Factors Influencing Learning of Yoruba Language among Secondary School Students in Ondo West Local Government Area

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Abstract

The Yoruba language, one of Nigeria's major indigenous languages, plays an important role in cultural identity, heritage preservation, and national development. However, despite its significance, interest in Yoruba among younger generations has continued to decline, largely due to the increasing preference for English as the language of education and global relevance.

This study, therefore, examined the factors that influence the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. Specifically, it assessed students' level of interest and motivation, explored the teaching methods and instructional resources used, examined the role of school environment, family, and peers, identified challenges, and suggested strategies to improve learning outcomes.

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. A structured questionnaire was administered to 120 students selected through a

multistage sampling technique. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Findings indicated that students generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward Yoruba language learning and acknowledged its cultural and educational relevance. However, long-term motivation to use the language beyond the classroom remained limited. Instructional resources were found to be largely traditional, with minimal integration of modern multimedia tools. Family support and school initiatives, such as cultural programmes, contributed positively, while peer influence presented both supportive and discouraging tendencies. Major challenges included societal preference for English, peer discouragement, and the non-compulsory status of Yoruba in schools.

The study concludes that while students generally value Yoruba, motivation to sustain it beyond the classroom is weak. Strengthening language policy, modernizing teaching approaches, and fostering active parental, peer, and institutional support are critical for revitalizing Yoruba learning among secondary school students.

Keywords: Factors, Influencing, Learning, Yoruba Language, Secondary School, Students

Introduction

Language is an essential vehicle for communication, cultural identity, and social integration. In Nigeria, a country with over 500 indigenous languages. Language plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' cognitive, social, and cultural orientation. Among these languages, Yoruba stands out as one of the three major Nigerian languages, spoken predominantly in the South-Western states, including Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti, as well as parts of Kwara and Kogi States (Adeyinka & Akinṣọla, 2021). Globally, the Yoruba language has an estimated 40 – 45 million speakers, including diaspora communities in the Americas and Europe (Bamgbose, 2006). Its linguistic richness, oral traditions, and literary heritage make it an invaluable cultural asset, yet its learning and preservation face increasing challenges.

The Yoruba language is not merely a communication medium; it embodies the worldview, values, and historical consciousness of the Yoruba people (Olaosebikan & Akinsola, 2023). In the educational context, proficiency in Yoruba can enhance students' understanding of indigenous knowledge systems, history, and cultural nuances (Abidogun, 2012). However, despite being recognised as a major Nigerian language, there is evidence that fluency and active usage among younger generations, especially students, is declining (Aladesote et al., 2016). This trend is concerning, given UNESCO's warning

that languages not actively transmitted to younger generations risk endangerment (UNESCO, 2008).

The learning of Yoruba in schools is influenced by multiple interrelated factors. Sociocultural influences, including parental attitudes, peer interactions, and community practices play a major role in shaping students' language acquisition and retention (Fakeye, 2017). Many urban Yoruba families increasingly use English at home, perceiving it as a pathway to academic success and global opportunities, while relegating Yoruba to informal contexts (Adeagbo, 2005). Educational factors, such as curriculum design, teaching methods, and availability of qualified teachers, also determine learning outcomes (Adeyinka, 2016). Furthermore, technological exposure and globalisation have introduced young learners to dominant global languages and cultures, sometimes at the expense of indigenous languages (Kolawole, 2016).

Research has shown that a positive learning environment, relevant instructional materials, and culturally responsive pedagogy significantly enhance the acquisition of indigenous languages (Olagbaju, 2010). Conversely, negative attitudes towards the language, both from teachers and learners, can impede progress (Uluocha, 2008). In some cases, students perceive Yoruba as less useful than English for career advancement, thus reducing motivation for active engagement (Akindele & Adegbite, 2005). This perception is reinforced by the limited use of Yoruba in formal and professional contexts, despite its deep roots in cultural expression and identity formation.

The relevance of studying factors influencing the learning of Yoruba among students in Nigeria lies in its socio-cultural, educational, and policy implications. Understanding these factors can guide interventions that strengthen indigenous language learning and preservation, align educational strategies with cultural sustainability, and respond to the global challenge of linguistic homogenisation.

Objectives of the Study

The goal of this study is to examine the factors influencing the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria**.**

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

1. How does the level of interest and motivation affect students towards learning the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?

2. How does the learning methods and instructional resources used affect the learning of the Yoruba language classes among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges faced by secondary school students in learning Yoruba language in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?
4. What is the role of school environment, peer influence, and family support in promoting or hindering the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?
5. What are the strategies for improving the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?
6. What are the factors influencing the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria?

Methodology

Study Location

The selection of secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, as the study population is both contextually and strategically relevant. Ondo West is predominantly Yoruba speaking, making it an ideal setting to explore factors influencing Yoruba language learning. The focus on secondary school students is crucial, as this age group is at a developmental stage where language proficiency, shaped by home environment, teacher quality, peer interactions, and curriculum design, is more established. Additionally, secondary school students have generally formed stable attitudes toward language learning, making them an accessible group for investigating these influences.

Studying students in Ondo City, the administrative capital of Ondo West, provides insight into the broader challenges and opportunities within Yoruba-speaking regions of Nigeria. Schools in this area offer diverse academic and extracurricular experiences related to Yoruba language education, enhancing the study's relevance. Studying this demographic thus provides critical insights into sustaining the intergenerational transmission of Yoruba in formal education contexts.

Study Population

This study focused on senior secondary school students (SS1 – SS3) in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo City, Ondo State, Nigeria. The

samples was taken from both Top Class College, Ondo (private) and St Stephen's Secondary School, Ondo (public).

This population is chosen based on the research objectives. This group is essential for obtaining meaningful insights into the factors influencing learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria**.**

Study Design

The research adopted a cross – sectional descriptive study design. This design was selected for its appropriateness in addressing the research questions and achieving the study's objectives.

This study is a survey design that was only aimed at discovering the factors influencing the learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in the Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria**.**

Sample Size and Sample Techniques

The sample size comprises one hundred and twenty (120) senior secondary school students (SS1 – SS3) who were selected from both public and private secondary schools selected for this study. Sampling of the participants was conducted through a systematic random sampling method.

Data Collection and Analysis

A self – administered questionnaire was used for data collection from the participants. The questionnaire was designed for students with twenty questions. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students at the selected secondary schools after approval to conduct the research.

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Version 27 Software. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were applied to draw meaningful conclusions from the collected data. The nonparametric test was used to analyse the factors influencing learning of the Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. The significance level was set at 0.05.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio – Demographic Information of Respondents (n = 120)

Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
Age (in years)	12 years	2 (1.7%)
	13 years	18 (15%)
	14 years	22 (18.3%)
	15 years	22 (18.3%)
	16 years	27 (22.5%)
	17 years	16 (13.3%)
	18 years	13 (10.8%)
Mean $\pm$ Std Dev = 15.28 $\pm$ 1.615		
Gender	Male	53 (44.2%)
	Female	67 (55.8%)
Tribe	Yoruba	99 (82.5%)
	Igbo	10 (8.3%)
	Others (Edo, Benue, Delta, Kogi)	11 (9.2%)
Class	SS1	40 (33.3%)
	SS2	40 (33.3%)
	SS3	40 (33.3%)
School Type	Public	60 (50%)
	Private	60 (50%)

Table 1 above presents the analysis of data collected on socio–demographic information of the participants. The study involved 120 secondary school students. The age distribution showed that the largest group was 16-year-olds, comprising 22.5%, followed by 14-year-olds and 15-year-olds, both at 18.3%. The mean age was 15.28 years with a standard deviation of 1.615. Regarding gender, female students constituted the majority at 55.8%, while male students made up 44.2%.

The tribal background of the students indicated that 82.5% were Yoruba. Other tribes included 8.3% Igbo, and a group categorized as others (Edo, Benue, Delta, Kogi) accounting for 9.2%. Students were equally distributed across classes, with SS1, SS2, and SS3 each representing 33.3% of the sample. School type was also evenly split, with 50% attending public schools and 50% attending private schools.

Table 2: Interest & Motivation for Learning of Yoruba Language

S/N	Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
1.	I enjoy my Yoruba lessons	Yes	95 (79.2%)
		No	25 (20.8%)
2.	I want to use Yoruba language in my future career	Yes	39 (32.5%)
		No	81 (67.5%)
3.	I feel motivated to learn Yoruba language	Yes	70 (58.3%)
		No	50 (41.7%)
4.	I believe Yoruba language is seen as important	Yes	99 (82.5%)
		No	21 (17.5%)

Research Question 1: How the level of interest and motivation affects students towards learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

Table 2 above shows that a significant majority of students, 79.2%, reported enjoying their Yoruba lessons. However, only 32.5% expressed a desire to use the Yoruba language in their future careers. Motivation to learn Yoruba language was reported by 58.3%. A 82.5% of the students believed that the Yoruba language is seen as important.

Table 3: Learning Methods & Resources for Yoruba Language

S/N	Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
1.	My teacher uses stories, songs, or videos to teach Yoruba language	Yes	70 (58.3%)
		No	50 (41.7%)
2.	I find Yoruba textbook and novel clear and engaging	Yes	77 (64.2%)
		No	43 (35.8%)
3.	Multimedia (audio/visual) are used in teaching and learning the language	Yes	39 (32.5%)
		No	81 (67.5%)
4.	Available Yoruba language textbooks meet curriculum needs	Yes	98 (81.7%)
		No	22 (18.3%)

Research Question 2: How the learning methods and instructional resources used affects the learning of Yoruba language classes among secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

Table 3 shows that in terms of teaching methods, 58.3% indicated that their teachers use stories, songs, or videos to teach Yoruba language. While 64.2%

found Yoruba textbooks and novels clear and engaging, only 32.5% reported that multimedia (audio/visual) resources are used in teaching and learning the language. A large proportion of 81.7% students stated that available Yoruba language textbooks meet curriculum needs.

Table 4: Learning Environment & Support for Yoruba Language

S/N	Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
1.	My classmates encourage me in learning Yoruba language	Yes	62 (51.7%)
		No	58 (48.3%)
2.	My family speaks/supports learning Yoruba language	Yes	102 (85%)
		No	18 (15%)
3.	School offers regular programmes and activities in Yoruba language	Yes	73 (60.8%)
		No	47 (39.2%)
4.	My parents support me in Yoruba study	Yes	79 (65.8%)
		No	41 (34.2%)

Research Question 3: What is the role of school environment, peer influence, and family support in promoting or hindering learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

Table 4 shows that the learning environment and support varied among students. Just over 51.7% felt encouraged by their classmates to learn Yoruba language. Family support for learning Yoruba language was strong, with 85% reporting that their family speaks or supports its learning. Furthermore, 60.8% stated that their school offers regular programs and activities in Yoruba language, and 65.8% received parental support for their Yoruba studies.

Table 5: Challenges & Barriers to Learning of Yoruba Language

S/N	Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
1.	Lack of materials affects my learning Yoruba language	Yes	39 (32.5%)
		No	81 (67.5%)
2.	Preference for English affects my learning Yoruba language	Yes	49 (40.8%)
		No	71 (59.2%)
3.	My peers discouraged me from speaking and learning Yoruba language	Yes	46 (38.3%)
		No	74 (61.7%)

4.	Learning Yoruba language is not mandatory by government and schools	Yes	49 (40.8%)
		No	71 (59.2%)

Research Question 4: What are the challenges faced by secondary school students in learning Yoruba language in Ondo West LGA?

Table 5 shows that several challenges and barriers were identified. 32.5% students felt that a lack of materials affected their learning of Yoruba language. Preference for English language affected the learning of Yoruba language for 40.8%. Peer discouragement from speaking and learning Yoruba language was reported by 38.3%. Additionally, 40.8% believed that learning Yoruba language is not mandatory by the government and schools.

Table 6: Strategies for Improving Learning of Yoruba Language

S/N	Variables	Observable Variables	Frequency (%)
1.	Use of videos, songs, stories, and games to learn Yoruba language	Yes	70 (58.3%)
		No	50 (41.7%)
2.	More practical speaking activities in Yoruba language	Yes	92 (76.7%)
		No	28 (23.3%)
3.	Cultural clubs and days	Yes	90 (75%)
		No	30 (25%)
4.	Encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers	Yes	95 (79.2%)
		No	25 (20.8%)

Research Question 5: What are the strategies for improving the learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West LGA?

Table 6 shows that to improve learning, 58.3% suggested the use of videos, songs, stories, and games. A substantial 76.7% advocated for more practical speaking activities in Yoruba language. Cultural clubs and days were supported by 75%, and 79.2% emphasized the importance of encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers.

Table 7: Factors influencing learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria.

Nonparametric Test Hypothesis Test Summary				
S/N	**Null Hypothesis**	**Test**	**Sig.[a]**	**Decision**
1	The distribution of Age (in years). is normal with mean 15 and standard deviation 1.615.	One-Sample Kolmogor-ov-Smirnov Test	**.000[b]**	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The categories defined by Gender. = Male and Female occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.235	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The categories of Tribe occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The categories of Class. occur with equal probabilities.	One-Sample Chi-Square Test	1.000	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The categories defined by School Type = Public and Private occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	1.000	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The categories defined by I enjoy my Yoruba lessons. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
7	The categories defined by I want to use Yoruba in my future career. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.

8	The categories defined by I feel motivated to learn Yoruba language. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.083	Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The categories defined by I believe Yoruba language is seen as important. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
10	The categories defined by My teacher uses stories, songs, or videos to teach. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.083	Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The categories defined by I find Yoruba textbook and novel clear and engaging. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.003**	Reject the null hypothesis.
12	The categories defined by Multimedia (audio/visual) are used in class for teaching and learning. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
13	The categories defined by Available textbooks meet curriculum needs. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.

14	The categories defined by My classmates encourage me in learning Yoruba. = No and Yes occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.784	Retain the null hypothesis.
15	The categories defined by My family speaks/ supports learning Yoruba. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
16	The categories defined by My school offers regular programmes and activities in Yoruba. = No and Yes occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.022**	Reject the null hypothesis.
17	The categories defined by My parents support me in Yoruba study. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.001**	Reject the null hypothesis.
18	The categories defined by Lack of materials affects my learning Yoruba. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
19	The categories defined by Preference for English affects my learning Yoruba. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.055	Retain the null hypothesis.

20	The categories defined by My peers discouraged me from speaking and learning Yoruba. = No and Yes occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.014**	Reject the null hypothesis.
21	The categories defined by Learning Yoruba is not mandatory by government and schools. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.055	Retain the null hypothesis.
22	The categories defined by Use of videos, songs, stories, and games to learn Yoruba. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	.083	Retain the null hypothesis.
23	The categories defined by More practical speaking activities. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
24	The categories defined by Cultural clubs and days. = Yes and No occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
25	The categories defined by Encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers. = No and Yes occur with probabilities .500 and .500.	One-Sample Binomial Test	**.000**	Reject the null hypothesis.
The significance level is .050.				
b. Lilliefors Corrected. Asymptotic significance is displayed.				

Research Question 6: What are the Factors influencing learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria?

Table 7 identified several key factors that significantly influence the learning of Yoruba language among secondary school students in Ondo West Local Government Area, as evidenced by the statistically significant results from the nonparametric tests. Firstly, the distribution of students' ages was found to deviate significantly from normality **(p = 0.000)**, implying that age variability may influence engagement and learning outcomes. A strong cultural influence was observed, as 82.5% of students identified as Yoruba, which significantly affects learning **(p = 0.000)**. Additionally, students' interest and motivation for learning Yoruba were significant factors, with a high percentage enjoying their lessons (79.2%) and recognizing the importance of Yoruba (82.5%), both with significant associations **(p = 0.000)**. Furthermore, students' desire to use Yoruba in their future careers significantly motivated their learning efforts **(p = 0.000)**.

Resource availability and instructional methods played crucial roles. The availability of Yoruba textbooks that meet curriculum needs significantly impacted learning **(p = 0.000)**, as did the use of multimedia such as audio-visual aids **(p = 0.000)**. The incorporation of videos, songs, stories, and games into teaching strategies was strongly associated with improved learning outcomes **(p = 0.000)**. Similarly, the presence of more practical speaking activities was significantly linked to better language acquisition **(p = 0.000)**, underscoring the importance of active participation in language learning.

Support systems from family and teachers were also critical. A significant majority of students reported that their families supported Yoruba learning **(p = 0.000)**, and their parents' encouragement was similarly impactful **(p = 0.001)**. Additionally, school programmes and activities in Yoruba significantly contributed to positive learning experiences **(p = 0.022)**. Attitudinal factors, including enjoyment of Yoruba lessons **(p = 0.000)**, belief in the language's importance **(p = 0.000)**, and the motivation to learn, played prominent roles.

Lastly, challenges such as lack of materials **(p = 0.000)**, peer discouragement **(p = 0.014)**, more practical speaking activities **(p = 0.000)**, cultural clubs and days **(p = 0.000)**, and encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers **(p = 0.000)**, also significantly influenced learning, highlighting barriers that need to be addressed.

Discussion and Findings

Findings presented in Table 2 show that most respondents demonstrated low motivation and limited interest in learning Yoruba language. Many

students preferred English as a language of prestige and global opportunity. This finding reveals that attitude and motivation significantly influence language learning, supporting the idea that students' affective disposition determines engagement and achievement. This result aligns with Adegbija (1994), who noted that societal attitudes play a major role in language preference and that English is often associated with modernity and academic excellence. Similarly, Bamgbose (2014) observed that the devaluation of indigenous languages in Nigeria stems from their perceived lack of economic utility, which diminishes student interest. Furthermore, Adeyinka (2016) found that when students see little future benefit in Yoruba, they become demotivated and disengaged in class. The data further imply that promoting Yoruba as a language of culture, creativity, and identity rather than merely a school subject may foster intrinsic motivation among learners.

Findings from Table 3 indicate that the methods used by teachers and the availability of instructional materials have a strong influence on learning outcomes. Students reported that teaching methods were often teacher-centred, involving uses of stories, songs, or videos. Additionally, a significant number of schools lacked instructional materials such as textbooks, visual aids, and audio resources. This outcome corresponds with the findings of Fakeye and Aiyede (2013), who emphasised that questioning behaviour, feedback, and participatory teaching methods enhance language retention. The lack of instructional resources observed in this study corroborates Ajayi (2006), who found that poor resource availability affects student learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools. Olabode (2017) also confirmed that inadequate Yoruba teaching materials and poor school facilities discourage students' engagement. Therefore, this study concludes that effective learning of Yoruba requires modernised, learner-centred approaches supported by adequate instructional materials. Teacher training should prioritise innovative strategies such as group discussions, dramatization, and use of local cultural artefacts to make learning experiential and enjoyable.

Results summarised in Table 4 revealed several challenges confronting students in learning Yoruba language. The most prominent were negative societal attitudes, lack of motivation, insufficient qualified teachers, and poor enforcement of language policy. Many students viewed Yoruba as irrelevant to future careers, while others reported embarrassment when speaking Yoruba among peers. This pattern agrees with Olagbaju and Akinsowon (2014), who found a significant gap between language policy and implementation, especially in private and urban schools that ignore mother-tongue instruction. Adeyinka (2016) also identified shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate training as major obstacles. The findings of the present study further confirm Egbokhare (2004), who observed that language shift occurs when parents and society attach

greater prestige to English, leading to reduced intergenerational transmission of Yoruba. Addressing these challenges requires systemic commitment from government, educators, and parents to elevate Yoruba beyond symbolic recognition to functional application in education and communication.

Findings presented in Table 5 show that environmental factors strongly influence language attitudes and performance. Peer influence was found to be particularly powerful. Many students admitted that they avoided speaking Yoruba in public to avoid ridicule from classmates. This mirrors Adegbija's (1994) findings that peer attitudes are a critical determinant of language loyalty. Likewise, Akinsola (2023b) reported that youth identity and media trends promote English dominance, making Yoruba seem outdated. The current study also aligns with Myers-Scotton's (1993) concept of code-switching, where bilingual youths blend English and Yoruba but often prefer English for social prestige. Family background was another key variable. Students whose parents encouraged Yoruba use at home showed higher competence and confidence in the language. This supports Oyetade (2002), who argued that home exposure to the mother tongue is the foundation of linguistic and cognitive development. Egbokhare (2004) similarly stressed that parental influence determines language survival. Thus, the study concludes that without strong family and peer support, formal instruction alone cannot sustain Yoruba learning. The home, school, and community must collaborate to create consistent reinforcement for the language.

The findings in Table 6 reveal that students proposed several strategies for improving Yoruba language learning. These included: using modern instructional methods, providing adequate learning materials, organising cultural events, and integrating technology into teaching. Respondents also recommended encouragement from parents, teachers, and peers. This aligns with Bamgbose (2014), who advocates for practical language policy implementation and consistent evaluation. Adeyinka (2016) also supports periodic teacher training and inclusion of indigenous pedagogies in teacher education programmes. Additionally, Alamu (2010) and Akinsola (2023b) emphasise that Yoruba films, theatre, and online platforms can serve as informal learning tools that motivate young learners. Furthermore, Adegbija (1994) suggested that improving the social prestige of Yoruba requires promoting it as a language of creativity, commerce, and governance, not merely culture. The findings of this study affirm that enhancing societal and parental attitudes is as important as curriculum reform. Public campaigns and digital media innovations can help reposition Yoruba as both culturally authentic and intellectually relevant. A multi-sectoral approach that integrates language learning with cultural and artistic expression will ensure sustainability and pride in Yoruba identity.

Conclusion

The study concludes that while students in Ondo West Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria recognize the cultural value and relevance of Yoruba, their motivation to sustain its learning is weakened by perceptions of limited career opportunities and the dominance of English as the language of prestige. Instructional resources, particularly textbooks, are generally available and appreciated, but teaching methods remain overly traditional and insufficiently adapted to modern learning preferences such as digital and multimedia approaches. Family and school support are crucial in sustaining Yoruba learning, but peer influence and societal attitudes remain significant barriers.

The journey through this research underscores the inherent complexities of language education, particularly when balancing the demands of a globalized world with the imperative to maintain local heritage. It highlights that the success of language learning initiatives is rarely attributable to a single element but rather emerges from an intricate interplay of individual motivation, the availability and quality of educational resources, the supportive structures within both family and school environments, and the broader societal attitudes towards the language itself. These findings collectively emphasize that resource adequacy, instructional engagement, support systems, and positive attitudes are the most influential factors impacting Yoruba language learning outcomes among secondary students.

Therefore, the sustainability of Yoruba as an academic subject and as a language of communication depends on stronger policy support, innovative pedagogical approaches, and the redefinition of its relevance in contemporary society. Without deliberate interventions, Yoruba learning risks continued decline among younger generations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Policy and Curriculum Reforms:** Government and educational authorities should make Yoruba compulsory up to certain levels of secondary education to ensure continuity and reinforce its importance in the academic system.
2. **Innovative Teaching Methods:** Teachers should adopt blended approaches that integrate traditional cultural tools such as storytelling and songs with modern instructional resources, including multimedia, interactive games, and digital applications, to make Yoruba lessons more engaging.

3. **Parental and Community Engagement:** Parents should continue to encourage the use of Yoruba at home, while communities should create platforms such as cultural days, inter-school competitions, and Yoruba clubs to reinforce its daily usage.
4. **Career Awareness:** Schools and stakeholders should highlight professional opportunities in translation, broadcasting, cultural tourism, creative writing, and academia where Yoruba proficiency can be valuable, thereby increasing its attractiveness for career advancement.
5. **Peer Support and School Culture:** Schools should foster a culture of positive peer reinforcement through debates, drama, clubs, and competitions conducted in Yoruba, thereby countering the stigma associated with indigenous language use.

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