



SOCIO- EDUCATIVE ACTIVITIES, LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AS DETERMINANTS OF FRENCH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG CULTURAL IMMERSION STUDENTS IN FRENCH LANGUAGE VILLAGE, BADAGRY, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Socio Educative Activities, Language environment and Pedagogical approach as determinants of Students' Proficiency in French language in Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry. The study adopted descriptive research design of correlational type. The population of the study was all University students in French Language Village, Badagry, Nigeria. Hundred students were randomly selected from 2000 students. Twenty French language Lecturers were randomly selected from 30 Lecturers. In all, a total number of 100 French language students and 20 French language Lecturers participated in the study. Four instruments were used in this study. These included: Questionnaire on Social Educative Activities (QSEA), Questionnaire on Students' Attitude to Language Environment (QSALE), French Language Lecturers' Classroom Practices Observation Scale (FLTCPOS) and Students' French Language Proficiency Test (SFLPT). The result indicates that students' proficiency in French language had positive moderate and significant relationships with socio-educative activities. Students' proficiency in French language had positive high and significant relationships with lecturer's pedagogical approach while it had positive low and non-significant relationship with attitude to language environment. The findings further revealed that the joint contribution of the three independent variables to students' French proficiency was significant. The result indicates that the relative contribution of lecturers' Pedagogical Approach was significant while the relative contributions of Socio-Educative Activities and attitude to Language Environment were not significant. It was therefore recommended that more emphasis should be placed on socio-educative activities and teacher pedagogical approach in order to enhance the foreign language proficiency of the learners of French Language.

KEYWORDS: Socio Educative activities, Language environment, Pedagogical approach, Proficiency in French, Cultural immersion

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INTRODUCTION

French language is a language of international repute in Nigeria; it is considered as the second official language. It is offered as a course of study in many tertiary institutions in Nigeria, including Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. The study of French as a foreign language requires the students in Colleges of Educations and Universities to participate in cultural immersion program in French. This also applies to the Village of Badagry, where they are exposed to comprehensive teaching and cultural experiences. Furthermore, the combination of pedagogical approach, socio- educative activities and an enriched linguistic environment is expected to influence the learning outcomes of the students and thereby produce bilingual citizens who are versed in the knowledge of French language and their mother tongue. Researchers in the field of French language as foreign language in Nigeria have critiqued the relative effect of these variables on the language proficiency of the students in French language as they observe their cultural immersion program in Nigerian French language Village in Badagry. Some students have trouble in expressing themselves effectively in French language even after a considerable number of months in the language village. This study therefore investigated the Socio Educative Activities, Language environment and Pedagogical approach as determinants of Students' Proficiency in French language in Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry.

It would have been artificial to base the teaching of French in a purely Nigerian social cultural setting, given the fact that Nigeria is an English speaking country. It appears more practical to have such a teaching in a Francophone West African Socio-cultural context, which in many respects is similar to that of Nigeria. Nigeria is a country with linguistic diversity because of the multilingual nature of the country in terms of the number of indigenous language that exist in the country. The multilingual characteristics of Nigeria is common in many African countries but the imposition of colonial language has assisted in a great deal to ease the communicative barrier among the diverse ethnics groups in Nigeria. However, French and English are recognized as official languages in Nigeria while English is viewed as a language of commerce, education, politics and mass media, and the medium through which one unifies the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Simire (2013) affirms that French occupies a very important place in the said syllabus (Nigerian University French language programs) from year one to the final year of first-degree programs. The University learners of French language are exposed to the literary works of great authors of the 16th and 20th century such as Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, and Jean Jaque Rousseau. Nigeria French Language Village located at Agbara Badagry in Lagos State is an inter-University Centre for French Teaching (ICFT), which was established in 1990 by the Federal Government as an alternative Centre for France or Francophone countries in which students of French must compulsory spend years doing the abroad programme. The center recruits experts from France, neighboring francophone countries and within Nigeria to serve as teaching staff in that programme. The major functions of the center according to Wende (2014) are as follow:

- Preparation of French students in colleges of education and universities for final year studies in French



- It serves as rendezvous for students and teachers of French for brainstorming how best to improve their methods and techniques of teaching.
- It organizes excursions, field trips and pique-niques for students and adults who can afford them
- It promotes cultural and technical services among speculated individuals and cooperate bodies under the scheme tagged French for special purposes (FSP), interested lawyers, medical directors, engineers, scientist, evangelists and the like trained in French with the view to enhancing cultural and technological transfer between Nigeria and /France
- The center creates job opportunity for the numerous multinational

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

French was one of the few subjects taught in Nigerian System of Education since the establishment of the first secondary school in Lagos in 1859. The Nigerian government established inter-university agency to perform central roles in the development and research in French language studies at the tertiary level. Among the agency in this regard, Arabic village in Ngala Borno and National Institute for Nigerian languages at Ogor Hill, Aba Abia State. Emenanjo (2001) is of the view that these three language institutions including Nigerian French language Village Ajara, Badagry through their acculturation programmes, documentation and research activities as well as teaching and training programmes have been implementing different aspects of the language policy.

Iteogu (2016) maintains that the philosophy guiding the activities of the French Village is to provide a programme that is practical in approach and familiar to the background of the learners. He further stated that the programme was designed by scholars in French studies and the Federal government to replace the former one-year abroad programme, which took place in France or West African countries. Since the creation of the center, it has been involved in teaching, research and documentation in the area of French language development. Olayinka & Ogundele (2015) identified environmental problem as one of the problems that bedeviled the teaching and learning of French in Nigeria. They are of the opinion that many of the students pass out of the colleges without processing the linguistic competence needed. Simire (2002) opined that the quality of French graduate rolled out in the Colleges of Education did not march with learners' practical linguistic and communicative competence outside the school system. Ignonor (2011) affirmed that for Nigeria to enter a relation of mutual benefits with francophone nations, it is imperative at least to some extent of her to communicate with these countries in their own official language French.

The Nigeria French language village is a real language laboratory. It is a language education setting concaved to enable a natural and pragmatic teething of French. Generally, the village adopts an eclectic approach to teaching. Emphasis is on methods that aim at enabling the learners to acquire the four essential language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students acquire the four basic skills through interactive exercises and teaching techniques based on printed or multimedia document that enable use of vocabulary, different registers, and language orders. Foreign teaching approach and methodology use in

the foreign language could either make or mar the language competence or proficiency of the learners undergoing cultural immersion programme. Hatifah (2017) explores successful EFL teachers in terms of their verbal cues in classroom interaction. Khaerati (2016) and Asriati (2015) have also made use of effective EFL teachers as the central phenomena under observation. Both of them try to identify the qualities attributable to effective EFL teachers in Indonesian context, which is also applicable to the teaching of French language as a foreign language in Nigeria.

Furthermore, sporting and socio-educative activities are designed as the springboard for French language learning to further improve the student's communicative competence. Socio-educative activities give room for intensive practice of French. Examples of socio-educative activities abound are sports, games, debates discussions talk shows, songs, films, drama, and press briefing. The activities therefore enhance language skills learning in diverse communication situation. Every week, a theme is earmarked for the socio-educative activities as applied to diverse domain (sport, health, religion, politics, education and culture). These enable students to get used to the terminology and enhance their vocabulary. Excursion to neighboring French speaking countries (Togo/Benin) expose the students to the way of life, culture and practices of francophone people. By coming directly in contact with their French-speaking counterparts, the students are able to practise French in a reel life situation. They thereby get used to the lexicon and language structures of these countries. Students visit places of interest in these francophone towns and they are received by important personalities in Benin/Togo who discuss the themes of the work with them.

Significance of the study

The study is significant because it will provide empirical evidence on the level of efficiency and effectiveness of academic activities geared towards influencing foreign language competence and cultural immersion programme in French language Village in Nigeria. The language teaching approach and methodology adopted in the teaching of French language to students would be critically examined with the view to establishing their efficacy and thereby recommend more efficient and effective methods of foreign language teaching that would impact positively on the proficiency of the students in French language. The language environment is of vital importance to the effective learning of French language as it is expected in Nigeria French language village in Badagry which was established to serve as an alternative to a typical year abroad programme where students are exposed to first-hand experience of the native language speakers and environment. However, the study will ascertain the vibrancy of the language environment in engendering communicative competence in French language learners with the view to overhauling the entire system in order to achieve the desired objectives.

Scope of the study

This study therefore investigated the Socio Educative Activities, Language environment and Pedagogical approach as determinants of Students' Proficiency in French language in Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry.



Research Questions

1. What is the level of French language proficiency among Students in French Language Village, Badagry?
2. What relationship exists between independent variables (Socio- educative activities, language environment and pedagogical approach) and Students' Proficiency in French language in French language village?
3. What is the joint contribution of Socio Educative activities, language environment and pedagogical approach to students' proficiency in French language in French language Badagry?
4. What is the relative contribution of socio- educative activities, language environment and pedagogical approach to students' proficiency in French language in French Language Village, Badagry?
5. Which of the independent variables (Socio – Educative activities, language environment pedagogical approach) best determined Students' Proficiency in French language in French Language Village, Badagry?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of a correlational type. The population of the study was all University students in French Language Village, Badagry, Nigeria. Hundred students were randomly selected from 2000 students in French Language Village. Twenty French language lecturers were randomly selected from 30 lecturers in French Language Village Badagry, Lagos. In all, a total number of 100 French language students and 20 French language lecturers participated in the study. Four instruments were used in this study. These include: Questionnaire of Social Educative Activities (QSEA), . Questionnaire of Students' Attitude to Language Environment (QSALE), French Language Lecturers' Classroom Practices Observation Scale (FLTCPOS) and Students' French Language Proficiency Test (SFLPT)

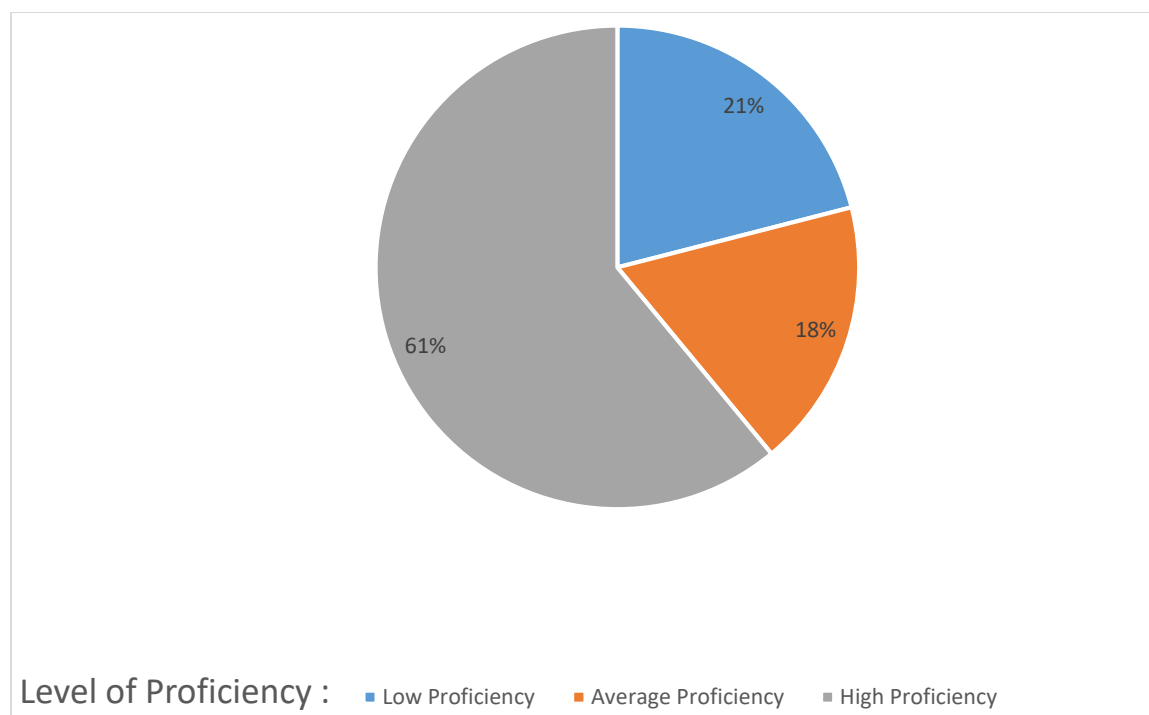
Questionnaire of Social Educative Activities (QSEA)

The instrument was self-designed to measure social educative activities in the French Language Village. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and B. Section A provided demographic information of the respondents such as name and sex while section B contained 10 items carefully worded to elicit responses from students. The items were structured along four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability and the coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Questionnaire of Students' Attitude to Language Environment (QSALE) was self-designed to measure students' attitude to language environment. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and B. Section A provided demographic information of the respondents such as school and qualification while section B contained 10 items carefully worded to elicit responses from teachers. The items were structured along four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The QSALE was piloted on 30 students that were not part of the students intended to be used for the main study. Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability and the coefficient of 0.78.

French Language Lecturers' Classroom Practices Observation Scale (FLTCPOS) was self-designed to measure French language lecturers' classroom practices. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A and B. Section A provided demographic information of the respondents such as course observed, topic of the lesson and time of the lesson while section B contained 30 items carefully worded to elicit responses from teachers. The items were structured along four-point scale of 1,2,3,4 and 5. Cronbach alpha was to determine the reliability and the coefficient of 0.84 was obtained.

Students' French Language Proficiency Test (SFLPT) was self-designed to measure students' French language proficiency. The proficiency test was divided into two sections: Section A and B. Section A was comprehension passage adapted from Tunde Ajiboye while section B contained 40 objective questions. The items were structured along ABCD. Pearson Correlation was used to determine the reliability and the coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The collection of data for the study lasted three weeks after which the data were analyzed. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, pie chart, mean, standard deviation and Multiple Regression Analysis and the data were interpreted at 0.05 level of significance.



RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the level of French language proficiency among students in French language village, Badagry?

Table 1.1: The Level of Students' Proficiency in French Language

Lowest Score = 15; Highest Score = 98; Mean Score = 61.23; Standard Deviation = 21.11

Score Interval	Level of Proficiency	Frequency	Percentage
15 – 44	Low Proficiency	21	21
45 – 59	Average Proficiency	18	18
60 – 98	High Proficiency	61	61
		100	100

Table 1.1 shows the level of French language proficiency of students in French language village in Badagry. The result shows that majority (61%) of the students were highly proficient in French as their score fell between 60 and 98. However, 21% of the students have low proficiency while the remaining 18% students have average proficiency in French language. In conclusion, the mean score of 61.23 shows that the level of students' proficiency in French was high.

Research Question 2: What relationship exists between independent variables (Socio-educative activities, attitude to language environment and lecturer's pedagogical approach) and students' proficiency in French in French language village, Badagry?

Table 1.2: Correlation Matrix of the Independent Variables and Students' Proficiency in French Language

Variables	French Language Proficiency	Socio-Educative Activities	Attitude to Language Environment	Pedagogical Approach
French Language Proficiency	1			
Socio-Educative Activities	.494** (.000)	1		
Attitude to Language Environment	.046 (.651)	-.053 (.559)	1	
Lecturer's Pedagogical Approach	.990** (.000)	.990** (.000)	-.454* (.044)	1
Mean	61.23	61.14	65.61	55.20
Standard Deviation	21.111	22.793	17.200	21.324
	100	100	100	20



Table 1.2 shows the relationships that exist between the independent variables (Socio-educative activities, attitude to language environment and lecturer's pedagogical approach) and students' proficiency in French in French language village, Badagry. The result indicates that students' proficiency in French language had positive moderate and significant relationships with socio-educative activities ($r = .494$; $p < .05$). The result also shows that students' proficiency in French language had positive high and significant relationships with lecturer's pedagogical approach ($r = .990$; $p < .05$) while it had positive low and non-significant relationship with attitude to language environment ($r = .046$; $p > .05$). These results imply that socio-educative activities and lecturer's pedagogical approach had positive influence on students' French proficiency such that when the more the variables increased, the more students' proficiency in French also increased.

Research Question 3: What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (Socio-educative activities, attitude to language environment and lecturer's pedagogical approach) to students' proficiency in French in French language village, Badagry?

**Table 1.3: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint Contribution of Independent Variables to Students' French Proficiency**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9243.456	3	3081.152	30.065	.000 ^b
	Residual	1639.744	16	102.484		
	Total	10883.200	19			

Model = 1; R = .922^a; R² = .849; Adj. R² = .821; Std. Error of the Estimate = 10.123

Table 1.3 shows that the joint contribution of the three independent variables (Socio-educative activities, language environment and lecturers' pedagogical approach) to students' French proficiency was significant ($F_{(3, 16)} = 30.065$; Adj. $R^2 = .821$; $p < 0.05$). This implies that the three independent variables when pulled together significantly determined students' French proficiency. The table also shows Adj. R^2 of .821, which means that the three independent variables had 82.1% contribution to students' proficiency in French. This implies that 82.1% variance in students' French proficiency was accounted for by the joint contribution of the independent variables and that other variables and residuals not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance of 17.9%.

Research Question 4: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (Socio-educative activities, attitude to language environment and lecturer's pedagogical approach) to students' proficiency in French in French language village, Badagry?

Table 1.4: Multiple Regression Analysis showing relative contributions of each of independent variables to Students' French Proficiency

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.953	13.630		1.097	.289
	Socio-Educative Activities	.185	.181	.214	1.019	.323
	Attitude to Language Environment	-.104	.159	-.071	-.653	.523
	Lecturer's Pedagogical Approach	.742	.221	.693	3.354	.004

Table 1.4 shows the relative contribution of each of the three independent variables to the students' proficiency in French as expressed in beta weight. The result indicates that the relative contribution of lecturers' Pedagogical Approach ($\beta = .693$; $t = 3.354$; $p < 0.05$) was significant while the relative contributions of Socio-Educative Activities ($\beta = .214$; $t = 1.019$; $p > 0.05$) and attitude to Language Environment ($\beta = -.071$; $t = -.653$; $p > 0.05$) were not significant. This implies that Lecturer's Pedagogical Approach was the variable that significantly determined students' French proficiency.

Research Question 5: Which of the independent variables (Socio-educative activities, attitude to language environment and lecturer’s pedagogical approach) best determined students’ proficiency in French language village, Badagry?

Table 1.5: Ranking of the Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables by their Beta Weights

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Rank	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	14.953	13.630			
1	Socio-Educative Activities	.185	.181	.214	1.019	2 nd
	Attitude to Language Environment	-.104	.159	-.071	-.653	3 rd
	Lecturers’ Pedagogical Approach	.742	.221	.693	3.354	1 st

Table 1.5 shows the prediction power of each of the independent variables on students’ proficiency in French. The result indicates that Lecturers’ Pedagogical Approach ($\beta = .693$) had the highest prediction power followed by Socio-Educative Activities ($\beta = .214$) and Attitude to Language Environment ($\beta = -.071$). This order of magnitude can be represented as follows: Lecturer’s Pedagogical Approach>Socio-Educative Activities>Attitude to Language Environment. This implies that Lecturer’s Pedagogical Approach was the variables that best determined students’ proficiency in French.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the majority of the students were highly proficient in French language, 21% of the students have low proficiency, while 18% of the students have average proficiency in French language. This finding might be due to that lecturers use viable and modern methods of teaching foreign language. This finding contradicts the finding of Simire (2002) who opined that the quality of French graduate rolled out in the Colleges of Education did not match with learners’ practical linguistic and communicative competence outside the school system. When concepts and principles are not presented in visual forms in a French class, learners fail to see their usefulness in everyday life and fail to participate actively during class discussion.

The study revealed that students’ proficiency in French language had positive moderate and significant relationships with socio-educative activities. Students’ proficiency in French language had positive high significant with lecturers’ pedagogical approach while it had positive low and non-significant relationship with attitude to language environment. This finding contradicts the finding of Olayinka & Ogundele (2015) who identified environmental problem as one of the problems that bedeviled the teaching and learning of French in Nigeria. They are of the opinion that many of the students pass out of the colleges without processing the linguistic competence needed.

The study showed that the joint contribution of socio-educative activities, language environment and lecturers’ pedagogical approach to students’ proficiency in French language was significant. This implies that

the three independent variables when pulled together significantly determined students' proficiency in French language. This is supported by Iteogu (2016) who maintains that the philosophy guiding the activities of the French Village is to provide a programme that is practical in approach, and familiar to the background of the learners. He further stated that the programme was designed by scholars in French studies and the Federal government to replace the former one-year abroad programme, which took place in France or West African countries. The learning environment, whether it is located in the urban or rural areas tells a lot about students' attitude and motivation towards learning a foreign language. The learning environment includes the space, how it is arranged and furnished, routines, materials and equipment, planned and unplanned activities and the people who are present. Teachers can use the classroom to promote meaningful learning and motivation.

The study revealed that the relative contribution of lecturers' pedagogical approach was significant while the relative contributions of socio-educative activities and attitude to language environment were not significant. The study showed that lecturers' pedagogical approach had the highest prediction followed by socio-educative activities and attitude to language environment. This is in line with the findings of Hatifah (2017) who explored successful EFL teachers in terms of their verbal cues in classroom interaction. Khaerati (2016) and Asriati (2015) also made use of effective EFL teachers as the central phenomena under observation. Both of them try to identify the qualities attributable to effective EFL teachers in Indonesian context, which is also applicable to the teaching of French language as a foreign language in Nigeria. It would have been artificial to base the teaching of French in a purely Nigerian social cultural setting, given the fact that Nigeria is an English speaking country. It appears more practical to have such a teaching in a Francophone West African Socio-cultural context, which in many respect similar to that of Nigeria. Nigeria is a country with linguistic diversity because of the multilingual nature of the country in terms of the number of indigenous language that exists in the country.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Socio-Educative Activities, Language environment and Pedagogical approach as determinants of Students' Proficiency in French language in Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry. It was discovered that there is a perceived link between students' proficiency in French language and socio-educative activities, which implies that efforts must be geared towards organizing educative programmes that would impart positively on the language proficiency of the students during cultural immersion. The results also show that students' proficiency in French language had positive high and significant relationships with lecturer's pedagogical approach, which implies that lecturers who teach language courses in this center must be versatile and competent in the knowledge of pedagogical principles and concepts. However, the language environment is of no significance to the attainment of French language proficiency, which might be due to the fact that the language village is well stimulated to engage the students in communicative acts. The findings further revealed that the joint contribution of the three independent variables (Socio-educative activities, language environment and lecturers' pedagogical approach) to students' French proficiency was significant which implies that the variables under investigation in the study are very germane to the study of French language as foreign language in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The teaching of French language in a center like Nigerian French Village should be enriched with socio- cultural and socio educative activities that will further enhance the learning outcomes of the learners.
2. The lecturers should make frantic efforts to improve on their pedagogical approach because it could impart positively on the learning outcomes of the learners.
3. The language environment should be further enhanced to stimulate and engineer learning outcomes. Students should be encouraged to communicate in French language and they should also be French speaking environment.

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