

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This study examined the structural and institutional challenges affecting the implementation of the French language curriculum in public junior secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Despite the designation of French as Nigeria's second official language and its inclusion in the National Policy on Education, its implementation at the basic education level remains inconsistent and largely ineffective. The study was guided by five objectives, including assessing the extent of curriculum implementation, students' awareness and interest, institutional and systemic factors, challenges faced by schools, and strategies for sustainable implementation. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted across four purposively selected Local Government Areas - Chanchaga, Bida, Kontagora, and Suleja. A total of 300 students were sampled from twelve public junior secondary schools using multistage sampling techniques, while only seven (7) French teachers were used for the study. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and focus group discussions, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings revealed that the implementation of the French curriculum is limited and inconsistent, with many schools either not offering French or teaching it irregularly. The shortage and uneven distribution of qualified French teachers emerged as the most significant challenge, alongside inadequate instructional materials and weak institutional support. Despite these constraints, students demonstrated a high level of interest in learning French and recognized its academic and career relevance, indicating that motivation is not a major barrier. The study also found disparities in curriculum implementation between schools, influenced by factors such as resource availability, administrative priorities, and sociocultural perceptions. The study concludes that the under-implementation of the French curriculum is primarily driven by structural and institutional deficiencies rather than lack of student interest. It recommends improved teacher recruitment and deployment, provision of adequate instructional materials, strengthened policy enforcement, and the promotion of interactive teaching methods and extracurricular activities such as French clubs. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring equitable and sustainable access to French language education and for enhancing Nigeria's multilingual capacity in a globalized context.

Keywords: French language education, curriculum implementation, institutional challenges, public schools, multilingual education.

Introduction

Nigeria's National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) designates French as the country's second official language after

English and mandates its inclusion across primary and secondary school curricula. This policy direction reflects Nigeria's geographic proximity to Francophone nations and underscores the

strategic importance of multilingualism for regional cooperation and global engagement. As noted by Oyetade (2019), the institutionalization of French within the education system is intended to develop communicative competence that enhances Nigeria's participation in West African and international affairs.

Despite this policy commitment, the implementation of French language instruction—particularly in public junior secondary schools in Niger State—remains weak and inconsistent. English continues to dominate as the principal medium of instruction, while Arabic benefits from strong institutional and cultural support, especially in northern Nigeria. Within this sociolinguistic context, French is often marginalized and perceived as supplementary rather than essential. Abubakar (2018) observes that such perceptions contribute to its limited adoption, while Lawal and Idris (2019) report that French is frequently taught irregularly or omitted entirely, even when formally included in the curriculum.

Empirical literature consistently highlights a gap between policy intent and classroom practice. Ajiboye and Adedeji (2017) found that although French is officially embedded in the curriculum, its delivery in public schools is often inconsistent and poorly monitored. Similarly, Okonkwo (2020) notes that French tends to receive low priority in school timetables and resource allocation, reinforcing its peripheral status within the broader educational framework. These findings point to systemic weaknesses in policy implementation, particularly in resource-constrained environments.

The challenges hindering effective curriculum delivery are multifaceted. A significant concern is the shortage of qualified French teachers, alongside the limited availability of instructional materials. Ibim and Nwachukwu (2016) identify these as critical barriers to effective teaching and learning. In addition, Adebayo (2018) highlights inadequate teacher motivation and a mismatch between pre-service training and classroom realities, resulting in pedagogical practices that fail to engage learners meaningfully. Ibrahim and Nwachukwu (2016) further emphasize that successful curriculum

implementation requires not only trained personnel but also adequate instructional support and continuous professional development.

Student-related factors also contribute to the under-implementation of French. Usman (2017) argues that learners' low interest in the subject is closely linked to limited exposure and a perceived lack of relevance to their immediate socio-cultural environment. This perspective is reinforced by Nnamani and Uzoegwu (2021), who contend that student engagement in language learning depends heavily on curriculum relevance, effective teaching strategies, and alignment with learners' lived experiences and future aspirations. Where these elements are absent, motivation and participation tend to decline significantly.

Regional and institutional disparities further complicate the situation. In northern Nigeria, Arabic enjoys widespread acceptance due to its religious and cultural significance, often overshadowing French in both policy attention and classroom practice (Abubakar, 2018). Bello and Yusuf (2019) report that in many schools in Niger State, French is either not offered or lacks qualified teachers. Moreover, differences between public and private schools contribute to unequal access to foreign language education. Dike (2019) notes that private schools, supported by better funding and administrative flexibility, are more likely to implement foreign language programs effectively. In contrast, public schools frequently struggle with staffing shortages, inadequate materials, and weak policy enforcement mechanisms.

Cultural perceptions and community attitudes also influence curriculum implementation. Usman (2017) highlights that in predominantly Islamic regions, attitudes toward French may be lukewarm or resistant, affecting both student interest and institutional commitment. Lawal and Idris (2019) similarly observe that even where French is included in school timetables, actual classroom delivery is often irregular due to competing curricular priorities and limited administrative oversight.

At a broader level, global perspectives reinforce these challenges. UNESCO (2016), along with Eze and Olanrewaju (2020), emphasizes that the success of multilingual

education policies depends on coherent policy frameworks, adequate resource allocation, effective teacher preparation, and strong community engagement. Across sub-Saharan Africa, many language policies fail not because of flawed design but due to weak implementation structures and insufficient contextual adaptation. Collectively, these studies underscore that the effective implementation of the French language curriculum in regions such as Niger State requires more than policy formulation. It demands a holistic approach that integrates institutional readiness, teacher preparedness, relevant pedagogical practices, and community support. Without these, the gap between policy intention and classroom reality is likely to persist.

In light of these issues, this study seeks to assess the implementation of the French language curriculum in public junior secondary schools in Niger State. It focuses on institutional capacity, teacher readiness, and classroom practices, with the aim of generating evidence-based insights that can inform policy refinement, strengthen curriculum delivery, and promote equitable access to foreign language education in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

French is officially designated as Nigeria's second national language, and its inclusion in the basic education curriculum is mandated by the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). This policy reflects Nigeria's strategic need for multilingual competence, particularly in relation to its diplomatic, economic, and cultural engagement with Francophone West Africa. However, despite this formal recognition, the implementation of French language instruction in public junior secondary schools—especially in Niger State—remains sporadic and inconsistent.

This inconsistency reveals a significant disconnect between national curriculum intentions and actual classroom practices, a challenge that is particularly pronounced in linguistically diverse and resource-constrained contexts (UNESCO, 2016). In many public schools across Niger State, French is either taught irregularly or omitted entirely from instructional delivery, even where it is formally included in the curriculum. Such

patterns undermine the policy's intended outcomes and raise concerns about the effectiveness of curriculum implementation mechanisms.

Existing literature identifies several interrelated factors contributing to this gap. These include a shortage of qualified French teachers, inadequate availability of instructional materials, and weak institutional commitment to foreign language education (Ibrahim & Nwachukwu, 2016; Abubakar, 2018; Adebayo, 2018). In addition, the dominance of English as the primary medium of instruction and the strong cultural and religious positioning of Arabic—particularly in northern Nigeria—further marginalize the role of French within the school system (Usman, 2017). These structural and sociocultural dynamics collectively limit the visibility and prioritization of French in public education.

The implications of this under-implementation are substantial. Students in public junior secondary schools are denied equitable access to a globally relevant language, thereby restricting their opportunities for regional integration and international participation (Lawal & Idris, 2019). Furthermore, disparities between public and private schools in the delivery of the French curriculum continue to widen, as private institutions—benefiting from better resources and administrative flexibility—are more likely to implement language policies effectively (Dike, 2019). This growing inequality raises critical concerns regarding fairness and inclusivity in access to foreign language education.

In response to these challenges, this study seeks to examine the implementation of the French language curriculum in public junior secondary schools in Niger State. Specifically, it focuses on classroom practices, teacher preparedness, and systemic constraints affecting curriculum delivery. By generating empirical, evidence-based insights, the study aims to inform policy review, strengthen implementation strategies, and promote more inclusive and effective access to French language education in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the implementation of the French language curriculum

in public junior secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent of French language curriculum implementation across public junior secondary schools in selected Local Government Areas of Niger State;
2. Assess students' awareness of and interest in French as a subject, particularly in schools where the subject is not currently offered;
3. Identify the institutional and systemic factors influencing the availability or absence of French language instruction in public schools;
4. Examine the challenges faced by schools that offer French language instruction and those that do not;
5. To propose context-specific strategies for the equitable and sustainable implementation of the French language curriculum in public junior secondary schools across Niger State.

Methodology

Research Design and Study Area

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the implementation of the French language curriculum in public junior secondary schools in Niger State, Nigeria. Niger State, located in the North-Central geopolitical zone, is characterized by considerable cultural and linguistic diversity. While English serves as the official medium of instruction, Arabic enjoys strong religious and community support, particularly in the northern parts of the state.

The study focused on four purposively selected Local Government Areas (LGAs): Chanchaga, Bida, Kontagora, and Suleja. These LGAs were selected to reflect geographical spread and variations in access to French language instruction and qualified teachers. The design enabled the study to assess both the extent of curriculum implementation and the contextual factors influencing the presence or absence of French instruction in public junior secondary schools.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of students and French language teachers in public junior secondary schools across the selected LGAs. A

total of twelve schools, three from each LGA were included in the study.

Sample of 300 students were purposively drawn from these schools. To account for variations in the availability of French instruction, a disproportionate sampling approach was adopted. Suleja and Chanchaga LGAs, which have relatively higher access to French teachers, each contributed 90 students (30 per school), while Bida and Kontagora each contributed 60 students (20 per school).

French language teachers in the selected schools were the target in the study given their limited number. This is intended to provide in-depth contextual insights into curriculum implementation.

Sampling Techniques and Procedure

The study employed a multistage sampling technique combining purposive and simple random sampling methods.

At the first stage, four LGAs were purposively selected to ensure representation of different geographical zones and variations in French language availability. At the second stage, three public junior secondary schools were randomly selected from each LGA.

At the third stage, students from JSS1 to JSS3 in each selected school were listed, and the required number of participants (20 or 30, depending on the LGA) was selected using simple random sampling. Where necessary, proportional representation across grade levels was ensured to maintain balance among JSS1, JSS2, and JSS3 students.

French language teachers in the selected schools were purposively included due to their relatively small population size.

Instrumentation

Data for this study were collected using two primary instruments: structured questionnaires and focus group discussion (FGD) guides.

The student questionnaire consisted of Likert-scale items designed to assess students' awareness of French as a subject, their interest in learning it, and their perceptions of its relevance. It also included preliminary screening items to determine whether respondents have been exposed to French instruction.

In addition, FGD guides were used to collect

qualitative data from French language teachers (where available) and school administrators. These guides explored issues such as curriculum implementation practices, teacher deployment, institutional support, availability of instructional materials, and challenges affecting the delivery of French language instruction.

This combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Procedure for Data Collection

Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from relevant educational authorities and school administrators. Data were collected during school hours with the support of trained research assistants.

Participants were adequately informed about the purpose of the study, ethical principles of voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality were strictly observed. Questionnaires were administered directly to students, while focus group discussions and interviews were conducted with teachers and school heads.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, to summarize responses and identify patterns.

Qualitative data generated from focus group discussions and interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring themes and patterns related to the implementation of the French language curriculum, thereby providing deeper insights into the factors influencing its effectiveness.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the **demographic characteristics of the respondents** who participated in the study. It provides background information such as gender, age, academic qualification, and other relevant variables. The purpose of this section is to give a clear description of the participants and to help in understanding the context within which the data for the study were obtained.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Language	Hausa	75	28.2
	Gbagyi	16	6.0
	Nupe	102	38.3
	Others	73	27.4
Class	JSS1	54	20.3
	JS2	72	27.1
	JS3	140	52.6
Age	11–12 years	70	26.3
	13–14 years	136	51.1
	15–20 years	60	22.6
Gender	Male	91	34.2
	Female	175	65.8

The table shows the demographic traits of the respondents. Most of the students were Nupe speakers (38.3%, n = 102), followed by Hausa speakers (28.2%, n = 75). Students who spoke other languages made up 27.4% (n = 73), while Gbagyi speakers were the smallest group at 6.0% (n = 16). This shows that Nupe-speaking students made up the largest linguistic group in the study.

When it comes to academic level, over half of the respondents were SS3 students (52.6%, n = 140). SS2 students accounted for 27.1% (n = 72), and SS1 students made up 20.3% (n = 54). In terms of age, most respondents were in the 13–14 years range (51.1%, n = 136), followed by those aged 11–12 years (26.3%, n = 70) and 15–20 years (22.6%, n = 60). The gender distribution also

shows that female students (65.8%) outnumbered male students (34.2%).

Table 2: Availability and Exposure to French

S/N	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	SD n (%)	D n (%)	Mean (M)	SD
1	French is currently taught in my school.	76 (28.6)	26 (9.8)	90 (33.8)	74 (27.8)	2.39	1.10
2	I have never been taught French in this school.	25 (9.4)	58 (21.8)	126 (47.4)	57 (21.4)	2.19	0.96
3	French is taught regularly according to our school timetable.	67 (25.2)	60 (22.6)	62 (23.3)	113 (42.5)	2.27	1.08
4	There are French teachers in my school.	123 (46.2)	26 (9.8)	34 (12.8)	83 (31.2)	2.71	1.30

Table 2 shows how students feel about the availability and delivery of French language instruction in their schools. For Item 1, only 38.4% of students agreed that French is currently taught, while 61.6% disagreed ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.10$). This suggests that many schools offer limited French instruction. Similarly, for Item 2, 68.8% of respondents said they had received some French instruction ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 0.96$). This indicates

that while some schools offer French, the coverage is uneven.

When it comes to how often instruction occurs, Item 3 showed that 65.8% of students saw French lessons as irregular based on the school timetable ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.08$). For Item 4, 56.0% reported having French teachers, but 44.0% disagreed ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.30$). This points to a possible uneven distribution of qualified instructors.

Table 3: Student Interest and Awareness

S/N	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	SD n (%)	D n (%)	Mean (M)	SD
5	I am personally interested in learning French.	138 (51.9)	85 (32.0)	15 (5.6)	28 (10.5)	3.25	0.90
6	I believe French is an important international language.	140 (52.6)	102 (38.3)	7 (2.6)	16 (6.0)	3.37	0.78
7	I would like to learn French if it is introduced in my school.	110 (41.4)	120 (45.1)	9 (3.4)	13 (4.9)	3.12	0.79
8	I think French can help me in my future career.	120 (45.1)	100 (37.6)	14 (5.3)	32 (12.0)	3.16	0.91

The analysis shows that students are very interested in learning French and have positive attitudes toward it. For Item 5, 83.8% of respondents said they have a personal interest in learning French ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.90$). Item 6 revealed that 90.9% recognized French as an

important international language ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 0.78$), showing a strong awareness of its global significance.

Regarding their willingness to learn, 86.5% of students agreed they would study French if it were offered in their schools (Item 7, $M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.79$). Similarly, 82.7% saw French as useful for their future careers (Item 8, $M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.91$).

Table 4: Institutional Support and Resources

S/N	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	SD n (%)	D n (%)	Mean (M)	SD
9	My school provides French textbooks and learning materials.	53 (19.9)	24 (9.0)	89 (33.5)	100 (37.6)	2.11	1.10
10	Our French classes are interactive and enjoyable.	78 (30.5)	37 (14.5)	64 (25.0)	87 (34.0)	2.40	1.13
11	The school encourages students to take French seriously.	55 (20.7)	81 (30.5)	84 (31.6)	46 (17.3)	2.55	1.02
12	French language posters or resources are visible around my school.	13 (4.9)	29 (10.9)	79 (29.7)	145 (54.5)	1.66	0.90

The analysis shows how students view institutional support and resources for French. For Item 9, only 28.9% of respondents agreed that their schools provide French textbooks and learning materials. In contrast, 71.1% disagreed (M = 2.11, SD = 1.10). This indicates a widespread lack of instructional resources. For Item 10, 59.0% of students felt that French classes were not interactive or enjoyable (M = 2.40, SD = 1.13). This suggests that teaching methods may not engage learners effectively.

When it comes to school encouragement, responses to Item 11 were nearly split. Fifty-one point one percent agreed that their schools encourage students to take French seriously, while 48.9% disagreed (M = 2.55, SD = 1.02). Item 12 showed a significant lack of French-related visual materials. Only 15.8% of students agreed that posters or resources were visible in their schools. Meanwhile, 84.2% disagreed (M = 1.66, SD = 0.90).

Table 5: Challenges and Barriers

S/N	Statement	SA n (%)	A n (%)	SD n (%)	D n (%)	Mean (M)	SD
13	French is not taught in my school due to a lack of teachers.	58 (21.8)	91 (34.2)	81 (30.5)	36 (13.5)	2.64	0.97
14	Students are not interested in learning French.	45 (16.9)	54 (20.3)	87 (32.7)	80 (30.1)	2.24	1.04
15	French is harder to learn than other subjects.	34 (12.8)	101 (38.0)	73 (27.4)	58 (21.8)	2.42	0.96
16	My school does not have a timetable slot for French.	45 (16.9)	82 (30.8)	84 (31.6)	55 (20.7)	2.44	0.99
Cluster Mean (CM) and Standard Deviation (SD)						2.44	0.99

The review of Items 13 to 16 shows how students view the challenges in learning French at school. For Item 13, most students (56.0%) agreed that not enough teachers limit French instruction (M = 2.64, SD = 0.97). This highlights that the availability of teachers is a big problem. In contrast, Item 14 reveals that most students (62.8%) disagreed that a lack of student interest is an obstacle (M = 2.24, SD = 1.04). This suggests

that motivation is not a major issue. When it comes to the difficulty of French, opinions on Item 15 were nearly equal, with 50.8% agreeing it is harder than other subjects and 49.2% disagreeing (M = 2.42, SD = 0.96). Similarly, Item 16 showed mixed feelings about the schedule for French classes, with 47.7% agreeing that there is no time slot for it and 52.3% thinking otherwise (M = 2.44, SD = 0.99).

Table 6: Suggestions and Recommendations

S/N	Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	SD (%)	D (%)	Mean (M)	SD
17	I wish French was compulsory in all public schools.	124 (46.6)	72 (27.1)	31 (11.7)	39 (14.7)	3.06	0.96
18	A French club in my school would make learning more fun.	122 (45.9)	105 (39.5)	16 (6.0)	23 (8.6)	3.23	0.86
19	Teachers and school heads should encourage students to learn French.	127 (47.7)	107 (40.2)	20 (7.5)	12 (4.5)	3.31	0.84
20	All students should have equal access to learning French.	109 (41.0)	125 (47.0)	8 (3.0)	25 (9.4)	3.20	0.87
Cluster Mean (CM) and Standard Deviation						3.20	0.88

The analysis of Items 17 to 20 shows that students strongly recommend promoting and expanding French language education. A large majority, 73.7%, supported making French compulsory in public schools ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.96$). This indicates widespread recognition of its importance. Similarly, 85.3% agreed that establishing French clubs would make learning more enjoyable ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.86$). This shows strong support for extracurricular activities that improve engagement.

Students also expressed strong support for institutional encouragement. About 87.9% agreed that teachers and school leaders should motivate students to learn French ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.84$). Furthermore, 88.0% emphasized that all students should have equal access to learning French ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.87$). This reflects a broad consensus on the need for fair educational opportunities.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

On Table 1 the demographic data indicate that most respondents were Nupe-speaking students. The majority were from JS3 classes, primarily in the 13–14 years age group, and mostly female. Being in JS3 means these respondents have spent several years in secondary education. They likely have had more exposure to the school curriculum and subjects like French. Their responses may reflect more mature academic experiences and clearer views on language learning in the school system. The dominance of Nupe-speaking students also highlights the linguistic background of the participants, which may shape their attitudes toward learning

additional languages. Furthermore, the higher number of female respondents gives insight into the gender distribution in the sample, which may influence views on language learning and participation in the classroom.

Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

This section presents the analysis of students' questionnaire administered during the study. The questionnaire was designed to collect students' responses regarding the key issues investigated in the research. Their responses were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods in order to identify patterns, trends, and levels of agreement or disagreement. The analysis therefore provides useful insights into students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward the subject of the study.

Availability and Exposure to French Language

Responses to items for availability and exposure to French language were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to determine students' perceptions of the availability and exposure to French in their schools.

Furthermore, the findings from Table 2 show mixed feelings about French instruction. Many students reported irregular lessons or limited instructional time, even with some French teachers in place. This suggests the challenge lies not just with the number of teachers but also with how the French curriculum is applied. Factors like scheduling issues, administrative priorities, or a lack of resources may contribute to this inconsistency. Irregular exposure to the language can harm students' learning opportunities and

overall language skills. Effective language teaching needs consistent contact hours and structured classroom practice to promote gradual language development. Therefore, better planning, proper scheduling, and sufficient teaching resources are important to ensure regular and fair French language education. This supports the idea that enough instructional time and organized curriculum delivery are vital for success in learning a second language (Thohir, 2017).

Student Interest and Awareness

Responses for student interest and awareness of French language were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to determine students' interest in and awareness of the importance of French.

However, the findings on Table 3 indicate that students have a positive attitude toward learning French. Many recognize its academic and practical value and are willing to engage with the language. This suggests that motivation is not a major barrier to introducing French language instruction in schools. In language education, students' interest and positive perception are keys to learning, as motivated learners are typically more eager to participate in activities and stick with the learning process. Thus, this motivation offers a solid foundation for effective French language programs. This supports the idea that motivation is essential for successful second language learning, impacting students' effort, persistence, and overall success (Thohir, 2017).

Institutional Support and Resources

Responses on institutional support and resources were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to assess students' perceptions of institutional support and availability of resources for French language instruction.

Consequently, the findings on Table 4 suggest that limited instructional resources, low classroom interactivity, and insufficient visibility of French materials are major challenges affecting French language instruction. These issues reduce students' exposure to the language and limit chances for meaningful practice, which are essential for acquiring a second language. Though some schools offer encouragement and support, problems like inadequate teaching materials and poor learning environments continue to block the

consistent and effective implementation of French programs. This observation supports the idea that having instructional resources and supportive environments plays an important role in the success of foreign language teaching and learning (Nița, 2025).

Challenges and Barriers

Responses for challenges and barriers were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to examine perceived challenges and barriers to French language instruction.

Nevertheless, the data on Table 5 indicate that structural and staffing problems, especially the lack of qualified French teachers, are the main obstacles to effective French instruction. Many students feel that French is not taught well in their schools because there are not enough trained teachers. This implies that while students want to learn the language, the shortage of professionals limits the regular teaching of French programs.

However, the results also show that student interest in learning French is generally strong, suggesting that motivation is not the key challenge. Instead, factors like teacher shortages, uneven staff distribution, and different scheduling seem to influence how French is taught in various schools.

These findings support reports by UNESCO, which highlight that the lack of qualified teachers is a significant barrier to quality language education in many systems. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on recruiting, training, and deploying teachers to enhance French language instruction.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Responses for suggestions were analyzed using frequencies and percentages to examine students' suggestions for improving French language instruction.

Nevertheless, from Table 5, the findings indicate that students are quite open to policy and structural changes that could strengthen French language education. Most respondents supported making French compulsory, establishing French clubs, getting encouragement from school authorities, and ensuring equal access to learning French. This shows that students see the educational and career value of French and are eager to embrace opportunities to learn it.

These results also highlight the importance of institutional support in language learning. When schools offer encouragement and create supportive environments, like extracurricular language activities, students tend to be more motivated and engaged. As Thohir, (2017) noted that learner motivation and supportive learning environments are crucial for successful second language acquisition. Therefore, improving school policies and providing equal learning opportunities for French can significantly boost its effective implementation.

Analysis of Teachers' Interviews

This section discusses the analysis of teachers' interviews that were part of the study. The interviews aimed to gather detailed insights into teachers' experiences, perceptions, and opinions about the subject being studied. Through a qualitative analysis of their responses, important themes and patterns emerged, which add to the quantitative data collected from other sources. This analysis helps clarify teachers' viewpoints and the actual challenges they face in the teaching and learning process.

Implementation of French Language Instruction

Most respondents indicated that French is not taught in their schools. The main reason is a lack of qualified teachers. One teacher stated, *"No teachers were posted to the school to teach French."* This highlights a staffing issue, indicating poor policy execution or ineffective teacher placement.

Another key theme in the responses is curriculum prioritization. Some schools seem to favor indigenous languages over foreign languages. One respondent said, *"Since we have chosen Hausa as the indigenous language, there is no need to consider French again."* This comment suggests a view of languages competing with each other rather than complementing one another. It also shows a possible misunderstanding of multilingual education policy, particularly in Nigeria, where French is recognized as a second official language and is regionally important.

Furthermore, there seems to be an argument that including a local language means there is no need to also include a foreign language. This suggests

an issue with how the policy is interpreted rather than a structural problem alone.

The responses indicate that although the Ministry of Education officially outlines a French curriculum, it is mostly not put into practice. Respondents often blamed this on the lack of qualified French teachers. One said, *"No effort was made to implement the French curriculum in the school due to lack of French instructors."* This highlights a serious human resource shortage, which appears to be the main obstacle to executing the curriculum. The lack of trained teachers undermines policy implementation, regardless of official curriculum guidelines. However, one school administrator offered a different view, mentioning an unsuccessful attempt to recruit teachers: *"We have been searching for teachers, but there are none."*

Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

The data show that in most schools, French is not taught at all, and therefore, no materials are available. As one respondent summarized, *"Since we do not teach French, French materials are not available in the school."* Even in institutions where French is supposedly available, the structured instructional materials seem insufficient. One respondent clearly stated, *"The thing is that they just give us a syllabus for the term, and we the teachers make notes."*

Availability and Quality of French Teachers

The data suggest that French teaching is not common across schools. This structural issue heavily influences discussions about teacher quality. One respondent said, *"Since the schools do not offer French, the issue of availability and quality of the teachers does not arise."* This suggests that the lack of French as a subject makes assessing teacher availability and quality mostly irrelevant in those cases.

Nevertheless, in schools where French is offered, there appears to be a shortage of qualified teachers. A respondent noted, *"The availability is scarce."* A student-teacher added, *"If we were not currently on teaching practice, there would not be a teacher to teach the students."*

Administrative and Policy Support

Despite these challenges, there is some evidence of

institutional support in schools where French is taught. A student-teacher mentioned, *“Absolutely yes, like when I started my teaching practice, I was given a textbook.”*

Students’ Attitude toward Learning French

The data show a mixed and somewhat contradictory view about students’ attitudes toward learning French. Teachers reported optimism about potential student enthusiasm. One said, *“The students will be very enthusiastic about learning French as a foreign language apart from English.”*

This suggests that teachers believe French could be appealing to students since it offers an additional foreign language alongside English.

However, this positive outlook is challenged by real classroom experiences. A French teacher offered a more cautious view: *“I will not say it is poor, but mild, because not everyone likes it.”*

This description indicates a more nuanced understanding, labeling student interest as “mild” rather than strong. The teacher added, *“Sometimes when I come to class, I try my best to make it lively and even be friendly with everyone so that they can learn.”* This suggests that the teacher uses motivational techniques to boost engagement, implying that innate interest may be low. The teacher concluded, *“I just notice that not everyone has the passion to learn; only a few students are willing to learn it.”*

Timetabling and Curriculum Structure Challenges

Responses about structural challenges are also shaped by the wider issue of limited French implementation. One teacher observed, *“Since French is not taught in many schools, there are no challenges hindering it.”* This indicates that the lack of French in many curricula removes any concerns about timetable or curriculum conflicts. In other words, structural challenges do not apply where the subject is not offered.

In schools where French is taught, responses indicate no significant scheduling problems: *“French is on the timetable, and there is nothing hindering it,”* one teacher said. This implies that when French is officially included in the timetable, it is not sidelined by scheduling issues.

Major Obstacles Hindering French Language Instruction

The first major obstacle is the lack of French instruction in many schools. When French is not offered, evaluating student performance and academic progress in the subject becomes impossible. This issue is systemic, not just about teaching methods.

In schools that offer French, the main challenge shifts from a lack of instruction to inadequate teaching resources. One respondent noted that there are not enough materials for effective French teaching.

Another respondent expanded on this limitation: *“We will need some materials because there are courses you teach theoretically. You have to dramatize them during the teaching for the students to learn better, things like photos or even a projector to show some objects.”*

This statement highlights the importance of audiovisual and hands-on teaching tools in foreign language education. The focus on dramatization and visuals shows the need for interactive and diverse teaching methods. The lack of such resources likely restricts instruction to theory, which may lower student engagement and understanding.

Suggestions for Improving French Language Instruction

The most common suggestion for reform is to make French a mandatory subject. Data indicate that this is the most frequently proposed change. One respondent stated, *“I suggest it should be made a compulsory subject since French is the second official language in almost every part of the world.”*

This shows a belief that French is both globally significant and institutionally important. Respondents think that enforcing this policy would boost student participation, commitment from schools, and the allocation of resources.

Beyond policy changes, respondents also call for ways to motivate students and teachers. One respondent argued that motivation and orientation are necessary to make French appealing to students. He directly stated, *“My suggestions are motivation and incentives should be given to both French teachers and students”*

Strategies for Equipping Public Schools to Offer French Comparable to Private Schools

A key theme in the responses is the urgent need for teaching aids and learning materials. One statement made this clear: *"We first need some resources and learning equipment that we can use to help these students gain basic knowledge of French."*

This emphasizes a lack of instructional support in public schools. The insistence on resources and learning materials suggests that effective French language instruction requires more than just textbooks.

Another significant theme deals with the position of institutions and the need for external support. One respondent suggested that public schools *"should be competent and challenged by what other schools are doing. They should seek help from the government."*

This implies that gaps between public and private schools may stem from differences in funding, administrative flexibility, and access to educational resources.

Another theme involves human resource capacity. One respondent pointed out, *"The manpower should be provided by the state government. If the manpower is provided, then materials should be available."*

This highlights the need for qualified teachers as a basic requirement. The order of events in this quote suggests that hiring teachers comes before providing resources. Once qualified staff are in place, resource allocation can be effective.

Finally, in Table 6 above the responses from participants reveal several structural and pedagogical challenges affecting the effective teaching of French in schools. These challenges extend beyond classroom practices and reflect broader institutional and systemic issues within the educational system.

First, although some schools are willing to employ French teachers, they face serious difficulties due to the shortage of qualified instructors. This indicates that the problem is not merely administrative but systemic within the educational workforce. The scarcity of trained language teachers can significantly hinder the successful implementation of language programmes, since

effective language instruction largely depends on the competence of teachers. As Nguyen & Hamid, (2018) notes, *teachers are the primary agents in the success of language programs, and without well-trained instructors, curriculum objectives cannot be effectively realized.*

The findings also reveal a reliance on **improvised instructional practices**, where teachers prepare lesson notes mainly from the syllabus due to the absence of adequate teaching materials. The lack of standardized textbooks, teachers' guides, and audio-visual resources suggests weak curricular support. Instructional materials are crucial in language education because they provide structured input and opportunities for practice. According to Babayev, (2021) *instructional materials generally serve as the basis for much of the language input that learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom.*

Another issue is the **dependence on student-teachers** to sustain French instruction in some schools. While teaching practice is important in teacher training, excessive reliance on student-teachers indicates institutional weakness, as the absence of such trainees may lead to the disruption or discontinuation of French classes.

The findings further suggest that the major challenges affecting French instruction relate primarily to teacher shortages and low student motivation, rather than timetable constraints. Motivation is a key factor in second language learning because it influences learners' interest and persistence. As Thohir, (2017) states, *motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the second language and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process.*

The responses highlight the need for improved teacher recruitment, better instructional resources, and strategies that enhance student motivation in order to strengthen the teaching and learning of French in schools.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study reveal several important issues concerning the teaching and learning of French in schools.

1. The results indicate that the availability and exposure to French language

instruction are limited and inconsistent. Many students reported that French is either not taught in their schools or is taught irregularly, largely due to the uneven distribution and shortage of qualified French teachers. This situation limits students' opportunities to develop language skills through consistent classroom instruction.

2. Despite the limited availability of French instruction, the findings show that students generally have a positive attitude toward learning French. A large proportion of respondents expressed personal interest in learning the language, recognized its importance as an international language, and believed that it could be beneficial for their future careers. This suggests that student motivation is relatively strong and could support the successful implementation of French programmes if adequate opportunities are provided.
3. The results highlight significant deficiencies in institutional support and instructional resources. Many students indicated that their schools lack French textbooks, teaching materials, and visual learning resources. In addition, French classes were often perceived as not interactive or engaging, which may reduce students' exposure to meaningful language practice and limit the effectiveness of instruction.
4. The findings show that the major barriers to effective French language instruction are structural rather than motivational. Students largely rejected the idea that lack of interest is the main problem. Instead, the main challenges include the shortage of qualified teachers, limited teaching resources, and inconsistent curriculum implementation.
5. Both students and teachers emphasized the need for stronger institutional support and policy implementation. Students recommended making French compulsory in schools, establishing French clubs,

encouraging students through teachers and school authorities, and ensuring equal access to French education. Teachers also stressed the need for recruitment of qualified teachers, provision of instructional materials, and government support to improve the teaching of French in public schools.

The study concludes that while student interest in French is high, the effective implementation of French language education is hindered mainly by teacher shortages, inadequate resources, and weak institutional support. Addressing these challenges is essential for strengthening French language instruction in schools.

Recommendations

Based on this study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested to improve the teaching and learning of French in schools:

1. Educational authorities should focus on recruiting and properly placing qualified French teachers in schools. Addressing the shortage and uneven distribution of teachers will help ensure that French is taught regularly and effectively.
2. Government and education policymakers should ensure that existing language education policies promoting French teaching are properly implemented. Monitoring and supervision should be conducted to confirm that schools meet curriculum requirements for French instruction.
3. Schools should be well-equipped with French textbooks, teacher guides, audio-visual materials, and other relevant resources. These materials will improve teaching quality and give students better chances to practice and interact in the language.
4. French teachers should use more interactive and communicative methods that encourage student participation and engagement. Visual aids, language games, group activities, and practical exercises can help make French lessons more engaging and effective.

5. Schools should set up French language clubs and other extracurricular activities that allow students to practice the language outside the classroom. These activities can boost students' interest and enhance their confidence in using French.
6. Teachers and school administrators should actively encourage students to take French seriously by emphasizing its academic, cultural, and career benefits. Recognition, competitions, and language-related activities can further inspire students to learn the language.

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