

# **IMPLEMENTATION OF FRENCH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study investigated the implementation of French Language Curriculum in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Seven null hypotheses were tested in the study. The population consisted of 186 principals and 135 French teachers in public junior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The sample of the study comprised 186 principals and 135 teachers drawn through census sampling method in public junior secondary schools in Bayelsa State. The instrument for data collection was self designed and titled: "French Curriculum implementation Process Questionnaire (FCIPQ)". The instrument was validated by experts. The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.79 which was determined through Cronbach alpha method. Mean eating and independent t-test was used in analyzing data generated from the study. The data was tested for significance at 0.05. The results of the study showed that there was significant difference between the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching personnel, adequacy of teaching aids, adequacy of language laboratories and libraries, adequacy of teaching periods, extent of students' interest, adequacy of funding and appropriateness of teaching method for the implementation of French language curriculum. Based on the results of the study, recommendations such as need to provide facilities to be provided in the schools for the implementation of French Language Curriculum.*

***Keywords: French, French Language, curriculum, Implementation, facilities***

## **INTRODUCTION**

French language is a typical subject curriculum in the school system world over. It is one major world language that enjoys an exemplary reputation, a proud and robust history; enviable international and supranational attraction, a carefully co-ordinated worldwide legislative and administrative attention and care; an enduring semantic richness, a captivating rhythmical beauty and an indisputable magnetic pull to scholars and the lovers of the language (Didi & Wonu, 2010). It also exhibits other impressive intrinsic and extrinsic qualities which make it stand over and above most modern world languages. These qualities and other factors account to a great extent, for the passionate love and unreserved respect that are shown to the language by its almost 300 million users and admirers across the globe (Ojo, 2001).

It is to be noted that there is hardly any other modern world language that has provided such a secure and comfortable haven as French that are drawn from other languages. The French language has since its origin, been so carefully nurtured that it has never ceased to accumulate and exhibit extraordinary qualities including its exemplary capacity to express ideas as clearly and as accurately as they should be understood. These were some of the major reasons that made the language the favoured linguistic candidate for drafting international treaties. They have also contributed in making it the preferred mode of expression in modern international diplomacy (Ojo, 2001).

In Nigeria, French is a foreign language. Since Nigeria is surrounded by French speaking countries, the importance of the language in Nigeria for social, political, economic and international relations cannot be overemphasized. To enhance the effective teaching and learning of French in secondary schools, the French curriculum has been fashioned. These French curricula include that of the Junior Secondary School and the Senior Secondary School.

The purpose of learning French in Junior Secondary Schools include

- To teach the learners to communicate in French language through the systematic use of communicative language teaching method (an appropriate method).
- To widen the scope of the learner's knowledge about the French and the French speaking world.
- To assist the teacher in his presentation of the subject in the simplest possible manner, in order to sustain the interest of the learners who may be coming into contact with French for the first time.
- To encourage the innovative capacity of the teacher who should be able to improve on materials in order to enhance effective delivery.
- To serve as the synthesis of past Nigeria syllabuses as well as those of other countries and benefits from the experience of the other to fit into the present modern Nigerian context.
- To help textbook developers to produce teaching materials that will adequately reflect the objectives aforementioned.

At the Senior Secondary School level, the objectives of teaching and learning French language include:

- To enable students communicate effectively in French
- To enable students write fluently in French

Ajiboye (2009) explained that the purpose of learning French in the secondary school could, for convenience, be broken into two.

- To enable students of the language respond satisfactorily to the general need of being able to use the language for simple social interactions, presumably with the owners or first users of the language.
- To give students the opportunity to gain functional mastery of the language through an adequate grasp of the fundamental structures that characterize this language and thereby distinguish it from other languages (p. 103).

While the first objective could be described as long-term, the second could be described as short-term. In another context, while the first objective represents a goal, and a social end, the second represents a vital means of reaching the goal. However, it is necessary to see the second objective as one that requires further breakdown if only to justify the areas of emphasis of foreign language teaching, and to give some degree of prominence to the peculiar language hold that each area represents or fails to represent. Thus it could be said that French at the secondary school is meant to:

- To promote spoken French
- To develop understanding of spoken and written French
- To encourage acceptable reading of contemporary French
- To enhance correct writing of French (Anwukah, 2001).  
Didi & Wonu, (2010:32). Have other benefits to include:
- Communicating with Nigerian neighbours as Nigeria is surrounded by French speaking nations.
- Serving as a veritable tool for diplomacy;
- Enhancing a better understanding of French scientific discovery, technological breakthrough and political thought; and
- Allowing for better understanding of the French culture.

For effective implementation of French curriculum in the secondary schools, certain factors are necessary; these are: the personnel must be available. In this case, the personnel refers to teachers who must be available in terms of quantity and quality. The importance of such personnel in the curriculum implementation process cannot be overemphasized. They act as the middle men between the curriculum itself and the students. The facilities needed for the study of the subject also need to be provided. The facilities include well equipped language laboratories, teaching aids as well as availability of the relevant textbooks. Apart from these extraneous variables or factors, there are internal factors such as interest on the part of the students, motivation for teachers and students, right attitudes and aptitude among the students. Also the number of periods for the study

of French per week is very important. It will be recommended that at least a four periods per week should be accorded to the study of French (Agina-Obu, 2003).

Iloputaife, Maduwesi and Igbo (2010) listed the issues affecting the implementation of French curriculum in junior secondary schools. Efefi (2008) explained that many schools are without teaching aids and most teachers are unable to manipulate these few facilities that are provided. Orgubeim (2005) identified lack of language laboratories and libraries as impediments affecting the implementation of French language curriculum in schools. Jack (2010) explained that students' lack of interest as an impediment to the implementation of French curriculum. Lulu (2009) posits that poor funding is a hindrance to the implementation of French language curriculum. Didi and Wornu (2010) and Philip and Josiah (2005) explained that poor teaching method affects the implementation of French language curriculum.

The inclusion of French language among the subjects to be studied at the secondary school is a very welcomed development with a lot of benefit for the country in general and Bayelsa State in particular. However, there is need to investigate if most of the factors needed to effectively implement the French curriculum at the secondary school level are available. Some of such factors may be qualified French language teachers, teaching aids, relevant textbooks and multi-lingualism, well-equipped language laboratories and libraries, interest on the part of the students, teaching method and teaching periods, motivation for both students and teachers alike and funding, etc. The problem of this study is to determine the extent of implementation of the French language curriculum in secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria with regards to these factors.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance are stated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the principals and teachers on the status of teaching personnel for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching aids for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of the language laboratories and libraries for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching period for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.
5. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of students interest in the study of French in Bayelsa State.
6. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.
7. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of the appropriate teaching method for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

### **Methods**

The study adopted survey research design which involves describing the implementation process of the French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State based on result of analysis of data collected from a sample drawn from the schools. The survey research design was considered appropriate for the study following the description of the survey design by Nworgu in Alio (2008), as one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The design specifies how such data was collected and analyzed. Therefore, the study involved collection of data

with structured questionnaire from samples of Junior Secondary School in Bayelsa State. These respondents are actually involved in the implementation of the French Curriculum in the various schools which justifies the decision to source data from them directly.

The population of the study consisted of 321 made up of 186 principals and 135 French teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. There are 186 Basic Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. However, there are 135 French teachers in the Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

The sample of the study consisted of 321 staff in Basic Junior Secondary Schools, (186 principals and 135 French teachers). All the French teachers were involved in the study. Because of the size of the population, the study adopted census sampling technique.

The structured questionnaire was used in collecting data for the study tagged: "French Curriculum Implementation Process Questionnaire (FCIPQ)". The questionnaire was prepared in two parts namely: part I and II. Part I is on demographic data of the respondents, while Part II is divided into three sections, (A-C). Section A contained items on the methods adopted in the implementation of French Curriculum in the area; Section B contained 72 items on the evaluation techniques adopted in implementing French Curriculum while Section C contained items on the adequacy of teachers' facilities. Altogether, the instrument contained 72 number of question items.

The instrument (FCIPQ) was subjected to face validity. The instrument was given to three experts from different institutions of higher learning. The experts consisted of two senior lecturers in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, and Measurement & Evaluation, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt and from the French Department in the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Port Harcourt, Department of Educational Foundations, Ebonyi State University. The experts checked and made comments on whether the items are clearly stated, adequate and suitable for eliciting desired responses from the respondents. The necessary corrections suggested by the experts were effected by the researcher.

Reliability refers to a tendency where an instrument measures what it is purported to measure. The reliability of this instrument which had 72 items after face validation was determined by subjecting it to a trial testing. This was done by administering it to a small group of teachers from Port Harcourt in Rivers State numbering thirty-five. These French teachers were not part of the sample for the main study. Rivers State was chosen because of its closeness and similar geographical features with Bayelsa State.

The responses of the teachers were collated and used to determine the reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach Alpha Approach. By this analysis, the reliabilities for clusters A, B, C, D and E were obtained as 0.61, 0.58, 0.69, 0.59 and 0.66 respectively. Then, the overall reliability for the entire 54 items was obtained as 0.79. This figure showed a high internal consistency for the instrument and so made the instrument suitable for use for the study.

In order to collect data, five research assistants were involved in the distribution of the instrument. The assistants were briefed on the objectives of the study in order to achieve the set objectives. The instrument for data collection was administered directly to the French teachers and Principals and retrieved after a week.

Mean scores and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while independent t-test was used in testing the 8 hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The following range of values are used for decision rule and the various responses ie.

Very Great Extent (VGE): 3.1 – 4.0

Great Extent (GE): 2.1 – 3.0

Low Extent (LE): 1.1 – 2.0

Very Low Extent (VLE): 0.1 – 1.0 (Adopted from Igwe, 2012)

## **Results**

### **Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching personnel for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 1: t-test results on the Extent of Adequacy of Teaching Personnel for the Implementation of the French Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	2.68	0.63				
Teachers	135	1.92	0.51	319	12.043	0.013	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

**Alpha level .05**

Table 1 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching personnel for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 1 above reveals that the calculated t-value is 12.043 while the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis is accepted. The result is that the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching personnel for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching aids for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 2: t-test Results on the Extent of Adequacy of Teaching Aids for the Implementation of Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	2.94	0.89				
Teachers	135	2.36	0.46	319	6.332	0.193	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

**Alpha level .05**

Table 2 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching aids for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 2 above reveals that the calculated t-value (is 6.331, the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is however, accepted. The result is that the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching aids for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of the language laboratories and libraries for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 3: t-test Results on the Extent of Adequacy of Language Laboratories and Libraries for the Implementation of Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	1.703	0.32				
Teachers	135	2.115	0.48	319	7.233	0.186	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

**Alpha level .05**

Table 3 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of language laboratories and libraries for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 3 above indicates that the calculated t-value (7.23) is greater than the critical t-value is 7.233, the p-value (0.186) is than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result is that the mean rating of principals and

teachers on the adequacy of language laboratories and libraries for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

#### Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent teaching periods are adequate for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 4: t-test Results on the Extent of Adequacy of Teaching Periods for the Implementation of French Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	1.525	0.29				
Teachers	135	2.195	0.35	319	8.301	0.752	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

#### Alpha level .05

Table 4 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching periods for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 4 above reveals that the calculated t-value is 8.301, the p-value is 0.752 is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result is that the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching periods for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

#### Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent students are interested in the study of French in the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 5: t-test Results on the Extent of Students' Interest for the Implementation of French Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	2.539	0.48				
Teachers	135	2.948	0.83	319	12.722	0.011	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

#### Alpha level .05

Table 5 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent students are interested in the study of French in the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 5 above reveals that the calculated t-value is 12.722, the p-value (0.011) is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result is that the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent students are interested in the study of French in the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

#### Hypothesis 6

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 6: t-test Results on the Extent of adequacy of funding for the Implementation of French Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	2.930	0.89				
Teachers	135	2.345	0.31	319	8.423	0.736	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

### Alpha level .05

Table 6 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 6 above reveals that the calculated t-value is 8.423, the p-value (0.736) is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result is that the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the adequacy of funding for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State significantly differ.

### Hypothesis 7

There is no significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the appropriateness of method of teaching for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

**Table 7: t-test Results on the Appropriateness of Teaching Method for the Implementation of French Language Curriculum**

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Stf	Df	t-cal	P-value	Remark
Principals	186	3.132	0.93				
Teachers	135	2.330	0.41	319	10.641	0.016	Significant H <sub>0</sub> is Rejected

### Alpha level .05

Table 7 shows the t-test results on the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the appropriateness of method of teaching for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. An observation of the summary of the t-test analysis in Table 7 above reveals that the calculated t-value is 10.641, while the p-value (0.016) is less than 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result is that the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the appropriateness of method of teaching for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa state statistically differ.

### Discussion of Findings

Teachers are the middle men between the French curriculum and the students in Junior Secondary Schools. When the teachers are better equipped, experienced and motivated, it will enhance the effective implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools. The reverse is the case, when the French teacher is not equipped, inexperienced and poorly motivated. The findings are in agreement with Didi and Wonu (2010) who said that the professional competence of most of the French language teachers in Rivers State is in doubt. Also, Iloputaife, Maduwesi and Igbo (2010) pointed out that issues bordering on teachers' related factors affect the implementation of curriculum in both senior and junior secondary schools. Such teacher factors involve teachers' qualification, training, readiness or commitment as well as teachers' capability in utilizing the necessary teaching skills. Study findings were supported by the alternate hypothesis which indicates that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching personnel for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in the area.

Teaching aids are important resource in the teaching and learning of French in junior secondary schools. Teaching aids make teaching and learning easier, interesting and gives better understanding of materials learnt. Inadequate supply of teaching aids will negatively affect the implementation of French curriculum. This finding is in agreement with Efedu (2008) who explained that many schools are without the relevant teaching materials while many teachers are ignorant of the ability to create and even to manipulate the few ones available. Study finding was supported by the alternate hypothesis which indicated that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the adequacy of teaching aids for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State. There is no gainsaying to the fact that lack

of or poor supply of instructional materials or teaching aids in general affect the implementation of French curriculum in Bayelsa State.

Language laboratories and libraries are very essential component in the learning of French in schools. Language laboratories and libraries make it very easy for the teaching and learning of French in schools. When language laboratories and libraries are adequately provided and equipped, it will help to effectively implement French curriculum in the secondary schools. The reverse is the case when language laboratories and libraries are not adequately provided and equipped, it will affect effective implementation of French curriculum in secondary schools. This finding is in agreement with (Orugbemi, 2005) explained that the absence of language laboratories and libraries affects the effective implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools. This study finding was supported by the rejection of the null hypothesis which indicated that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the inadequacy of the language laboratories and libraries for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

This study finding was supported by the rejection of the null hypothesis which indicates that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the extent teaching periods are adequate for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

Interest is a factor that indicates whether individuals are enthusiastic in engaging in an activity. Students' interest stimulates their readiness in studying a particular subject. Students' interest is an important yardstick in determining the extent a student can be proficient in a particular subject. It indicates whether or not a student can study a subject successfully. The finding is that there is low interest among students and this affect the implementation of French Curriculum in the area. This finding is in agreement with Jack (2010) who explained that interest of students is an important consideration in the implementation of French curriculum. Study findings supported by the alternate hypothesis indicates that there is significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent students are interested in the study of French in the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

Funding is an important requirement in the implementation of any educational programme. Funding ensures the recruitment of qualified teachers, availability of equipment and facilities and sustainability of such educational programmes. However, the funding provided for the implementation of French curriculum is inadequate and in most cases insignificant bearing in mind the enormous importance of French curriculum. In addition, misappropriation of school fund and embezzlement, there is no regular auditing of school finance. Thus, poor school funding pose great challenge to various facet of the French curriculum implementation. Such challenges include: poor payment and remuneration of teachers, poor incentives for French teachers, non-provision of teaching resources. This finding is in agreement with Lulu (2009) who explained that poor funding, misappropriation of fund and embezzlement are impediments to effective implementation of French curriculum.

This finding is in agreement with Didi and Wonu (2010) who explained that the methods adopted by the teachers determine the effective implementation of a curriculum. Also, Philip and Josiah (2005) stated that the teaching method adopted by a teacher is an important criteria in deciding the success of a curriculum implementation process. This study finding was supported by the rejection of the null hypothesis which indicated that there is significant difference in the mean rating of principals and teachers on the appropriateness of method of teaching for the implementation of French Curriculum in Junior Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the study, the research concluded that personal, teaching aids, language laboratories and libraries, teaching periods, students' interest, funding and teaching methods are either inadequate or inappropriate for the implementation of French language curriculum in Bayelsa State.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers teaching French should be encouraged to undergo in-service training in Colleges of Education and Faculties of Education in Universities to improve their understanding of teaching and enhance their competence.
2. Prescribed equipment and instructional materials should be provided for the teaching and learning of French curriculum, French teachers should be taught how to improvise teaching materials needed for implementation of French curriculum. Also, audio-visual aids for the teaching of French should be provided; well illustrated textbooks, projection, slides, film strips, printed materials; news paper cuttings; pamphlets; visual aids; pictures; maps; flannel boards and generating sets should be provided for the implementation of French curriculum.
3. Language laboratories should be provided for the implementation of French curriculum; language laboratories should be well equipped for the implementation of the language.

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