HOME LANGUAGE AND ECONOMIC VALUES OF FRENCH AS DETERMINANTS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT IN FRENCH LANGUAGE IN IBADAN NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Araromi, Maxwell Olakunle, Ph.D & Adeoye Faith Omorinsola
Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan
+2348148834596: araromimaxwell@gmail.com &
+2349052413650; omorunrinsola adeoye@gmail.com

Abstract
Home language and Economic values of French are said to have influence on the proficiency of the learners in French language. Some students perform low in French language due to the influence of these variables. This study therefore examined home language, age, gender and economic values of French as determinants of Junior secondary school II students achievement in French in Ibadan North Local Government Area. Five research questions were raised and answered. Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study includes all junior secondary schools students in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. Simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 200 students: 50 from each junior secondary school in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Achievement Test in French Language (ATFL) and Questionnaire on Economic Values of French Language (QEVFL) were used to collect data. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple statistics tool of percentage and ANOVA. The students' home language of communication had positive but not significant relationship on students' achievement in French language. There is no significant relationship between students' home language of communication on their achievement in the French language while the economic value had significant contribution. Home language of communication and economic value of French have a statistically significant joint contribution to students' achievement in French language. Economic value of French has a significant and moderate effect on students' achievement in the French language. Stakeholders in the field of foreign education in Nigeria should consider appropriately the potency of the factors on students' achievement in French.

Key Words: Home language, Economic values of French, Achievement in French language

Introduction

The roles a foreign language plays are crucial in global communication. As it plays several roles in internal and external communication, it creates job opportunities and promotes the understanding of other cultures. Proficiency in French in today's world is so much important knowing that the world is tending to become a global village through the influence of new technology. For global competitors, the most important factor is the ability to communicate on a wider range, quicker and clearer basis and ability in communication is focused on foreign languages which are widely used. French as a foreign language in Nigeria has created employment opportunities and social capital necessary for thriving concerns.

Economic value of French language among the learners is another factor under consideration in this study. Arcand and Grin (2013) posit that the term 'economics of language' has, since the mid-1960s, been utilized to explore the effect of language skills on labour income and evaluation of language policies. The authors' concern, however, is the subfield of development economics that has paid little attention to foreign language learning. This suggests a need to explore foreign language learning as a means of empowering citizens so they can participate in the economic development of the country. Arcand and Grin's (2013) view is shared by Kormos and Kiddle (2013), who lament the scarcity of research on the motivation of

disadvantaged learners to learn a foreign language. Kormos and Kiddle's (2013) affirmed that foreign language competence might open up new opportunities and assist in breaking social barriers for students from disadvantaged communities. Kormos and Kiddle (2013) further noted that the existing findings on the role of socio-economic factors in foreign language learning 'clearly highlight the importance of social context in influencing foreign language learning outcomes.

Looking at vulnerable learners of another language, the difference between the home language and the language of instruction has a negative influence on schooling achievement. By vulnerable learners in this regard, we refer to learner from rural environment, from poor background and female learners (Lewis, 2006). Lewis and Lockheed (2006) in a study discovered that almost three-quarters of the 60 million females that are not in school belong to ethnic, religious, linguistic, racial or other minorities. As females are less exposed to the language of instruction of a country, they may be more disadvantaged when they start schooling than their male counterpart (Lewis, 2006). According to Lewis and Lockheed (2006), linguistic diversity within a country does not necessarily lead to a failure to educate pupils. It is according to them, diversity accompanied by derogation and discrimination that leads to exclusion. Why would home language hamper educational achievement? There are various explanations for low achievement of language learners.

Benson (2002) and Klaus (2003), furthermore, observed that when teachers and students are both speaking the same language, teachers can get a much better idea of what their students are learning. This linguistic capital may be transferred into other forms of capital like economic or social capital and thus help the "legitimate speakers of the legitimate language" on their path to societal success.

Children who speak a language at home that is different from that used in school often encounter discrimination and learning challenges (Lewis and Lockheed, 2006). As a result of this,

the gap between the ways of speaking and listening among learners and teachers can lead to miscommunications in the classroom. This study therefore examined home language, age, gender and economic values of French as determinants of Junior secondary school II students achievement in French in Ibadan North Local Government Area.

Statement of the problem

Teaching and learning of French in a country like Nigeria is a difficult task to undertake both on the part of the teacher and the students. With the effect of home language and other determinant factors on the students' achievement in French in junior secondary schools some students seems to lose interest or feel inferior to other students either as a result of their home background, age difference among the learners or gender as those factors determine their achievement in the subject. The use of mother tongue in secondary schools by students is an issue of concern since it is a challenge that influences their achievement in French. This study therefore examined home language, age, gender and economic values of French as determinants of Junior secondary school II students achievement in French in Ibadan North Local Government Area.

Research questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the students' perception of the economic value of French?
2. What relationship exists between the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) and students' achievement in French language?
3. What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language?
4. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and

economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language?

5. Which of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) would determine students' achievement in French language?

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study includes all junior secondary schools students where French language is taught in forty two (42) secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Four (4) junior secondary schools were selected. Simple random sampling technique and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 200 students: 50 from each junior secondary school in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.

The study is limited only to students in Junior Secondary Schools two class (JSS2) of the selected schools Research instruments for data collection of study are: Achievement Test in French Language (ATFL) and Questionnaire on Economic Values of French Language (QEVFL). Achievement Test in French Language (ATFL) to test students' competence in French Vocabulary and Grammar, Reading Comprehension and writing.

The section one is made up of ten questions on vocabulary and grammar. The section two is based on a comprehension passage. While, the section three sought to test students' writing skills. Students are to write a short composition about themselves in simple sentences in French.

Economic Values of French Language (QEVFL) was designed to collect data on Economic Values of French Language in Ibadan North Local Government Area. The questionnaire is in two sections:

Section A focused on obtaining demographic information of the respondents such as: gender, age, home language(s) and language of communication at home. Section B focused on obtaining information on economic values of French language with 15 items. The options in the questionnaire include: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

The instruments were administered on the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple statistics tool of percentage and ANOVA.

Results
Demographic Information of the Students
Table 1.1: Gender and Age Distribution of the Students

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	87	43.5
Female	113	56.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**
Age		
11 years	105	52.5
12 years	50	25.0
13 years	32	16.0
14 and above	13	6.5
Total	**200**	**100.0**

The analysis provided in table 1.1 presents the demographic breakdown of the sample population of this study based on gender and age. In terms of gender, the analysis reveals that out of the total sample size of 200 individuals, 87 (43.5%) were male and 113 (56.5%) were female. This indicates that there is a slightly higher representation of females in the sample.

Regarding age, the analysis shows that out of the total sample size, 105 individuals (52.5%) were 11 years old, 50 individuals (25.0%) were 12 years old, 32 individuals (16.0%) were 13 years old, and 13 individuals (6.5%) were 14 years old or above. This distribution suggests that the majority of the sample consists of individuals who are 11 years old.

It is important to note that this analysis is based on a specific sample and may not be representative of the entire population.

RQ 1: What is the students' perception of the economic value of French?

Table 1.2: Students' perception of the economic value of French

Score	Frequency	Percentage
32.00	64	32.0
33.00	39	19.5
34.00	72	36.0
35.00	25	12.5
Total	200	100.0
Average = 33.29; % Average = 55.48%		

The result provided above in table 1.2 shows the students' perception of the economic value of French. Based on the data presented in Table 1.2, students' perception of the economic value of French is diverse, with a range of scores given by the respondents. The average score indicates a moderate perception of economic value among the students surveyed. The average score (33.29) suggests that overall, students perceive a moderate economic value in learning French.

RQ 2: What relationship exists between the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) and students' achievement in French language?

Table 1.3: Correlation Matrix of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) and students' achievement in French language

Variables	Achievement in French language	Home language of communication	Economic value of French
Achievement in French language	1		
Home language of communication	.098 (.169)	1	
Economic value of French	.152* (.032)	.071 (.320)	1
N	200	200	200
Mean	13.92	10.43	33.29
St. Dev.	11.62	.66	1.04

The correlation matrix presented in Table 1.3 provides information on the relationship between the independent variables, namely students' home language of communication and the economic value of French, and students' achievement in French language. The positive correlation suggests a weak relationship between these two variables. However, it is important to note that the p-value (in parentheses) associated with this correlation coefficient is .169, indicating that this relationship is not statistically significant.

Similarly, the correlation coefficient between achievement in French language and economic value of French is .152. Again, this positive correlation suggests a weak relationship between these two variables. However, the p-value (in parentheses) associated with this correlation coefficient is .032, which is below the conventional threshold of .05. Therefore, this relationship can be considered statistically significant.

The correlation coefficient between home language of communication and economic value of French is .071. This positive correlation indicates a weak relationship between these two variables. Based on the correlation matrix results, there appears to be a weak positive relationship between students' achievement in French language and both their home language of communication and the economic value of French. However, only the relationship between achievement in French language and economic value of French is statistically significant.

RQ 3: What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language?

Table 1.4: Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of the joint contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language

R=.186; R Square=.035; Adj. R Square=.025; Std. Error of the Estimate=11.48039

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	935.103	2	467.552	3.547	.031[b]
	Residual	25964.452	197	131.799		
	Total	26899.555	199			

In summary, the joint contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language was significant (F $_{(2; 197)}$ = 3.557; Adj. R Square = .025; p<0.05). This implies that the two independent variables when pulled together had significant contribution to students' achievement in French language. The Adj. R square of .025 implies that 2.5% variance in students' achievement in French is attributed to the joint influence of the independent variables while the remaining variance of 97.5% could be attributed to other variables not included in this model.

RQ 4: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language?

Table 1.5: Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of the relative contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language

Co-efficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	52.705	28.086		1.877	.062
	Home language of communication	1.912	1.233	.109	1.551	.123
	Economic value of French	1.765	.777	.159	2.270	.024

Table 4.5 shows that economic value of French (Beta =.159; p<0.05) had had significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French language while home language of communication (Beta =.109; p>0.05) had non-significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French.

RQ 5: Which of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) would determine students' achievement in French language?

The result presented in Table 1.5 is a summary of a multiple regression analysis that examines the relative contribution of two independent variables, namely students' home language of communication and economic value of French, to students' achievement in the French language.

Looking at the significance levels (p-values), we observe that the economic value of French has a p-value of .024, which is less than the conventional threshold of .05. This indicates

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that the relationship between economic value of French and students' achievement in the French language is statistically significant. On the other hand, the home language of communication has a p-value of .123, which is greater than .05. Therefore, we cannot conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' home language of communication and their achievement in the French language. Based on these results, we can conclude that the economic value of French is a determinant of students' achievement in the French language. However, we cannot make the same conclusion for students' home language of communication.

Discussion of Findings

There appears to be a weak positive relationship between students' achievement in French language and both their home language of communication and the economic value of French. However, only the relationship between achievement in French language and economic value of French is statistically significant. Children who speak a language at home that is different from that used in school often encounter discrimination and learning challenges (Lewis and Lockheed, 2006). Linguistic diversity within a country does not necessarily lead to a failure to educate pupils. There is a moderate perception of economic value among the students surveyed. The average score (33.29) suggests that overall, students perceive a moderate economic value in learning French This correlates with the findings of Taylor & Marsden (2014) that states that there is limited evidence about the extent to which perceptions of and attitudes towards languages, lessons, and learning are associated with the actual decision on whether to study a foreign language.

The joint contribution of the independent variables (students' home language of communication, and economic value of French) to students' achievement in French language was significant. Marschan-Piekkari et.al (2014) observe that a foreign language could be beneficial to business, and useful in building relationships with contacts abroad. Gallagher-

Brett (2004) stipulates that people study foreign languages because they value the personal benefits of language learning such as communication, travel, and employability. Also, children who speak a language at home that is different from that used in school often encounter discrimination and learning challenges (Lewis and Lockheed, 2006).

Economic value of French had had significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French language while home language of communication had non-significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French. Gbollie and Gong (2013) paint a vivid scenario of the benefit of speaking the language of business partners or those countries with diplomatic ties. According to Gbollie and Gong (2013) interaction in a language that both speakers are proficient in is much more effective than resorting to translation and interpretation.

The relationship between economic value of French and students' achievement in the French language is statistically significant. Wagikondi (2004) identified that when language of communication at home and school is mother tongue, then acquisition of English skills is inhibited and thus the performance of English is affected.

Conclusion

The research work and findings of this study revealed the extent to which students' achievement in French could be determined by students' home language of communication and the economic values attached to French. Given that economic value of French had significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French language, it will be of great advantage to them if they are to further in learning the language. Even though their home language of communication had non-significant relative contribution to students' achievement in French, they should Endeavour to make it a habit to be conversing in French among themselves and with their French teachers.

Based on the results, we can conclude that the economic value of French is a determinant of

students' achievement in the French language. However, we cannot make the same conclusion for students' home language of communication.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations are hereby put forward.

1. Government both at federal and state level should provide secondary schools with language laboratories and the necessary instructional materials to facilitate teaching and learning process, and captivate the interest of students in learning French.
2. Curriculum planners should state appropriately the importance of the teaching and learning of French language and other languages in secondary school.
3. To develop the teaching and learning of French language in secondary schools, French language teachers should be attending seminars, workshop or conferences to know about new developments in the teaching of the language and develop their teaching method.
4. Excursion should be organized for students to be exposed to benefits of learning French language and discover the exploits in it.

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