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The Contributions of Non-Governmental Organizations in Teaching Hausa Language at Basic Level in Katsina State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are crucial to development efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in education, where many major donor organizations have increased funding routed through NGOs to support educational programs. Therefore, this study investigates the contribution of NGO activities in teaching and learning the Hausa language at the basic level, with a specific focus on Teaching at the Right Level Nigeria in Katsina Metropolis. The study employed a collective case study design and mixed methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. A total of 192 respondents involved in basic education delivery were selected using purposive sampling. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while interview responses were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis using codes and themes. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data reveal that the Teaching at the Right Level project had a significant positive impact on students' Hausa language skills, particularly in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also contribute to basic education delivery in Katsina State. These interventions improved the quality of Hausa language teaching and learning, increased access to teaching and learning resources, and helped enhance students' performance in phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle. Despite these improvements, the support activities were not sufficient to reach all schools, which contributed to continued low student performance in their first school leaving examination. Based on the results, it was recommended that The Government authorities should enforce policies that mandate continuous professional development for teachers and monitor their implementation to ensure effectiveness. The Ministry of Education should enhance teacher training programs by investing in comprehensive and continuous professional development programs that focus on modern teaching methodologies, ICT integration, and language competencies.

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of education is to transmit knowledge to younger generations through effective communication. Research consistently indicates that when educators employ the pupils' mother tongue, the learning process is significantly facilitated. Studies conducted in both African and non-African contexts demonstrate that children achieve optimal learning outcomes in a language they speak fluently. Such an environment fosters significant cognitive, socio-emotional, and cultural advantages (Amina, 2021).

Basic education serves as the foundational link between the individual and their environment. Levine and Ibrahim (2005) and Hornby (2006) define this stage as the formal schooling necessary for an individual to function effectively within society. As language shapes thoughts, emotions, and perceptions of reality, it remains central to this development. The essence of education is to cultivate a child's potential, enabling them to contribute to their local community and the broader nation (Amina, 2021). This is predicated on the belief that education is a pursuit of knowledge essential for national growth, supporting the axiom that no nation can surpass the quality of its educational system. Consequently, educational stakeholders must strategically foster critical thinking skills to ensure learners are equipped for the 21st century.

Classroom research highlights a strong correlation between the language of instruction and the success of learner-centered, participatory environments. Using a familiar language amplifies pedagogical effectiveness, particularly at the primary level (Sardana, 2022). Furthermore, mother-tongue instruction enhances student motivation and fosters greater family engagement in the learning process (Ali, 2022). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (NPE) mandates that pupils be taught in their mother tongue from Primary 1 to 3 to ensure conceptual clarity, prevent knowledge gaps, and increase comprehension speeds.

Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has faced persistent challenges in educational development, specifically regarding illiteracy, academic standards, and poverty reduction. However, since the 1980s, basic education has faced significant decay, characterized by rising illiteracy and dropout rates (Adeyemi, 2011). In Katsina State, pupils have consistently underperformed in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). State statistics reveal that only 33% of students performed above average in 2019, with fluctuations in subsequent years: 28.5% in 2021, 38.8% in 2022, 39% in 2023, and 42% in 2024.

A critical factor in this decline is inadequate funding. While UNESCO recommends that 15–26% of annual

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budgets be allocated to education, Katsina State's allocation dropped from a range of 15–18% (2020–2023) to a mere 3% in the 2024 budget.

Given the state's limitations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have increasingly assumed implementation roles in development programs (Dilevko, 2018). These organizations are now vital partners in service delivery (Brophy, 2020), a shift driven largely by global efforts toward poverty eradication (WHO, 2011). In Katsina Metropolis, various NGOs have been active since the 1990s. Notably, the "Teaching at the Right Level" (TaRL) project has operated in the state since 2017.

The present study evaluates the impact of such interventions on learner competence. Specifically, this research assesses how international NGO interventions contribute to student proficiency in the Hausa language in Katsina State. The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the specific areas of NGO contribution toward the teaching of the Hausa language.
2. To examine the impact of these NGO contributions on Hausa language instruction.
3. To identify the challenges faced by NGOs in contributing to Hausa language teaching at the basic education level.

Problem Statement

Despite efforts to improve Hausa language competence in Katsina among primary schools pupils, challenges remain in achieving sufficient proficiency. UNICEF 2018 reported that about 60% of primary school leavers cannot read and write good sentence in Hausa, indicating a need for improved teaching methods and teacher capacity. While initiatives such as the Teaching At Right level Africa in 2018, aimed to enhance P2 and P3 teachers' skills in Hausa and methodology, there has been limited comprehensive analysis of its direct impact on student competence. The Ministry of Education's progress report noted some improvement in language skills among primary school students, but there is a lack of detailed understanding of how these gains correlate with TaRL interventions and what challenges may have affected its success. Previous studies (e.g., Ali, 2020) highlighted the importance of teacher training in improving student outcomes, yet gaps exist in assessing the sustainability and scalability of such projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

NGOs are more malleable and pioneering than governments when fulfilling their different curricula and educational strategies (Lewis, 2016). A similar study conducted by Sakya (2000), showed that the intervention of local NGOs within their communities has reaped more benefits than the government for many reasons. One example relates to structural complications such as multiple bureaucratic procedures and political interference in the implementation of development schemes such

as Early Childhood programs. In the same context, Lewis (2009) showed that NGOs are better successful in mobilizing society to encourage and strengthen community participation in building a more innovative educational program for the children. This is because of the great involvement by NGOs in understanding the social and cultural realities of the communities than the government. As a result, NGOs are able to build stronger relationships with local communities than government officials, thereby improving their performance and accountability as compared to government interventions. Regular follow-ups conducted by these NGOs also make a measurement of results more convenient.

Kooli (2017) drew conclusion that the Omani government's decision to make physical infrastructure investments in education improved both the quality of education and the efficiency of educational institutions. Adu-Baffoe and Bonney (2021), citing Imam (2017), also disclosed empirical evidence supporting the impact of school infrastructure on students' well-being in the Belgian Region of Flanders. Similar to this, students' academic performance may be demotivated by the school's complete ugly physical layout (Oselumese *et al.*, 2016). NGOs responded to the Education for All (EFA) declaration in a very positive and timely manner as part of the Bangladesh Education Sector Review (Groundwork Inc, 2002 as cited in Adu-Baffoe & Bonney, 2021). The development of additional reading materials for the students has also received help from these NGOs. In order to revive some difficult and inefficient state-funded public schools and fulfil its mission of offering high-quality basic education, the Bangladeshi government, which has also recognized the influence of NGOs in the field of education, turned them over to a few well-known NGOs (Roy *et al.*, 2017).

According to Kremer (2003), educational outcomes has improved as a result of several randomized reviews of local NGO programs in India and Kenya. In 2002, Kremer and colleagues reported on a project wherein seven schools were chosen at random from a group of fourteen underperforming applicants to receive classroom supplies, textbooks, and uniforms from NGO, International Christelijk Steunfonds. Participants in the treatment schools completed almost 15% more coursework after five years, thanks to this programmed that increased enrolment. Nigeria's educational system has gotten worse for a variety of reasons (Olisa & Obiukwu, 2000).

Teaching at the Right Level Africa (TaRL) in Africa is an independent organization that was originally a joint venture between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) and Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). TaRL Africa's mission is to help governments and organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa design and scale programs that equip children with foundational skills. The TaRL approach shifts the focus of education for all to learning for all. TaRL Africa's programs have reached over five million children in

over 15 countries. Its headquarters in Africa is based in Nairobi Kenya.

The TaRL methodology has contributed to raising the learning outcomes of pupils in Nigeria. (TaRL <http://tarlafrica.22.com> retrieved 14 December, 2024). During its pilot in Katsina, 60% of the pupils tested in Hausa literacy were at the beginner level, while only 8% were at the paragraph and story levels at baseline. However, at the end line, the percentage of pupils at the beginner level reduce to 17% (from 60%), while those who could read paragraphs increase to 25% (from 8%) Imam 2023).

However, the extent of its contributions has not been satisfactorily highlighted. It is interesting to know that for many years of TaRL Africa operations in Katsina State, no academic research has been done to bring out their contribution to basic education in Katsina and other benefitting regions.

NGOs have a strong record in providing the financial incentives to households, capacity building to the society or individuals, nutrition and health care programs to children, and provision of infrastructure in needed areas. Financial aid provided by NGOs plays a major role in marginalized areas according to a study conducted by (Anzar 2002) about the NGOs sector in Pakistan. Anzar's findings reveal that NGOs in Pakistan have clearly contributed to reducing the costs of private school requirements in slums and have achieved successes in establishing private schools for females. A similar study by Avolio-Toly (2010) showed that NGOs provide financial incentives to households in the rural areas of Sub-Saharan Africa to support children's participation in educational programs.

International NGOs also focus on financial assistance to children in marginalized areas. Alaraji (2016) emphasized that Save the Children as an international institution, has an interest in the basic education stage, and a large part in preschools, especially those who have not been able to attend preschool because they are not available in the country and includes a financial burden when enrolling. Despite this, NGOs also provide capacity-building programs in areas of need. In Pakistan, Anzar's (2002) noted that NGOs have improve public schools through teacher training and support for educational centers. Similarly, a study conducted by Manli (2007), in China on the role and activities of NGOs in the development of (ECD). In the study, the results show success in knowledge utilization using advanced training and high levels of satisfaction due to individual development.

Many scholars have investigated the contribution of non-government organization to education. Some of the works include Ali (2010), examined the work of the Department for International Development DFID in supporting basic education in some rural Nigeria and concluded that despite poor road networks, this NGO provided teaching aids and support teachers training to many remote primary school, which enhanced school enrollment in these schools.

Social and Political Context of the Research

Katsina State was created on 23rd September, 1987 from the defunct Kaduna State. The State is situated in the extreme northern part of the country with two Emirate Councils of Katsina and Daura. The State occupies an area of 29,938 square kilometers lying between latitudes 11° 02'N NS 13° 32'N and longitude 6° 52'E and 9° 02'E with an estimate population of 5.267 million people based on the 2006 National Census and currently estimated at 10.368, 500 million (2022 estimates) with the growth rate of 3.0% per annum (National Population Commission). The state has thirty four (34) Local Government Councils. Katsina state start the enjoying of the service of Non-Government Organization (NGOs) in the 1970.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This research adopted a descriptive case study design aimed at assessing the impact of Teaching at Right level interventions on learners' competence in Hausa Language in Katsina state. The study utilized a mixed-method approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data was collected through structured, close-ended questionnaires, which facilitated the analysis of trends and patterns in responses. Conversely, qualitative data was gathered using open-ended questions and interview guides, allowing for an in-depth exploration of individual perceptions and experiences. Emphasis was placed on collecting primary data from students, teachers, head teachers and Staff of the Tarl.

Target Population

The population of our study was composed of 72 teachers, 8 staff of Tarl and 120 students all in Katsina state. These participants were chosen due to their firsthand experience and active role in the project's execution and outcomes, making them valuable sources of data on the impact of the Tarl interventions.

Sample Size

The researcher selected 14 schools among the 30 schools that benefited from the Tarl Project. 14 head teachers from selected schools participated in this study. Furthermore, all the teachers that benefited from their training were considered for this study. Sampling for staff of the Tarl was purposive.

Sampling Techniques

The sampling approach was specifically tailored to suit the different categories of participants in the study. Purposive sampling was employed to select all head teachers from the identified schools, as well as the teachers who were actively involved in the Tarl project and still held their roles at the time of the study. This approach ensured that those with direct involvement and

knowledge of the project were included, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of its implementation and outcomes. In contrast, stratified random sampling was used to select students, ensuring representativeness across various demographics such as gender, class, and school location. This technique controlled for potential biases and facilitated balanced representation among different subgroups within the teaching population.

Data Collection

Two research instruments, namely questionnaire and interview guide was used for the data collection. The questionnaires were used to collect basic descriptive statistics from the respondents. The second instrument that was employed for data collection in the study is interview guide. Contextually, the interview guide was directed at the staff of Tarl Africa, as their responses were intended to reflect their experiences across various schools. This was aimed at eliciting insights into the limitations encountered by Tarl in its efforts to support the teaching of the Hausa language in Katsina state.

Data Collection Instrument

For this study purpose, questionnaires and interview guide was used to collect and analyze data from research participants.

Questionnaire

For our study, the researcher established a two different questionnaire which guided information gathering among students and teachers from selected schools. It involved a set of written questions about the problem to which respondents are expected to provide information. Questions constructions were close, open-ended. Likert scale type was used for close-ended questions to help the researcher find information from respondents, where everyone found a free way of responding to asked questions.

Interview

The researcher designed interview tools in a way that qualitative information got collected. Interviewees were given open-ended questions and ample space. The researcher investigated teachers who participated in the project and staff of the Tarl Africa. They were interviewed one by one to avoid peer influence in answers.

Gender of the Respondents (Teachers)

Details about gender classification will help assess the balance among respondents. The table below outlines the gender distribution for all respondents.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Parents

| Gender | Frequency | Percent (%) | Valid Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|--------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Male | 22 | 30.6 | 30.6 | 30.6 |
| Female | 50 | 69.4 | 69.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

As observed from Table 1, females are a bit many compared to males. They are 60.4 and 30.6 respectively. This predominance of females over males will be considered when interpreting the study's results in relation to gender issues.

Experience of Respondents in Teaching

The P2/P3 teaching experience of the respondents

helps the study establish the relationship between their teaching skills at the stated level and their ability to provide necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that will lead the students to a successful career. Therefore, the researcher gathered information on the duration of the staff respondents' tenure in teaching at P2/P3 level, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Work Experience in Teaching (in years)

| Experience (Years) | Frequency | Percent (%) | Valid Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 6-10 | 40 | 52.0 | 52.0 | 52.0 |
| 13-16 | 22 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 81.3 |
| 16+ | 10 | 18.7 | 18.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 72 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The Table 2 indicates that the majority of the study respondents have experience in teaching in P2/P3 of 6 to 10 years (52%), while 29.3% have between 13 and 16 years. Only 18.7% respondents hold more than 16 years of teaching experience in those specific class.

appropriate descriptive statistics in percentage and frequency which allowed the researcher to use numerical values to represent scores in the sample. For qualitative data, interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder, then translated verbatim. The research instrument was subjected to a validity and reliability test. The suggestions by the specialist aided the research instrument that was deemed reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The quantitative data collected was analyzed using

This section deals with discusses the results. The analysis and discussion aimed to describe the contribution of NGOs’ (Tarl) on Students’ Competences in Hausa Language in Primary Schools of Katsina. The analysis is based on the respondents’ perceptions of the research questions. It is also based on interview guide responses from interviewees. It discusses the main findings of the

study and their importance to the field of knowledge based on previous studies that support or deviate from our conclusions. Hence, the presentation of the findings is done according to the study research questions. What are the Teaching at the Right level areas of contribution in teaching Hausa Language? Results from this revealed that the capacity development

Table 3: Which of the following areas that Teaching at Right level contribute most?

| SN | Contribution in Teaching Hausa | Yes % | No % |
|----|--|-------|------|
| 1 | Provision of teaching and learning materials | 87% | 13% |
| 2 | Curriculum development | 75% | 25% |
| 3 | Capacity development of teachers | 90% | 10% |
| 4 | Sensitization of school communities | 85% | 15% |

of the teachers is the dominant areas of contribution provided by (Tarl) towards teaching and learning Hausa language, followed by provision of teaching and learning material in Katsina state.

How does the education- related activities of Teaching at the Right Level contribute to Teaching and learning Hausa language?

As indicated in Table 4, there are significant changes from

Table 4: Importance changes of teaching and learning Hausa

| SN | Changes | Yes % | No % |
|----|---|-------|------|
| 1 | Performance of school children | 85% | 15% |
| 2 | Enhanced skills for teacher | 88% | 12% |
| 3 | Improve quality of teaching and learning | 85% | 15% |
| 4 | Adequacy of teaching & learning materials | 65% | 35% |

the contributions of the activities of Teaching at Right level in teaching and learning Hausa language in Katsina state. Interestingly, the outstanding changes acknowledge by the respondents are the enhanced skill for teachers

through capacity development programs of Tarl, What are the impact of Teaching at The Right Level contributions in teaching Hausa Language?

The result from the study showed that there was a

Table 5: The following table shows the impact of Tarl project on the teaching and learning of the Hausa language among primary 2 and 3 pupils.

| SN | Activities | Yes % | No % |
|----|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Letter sound Identification | 64% | 36% |
| 2 | Non-word Reading/Decoding | 56% | 44% |
| 3 | Oral Reading fluency | 32% | 68% |
| 4 | Reading comprehension | 45% | 55% |
| 5 | Listening comprehension | 81.3% | 18.7% |

deficiency in the method that was used in teaching Hausa language within the school setting. Oral reading fluency has the low percentage, followed by Reading comprehension which shows that curriculum and teachers guide for the native languages be reviewed accordingly. Listening comprehension has highest percentage of contribution with 81%.

through face-to-face interviews using an interview guide.

From the analysis of the interview results, the greatest challenge in its efforts to adequately provide teaching and learning materials is due to poor maintenance culture on the part of beneficiary schools.

Another staff also made the following comment that: Due to poor maintenance many tables have broken down resulting on pressure on the existing one.

What challenges encountered by Tarl project in Contributing to the teaching of Hausa language at Basic level?

In addition to the views of stakeholders involved in basic education delivery, further qualitative information was gathered from the staff of Teaching at Right Level. The results in this context entirely qualitative gathered

Another teacher recounted that

“While TaRL Africa provided essential instructional resources—including textbooks, exercise books, and recreational equipment—poor maintenance protocols have hindered the sustainability of these materials. Consequently, the available resources are increasingly

insufficient to meet the demands of rising student enrollment.”

It was revealed by some staff of Teaching at Right Level and teachers who participated in the project, that lack of political will from the state government are hindering the success of the intervention, he said that:

‘Government especially at state level are not will to continue from where the previous government stop, this make NGO lose hope in some intervention that are making’

An NGO staff member noted that several learning centers are currently in a state of decay due to a combination of poor management, neglect, and budget cuts. While the organization is prioritizing these repairs, they face a broader challenge: the existing infrastructure is structurally ill-equipped to support modern technology. Updating these facilities to include the wiring and connectivity required for high-speed internet involves substantial financial investment. Consequently, NGOs are deeply unsettled by this instability, viewing it as a major obstacle to fulfilling their infrastructure development goals (Staff 1).

Discussion and Implication

Language Competences Acquired by Learners through Tarl project

The results from the Tarl project reveal considerable advancements in various aspects of Hausa language acquisition among students. Remarkably, 90.7% of participants stated that the instructional videos made available on iPods through the project improved their learners’ Hausa listening abilities, while 9.3% expressed strong agreement. This unanimous consensus (100% agreement) emphasizes the effectiveness of using instructional videos to enhance listening skills. The lack of any disagreement or uncertainty from respondents further confirms the positive effect of this approach on listening proficiency. Regarding speaking fluency, the findings are equally striking, with 100% of respondents indicating that the instructional videos boosted their learners’ fluency in Hausa. This complete consensus underscores the significant positive impact of the instructional videos on speaking skills, illustrating the success of the efforts made. The impact on reading skills was also noteworthy, with 94.7% of respondents agreeing and 5.3% strongly agreeing that the provision of teaching aids by Tarl improved their learners’ Hausa reading skills. This overwhelming consensus (100%) highlights the importance of teaching aids in promoting reading proficiency, showcasing their crucial role in the educational process. In a similar vein, the enhancement in writing abilities was clear, with 86.7% of participants agreeing and 13.3% strongly agreeing that the teaching aids improved their students’ Hausa writing skills. The full agreement once again reflects the effectiveness of teaching aids, with a marginally higher percentage of respondents strongly agreeing compared to those regarding reading skills. This indicates that the aids may

have had an even greater impact on writing proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), specifically Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), play a vital and transformative role in enhancing Hausa language education at the basic level in Katsina State. By shifting the focus from simply providing education to ensuring actual learning, these interventions have significantly improved students’ foundational skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The research highlights that capacity development for teachers and the provision of modern instructional materials (such as iPods with instructional videos) are the most effective areas of NGO contribution. However, the sustainability and reach of these successes are currently threatened by poor maintenance cultures within schools, inadequate government funding, and a lack of political will to scale these interventions state-wide. While NGOs have bridged critical gaps in the educational system, they cannot replace the necessity for robust state-led structural support and infrastructure maintenance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthening Teacher Professional Development
2. Infrastructure and Resource Sustainability
3. Policy and Financial Commitment.
4. Curriculum and Language Focus

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