in the statement made at the 20th year anniversary press briefing while he reiterated that the Village had intentions to offer French language courses to Nigerian journalists. The statement made by the director threw a spine into the marrow of the journalists present at the occasion as they all laughed and applauded the good gesture. Professor Aje said and I quote.

We want our brothers in the media to be able to utilize this tool to help broaden their reporting horizon. They can now go after French related stories without the need of interpreters.

The university don further affirmed that "after an intensive programme in our institution that will only run for months, our journalists can become competent in French language which will be an inestimable asset in their chosen profession''. The director is highly optimistic in his assertion that the knowledge of French language by the Nigerian journalist will bridge a gap between the use of interpreter and having direct access to information, facts or stories coded in the French language.

The Nigerian French language village successfully trained 45,000 Nigerians from all walks of life since its establishment in 1991. This statistics was confirmed by the Director of the French village in 2011 during the celebration of 20th year's anniversary of the Nigeria French Language Village, Badagry. It was further affirmed that this training could as well be extended to Nigerian journalists.

The journalists are intellectuals and they are expected to be watch dogs of the politicians and the rulers. This team of intellectuals or journalists should be well groomed not only in the acts of news gathering or reporting, but also in the knowledge of additional foreign language such as French language in order to add value to their chosen career and induce the public into reposing confidence in the news stories which is the function of the versatility and diverse approach in the act of news gathering and reporting.

It has been observed that the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and metacognitive knowledge that students bring with them to the classroom are significant contributory factors in the learning process and a determinant of the ultimate success in the classroom context (Breen, 2001). In the second or foreign language learning context, there are so many phenomena that could constitute the learners' disposition towards the learning of the language in question. Some of these variables include the beliefs about the nature of the language under study, its difficulty, the process of its acquisition, the success of certain learning strategies, the existence of aptitude and the learners' expectation about achievement and teaching methodologies.

However, learners' beliefs or attitude cannot be treated in isolation with respect to the learners' success or achievement in the second or foreign language.

Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggests that if teachers attend to these affective and cognitive components of students' attitudes as well as develop dependable pedagogical techniques, they may be able to increase both the length of time students commit to language study and their chances of success in it.

Attention must be shifted to the affective domains in the foreign or second language learning if a meaningful success would be attained by the learners in foreign language class. Researchers have agreed that it is possible to discover students' attitudes and beliefs since it is particularly obvious that learners bring their attitudes to consciousness and these are well pronounced in the foreign language learning context (Willing, 1988, Kalaja, 2003, Hosenfeld, 2003). Kalaja (2003) further suggested the use of discursive approach of social psychology to study the learner's belief, claiming that this approach is more sensitive than the conventional methods of data collection. However, the factors that influence learners' beliefs or attitude varied from researchers to researchers. Dias (2000) identified family and home background as determinants of learners' beliefs and attitudes. Alexander and Dochy (1995) recognized the cultural background of the learners as a determinant of their beliefs while Arnold (1999) identified classroom and social peers as factors that influence the learners' beliefs or attitudes in the

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learning situation. Individual differences such as the gender and personality of the learners can also be a contributory factor to the learners' beliefs or influence in the foreign language context. Rifkin (2000) further corroborate the relative effect of the learners' individual differences such as personality on the learners' attitudes to foreign language learning. The researchers affirmed that the personality of the learners played significant and important roles in shaping the learners' attitudes even more than phenomena such as the level of language instruction, the nature of language studied and the type of educational institution.

II. The Problem of the Study

The relative importance of foreign language in journalism Education or mass communication education in Nigeria has been long debated by experts in the field of Journalism in Nigeria. Stakeholders in the field of journalism education are skeptical and disillusioned about the inclusion of French language into the curriculum of journalism education in Nigeria. This skepticism gave birth to variation in the content of the curriculum of journalism across various bodies or institutions offering journalism training or mass communication in Nigeria. Research works in Journalism in the recent past only focused on indigenous languages in Journalism in Nigeria to the exclusion of French language. This study therefore set out to investigate the relevance of French language to journalism education in Nigeria.

III. Research Questions

Four research questions were proposed for this study

1. Does knowledge of French language have significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria?
2. Is there any significant relationship between attitude and knowledge of French language in Journalism Education in Nigeria?
3. Is there any significant difference between Students' Knowledge of French and students' career development as prospective Journalist?
4. Does self -concept have significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist?

IV. Research Method

a) Subjects

The population of the study comprises all the higher national diploma (HND) students of mass communication students of the Polytechnic Ibadan. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty five students of higher national diploma of the department of mass communication of the Polytechnic Ibadan.

b) Instrument

The only instrument used in this study is questionnaire on mass communication students' attitude to French language (QMCSAFL). This instrument is divided into two sections. Sections A & B. Section A deals with the demographic information of the respondents i.e. the name of school, sex, and age. Section B contains twenty five (25) items which were specifically designed to elicit information from the respondents on the significance of French language to journalism or mass communication education.

This instrument is a self-designed instrument. The respondents are expected to respond to the instrument on the likert scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). As part of validation process the instrument was given to experts in the field of journalism and mass communication for thorough examination after which the face and the context validity of the instrument were assured. Professional teachers in the field of French language teaching and learning also verified the instrument and their comments and advice served as a basis to establish the reliability and the validity of the instrument before the instrument was administered on the respondents. Validity test was also conducted on the instrument using Crombach Alpha. The validity score of 0.78 was obtained which made the instrument valid for administration.

c) Procedure

The researcher sought the consent of the students of mass communication of the Polytechnic Ibadan and the significance of the research was specifically made known to them. The researcher also intimated the lecturers of the department of mass communication in the aforementioned institution of the intent and value of the research work at hand. After the consent of the students and lecturers have been granted, the researcher swung into action to administer the instrument on the respondents with the assistance of the lecturers of the department. However, out of 125 instruments administered only 120 were retrieved from the respondents.

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V. Data Analysis and Results

a) Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 : Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Institution	The Polytechnic Ibadan	120	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**
Sex	Male	82	68.3
	Female	38	31.7
	Total	**120**	**100.0%**
Age group	Less than 20 years	12	10.0
	21 to 25 years	46	38.3
	26 to 30 years	62	51.7
	Total	**120**	**100.0**

Table 4.1 revealed Social demographic characteristics of respondents, the results revealed the name of Institution as The Polytechnic Ibadan with percentage of 120(100.0%). It implies that only The Polytechnic students were used.

Finally, the table revealed the frequency distribution according to sex of respondents, the result shows high percentage of male as 82(68.3%) while female respondents were 38(31.7%). It implies that male have higher percentage.

b) Resolution of Research Questions

Research Question 1

Does knowledge of French language have significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria?

Table 4.2 : Show the chi-square of Knowledge on Journalism

	Career Choice						X^2 Cal	Crit. Val	Df	P value	R
		SD	D	A	SA	Total	44.50	16.9	9	0.000	S
Knowledge	SD	3	6	0	0	9					
		2.5	5.0	0.0	0.0	7.5					
	D	7	15	6	0	28					
		5.8	12.5	5.0	0.0	23.3					
	A	16	21	7	9	53					
		13.3	17.5	5.8	7.5	44.2					
	SA	0	4	14	12	30					
		0.0	3.3	11.7	10.0	25.0					
Total		26	46	24	21	120					

Since the calculated value (44.50) was greater than the Critical value (16.9). That is, knowledge of French language have significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria, at X^2 Calculated (9) = 44.50 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05. The conclusion therefore was that, knowledge of French language has significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria.

Research Questions 2

Is there any significant relationship between attitude and knowledge of French language in Journalism Education in Nigeria?

Table 4.3 : shows correlation analysis between attitude and knowledge of French language

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P	Remark
Attitude	120	2.51	1.05	-	-	-
Knowledge	120	2.57	0.87	0.065	0.479	NS

Significant = 0.05 level.

The result from table 4.3 shows that correlation was not significant at the 0.05 level, Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) 0.065, indicating there is no relationship between attitude and knowledge at (r=0.065; p>0.05) Since P value is greater than 0.05. That is there is no significant relationship between Attitude and Knowledge of French Language in Journalism Education in Nigeria.

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Table 4.4 : Show the t-test of Knowledge and Students' career

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std Error	t. Cal	t.Crit	Df	Sig (2 tail)
Knowledge	120	20.95	3.051	0.279	-8.941	1.96	119	0.000
Career Choice	120	24.17	4.225	0.386				

The table 4.4 shows that there was significant difference between Students' Knowledge of French and students' career development as prospective Journalist. It was observed that the t- Calculated value was greater than t-Critical values (t-Cal=-8.941 > t=Crit =1.96) (P<0.05). It is significant. Therefore it was concluded that, there was significant difference between Students' Knowledge of French and students' career development as prospective Journalist.

Research Question 4

Does self -concept have significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as a Journalist?

Table 4.5 : Show the chi-square of self-concept on students' knowledge

		Career Choice					X^2 Cal	Crit. Val	Df	P value	R
		SD	D	A	SA	Total	52.11	16.9	9	0.000	S
Self concept	SD	3	6	3	1	13					
		2.5	5.0	2.5	0.8	10.8					
	D	6	28	1	16	51					
		5.0	23.3	0.8	13.3	42.5					
	A	14	12	13	0	39					
		11.7	10.0	10.8	0.0	32.5					
	SA	3	0	10	4	17					
		2.5	0.0	8.3	3.3	14.2					
Total		26	46	24	21	120					

Since the calculated value (52.11) was greater than the Critical value (16.9). that is, self -concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist, at X^2 Calculated (9) = 52.11 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05, the conclusion therefore was that, self-concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist.

VI. Summary of Results

The summary of the results is as follows:

1. Knowledge of French language has significant effect on Journalism Education in Nigeria, at X^2 Calculated (9) = 44.50 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05.
2. There is no relationship between attitude and knowledge at (r=0.065; p>0.05).
3. There was significant difference between Students' Knowledge of French and students' career development as prospective Journalist. It was observed that the t- Calculated value was greater than t-Critical values (t-Cal=-8.941 > t=Crit =1.96) (P<0.05).
4. Self-concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist. X^2 Calculated (9) = 52.11 greater than X^2 Critical (9) =16.9 at P=0.000<0.05.

VII. Conclusions

We have succinctly considered in this study, the relative significance of foreign language programme on the Journalism education in Nigeria with particular emphasis on French language as the de facto second official language in Nigeria. Attempt has also been made to establish the popularity of French language in Journalism profession in Nigeria as a multilingual and multicultural state where over five hundred languages exist together with English language which is the official language of the country. It is not gainsaying the fact that language is a tool or instrument per excellence for carrying out the journalistic activities such as news gathering, research, interview, News reporting and news editing.

However, French language is yet to be offered its pride of place in Journalism education in Nigeria most especially in the area of requirements for admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria where Journalism or mass communication is offered. The language is also not found on the curriculum of many tertiary institutions in Nigeria where mass communication is offered. In some cases where the language is found on the curriculum, it only wears an optional look. This scenario has relegated the status of the language to the background despite its status as the second official language in Nigeria and the useful value

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of the language to prospective Journalist who is aspiring to operate on the international scene.

Knowledge of French language should be critically looked into as it has significant effect on the career development of students of Journalism. In addition, the self- concept has significant effect on students' knowledge of French language as Journalist. Therefore, it must be keenly considered in designing foreign language programme for prospective Journalists.

VIII. Recommendations

1. The attitudes of students of mass communication or journalism to French language should be positively enhanced in order to improve on their knowledge of the language. Nigerian union of journalist (NUJ) and other vital organs in the field of journalism should embark on sensitization programme that would create an awareness of the relevance of French language as a veritable tool in journalism profession in Nigeria.
2. The students should be encouraged to embrace the learning of French language at the earlier stage of their career in journalism or mass communication. The results of this study revealed that as students advance in age they tend to recognize the value of French language which could be as a result of their belief that it could help boost their career in the process of searching for job.
3. Government should formulate a policy that will make French language compulsory in all institutions offering Journalism or mass communication in Nigeria. The government should also see to the implementation of such policy by providing technical assistance through provisions of incentives or funds to these institutions.
4. Government should embark on mass training of French teachers and their subsequent deployment to the Journalism schools and institutions in Nigeria.
5. Government should embark on sensitization programmes and value re- orientation among the Nigerian citizenry in respect of the significant worth of French language to Journalism education in Nigeria. This campaign can be flagged off in all higher institutions of learning in Nigeria and professional bodies such Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) etc.

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