

PREPARING ARABIC STUDENTS OF NIGERIA INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES: NEEDS FOR CURRICULUM EXPANSION

Shittu Morufudeen Adeniyi¹, Muhammed Yusuf², Sabri Bin Mohd Salleh³, Ajape, Kazeem Oluwatoyin⁴

^{1, 2, 3}Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia

⁴Michael Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State, Nigeria.

¹maruf_shittu@yahoo.co.uk

²muhammed.yusuf.fppm.upsi.edu.my

³sabri.ms@fppm.upsi.edu.my

⁴ajapekazeem@gmail

ABSTRACT

This paper wishes to inform the curriculum planners the needs to repackage Arabic studies' work-load in Nigeria institution of higher learning to face the taste of challenges in the contemporary globalization. The curriculum should be tailored towards the actualization of preparing future generation not only as religious propagators and teachers, but also, to partake in commerce industries/vocational jobs, diplomats, oil companies' managers and administrators in cooperate organizations in any country and Nigeria in particular. The Language should be taught beyond religious or regional languages. To achieve the above, students must be prepared for intensive professional language needs skills and entrepreneurship scheme in content and context that provides them to involve in global activities. The paper shall showcase and sample some countries whose Arabic education and studies has elevated their students and compete globally.

KEYWORDS: Nigeria, Institution of Higher learning, Future challenges, Curriculum Development.

INTRODUCTION

Some Arab do says در كما تدور الزمان: "Dur kamal tadur az Zaman" Meaning; Move along with the word development. This instructs and poses challenges to curriculum planners and teachers to be dynamic in their training and teaching activities. Hence, teaching methodology ought to be changed from time to time. It can be student centered, class centered or societal/community centered.

An insight to the future of Arabic Studies in Nigeria Institutions of Higher Learning presently, especially those in South –West part of the Country, would envisage decline in the nearest future (Sanni, Lawal, Muhibbu-Din, Akintola, Timehin, & Paramole, 2012). If one looks at the laudable achievements of the leaders (past and present) which they put together to sustain the Language, would not allow its declination "Dhalika mablaguhum minal 'ilm". Meaning; That is what they could reach of knowledge (Quran 53). They have done what are expecting of them at the time need. The challenges posed to the present younger scholars are that they should start from where the leaders stopped. Among others areas that need focus is "Arabic for specific purpose" specifically in the Nigerian content and context.

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

The emergency of Arabic language in Nigeria was dated back to 8th century; it entered with its culture and civilization into several spheres of Nigeria society in the area of religion, language, culture, trade and commerce (Al ilori, 1978). According to Abdelali, (2003) around fifth century A.H. Islam along with its language(Arabic) penetrated the kingdom of Kanem -Borno situated in modern Chad, turning it too into Muslim kingdom. He went further quoting Ali Abu Bakr (n.d), speaking about Arabic under Ottoman reign, established by sheik Othman Bin Foudi in the thirteenth century hegira (9th century a.d) a Scholar from Nigeria wrote:

"Arabic was the only language in which were drawn up all the report of the empire in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, correspondence between princes continue to..(1967) to be carried out in Arabic" (p.223-224).

Abdelali added that, despite colonial pressure the courts in the Wilaya Kano use Arabic exclusively until 1960. Ayuba, (2012) argues that Arabic had established itself in Nigeria as the Language of administration, Literacy, Education, history and Legislation before the arrival of colonial master. This assertion was also attained to by (Gbadamosi, 1978; Galandanci-shaykh, 1982; Yahya, 1986; Lawal, 2007) with the spreading of Islam in this region, which later developed in the modern times into several states carrying different times. Arabic became the language of writing and reading and language of communication among these states in various field. One hundred and fifteen books were enumerated and written by sheik Othmane Bin Foudi. His brother, Abdullah Bin Foudi, known otherwise as the “Master” wrote more than two hundred books. Sultan Muhamed Balu authored about a hundred books.

In Ibadan and Ede there were an account of Arabic documentations grasped that related to the palace of Olubadan and Timi of Ede respectively (Lawal, 2007). And that was the case until the advent of colonialism. With the arrival of British colonization in 19th century and introduction of English Language as official Language in Nigeria, abating witnesses the status of Arabic Language in Nigeria (Ajape, 2014; Fafunwa, 1979) it was informed that, the activities of European Christian missionaries and the introduction of western education as the only means of acquiring knowledge in Nigeria. As a result, teaching and learning of Arabic language were given little attention (Ajape, 2014; Al-ilori, 1978) illustrates the impact of the colonization on Arabic Studies thus:

“When the British Colonial Master came, they were highly furious to meet Islam in West Africa not only as a religion also as a powerful government and an established nation”.

He reported their negative reaction thus:

“They changed Arabic civilization with European civilization, demolished house, replaced Islamic law with Common law, sent out the Muslim jurist, replaced with lawyers and humiliated Arabic learners replaced with English learners” (Al-ilori, 1987, p. 149).

In spite of this declining, Scholars encourage the learning by establishing private Arabic schools in various part of the country. Markaz at ta’lim al ‘arabi founded by Shaykh Adam Abdullahi Al-ilori in 1950 at Abeokuta then moved to its permanent site Agege, Lagos, Nigeria in 1952. Daru d Da’wah wal irshad founded by Shaykh Mustapha Zaglul as Sanusi in 1970 at Mushin moved to its permanent site Isolo, Lagos, Nigeria in 1980. Karachi Memorial Arabic Secondary School, Ibadan, Oyo Nigeria founded by late Shaykh Narir Alhaji Muhammed Thani Karasi and Alhaji Issa Magaji in 1945. Arabic Institute of Nigeria, Ibadan, Oyo, Nigeria, MA’HAD founded by Shaykh Murithad Abdul Salam in 1958. Islamic preaching School, Ibadan, Oyo, Nigeria, (Ad Da’wah), founded by Shaykh Ballo Alli Adelani in 1974 and host of other Arabic schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. In Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria a magnitude numbers of well standard Arabic Institutions were founded. Two, in Osun State, Auchi, Ondo and several part of Yoruba Land compete with the establishing Modern Arabic Institutions. Islamic Organizations in the Country such as An sar ud deen society of Nigeria established a bookable Arabic School. It was the products of these citadels of learning serving private and Public Higher Institutions where Arabic is been taken as a course of study till date. The graduates of this language are found throughout public and private sector within and outside the country, mostly for teaching and lecturing (Arabic Language and Literature). Some are found in other field with additional qualifications.

The concern and the argument of this paper is that, with the proclamation of the Creator, Allah, “nothing was not left without discussion in the book (Quran 6, 38) If Arabic Curriculum is well packaged and designed with various field of knowledge, that will assure the future of Nigerian Arabic learners. The language will motivate them to learn and as a result addressed the problem of low enrollment and its relevance in the global development. The reform this paper praying for is similar to 1925 educational reform in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where formal schooling system was introduced, and secular subject became part of the curriculum (Adetona, 2011).

THE ROLE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Looking into the past history of Arabic in Nigeria, we observed the laudable contribution the language has invested in the country. The Government should encourage and promote the learning. However, Ayuba, (2012) highlighted the following area that the language is championing the national development in Nigeria.

- Religion
- Education
- Social-psychology

- Economy
- Diplomatic Relationship and
- Security

Religion

The ethical norms every citizen adopts that provide peace, harmony and development, within the country cannot be seen elsewhere, than in religion. Ayuba (2012) said further:

"A cursory look at the history of human civilization shows that religion has been the supreme force in the development of mankind. The ethical development of man to his present state is due to religion..."

He gave the preference to Islamic religion and said further:

"Islam, way of life, affirms God's sovereignty over the entire gamut of man's life. Its teachings cover all fields of human activity, spiritual and material, individual and social, educational and cultural, economic and political, national and international"

He concluded his argument in showcasing the result of accepting Islam through the use of Arabic Language

"Religion as perfected by Islam laid the basis for the unification of humanity. Therefore, the religion, when approached from the Islamic perspective, can bring true happiness to the human race"

Al Qur'an the holy scripture and reference book in the religion of Islam and which all knowledge were taken, highlighted duties of Government towards her citizen and what are expected of a good citizen (Q4, 59) duties of a child toward his parent and responsibility of parents to the children (Q 52, 21). The Inter relationship between different religions believers in south-west part of the country is a result of Muslim Clergies.

Some religion leaders take upon themselves in collaboration with ministry of home affairs in Lagos state for example, visiting government house to inform workers and alike on what are required by the Creator to live in this world and hereafter. The government has respect for religious leaders in disseminating government policy after necessary religion modifications to the populace. It should be noted, that, Arabic is the source language in Islamic Religion.

Education

The role Arabic play in old kanem Borno and Sokoto caliphate on education advancement cannot be over emphasized. Schools were built in every Mallam house to educate the populace. We also mentioned above, number of private Arabic institutions owned by individual to educate Muslim children. Muslim has keen interest in Arabic education because it is the language of worship. Every Muslim home takes important to its study (Ayuba, 2012).says:

"Arabic language served as the first nonnative language that brought its educational as well as its rich culture to Nigeria. The coming of Islam to this part of globe brought with it literacy and technology of writing"

He explains the result of how Nigerian taken keen interest in the language below:

"Nigerians use Arabic in writing their languages. With the help of Arabic characters, they were able to express their mother tongues, read and write in Arabic with ease and this has put them in a kind of intellectual tradition"

Arabic Language Education has penetrated into two out of the three major languages in Nigeria; as a result the two languages had a number of loaned words from Arabic Language as in Table below.

Arabic	Yoruba	Hausa	Meaning
Al 'afiyah	Alafia	Lafia	sound health
Al ibham		ibham	Thumb
Al mu'allim	malimu	Malam	Teacher
Shari'ah	Seria	Sharia	Law
Ad Darar	Laluri	Laluri	Harm

Social Psychology

Many sign post in Nigeria today are decorated in Arabic words. Posters in Arabic scripts are seen on Nigerians' doors, offices, shops, motors and some Nigeria currency notes also carry Arabic scripts. Nigeria Army logo reads نصر من الله victory is from Allah. Many Nigerian Fuji musician use Arabic knowledge to compose that teaches history, generosity, braveness, sermon as checks and balances to leaders and culture etc. Ayuba , (2012) explains thus:

"Arabic had been used to write many works range from Acts of Worship, Islamic Jurisprudence, Health Education and Ethics to Sociology, Economic, Public Administration and Political Science. Such works were also taught at schools and discussed at public gathering specially organized for the enlightenment of the masses, male and female....."

To this end, we discovered the range of level Arabic has impacted to life of a meaningful Nigerian.

Economy

The diffusion of Arabic Language into the country was through commerce for centuries. The link was through Arab traders via North Africa, West Africa and Nigeria. If any foreign languages should proud of establishing trade and commerce in the Country, It should be Arabic, because it is the Language of communication. The art of creativity in Arabic Language calligraphy enjoys a huge patronage and adds to the economy of the Country. Numbers of Arabic Institutions in the country stage events where buying and selling features therein.

Security

Arabic has been in fore front of security in Nigeria. The Local Mallam plays prominent role in defending their villages, town and territories against external forces. An oral tradition from Shaykh Zaglul narrating the extent of security attached to al Qur'an thus:

"One Alufa in old Oyo Empire explored the holistic power contained in Arabic Qur'an to stop the attack of neighboring country against the empire".

The federal Government identified this power to the extent that a Chaplain directorate was established within Nigeria Army and an Arabic personnel was employed to direct the directorate.

Diplomatic Relationship

Nigeria has established strong relationship with many Arabic speaking Country through the surviving of Nigerian learning, teaching and speaking the language. This relationship benefits both the Government and Citizen. The fact that Nigeria Government appreciates Arabic Language it gives extra advantages between her and another Arabic speaking Country in terms of understanding. An Arab proverb says: whoever understands language of a community is safe from their plans.

Curriculum in Nigeria Institution of Higher Learning

Nigeria Institutions of Higher Learning in the content of this paper are the tertiary Institutions in South West part of the Country. The reason being is that the Institutions in this part of the Country witness low enrollment at every admission, which may result of the following:

1a- entry requirements do not give chance to the most available way to source for students ,i.e. al Madaris whose Arabic is their official Language

b-their Curriculum does not contained pre-English training that will prepare the candidate for National Challenges and

c-the graduates has little opportunity to work in any other field than teaching and lecturing.

The above does not happen to Higher Institution in Northern part of the country, as a result the three variables above were handling with care.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of Arabic curriculum in Nigerian Institutions of Higher learning in terms of its design and implementation? In his research, Ajape, (2014) from four Arabic lecturers, four Arabic students and a programme officer in charge of Arabic language, five themes were raised .these includes:

1-Lack of practical curriculum content

2-Lack of Native speaker involvement

- 3-Lack of acculturation
- 4-Lack of Community input and
- 5-Disparity in admission criteria.

Curriculum Planning: General Overview

To view what Curriculum is and types of reform expected in Curriculum of tertiary institution in Nigeria, we need to go through curriculum definition and reforms.

The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program, typically, it refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning.

In many cases, teachers develop their own curricula, often refining and improving them over years, although it is also common for teachers to adapt lessons and syllabi created by other teachers, use curriculum templates and guides to structure their lessons and courses, or purchase prepackaged curricula from individuals and companies. In some cases, schools purchase comprehensive, multi-grade curriculum packages often in a particular subject area, such as mathematics that teachers are required to use or follow. Curriculum may also encompass a school's academic requirements for graduation, such as the courses students have to take and pass, the number of credits students must complete, and other requirements, such as completing a capstone project or a certain number of community-service hours. Generally speaking, curriculum takes many different forms in schools—too many to comprehensively catalog here.

It is important to note that while curriculum encompasses a wide variety of potential educational and instructional practices, educators often have a very precise, technical meaning in mind when they use the term. Most teachers spend a lot of time thinking about and analyzing curriculum, and many educators have acquired a specialist's expertise in curriculum development—i.e., they know how to structure, organize, and deliver courses in ways that facilitate or accelerate student learning. To non-educators, some curriculum materials may seem simple or straightforward (such as a list of required reading, for example), but they may reflect a deep and sophisticated understanding of an academic discipline and of the most effective strategies for learning acquisition and classroom management.

The above denotes that our curriculum most entailed all if not more comprehensive than stated above. An investigation to Nigeria tertiary institution Arabic curriculum revealed that the program planner needs to update the Curriculum to address global expansion, so that, graduates of the subject will be relevant without going for additional qualification in other field. The Curriculum planners should take recognition of the following reform as highlighted by Great Schools Partnership.

Reform

Since curriculum is one of the foundational elements of effective schooling and teaching, it is often the object of reforms, most of which are broadly intended to either mandate or encourage greater curricular standardization and consistency across states, schools, grade levels, subject areas, and courses. The following are a few representative examples of the ways in which curriculum is targeted for improvement or used to leverage school improvement and increase teacher effectiveness:

1. Standards requirements: When new learning standards are adopted at the state, district, or school levels, teachers typically modify what they teach and bring their curriculum into alignment with the learning expectations outlined in the new standards. While the technical alignment of curriculum with standards does not necessarily mean that teachers are teaching in accordance with the standards or, more to the point, that students are actually achieving those learning expectations learning standards remain a mechanism by which policy makers and school leaders attempt to improve curriculum and teaching quality. The Common Core State Standards Initiative, for example, is a national effort to influence curriculum design and teaching quality in schools through the adoption of new learning standards by states.

2. **Assessment requirements:** Another reform strategy that indirectly influences curriculum is assessment, since the methods used to measure student learning compel teachers to teach the content and skills that will eventually be evaluated. The most commonly discussed examples are standardized testing and high-stakes testing giving rise to a phenomenon informally called “teaching to the test.” Because federal and state policies require students to take standardized tests at certain grade levels, and because regulatory penalties or negative publicity may result from poor student performance (in the case of high-stakes tests), teachers are consequently under pressure to teach in ways that are likely to improve student performance on standardized tests e.g., by teaching the content likely to be tested or by coaching students on specific test-taking techniques. While standardized tests are one way in which assessment is used to leverage curriculum reform, schools may also use rubrics and many other strategies to improve teaching quality through the modification of assessment strategies, requirements, and expectations.
3. **Curriculum alignment:** Schools may try to improve curriculum quality by bringing teaching activities and course expectations into “alignment” with learning standards and other school courses—a practice generally called “curriculum mapping.” The basic idea is to create a more consistent and coherent academic program by making sure that teachers teach the most important content and eliminate learning gaps that may exist between sequential courses and grade levels.
4. **Curriculum philosophy:** The design and goals of any curriculum reflect the educational philosophy—whether intentionally or unintentionally—of the educators who developed it. Consequently, curriculum reform may occur through the adoption of a different philosophy or model of teaching by a school or educator. Schools that follow the Expeditionary Learning model, for example, embrace a variety of approaches to teaching generally known as project-based learning, community-based learning, and authentic learning. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students complete multifaceted projects called “expeditions” that require teachers to develop and structure curriculum in ways that are quite different from the more traditional approaches commonly used in schools.
5. **Curriculum packages:** In some cases, schools decide to purchase or adopt a curriculum that has been developed by an outside organization. One well-known and commonly used option for American public schools is International Baccalaureate, which offers curriculum programs for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. Districts may purchase all three programs or an individual school may purchase only one, and the programs may be offered to all or only some of the students in a school. When schools adopt a curriculum package, teachers may receive specialized training to ensure that the curriculum is effectively implemented and taught. In many cases, curriculum packages are purchased or adopted because they are perceived to be of a higher quality or more prestigious than the existing curriculum options offered by a school. (It will come in my suggestion, sample of some international tertiary institution that have some packages in their Curriculum and has prepared their student for global challenges).
6. **Curriculum resources:** The resources that schools provide to teachers can also have a significant effect on curriculum. For example, if a district or school purchases a certain set of textbooks and requires teachers to use them, those textbooks will inevitably influence what gets taught and how teachers teach. Technology purchases are another example of resources that have the potential to influence curriculum. If all students are given laptops and all classrooms are outfitted with interactive whiteboards, for example, teachers can make significant changes in what they teach and how they teach to take advantage of these new technologies. In most cases, however, new curriculum resources require schools to invest in professional development that helps teachers use the new resources effectively, given that simply providing new resources without investing in teacher education and training may fail to bring about desired improvements. In addition, the type of professional development provided to teachers can also have a major influence on curriculum development and design.

Curriculum standardization: States, districts, and schools may also try to improve teaching quality and effectiveness by requiring, or simply encouraging, teachers to use either a standardized curriculum or common processes for developing curriculum (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

Area Needs to Expand on

Haven gone through some other institutions in other part of the word and some other University in the North Nigeria, we discovered the following areas could be of useful to Curriculum planners for future development of Arabic program in Nigeria: 1- Department Of Arabic And Islamic Studies Kogi State University, Anyigba, Kogi, Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial Development

The Entrepreneurial Development course, ALL 311: Arabic and Entrepreneurial Development are offered as one of its core courses at first semester 300 Level. Students should take note that this course is compulsory at that level and the credit unit must be earned for graduation.

All 311 Arabic and Entrepreneurial Development (3cu)

Introduction to Entrepreneurial Development and new venture creation, entrepreneurship in theory and practice, the opportunity, forms of business, staffing, marketing and the new venture, determining capital requirements, raising capital cost, financial planning & management, starting a new business, innovations, legal responsibility, insurance and environmental considerations and the role of Arabists.

The above shows that Kogi state is one of the state in Northern Nigeria has prepared some entrepreneurial work for their graduate apart from teaching. This is good innovation compare to other university in Nigeria.

METHOD

The researchers of the present paper had interviewed three ex-students who studied Arabic as a course and the university prepared them for other jobs in order to be relevant.

For example, Alongbeja Lawal Musa an ex-student of Islamic University, Niger, when interviewed responded thus: *"I, Alongbeja Lawal Musa, specialized in Arabic Linguistic and Electricity/Computer Studies, 2000. Now, I am a Managing Director, Alongbeja Computer Centre, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria a registered Company and Alongbaja publishers, Ibadan"*.

The second person interviewed was Sulaimon Abdul Aziz said thus on a phone interview:

"I, Sulaimon Abdul Aziz, did Arabic and General Electricity/Art design, 2002. I am now working as a General Secretary to Imam Malik College, Ibadan and Manager, SUABLAZ Multipurpose Venture. For installation of satellite dish, wiring of building and Arabic Artistic design".

The two above are the product of the University that makes the vocational job compulsory during the normal class hour. They have prepared the students for future expansion.

Another Institution in the world that prepared the student for future expansion is Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. Which according to the ex student we interviewed, said he undergone an intensive compulsory computer class before graduation. The programme was made for four months between the hours of 5 -7pm. The Student by name is Dr. Ibrahim Alli Adelani B.A.(ed) 2005, Cairo, M.A, 2010, IIUM&PH.D 2014, UPSI, he informed that he sustained his studentship during M.A. and PH.D with the knowledge of editing he learnt during his under graduate in Cairo.

Very recently, International Islamic University, Malaysia came on board to face the challenges of the globalization, in her discovery of the problem Muslims Children encountered in studying when English language is the target of the world, makes provision for an intensive two years on rudiment of English language and also make Arabic an official language in the campus. As a result, the two years compulsory class is mandatory to pass before graduation. This Citadel of knowledge wishes her graduates to compete globally, just established a new faculty (still nurturing) on Arabic for specific purpose. See the kuliyyah at a glance:

Objective and Relevance of the Course

To produce ethical professional who can communicate effectively and work collaboratively in various professional settings. The specific objectives of the programme are to produce graduates who:

- 1- can communicate effectively in Arabic/English.
- 2- are able to communicate with the international community.

3- are able to interact and present ideas effectively.

For effective of the programme, each course is assigned with different rationale and objective.

The objectives are visualised on the outcome of the student thus:

Students who have successfully completed the programme should be able to:

1. Apply knowledge of Arabic for communication to language field.
2. Engage in non-discursive communication.
3. Communicate in Arabic with people from diverse backgrounds in a socially responsible manner.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the professional and ethical standards set by users of the services of communication professionals.
5. Show leadership qualities and team management skills.
6. Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking.
7. Apply entrepreneurial and managerial skills using Arabic as a medium of communication.
8. Execute effective strategies for life-long improvement and apply the necessary learning skills in information management.
9. Explain Arabic language and international communication issues from Islamic perspectives.

CONCLUSION

This paper, a qualitative informative oriented study, has informed that, the Arabic Curriculum in Nigeria Institution of Higher learning needs expansion based on recent development in the world market. The essence of knowledge according to Taxonomy of learning, knowledge that provides one domain all the years and across all the graduates needs to work on. We have discussed the entry point of the Language, which has a remarkable history. The paper also highlighted the input of the language to overall development of the nation, it looks into weak area of the curriculum and suggests through evidence around the word how it should operate to give chance to the young learners to work in the globalized world. Some Institutions of higher learning are showcased to borrow from their noble ideas. Some Scholars said: "الحكمة ضالة المؤمن حيث ما وجدها أخذها" Meaning: Wisdom is a lost property of a believer, he should grasp it wherever he sees it.

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