



TOWARDS PROMOTING THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF POETRY IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF OYO WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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Abstract

This paper focused on promoting the teaching and learning of Yoruba oral poetry in secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State. The poor performance of learners in Yoruba literature in the recent time has called for concern of the writers of this paper. Three research questions were formulated to guide this study. The instrument used to gather data for this study is self-structured questionnaire which was administered to the respondents. The data generated was analysed using frequency count and simple percentage. One hundred and fifty (150) people were randomly selected for the study. The selection of teachers was based on gender balance. The findings of this study showed that most teachers have failed to deliver purposeful teaching on poetry when teaching Yoruba literature in schools. This paper also highlighted the import of oral poetry to students, individual and society at large. This work also advanced reasons why the Yoruba language teachers need to deliver a quality and effective teaching on poetry as well. This paper recommends among others that Yoruba language teachers need to improve on effective teaching, especially on Yoruba oral poetry in schools. This paper concludes that the teacher of Yoruba language need to familiarize themselves with the teaching of all aspects of Yoruba literature as to enhance the students to have proper understanding particularly on poetry.

Keywords: *Teaching, Learning, Poetry, Junior Secondary Schools Students, Oyo West Local Government of Oyo State.*

Introduction and Background to the Study

The teaching of Yoruba language in secondary schools in this country is a demanding task and needful for concerted and deliberate effort of Yoruba teachers. The teaching of Yoruba literature (poetry) in school cannot be over emphasized because of it benefits to the students, individual, and our society as well. Considering the efficacy of poetry to our society, it is expedient for the Yoruba teacher in secondary schools to teach well for the students to understand the rudiments of poetry which will be of great importance to them in future. A distinction has been made between teaching and learning of language in general. Brown (2007) argue that teaching plays numerous roles as guiding, facilitating learning, and encouraging the learners and setting the conditions for learning. This shows the depending and subordinating relationship between teaching and learning. Cook (2011) strongly believes that “the proof of teaching is in the learning” and “all successful teaching depend upon learning” The author further argues that there is no point in providing interesting, well-prepared language lessons if students do not learn from them. It is from this opinions that it has become imperative for competent Yoruba teacher, or instructor, to handle the responsibility of teaching the subject especially poetry at the secondary school level.

According to Oladosu cited in Salahudeen (2014) teaching is regarded as an activity in which the teacher, his students and instructional materials comes in close contact with one another for the purpose of teaching and learning. However, in Nigeria of today teaching implies more than more imparting knowledge to the learners but to prepare them for future endeavor. In other words teaching and learning can be meaningful and interesting when the students acquire much knowledge as to improve their performance in the subject. Adeleke (2000) regarded oral literature as a broad term which may include ritual text, curative chants epic poems, music genres, folk tales, creation tales, song, poems, myths, spell, legends, proverbs, riddles, tongue-twisters, word game recitation, etc. These oral literature are aspect of the Yoruba curriculum in the secondary schools. The aspect of this oral literature (poetry) is the major concern of this paper. Oral poetry is poetry that is composed and transmitted without the aid of writing. Also, oral poetry is sometimes considered to include any poetry overlaps with or is identical with song, meanwhile through the mouth in some culture, but it can survive and indeed flourish in highly

literature cultures. However oral poetry is memorized verbatim through the precise wording, particularly of words which are essential to sense; do tend to change from one performance to higher level of performance.

Ruth Finnegan (2007) sees the following as the types of oral poetry, they are, epics, Ballads, panegyric, lyric poetry and various others. Many scholars have worked on poetry like Akinjobi (1969) Olatunji (1984), Opatodun (1993).

Adeleke (2000) viewed teaching in three perspectives: as doctrines, a profession and act of instruction. He agreed the latter has pedagogical implications as it shows that there is a person who knows and who still transfers what he knows to others. However, it is an established norm that in a formal school, such an instruction has to be planned. Adeleke (2000) quoting Lovell (1973:132) regarded teaching as “programmed instruction”. His position agreed with Awoniyi’s (1979:4) description of teaching as “systematic instruction” it should however be noted that teaching involves prompting of the learners to achieve a desirable change in performance. This is why Nyikah and Utor (1994:17) perceived teaching as arrangement of information to produce learning. Teaching however precedes learning as each does not exist independently.

Learning is however an act in which knowledge is accumulated. Adeleke (2000) quoting Abiri (1980:35) posited that learning is geared towards a change in an individual’s cognition, feeling or physical skill. It should however be noted that such a change is not supposed to be ephemeral.

Adeleke (2000) quoting Lovell (1973:122) observed that learning may take place in different situations viz rote learning, acquisition of physical or intellectual skills, heuristic learning, insightful learning and the establishment of attitudes. This also emphasized the psychologists’ postulation that learning may not take place without reinforcement or reward. It however becomes imperative for Yoruba Language teacher as an instructor to reinforce his teaching method during the teaching of Yoruba oral poetry. Apart from this learning involves adequate utilization of mental and physical skills. In lieu of this, the Yoruba language teacher has to evoke the interest of the learners to integrate two skills. The proper articulation and co-ordination of these skills will ensure lasting impression of the information passes.

Belcher and Gbadamosi 1959 cited in Olatunji (198:6) stated that:

Yoruba poetry is classified not so much by the contents or the structure but by the group of people to which the recites belongs and techniques of recitation which he employs.

Babalola (1966:23) stated thus:

Each genre has its distinctive style of vocalization or technique of vocal performance. Yoruba traditional poetry in general is best classified not so much by the themes as by the stylistic devices employed in recitals. There is a distinctive mode in which each genre should sound forth in performance.

*Sangoduali (1987) salaye pe ewi ni a fi n sin orisa wa,
A fi n gbe asa laruge, o wa fun idaraya lakooko isile,
Ikomojade ati oniruuru ayeye miiran.*

*Poetry is used to praise the idol, to enrich culture,
It is meant for entertainment during social festivals
Like house warming, christening and other ceremonies.*

However Olatunji (1982) ni ewi je oro ijinle ti o tayo oro gberefulo.

A composed word that is meaningful then ordinary word. Frye 1985

So pe ewi je itan aroso, to yato is orisii itan aroso miiran, eyi npe

Ilo ede ni o sodo sinu ewi, awon bii afiwe ti a n fi gbe ewi jade lona ti

O fi ise le awujo han.

*Poetry is a prose that differs from other stories, in which figure of speech
Embedded in it, like smile that used to construct and bring out the
happens in the society.*

These opinions above are fantastic in nature but however poetry can be used to for relaxation, entertainment, to teach good character as to live a peaceful life with in the society.

Junior Secondary Education (JSE) is at the last segment of the nine-year basic education programme in Nigeria. It was designed with the emergence of the NPE (1977) and launched in 1992. Junior secondary school education was designed to equip citizens with adequate knowledge and skills required for a useful life in the society. The objective of junior secondary education is to provide all primary school leavers with opportunities for education of a higher

level (FME 2003) right from the attainment of independence, policies change in Nigeria system of education based on the need for it. The type of education imported to Nigeria under British control reflected the needs of the colonial government. Then we had the 7-5-4 system of education. It was later replaced in 1983 by the 6-3-3-4. The universal primary education scheme was also launched in 1976, later Universal Basic Education in 1999 call for innovation in curriculum development. This scheme is monitored by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) The law stipulated a 9-year formal schooling which still remains and aims at achieving its objectives in the teaching and learning of Yoruba oral literature in JSE (Ezekwezill).

Oyo west local government area in Oyo State, Nigeria with headquarter at Ojongbodu. It has an area of 520 km². It is bounded to the north by Atiba Local government area, to the east by Oyo East Local Government area and thin to the west by Iseyin and Itesiwaju local government areas. (wikipedia).

Statement of the problem

This study is aimed at the utilitarian aspect of literature especially poetry on our society and how to encourage student to study poetry in our school. The researchers found out that mostly in Nigeria schools today, there is challenge of mass failure in Yoruba literature especially in poetry. Many of our school nowadays don't teach Yoruba language as it expected. Those who offer Yoruba language do not employ trained teacher in Yoruba language instead they assigned any other specialist teacher to teach Yoruba. For instance who major in CRS will be assigned to teach Yoruba language and when the he/she get to topics like Yoruba Oral Literature in the syllabus, the teacher will just over look those topics because he/she is not a certificated trained Yoruba teacher. By this, the result comes clown on the students' performance in Yoruba Literature. Also, there are some, Yoruba experts' teachers that usually ignore topics on oral poetry in literature counting on their belief or religion and by this student will find it difficult to answer questions on Yoruba poetry. But if the language teacher teaches all aspects of Yoruba literature including poetry very well student perform well during the examination. When the students get the rudiments of poetry well in the classroom teaching, this will help the students in the future, they will be able to recite oriki, ijala, etc. If teacher teaches Yoruba literature as it is suppose to teach it, it will enhance good understanding of the

subject matter and taught and then improve the oral performance of the learners in any aspect of Yoruba poetry.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

- 1) What are the impact of teachers in teaching and learning of poetry?
- 2) Do the teachers encourage the students in teaching and learning of poetry?
- 3) What are the factors that encourage the students in the teaching and learning of poetry in Oyo west local government?

Significance of the Study

This research study will be of immense benefit to every individual, adult and young, literate and illiterate fellow in Oyo state and globally. It will update the students' knowledge on the importance of Yoruba literature and it will introduce them to the fundamental nature of Yoruba literature especially in poetry. It would affirm the need for students to apply knowledge from old knowledge to the new. They would also change from the habit of wasting their precious time on wrong and useless downloads on their smart phone and laptops rather they would wisely use the for positive gains like rehearse on ewi, ijala etc. It would reeducate every individual that each student by adding new thing through learning of poetry to his previous skill, value, knowledge and the like, in far and nearest future, the student would engage in multiple possibilities; teacher language teacher, newscasters, writers, poet, play wright etc. It would be an eye opener to language teacher to watch his attitude and behavior by teaching of all aspect of literature according to the design of the school curriculum. The learning of poetry in school would enable the student to be self-reliance in future, instead of searching for white-collar job, he/she will be stand on their own as a notable poet in the society. The knowledge gained from learning poetry would be another means with which students sustain their created and developed knowledge, values, attitudes and skills in or language which constitute wealth and power. Also, this study will re-educate every teacher, especially the Yoruba language teachers on the necessity for good teaching in schools. This research will call the attention of government to employ enough Yoruba teachers in our school to enhance, easy and effective teaching and learning of all aspect of Yoruba language. This research will provide lasting solution to the lazy teachers in our schools as to be up and doing at work. This work also will expose the hidden benefits embedded in the learning and utilization of Yoruba oral poetry by the learners in Oyo West Local government

and in Nigeria at large. It could well be a chance to encourage teachers, especially Yoruba language teachers on how to improve on the teaching of the subject matter. Other researchers would study this finding and fill more gaps from where these researchers drop pen.

Scope of the Study

This study was limited to some secondary schools in Oyo West local government area of Oyo state. The school concerned include among others: Ansarudeen High School Opapa, Alaafin High School, Oyo, Isale Oyo Community High School, Oyo Community Grammar School Isokun and Isale Oyo Community High School, Oke-Omi, Oyo.

Methodology

Questionnaire was used to collect relevant information from the respondents. The researchers adopted frequency count and simple percentage to in analyzing data to this study.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population used in this study comprised respondents from five selected secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State. In all, the sample consists of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents which comprise thirty teachers (30) from each school, as the researchers consider gender balance. Respondents were randomly selected irrespective of their social economic background schools selected for these studies are the following: Ansarudeen High School, Opapa, Oyo, Alaafin High School, Oyo, Isale Oyo, Isale Oyo, Isale Oyo Community High School, Oyo, Community Grammar School, Isokun Oyo and Isale Oyo Commercial High School, Oyo.

Research Instrument and it Administration

The instrument for this study was a 20-item questionnaire A consist of biographical data of respondents while section B contains fifteen (15) items designed so as to elicit response from the respondents as regards their views and opinions toward promoting the teaching and learning of poetry in schools in Oyo West local government. These question items were subjected to content, findings, comments, suggestion obtained from the respondents. The response of each respondent to question is true or false, if respondent agrees with what is being posed to him/her it is true and false if the respondent disagrees. The questionnaires were distributed individually to respondent by the researchers.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The questionnaire items were subjected to criticism by the head of Yoruba department, who read through to detect some mistakes which were rectified. These processes ensured the content and face validity and make reliability of the instrument.

Data Collection

The researchers personally administered copies of the corrected questionnaire. The questionnaire forms were collected after proper filling by each respondent to avoid loss or interference.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using frequency count and simple percentage.

Table I

S/N	Statement	True	%	False	%
1.	The teaching of Yoruba Literature as a school subject is interesting	82	55	68	45
2.	Poetry teaching encourages students to view the complexity of the world	102	67	48	33
3.	Teaching of poetry as an aspect of Yoruba literature is difficult	64	43	86	57
4.	Poetry teaching enable students to understand the deep connections that exist between people and literature	84	57	66	43
5.	Yoruba language teachers do upgrade their knowledge through seminars, workshops, conferences etc	65	43	85	57

The result from table I above revealed that 82 respondents out of 150 representing 55% out of the population sampled reacted positively to the statement that the teaching of Yoruba Literature as a school subject is interesting while 68 respondents representing 45% negate the item. This result shows that above average of the population sampled agreed with the item. Then, in item 2, from the table above, 102 respondents out of 150 representing 67% agreed with the item but only 48 respondents representing 33% of the population sampled disagreed, which implies that majority of the population sampled agreed with the item which says that poetry teaching encourages students to view the complexity of the world. Also in item 3 from the table above, the result revealed that 64 respondents out of 150 representing 43%

claimed positive to the item while 86 respondents representing 57% of the population sampled claimed to be negative to the item which means that little above average of the population sampled negated the item which read that teaching of poetry as an aspect of Yoruba literature is difficult. Also from the table above, in item 4, the result shows that 84 respondents out of 150 representing 57% out of the population sampled agreed with the item but the remaining 66 respondents representing 43% of the population sampled disagreed with the item. This result implies that above average of the total population sampled agreed that poetry teaching enable students to understand the deep connections that exist between people and literature. Then in item 5, from the table, the result shows that 65 respondents out of 150 representing 43% reacted positively to the item, and 85 respondents representing 57% of the population sampled reacted negatively to the item posed to them.

Table II

S/N	Statement	True	%	False	%
1.	Poetry teaching is best appreciated when it is been read aloud	90	60	60	40
2.	Poetry teaching promotes African culture	84	57	66	43
3.	Poetry teaching helps students to increase their skills of critical analysis	72	48	78	52
4.	Poetry teaching allow the students to be more creative	74	49	76	51
5.	Poetry teaching enable the students to write different poem	65	43	85	57

The result from table II above shows that 90 respondents out of 150 representing 60% of the population sampled agreed with the item 1, but 60 respondents representing 40% disagreed with the item. This show that majority of the respondents agreed with the items that says poetry teaching is best appreciated when it is been read aloud then in item 2, the result revealed that 84 respondents representing 57% reacted positively while 66 respondents representing 43% negate the item, which means little above average of the population sampled agreed with the item that says poetry teaching promotes African culture. Also from the table above, in item 3, only 73 respondents out of 150 populations sampled representing 48% agreed with the item whereas the remaining 78 respondents representing 52% disagreed with the item, which indicated that above average of the total population sampled disagreed with the item. Also, from the table above, the result there revealed that in item 4, 74 respondents out of 150 populations sampled representing 49% claimed to be positive while 76

respondents representing 51% of the population sampled negate the item. Then in item 5, only 68 respondents out of 150 population sampled were in the support of the item but the remaining 82 respondents representing 55% of the population failed to support the item, therefore majority of the population sampled moved against the item.

Table III

S/N	Statement	True	%	False	%
1.	Poetry teaching allows students to play freely with words, rhythms and ideas	83	55	67	45
2.	Poetry teaching encourages the students to think about different ways of interpreting poems	112	75	38	25
3.	Poetry teaching allows students to expand their oral and written vocabulary	79	53	71	47
4.	Poetry teaching increases students literature and linguistic awareness	104	69	46	31
5.	Poetry teaching in schools help students to connect to others in life	48	33	102	67

From the table above, the result revealed that in item 1, 83 respondents out of 150 representing 55% of the population sampled agreed with the item, but 67 respondents representing 45% disagreed with the item. Then, in item 2, the result shows that 112 respondents out of 150 representing 75% of the population sampled claimed positive, while 38 respondents representing 25% negate the item. This result indicate that majority of the respondents form the population sampled agreed totally with the item that says that poetry teaching encourage the students to think about different ways of interpreting poems. Also, in item 3 from the above table, the result shows that 79 respondents out of 150 representing 47% opposed the item, which means that little above average of the total population sampled agreed with the item. In item 4, it was revealed from the table above that 104 respondents out of 150 representing 69% of the population sampled claimed positively to the item, while the remaining 46 respondents representing 31% claimed negative to the item, this result shows that majority of the population sampled reacted positively to the item that says poetry teaching increases student literature and linguistic awareness. Then, in item 5, from the table above shows that only 48 respondents representing 33% agreed with the item, but the remaining 102 respondents representing 67% of the population sample totally disagreed with the item, which shows that

majority of the respondents out of population sample strongly disagreed with the item.

Conclusion

This study explores ways of promoting the teaching and learning of Yoruba oral poetry in secondary school in Oyo West Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study revealed that most of the students have no interest in learning of oral literature because of westernized life and this jet-age civilization. Also, this study revealed that most Yoruba language teachers do not teach this aspect of Yoruba literature as expected of them because of their beliefs, influence of foreign religion. These teacher needs to realize that religion is different from culture. Through this study, it was revealed that the orature is good as it is a source of history and it is through which the generations will be informed about their lineage. The attitude and behavior of some teachers (Yoruba teacher) toward the teaching of poetry in schools were highlighted in this research work, in order to make them work harder as to promote the teaching of poetry in schools. There were recommendations given in order to improve and promote the teaching and learning of Yoruba oral poetry in the schools.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research, the following recommendations were made, that government should make it compulsory that student should learn and understand one aspect of Yoruba oral literature from their environment because orature is a source of history. Yoruba teachers should be encourage to teach oral literature topics in the curriculum by providing conducive environment for teaching in our schools. That the students should be allowed or given opportunity to develop their ability and innate tendencies because some of these students are form such home that these orature are in their lineage. That the teachers should understand that religion is different from culture. That the school authority should not portray their belief to antagonize what the students suppose to know in Yoruba oral literature. That the teachers should encourage the students on learning of Yoruba oral literature in schools. That the teachers should let the student understand that chanting of orature does not portray someone as fetish. Also the government should give enough fund to schools, by providing grants to educational developments in schools. Government should employ enough Yoruba trained teachers to our schools, it will solve the problem of man power inadequacy in our secondary schools. Also, government should provide adequate teaching facilities in secondary school i.e. well equipped libraries with current materials on Yoruba literature.

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