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Vol. 8 No. 2
ISSN: 1595-1324
June 2016
www.ysan.org

YORÙBÁ

Journal of Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria

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Yorùbá

Journal of the Yorùbá Studies Association of
Nigeria



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Vol. 8 No. 2

ISSN 1595-1324

June 2016

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Psychological Factors as Predictors of Students' Academic Achievement in Yorùbá Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Egbédá Local Government Area, Òyó State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the relationship among selected psychological factors (Locus of control, Self-concept and Motivation) and students' academic achievement in Yorùbá Language in Egbédá Local Government Area, Òyó State. The study also examined which of the selected psychological factors will most predict academic achievement in Yorùbá language. Four hundred and eighty class two students randomly selected from nine senior secondary schools out of twenty six in Egbédá Local Government Area participated in the study in which four research questions were answered. Four research instruments were used in this study: Students' Locus of Control Scale (SLOCS)($r=.76$); Students' Self-Concept Scale (SSCS)($r=.82$); Students' Motivation Scale (SMOTS)($r=.84$); and Yorùbá Language Achievement Test (YLAT)(.86). Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard



deviation; inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regressions. Findings revealed that there is no significant correlation between students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language and locus of control ($r=.060$, $p>.05$). The correlation between students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language and motivation is not significant ($r = -.067$, $p > .05$). However, there is significant positive correlation between students' self-concept and academic achievement in Yorùbá language ($r=.067$, $p < .05$). The three psychological factors can predict students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language (SMOT ($\beta=0.15$; $t=2.06$; $P<0.05$); SLOC ($\beta=.079$; $t=1.642$, $p>.05$); SSC ($\beta=-.040$; $t=-.736$; $P>.05$) with motivation being the most, followed by locus of control and self-concept. Based on the findings, it is recommended that parents and guardians should exhibit positive attitude towards Yorùbá language and train their children to appreciate the values in the language so that they will be committed to learning it as other school subjects.

Keywords: Locus of control, Self-concept, Motivation, Achievement, Yorùbá Language Teaching.

Introduction

In Nigeria, just like other former British colonies, English language is retained as an official language and the language of post-primary education. In contrast, the indigenous languages are restricted to primary education and the cultural domain. Yorùbá, alongside Igbo and Hausa, has the status of a national language as prescribed in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Igbo, Hausa and Yorùbá are prescribed in the *National Policy on Education* (NPE, 2004) as a medium of

instruction in primary schools and to be studied as a second language in junior secondary schools in Nigeria.

The *National Policy on Education* emphasises the importance of Nigerian language in the education of a child as means of preserving the culture of a people and for national unity (Section 1, 10a). In school, mother-tongue is of immense importance to the educational foundation of learners. The Nigerian *National Policy on Education* stipulates that from pre-primary to the first three years of primary education, mother tongue (MT) or Language of the Immediate Community (LIC) should be the medium of instruction, while from the fourth year of primary school onwards, the medium of instruction should be English but the MT or the LIC should continue to be taught as a school subject (NPE 2004, section 2, 14e; section 4, 19 e & f). To the end of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level, learners' LIC and one major Nigerian language, other than that LIC, should be among the basic subjects to be offered (NPE, 2004, section 5, 24a). This is because the background experience is required to make learning conducive for learners.

In Patrick, Sui, Didam and Gyang (2013), it is stated that the use of mother tongue to teach at the elementary level will enable the learners to use their mother-tongue to establish and maintain good relationships with family members (especially grandparents) and relatives, understand their culture and develop organised interpersonal relations. In evaluating the interdependence of English language and learners' mother tongue, Krashen (2004) states that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the English language. For



example, if a child has developed good reading skills in the Yorùbá language, she/he is likely able to apply these skills when reading the English language. This means that children will learn English much more effectively if they continue to develop their first language at the same time. Oribabor and Adesina (2013) corroborate the above assertion when they declare that a child will learn faster and better if he is taught in his mother tongue at the early stage of his education. It is identified that mother-tongue instruction will help the children to acquire facts and information easily and quickly interpret information obtained properly and correctly.

Formal learning of the Yorùbá language is facing a lot of challenges. The stakeholders (Government and parents) are not enhancing the prospects of the language. For instance, in employment exercise, few Yorùbá teachers are employed compared to other disciplines as a result of which some schools now experience shortage of trained Yorùbá language teachers. Some private primary schools do not offer Yorùbá as a school subject at all while some start at primary four; just because the implementation is not enforced as if it were not meant to serve a purpose at its inception. Most parents prefer schools where the English language is the medium of instruction even at the pre-primary level so they abandon Government schools and take their children to private schools. For the fact that no sanction is placed on private schools for non-compliance on the issue of medium of instruction and parents also have preference for English language, most public schools' teachers also adopt English as the medium of instruction at the lower primary.



Abijo (2014) discovers no significant difference in the use of mother tongue between the public and private primary schools in South-west Nigeria.

In schools, 'No speaking of vernacular' is a strong rule with punishment for violators. Yorùbá language speaking is only allowed during its lessons while English is welcomed everywhere and every time. This attitude to use of Yorùbá language makes children perceive Yorùbá as less important. OlaOlorun, Ikonta and Adeosun (2013) opine that where one language is devalued and the child is made to have a low perception of it, low cognitive functioning results. These problems and many others inform negative psychological affects and poor academic achievements in Yorùbá language. Some parents hardly buy Yorùbá textbooks for their wards, assist in doing homework and encourage children to read Yorùbá textbooks and literature books.

Adeosun (2008) reports that it is ironic that most Yorùbá parents prefer their children speak English to speaking their mother tongue. The result, according to Isola (1995), is that the competence of the child in Yorùbá would be dangerously affected. Adeniyi and Bello (2007) confirm incompetence when examining teachers' attitudes and students' performance in Yorùbá language learning in private schools in Lagos metropolis. The study found that most of the learners had English as their first language (L₁), and had little or no knowledge of the Yorùbá language which is either their mother tongue or language in the immediate community. When these categories of pupils get to secondary school, it is difficult to



teach them the basic concepts they have missed in primary education. As a result, some of them usually lose interest or simply claim that Yorùbá is a difficult subject (Adeyinka, 2015).

Globalisation is seen as posing problems to use of the Yorùbá language in conversation among young ones. Raheem (2013) observes that globalisation is shaping our world in different ways and producing undeniable consequences in our interaction at the individual, interpersonal, societal and international levels. He discovers that it has got great impact on the patterns of language choice, attitudes to languages, language shift and language use among youths in Southwestern Nigeria. The English language remains the most dominant language on the internet. Those who are not versed in English would rather use pidgin or code-mix English with Yorùbá in order to converse with their peers (Adeyinka and Awolere, 2013). Many of them transfer the habit of code switching to conversations in Yorùbá formal setting and writing. Hence they score ridiculous marks in internal and external examinations.

While many discussions about Yorùbá language learning have focused on teaching approaches and methodologies, little emphasis is given to individual's psychological factors that affect students' learning. Many studies in foreign languages (English and French) have found correlation among self concept, locus of control, motivation and students' academic achievement, while few do not. These include Amadi (2010), Liu (2010), Fakeye (2011), Ezeokoli and Fasan, (2013), Araromi (2013), Akintunde (2014), and Mkpae (2014). Few studies exist on the relationship between psychological factors

and academic achievements in Yorùbá language. Therefore, this research examined the relationship among locus of control, self concept, motivation and academic achievement in Yorùbá language. These psychological concepts are selected because they are resident in the learners and found significant in the language-learning process; in addition, they can be adjusted and learned.

Locus of control as an aspect of psychology was developed by Julian Rotter in 1966. It was derived from Rotter's Social Learning Theory of 1954. It is a generalised belief about who controls one's life. Individual has diverse beliefs about who controls her/his destiny and the causes of her/his actions. In other words, an individual's destiny could be controlled by oneself, fate, god or powerful others. These beliefs give the kind of attitude people adopt towards an event. The theory categorises locus of control into two non-dimensional units, that is, internal locus of control and external locus of control. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behaviour and actions whether positive or negative. Those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate or chance primarily determine events, so, their predicaments are beyond their control. A student with a high internal locus of control sees failure as his own inadequate preparation and efforts, while the externally controlled one does not blame himself for his errors (Fakeye, 2011). While Amadi (2010) and Fatemi and Elahi (2010) find no significant relationship between achievements in English language and students' locus of control, Mkpae (2014)



and Akintunde (2014) discover a significant correlation between students' locus of control and academic achievements.

Prominent among the psychological factors is the learners' self concept. Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, and Rothert (2006) define academic self-concept as a person's self-perception regarding a specific academic domain or ability. Mercer (2011) describes academic self-concept as an individual's self-perception of competence and her/his evaluative judgments in the academic domain. Researchers also agree that self-concept is not innate, but rather it is formed through an individual's experiences and interaction with the environment, where "significant others" play an important role. It is further explained as the component of human personality that is developed through the process of self-reflection and is susceptible to change, (Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton, 1976 and Sanchez and Ruda, 2003). Studies such as Marsh and Yeung (1997), Liu (2010), Ezeokoli and Fasan (2013) discover that self-concept positively correlates with academic achievements in English language, while Arnaiz and Guillen (2012) find no significant difference.

In contemporary times, some Yorùbá language students exhibit low competence in spoken and written forms. In terms of speech making, learners' now code switch and code mix when speaking the Yorùbá language. In written form, they struggle with the right structure. In Yorùbá language classroom, most learners are no longer confident to participate in classroom interactions because the teacher will demand for use of the acceptable form of the language. The number of studies that

have approached self-concept explicitly in language learning are mostly foreign. This essay sheds light on the general self-concept of students in formal learning of Yorùbá in secondary schools.

Motivation has been a central area for empirical research and theoretical work in the context of second language learning (L_2). With the problems facing the teaching and learning of Yorùbá language in Nigeria now, studies on how young ones can be motivated in the use of the language is urgently required. Gardner and Lambert (1972), who grounded motivation research in a social psychology framework, introduced instrumental motivation, which refers to the learner's desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes (such as employment, travel, or exam purposes) and integrative motivation, which refers to the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully into the target language community. Gardner (1985), in his socio-educational model, noted that motivation is perceived to be composed of three elements: effort, desire and affect. Effort refers to the time spent studying the language and the drive of the learner. Desire indicates how much the learner wants to become proficient in the language, and affect means the learner's emotional reactions related to language study. The study emphasises motivation as a combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, including favourable attitudes towards learning the language.

Deci and Ryan (2000) classify motivation into two types: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Students who are intrinsically motivated for learning are more eager to learn, likely to use



effective strategies, likely to persist in the face of challenges and likely to achieve at higher level unlike students who are unmotivated or extrinsically motivated. Many studies have found correlation between motivation and academic achievement. They include: Wechsumangkalo and Prasertrattanadecho (2004), Liu (2010), Wilmomas (2012) and Boboye and Sofowora (2014), though, Gagné and St. Péré (2001) and Araromi (2013) observe that motivation does not predict academic achievement after controlling for students' cognitive ability. Teachers' influence students' motivation to learn through their use of certain strategies and classroom structures. This is equally important in teaching Yorùbá language.

Statement of the problem

There is a decline in interest and number of young generations speaking the Yorùbá language and studying it as a subject in school. Amazingly, students begin to record performances that are below average in internal and external examinations despite the fact that this language is their MT or LIC. There arose concern from scholars and researchers on how to sustain interest and improve academic achievements in Yorùbá language. These result in many studies on the implications of attitudinal disposition of government, parents, learners and society at large to the use of Yorùbá, influence of globalisation/civilisation on the Yorùbá language, code alternation among bilinguals, ways to save the Yorùbá language from going into extinction, new teaching strategies and socio-cultural aspects of the language to

mention a few; yet, poor performance continues. Since studies have shown that psychological factors such as locus of control, self-concept and motivation correlate significantly with students' achievements in English and French, there is the need to examine this correlation in the Yorùbá language. Moreover, there is paucity of research on the relationship among these variables and students' achievement in Yorùbá language.

In order to partake of filling this gap, this study has selected locus of control, self concept and motivation to find the relationship among these and students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language. Moreover, it examined the relative and composite contributions of these psychological factors to students' academic achievements in Yorùbá Language.

Scope of the study

The study was carried out in Egbéda Local Government Area, Òyó State. It comprised SS2 students in public secondary schools in this local government. The study investigated the relationships between the selected psychological factors and students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language. It also determined the relative and composite contributions of the independent variables (locus of control, self-concept and motivation) to the dependent variable (academic achievement in Yorùbá language). It highlighted the modalities of helping the learners to develop positively their psychological well-being such that their knowledge of Yorùbá language would be enhanced.



Research questions

1. What is the relationship among the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) on students' achievement in Yorùbá language?
2. What are the composite contributions of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' achievement in Yorùbá language?
3. What are the relative contributions of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' achievement in Yorùbá language?
4. Which of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) will predict students' achievement in Yorùbá language?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all Senior Secondary Two (SSII) students in Egbéda Local Government Area of Oyo State. The respondents were 480 SSII students randomly selected from nine schools out of 26 senior secondary schools in this Local Government Area. Four self-designed instruments were used in the study, namely: Students' Locus of Control Scale (SLOCS); Students' Self Concept Scale (SSCS); Students' Motivation Scale (SMOTS) and Yorùbá Language Achievement Test (YLAT). The questionnaires were structured along four-point modified Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree,

and Strongly Disagree). A reliability test was conducted on the questionnaires using Cronbach-alpha yielding coefficients of: .76 for SLOCS; .82 for SSCS and .84 for SMOTS, while test-retest was used in validating the achievement test with a value of .86 obtained. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation, inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis to provide answers to the research questions at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research question one: What is the relationship among the psychological variables (Locus of Control, Self Concept and Motivation) and students' academic achievements in Yorùbá language?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables', (locus of control, self concept and motivation) on students' achievement in Yorùbá Language.

Variables	Achievement	Locus of control	Motivation	Self concept
Achievement	1.000			
Locus of control	.060	1.000		
Motivation	-.067	.345* ¹	1.000	
Self concept	.067*	.073	.364*	1.000
Mean	11.42	48.86	35.98	35.950
Standard deviation	2.563	6.950	11.036	7.816



*significant at $P < .05$

Table 1 shows that there is no significant correlation between students academic achievement in Yorùbá language and locus of control ($r = .060$). The correlation between students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language and motivation is not significant ($r = -.067$). However, there is significant positive correlation between students' self concept and academic achievement in Yorùbá language ($r = .067$).

Research question two: What is the composite contribution of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis showing the composite contribution of independent variables, (Locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language.

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
Regression	135.817	3	45.272	7.112	.001*
Residual	3011.331	473	6.366		
Total	3147.148	476			

Significant at $P < .05$

$R = .050$

$R^2 = .003$

Adj $R^2 = .001$

Table 2 shows that there is significant composite contributions of psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language ($F_{(3,473)} = 7.112$). The table also shows a multiple regression squared index R^2 of .001. This implies that 0.1% of the total variation in the achievement of students in Yorùbá language is attributable to the composite contribution of independent variables of students' locus of control, self concept and motivation.

Research question three: What is the relative contribution of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) to students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language?

Table 3: Relative contribution of independent variables, (locus of control, self concept and motivation), to students' achievement in Yorùbá Language.

Predictor Variables	Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised coefficient	T	Sig.	Rank
	Beta (β)	Std. Error	Beta (β)			
Constant	8.223			6.74	.000	
Motivation	.035	.017	.151	2.062	.004*	1 st
Locus of control	.029	.018	.079	1.642	.101	2 nd
Self concept	-.013	.018	-.040	-.736	.462	3 rd

Significant at $p < .05$



Table 3 shows the relative contributions of each of the independent variables to the dependent variable. The relative contribution of students' locus of control to academic achievements is ($\beta = .079$; $t = 1.642$); also, relative contribution of students' self concept to academic achievement in Yorùbá language is ($\beta = -.040$; $t = -.736$). While the relative contribution of students' motivation to academic achievements in Yorùbá language is $\beta = 0.15$; $t = 2.06$. Thus, motivation is the highest contributor to students' achievement in Yorùbá language. This is followed by locus of control, while self concept is the least contributor. The relative effect of each of the independent variables at different levels and ranks is shown as: SMOT ($\beta=0.15$; $t=2.06$)>; SLOC ($\beta=.079$; $t=1.642$)>; SSC ($\beta=-.040$; $t=-.736$).

Research question four

Which of the psychological variables (locus of control, self concept and motivation) will predict students' achievement in Yorùbá language?

The three psychological factors can predict students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language (SMOT ($\beta=0.15$; $t=2.06$)>; SLOC ($\beta=.079$; $t=1.642$)>; SSC ($\beta=-.040$; $t=-.736$) with motivation being the most, followed by locus of control and self concept, in that order. $Y = 8.223 + 0.035 x$; where Y is the students' academic achievements in Yorùbá language and X is motivation. Significant at $P < .05$ alpha level.

Discussion of Findings

This study found that there is no significant relationship between academic achievement in Yorùbá language and students' locus of control. Non-significance of locus of control in this study is consistent with Amadi (2010) and Fatemi and Elahi (2010) who found no significant relationship between achievement in English language and students' locus of control. These studies however found significant difference in students' internal and external locus of control in relation to their achievement in English language. Also, Fakeye (2011), in his study of students' locus of control and achievement in English language, found that the locus of control of students positively correlates with their English language achievement, but students with internal and external locus of control did not differ significantly in their English language achievement. Contrary to these results are the findings of Mkpae (2014) and Akintunde (2014), who found significant correlation between students' locus of control and academic achievements.

There is positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement in Yorùbá language. This result supports the findings of Marsh and Yeung (1997) and Liu (2010) among others who found that self-concept positively correlates with academic achievement. Contrary to this finding are Arnaiz and Guillén (2012), who computed the means and standard deviations of the global self-concept and the academic, social and emotional self-concepts of each ability group and found no significant differences between the three groups created. Not all studies support the importance of motivation in the prediction of



achievement. For example, Gagné and St Pére (2001) studied female 8th graders in an all-girl high school and found that motivation did not predict academic achievement after controlling for students' cognitive ability. Also, in Araromi (2013), verbal ability, aptitude, locus of control and attitude had predictive effect on students' proficiency in French while motivation did not. However, many studies found correlation between motivation and academic achievements, including Wechsumangkalo and Prasertrattanadecho (2004), Liu (2010) and Wilmomas (2012).

There is composite contribution of psychological variables (Locus of control, Self concepts and Motivation) to students' academic achievement in Yorùbá language. The result of this study corroborates the findings of Ezeokoli and Fasan (2013) who found the composite contribution of the socio-psychological factors (self-concept, locus of control, attitude to reading and parental involvement) positively significant in students' academic achievement in English reading comprehension. The relative contributions of students' locus of control, self-concept and motivation to academic achievements in Yorùbá language follow this ascending order: motivation, locus of control and self concept. Motivation has the highest contribution. In this era of globalisation and civilisation, there are lots of distractions and negative influences from foreign cultures which have greatly affected the self-concept of the youths against Yorùbá language and values. The way and manner at which they relate to their culture is externally controlled.



The three psychological variables (locus of control, self-concept and motivation) predict students' achievement in Yorùbá language but at different levels and ranks. Motivation has the highest prediction value followed by locus of control and then self-concepts.

Recommendations

1. Learners' psychological variables (Locus of control, self concept and motivation) should be developed to enhance academic achievement in Yorùbá language.
2. Significant others like parents and teachers should play their roles in appreciating and maintaining Yorùbá culture and inculcating the values in students to improve their attitude and study of the language.
3. Government should provide incentives, employ trained Yorùbá teachers, monitor and ensure full implementation of language use provision in the *National policy on Education* in schools.

Conclusion

This study revealed that students' locus of control, self-concept and motivation made greater contributions to students' achievements in Yorùbá language, though at varying degrees. There is need to motivate students to learn Yorùbá language as school subject as it is done in foreign language learning and boost their self-concept positively towards the language in order to arouse students' interest in Yorùbá language for better performance.



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