

Basic Education Curriculum in South- South Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities of Quality Contents in the Second Language Learning

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Abstract : The modern Nigerian society is dynamic, divided in zones based on economic, political and educational resources often shared across the zones. The Six Geopolitical Zones in Nigeria is a major division in modern Nigeria, created during the regime of president Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. They are North Central, North East, North West, South East, South South and South West. However, the zone used in this study is known as former South-Eastern State of Akwa-Ibom State and Cross-River State; former Rivers State of Bayelsa State and Rivers State; and former Mid-Western Region, Nigeria of Delta State and Edo State. Many reforms have taken place overtime, particularly in the education sector. Education is constantly presenting new ideas and innovative approaches which act to facilitate the rapid exchange of knowledge and provide quality basic education for learners. The Federal Government of Nigeria in accordance with its National Council on Education directed the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council to restructure its basic education curriculum with the hope to enable the nation meet national and global developmental goals. One of the goals of the 9-year Basic Education Programme is developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion. Another is ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life-skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning. Therefore, this article at the introductory stage is aimed to describe some key issues in Nigeria's experience in the basic education curriculum. In this study, particular attention is paid to this very recent educational policy of the Nigerian government known as Universal Basic Education, its challenges and what can be done to make the policy achieve its desired objectives. It progresses to analyze modern requirements for second language teaching; and presents the challenges of second language teaching in Nigeria. Finally, it reports a study which investigated special efforts for appropriate achievement of quality education in language classroom in the south-south zone of Nigeria. One fundamental research question was posed on what educational practices can contribute to current understanding of the structure of language curriculum. More explicitly, the study was designed to analyze the extent to which quality content contributes to current understanding of the structure of school curriculum in the zone. Otherwise stated, it investigated how student-centred educational practices impact on their learning of French language. One hundred and eighty (180) participants (teachers) were purposefully sampled for the study. Qualitative technique was used to elicit information from participants. The qualitative method used was Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Participants were divided into six groups comprising of 30 teachers from each zone. Group discussions were based mainly on curriculum contents and practices. Information from participants revealed that the curriculum content, among others is inadequate and should be re-examined. Recommendations were proffered as a panacea to concrete implementation of the basic education in Nigeria.

Keywords : basic education, quality contents, second language, south-south states

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