

Qualitative Exploration of the Cultural and Linguistic Impact of the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) In Primary Schools in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the cultural and linguistic impact of the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) in primary education, focusing on its role in preserving Yoruba language and identity. The research assesses how EYPAP enhances pupils' appreciation of Yoruba culture and fosters bilingual proficiency. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through focus group discussions and classroom observations with 11 primary school teachers in Ondo State. Findings indicate that EYPAP promotes cultural identity, strengthens bilingual literacy, and fosters linguistic pride. However, restrictive school policies limiting Yoruba use pose challenges. The study recommends expanding mother-tongue instruction beyond structured lessons and integrating cultural elements into bilingual curricula to sustain indigenous language preservation in Nigeria's multilingual educational system.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural and linguistic preservation is a crucial element of education, particularly in multilingual societies where indigenous languages are at risk of extinction due to the dominance of global languages. In many African countries, including Nigeria, indigenous languages such as Yoruba are increasingly marginalised in educational settings where English is the primary language of instruction (Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016). As a result, there is growing concern about the erosion of cultural identities, as language is a key component of cultural heritage (Hiswara et Al., 2023). Education systems have an important role in safeguarding the linguistic diversity of societies by promoting indigenous languages alongside global languages (Ogunyemi, 2023).

The importance of mother-tongue education in preserving and promoting cultural heritage cannot be overstated. Teaching children in their first language enables them to connect more deeply with their cultural roots while fostering cognitive development (Markus et al., 2023). Research has demonstrated that bilingual education facilitates proficiency in both languages and strengthens students' sense of identity and cultural pride (Garcia et al., 2016). The English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) has emerged as a potential solution, combining English and Yoruba to encourage language proficiency and cultural awareness.

This study explores the role of EYPAP in preserving Yoruba language and culture within primary education. Specifically, it examines how introducing EYPAP reinforces cultural identity among students and fosters linguistic pride in their mother tongue. Additionally, the study investigates how teachers perceive the impact of EYPAP on pupils' cultural engagement and appreciation for their Yoruba heritage.

The research objectives are:

1. To assess how using EYPAP enhances pupils' understanding and appreciation of the Yoruba language and culture.
2. To explore teachers' observations regarding the impact of EYPAP on pupils' cultural identity and linguistic pride.

By focusing on bilingual education's cultural and linguistic outcomes, this study highlights the broader significance of incorporating indigenous languages into the curriculum to preserve cultural heritage in a globalised world.

BACKGROUND

Preserving indigenous languages and cultural identity in education is a critical concern in the globalised world, particularly in multilingual societies such as Nigeria, where English has become the dominant language of instruction. Despite the prominence of English, local languages like Yoruba continue to play an essential role in Nigerian communities' cultural and social fabric (Obiegbu, 2016). Yoruba, spoken by millions, is not only a medium of communication but also a repository of rich traditions, customs, and cultural values (Yussuf & Olúbòmèhìn, 2018). However, the increasing use of English in education has posed significant challenges to the survival of the Yoruba language, particularly among younger generations (Dada, 2007). This shift threatens the continuity of cultural practices, oral traditions, and even local knowledge closely tied to the language (Mayo, 2023).

Mother-tongue education has been recognised globally as an effective way to bridge this gap, especially in early childhood education, where language plays a pivotal role in cognitive and social development. Studies have shown that students who are educated in their first language tend to develop better literacy skills, increased self-esteem, and a stronger connection to their cultural heritage (Garcia, 2015). In bilingual education settings, the simultaneous use of both the mother tongue and a second language, such as English, provides a structured approach to language learning, fostering academic success and cultural preservation (Muttalib, 2022).

In Nigeria, educational policies and practices have increasingly emphasized the importance of bilingualism. Programmes like the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) aim to integrate both languages into the curriculum, offering a practical solution for linguistic and cultural preservation (Adamo, 2012). By teaching pupils to read and write in Yoruba and English, EYPAP helps bridge linguistic divides, ensuring pupils can function effectively in a globalised world while maintaining their cultural and linguistic roots (Rao, 2019).

Meanwhile, this study seeks to explore the impact of EYPAP on cultural and linguistic preservation in Yoruba, specifically focusing on its role in fostering a deeper connection between students and their linguistic heritage. Through this lens, the research will highlight the broader implications of bilingual education in preserving cultural diversity within Nigeria's educational system.

The Role of Mother-Tongue Education in Preserving Culture and Language

Mother-tongue education is pivotal in preserving indigenous languages and cultures, particularly in regions with diverse languages. In multilingual societies such as Nigeria, where languages like Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo coexist with English, there is an increasing concern over the erosion of cultural identity tied to these languages (James et al., 2024). Educating children in their native language enhances their cognitive abilities and promotes cultural preservation by embedding their communities' values, traditions, and customs (Sakti et al., 2024). Studies have demonstrated that children learn more effectively when taught in their mother tongue, as they are more familiar with the sounds, structures, and meanings embedded in the language (Cummins, 2021). Furthermore, when children engage with educational content in their native language, they experience an increased sense of belonging and pride in their cultural heritage, contributing to a stronger cultural identity (Phiri et al., 2024).

The role of mother-tongue education in cultural preservation is significant, as language acts as a vessel for transmitting cultural knowledge and social practices. In many communities, oral traditions, proverbs, folk stories, and songs are passed down through generations in the mother tongue (Ganmote, 2004). These cultural artifacts contain profound knowledge about history, morality, and the values of the community (Ngowari et al., 2020). However, as younger generations become more attuned to English through formal education, there is a risk of losing these traditions if the mother tongue is neglected (Zickafoose et al., 2024). Educational initiatives prioritising mother-tongue instruction, such as the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP), help

prevent this cultural decline by actively promoting literacy and communication in the indigenous language alongside English (Ugwu, 2021).

Theoretical Foundations: Cultural Identity, Bilingual Education, and Cognitive Development

Cultural identity and cognitive development are two interconnected areas that benefit significantly from bilingual education. According to the Sociocultural Theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978), language is a fundamental tool for cognitive development, as it helps shape how individuals think and understand the world around them. In bilingual education settings, learning both the mother tongue and a second language creates a rich cognitive environment that supports the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and linguistic skills (Begum et al., 2024). When children are taught in their first language, they have a firmer grasp of complex concepts, which subsequently aids their learning of a second language (Bialystok, 2009).

Moreover, Cultural Identity Theory posits that language is central to forming individual and collective identities (Tajfel, 1982). Language functions as a mirror of cultural values and community practices, and when children learn in their mother tongue, they develop a sense of connection to their heritage and community (Hamidi, 2023). When effectively implemented, bilingual education fosters linguistic proficiency and cultural pride, helping students maintain a dual identity that embraces both local culture and global engagement (Ogunyemi, 2023). This dual identity can give students a broader worldview and greater resilience in the face of global challenges (Peace et al., 2025).

Using the **Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)** in bilingual education also emphasises the importance of teaching two languages in parallel. CAH suggests that teaching a second language by drawing comparisons to the first language can ease the process of learning, particularly when the languages share common structures or linguistic features (Olawe, 2021). In the context of Yoruba-English bilingual education, the simultaneous instruction of both languages can help learners bridge gaps between the languages, promoting proficiency in both and reinforcing their linguistic and cultural connection (Dada, 2007).

Previous Qualitative Studies on the Cultural Impact of Bilingual Education

The impact of bilingual education on cultural identity and linguistic preservation has been a focal point of numerous studies. Research by Garcia and Velasco (2014) explores bilingual education's role in enhancing academic achievement and cultural identity among students. Their work demonstrates that bilingual programs incorporate language and culture into the curriculum. They help students feel more connected to their roots, boosting their confidence and self-esteem (Ozfidan & Toprak, 2019). These programmes also encourage students to appreciate and take pride in their cultural heritage, reducing the risk of cultural assimilation and loss (Hiswara et al., 2023).

Igbojinwaekwu and Dorgu (2015) provide further evidence of the positive impact of bilingual education on cultural preservation. Their qualitative study of Yoruba-speaking pupils in Nigeria revealed that when Yoruba was used as a medium of instruction, students showed a stronger understanding and appreciation of their culture (Igbojinwaekwu and Dorgu, 2015). Teachers reported that students were more likely to engage in cultural activities and share their experiences with peers and families, contributing to a broader dissemination of cultural knowledge (Igbojinwaekwu and Dorgu, 2015). This highlights the importance of integrating cultural elements into language learning, fostering a sense of belonging and identity among young learners.

Additionally, Alkhresheh (2015) discusses the role of culturally relevant pedagogy in bilingual education programs. According to Alkhresheh, culturally relevant teaching methods incorporating the students' native language and culture are critical for fostering academic success and cultural identity. In the case of EYPAP, the bilingual nature of the programme supports both linguistic and cultural learning, making it an effective tool for enhancing reading skills while preserving cultural heritage.

Furthermore, research by Tackie-Ofosu et al. (2015) highlights the role of mother-tongue education in promoting cultural identity in African communities. Their study found that when schools incorporate indigenous languages and cultural teachings into their curriculum, students improve their academic performance and develop a deeper

connection to their cultural roots (Tackie-Ofosu et al., 2015). This connection to culture encourages students to value and preserve their heritage, fostering a sense of pride and responsibility towards their community (Tackie-Ofosu et al., 2015).

Hence, the literature on bilingual education strongly supports the notion that mother-tongue education enhances linguistic proficiency and plays a critical role in cultural preservation. Using bilingual programs like EYPAP, which integrates both English and Yoruba, offers a promising approach to fostering cultural pride and linguistic competence in young learners (Ogunyemi, 2023). Through the lens of previous studies, it is clear that bilingual education can bridge the gap between linguistic proficiency and cultural identity, providing a comprehensive educational experience for students in multilingual societies.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research Design: Focus Group Discussions and Classroom Observations

The qualitative research design employed in this study focuses on understanding the cultural and linguistic impact of the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) in primary schools. A qualitative approach was deemed suitable for exploring teachers' complex and detailed experiences and the impact of bilingual education on cultural and linguistic preservation (Dooly, 2007). The study used two primary methods of data collection: *focus group discussions (FGDs)* and *classroom observations*. These methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions, experiences, and insights regarding using EYPAP to enhance both the linguistic proficiency and cultural identity of their students.

Focus group discussions were selected as the primary tool to gather qualitative data from teachers, as they provide a rich source of information about participants' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences in a group setting. Using FGDs enabled teachers to engage in dynamic conversations, share perspectives, and reflect collectively on their teaching practices with EYPAP. This method also encouraged participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide insights into the challenges and benefits they observed in their classrooms, particularly regarding students' cultural awareness and bilingual development.

In addition to FGDs, classroom observations were conducted to gain a first-hand understanding of how teachers implemented EYPAP in the classroom. Observing teachers during their lessons allowed the researcher to examine the pedagogical strategies employed in teaching Yoruba and English, the types of classroom interactions, and how cultural and linguistic aspects were integrated into the lesson plans. Classroom observations also provided contextual information that complemented the FGD data, offering a holistic view of how EYPAP was being utilised and its impact on student engagement and cultural preservation.

Participant Selection: Teachers Using EYPAP in Ondo State

The participants for this study were primary school teachers from public schools in Ondo State, Nigeria, who were involved in implementing the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP). Teachers were selected using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring that only those with experience using EYPAP were included in the study. This approach was appropriate for the study's objectives, as it aimed to gather specific insights from those directly engaged with the bilingual educational package.

In total, 11 teachers participated in the focus group discussions. These teachers were from various Ondo State primary schools, including rural and urban settings. The teachers were selected based on their involvement in teaching pupils using the EYPAP and their willingness to share their experiences. The sample included a diverse group in terms of gender, age, and teaching experience, ensuring a comprehensive representation of viewpoints. The age range of participants varied from teachers in their early 20s to those in their late 40s, with a mix of newly trained and seasoned educators. This diversity allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how EYPAP impacted their teaching practices and students' cultural and linguistic development (Wijayanti, 2024).

The teachers' backgrounds included a mix of educational qualifications, with some having formal training in teaching Yoruba, while others had specialised in teaching English. This diversity in educational background and

experience provided a broad spectrum of insights into how EYPAP was applied in classrooms and its perceived impact on bilingual proficiency and cultural identity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2010).

Data Collection: In-Depth Interviews and Thematic Analysis

Data collection was conducted through **in-depth interviews** and **thematic analysis** to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and linguistic effects of EYPAP. The in-depth interviews were conducted as part of the focus group discussions and were structured around open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed teacher responses (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). The questions focused on exploring teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of EYPAP in promoting cultural preservation, improving bilingual proficiency, and enhancing students' engagement with Yoruba and English (Deji-Afuye & Obadare, 2021).

The interviews also sought to uncover challenges teachers faced while using EYPAP, such as resistance to new teaching methods, training deficiencies, or issues related to resources and infrastructure. Using open-ended questions, teachers were encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences and provide insight into how they integrated cultural and linguistic elements into their teaching (Kurniawati, 2023). Additionally, questions were designed to examine how teachers observed students' growth in cultural awareness and appreciation of their native language, Yoruba (Salami & Oyaremi, 2012).

The focus groups allowed for rich dialogue among teachers as they discussed their observations and shared strategies for overcoming common challenges. This collaborative aspect of the data collection process helped uncover the shared experiences of teachers in using EYPAP while highlighting individual perspectives on its impact (O'Connor & Park, 2023). The open-ended nature of the discussions also facilitated the identification of unanticipated themes that arose during the conversations (Lochmiller, 2022).

In parallel, **classroom observations** provided additional qualitative data. The researcher observed lessons where teachers used EYPAP to teach Yoruba and English. These observations focused on how teachers facilitated bilingual learning, integrated cultural elements into the lesson plans, and managed classroom dynamics during language instruction (Swain, 1996). The observations also recorded pupil engagement levels, including how students interacted with the material and each other during bilingual learning activities (Sulis, 2023).

After collecting data from the focus group discussions and classroom observations, the next step involved the thematic analysis of the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a method that identifies and analyses patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Thematic analysis was chosen for its flexibility in examining both the content of the discussions and the broader contextual factors that emerged (Rosairo, 2023).

The data from the focus groups and classroom observations were transcribed and coded to identify recurrent themes. These themes were then categorised to highlight EYPAP's impact on cultural and linguistic preservation, bilingual proficiency, and teacher experiences. Key themes included enhancing students' cultural identity through language learning, the role of EYPAP in bridging linguistic gaps, the challenges of integrating bilingual education in the classroom, and the professional development benefits for teachers.

Through this thematic analysis, the study was able to identify patterns and draw conclusions about the effectiveness of EYPAP in promoting bilingualism, fostering cultural awareness, and preserving the Yoruba language. The findings were interpreted in light of the theoretical framework of cultural identity and bilingual education, as discussed in the literature review.

Therefore, this study's research methodology, combined focus group discussions, and classroom observations, provided valuable qualitative insights into the cultural and linguistic impact of the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP). By engaging directly with teachers using EYPAP in Ondo State and observing its implementation in classrooms, the study gathered comprehensive data on how EYPAP affects both bilingual education and the preservation of Yoruba cultural identity. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed several key themes, offering valuable insights into the effectiveness of bilingual education in promoting linguistic proficiency and cultural continuity in a multilingual educational setting (Braun & Clarke, 2023).

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered from teachers using the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) in primary schools in Ondo State. The key themes that emerged from the focus group discussions include:

- i. Cultural identity and linguistic pride
- ii. Bilingual proficiency and linguistic continuity
- iii. The impact of EYPAP on Yoruba language preservation.

These themes provide insight into how EYPAP fosters cultural and linguistic appreciation among pupils and the challenges teachers face in implementing the instructional package.

Cultural Identity and Linguistic Pride

One of the most significant findings from the qualitative data was that EYPAP helped cultivate cultural identity and linguistic pride among Yoruba-speaking pupils. Teachers observed that the package made students more aware of and confident using Yoruba in academic and social settings. Many teachers noted that before the introduction of EYPAP, pupils were hesitant to speak Yoruba, as English was the dominant language of communication in school and their social circles.

However, with EYPAP, pupils became more comfortable and engaged with Yoruba, particularly as the instructional package integrated Yoruba language learning alongside English rather than treating it as a secondary subject. Teachers emphasized that EYPAP encouraged a deeper connection to Yoruba traditions, proverbs, and expressions, reinforcing cultural appreciation and identity among students.

Teacher T6 observed:

"Yoruba language is the mother tongue. They cannot be prevented from speaking it."

Similarly, *Teacher T4* noted that Yoruba classes became more engaging for pupils, even though speaking Yoruba outside designated periods was still restricted:

"Yoruba classes are particularly interesting to pupils, although speaking Yoruba is not allowed outside of these classes."

The focus group data also revealed that some teachers incorporated cultural references and Yoruba proverbs into their teaching to enhance students' connection to their linguistic heritage. *Teacher T8* shared a classroom practice of translating English proverbs into Yoruba, demonstrating how pupils responded positively to cultural elements in language learning:

"Normally, everybody nowadays encourages their children to speak the Yoruba language, but as teachers, these pupils still need Yoruba and are supposed to understand it. What I do is take a proverb in English and then translate it into Yoruba. For example, now 'charity begins at home,' I will say 'Ile lati k'esorode.'"

This integration of linguistic and cultural components within the curriculum played a crucial role in enhancing pupils' sense of cultural identity and pride.

Bilingual Proficiency and Linguistic Continuity

Another critical theme that emerged from the focus group discussions was the impact of EYPAP on bilingual proficiency and linguistic continuity. Teachers highlighted that pupils who participated in EYPAP demonstrated a better understanding of the relationship between Yoruba and English, improving their reading proficiency in both languages.

A primary instructional strategy that contributed to bilingual literacy development was the structured comparison between the Yoruba and English alphabets. Teachers employed phonetics and alphabet comparison to ensure pupils understood the differences and similarities between both languages.

Teacher T3 explained how phonetic similarities were used to help students:

"Alphabet 'a' in English and alphabet 'e' are pronounced the same way in Yoruba language. 'a' is pronounced as 'e.'"

Teachers also incorporated diacritical markings (ami) to distinguish similar words in Yoruba and avoid confusion. Teacher T6 shared an example of using rising and falling tones to differentiate between homographs:

"I use signs (ami) to show the difference. For example, Owo (a city) and Owo (broom) have different pronunciations and meanings."

Similarly, *Teacher T1* described using chalkboard illustrations to highlight key differences:

"I illustrate it on the chalkboard; I will write the English alphabet in upper case and the Yoruba alphabet in lower case."

This structured approach to teaching bilingual phonetics helped students transition smoothly between Yoruba and English, reinforcing linguistic continuity in their learning process.

Additionally, teachers leveraged familiar objects and real-world examples to aid comprehension. *Teacher T8* detailed how object-based learning supported Yoruba literacy development:

"I normally make use of objects. Later, I will use objects and alphabets. For example, 'a': aja, 'b': bata, 'd': doje, 'e': ejo, 'e': epo. Before we go to Yoruba reading, they have already picked an interest by introducing the object combined with the alphabet in Yoruba."

This approach enabled pupils to form cognitive associations between Yoruba words and familiar items, making it easier to decode and understand Yoruba vocabulary.

Impact of EYPAP on Yoruba Language Preservation

A recurring theme in the focus group discussions was the role of school policies and social factors in restricting the use of Yoruba outside the classroom. Teachers reported that while EYPAP was crucial in promoting Yoruba literacy, strict school policies limiting Yoruba language use challenged its long-term preservation.

Teacher T11 stated:

"The rule in this school is that you cannot speak Yoruba. You can only speak Yoruba during the period of Yoruba on the timetable."

Similarly, *Teacher T7* noted that even after Yoruba lessons ended, students were required to revert to English for all communication:

"The pupils are not allowed to speak the Yoruba language except during the Yoruba period. Also, after the period has ended, they continue to communicate in English."

While intended to emphasise English proficiency, these policies undermined the potential benefits of EYPAP by restricting students' ability to practice Yoruba organically.

However, some teachers devised workarounds to reinforce Yoruba language use within school guidelines. For example, *Teacher T4* encouraged pupils to identify objects in Yoruba while teaching other subjects:

"I ask them to identify some objects in Yoruba when teaching other subjects."

Another strategy observed was using peer-based learning techniques to increase exposure to Yoruba. Collaborative reading exercises and group discussions allowed pupils to use Yoruba in a structured setting, helping reinforce fluency and comprehension.

Teacher T9 noted:

"This environment is a Yoruba-speaking community, and they are very fond of speaking it. They will even like to speak in class if allowed."

The focus group discussions demonstrated that while teachers and pupils valued Yoruba as a mother tongue, the limitations imposed by school policies and social expectations challenged sustained language preservation. The flexibility of EYPAP in integrating Yoruba into daily lessons provided an effective means of maintaining Yoruba literacy within the constraints of school regulations.

Thus, the findings indicate that the EYPAP significantly promoted Yoruba language literacy, fostered cultural identity, and supported bilingual proficiency. Teachers observed that pupils became more confident speaking Yoruba, showing an increased appreciation for their linguistic heritage. The structured comparison between Yoruba and English alphabets helped pupils bridge phonetic gaps and improve their reading skills.

However, challenges such as strict school policies limiting Yoruba use outside designated periods remained a barrier to full implementation. Despite these limitations, teachers adopted innovative strategies to ensure pupils continued practicing Yoruba literacy beyond the structured lessons. Ultimately, these findings highlight the critical role of bilingual education in preserving linguistic and cultural heritage and emphasize the need for policy adjustments to support mother-tongue instruction in primary schools.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of the English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) in preserving cultural identity and fostering linguistic continuity among primary school pupils. The discussion interprets these findings in light of cultural identity preservation, the role of bilingual education in maintaining linguistic and cultural heritage, and comparisons with existing literature on mother-tongue education.

Cultural Identity Preservation through EYPAP

One of the primary objectives of this study was to assess how using EYPAP enhances pupils' understanding and appreciation of the Yoruba language and culture. The results indicate that pupils exposed to EYPAP developed a stronger sense of cultural identity as they became more confident in speaking Yoruba and engaging with Yoruba traditions, proverbs, and expressions. Teachers observed that pupils showed increased enthusiasm for Yoruba language classes, and their ability to understand and use Yoruba in structured learning environments improved significantly.

These findings align with the Cultural Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1982), which posits that language is a core element of personal and collective identity. The study further supports research by Igbojinwaekwu and Dorgu (2015), who found that using Yoruba as a medium of instruction strengthened students' appreciation of their culture and encouraged participation in cultural activities. Similarly, Garcia and Velasco (2014) argued that bilingual programs integrating cultural elements into language learning boost students' confidence and engagement with their heritage.

However, despite EYPAP's positive influence on Yoruba language appreciation, school policies restricting Yoruba use outside designated language periods were challenging. Teachers expressed concern that such restrictions limited opportunities for authentic linguistic practice, potentially hindering long-term cultural preservation. This challenge mirrors the findings by Zickafoose et al. (2024), who noted that educational systems prioritizing dominant languages (such as English) often accelerate the decline of indigenous languages and cultural identity.

The Role of Bilingual Education in Fostering Linguistic and Cultural Continuity

The second objective of this study was to explore teachers' observations regarding the impact of EYPAP on pupils' cultural identity and linguistic pride. Findings revealed that EYPAP facilitated bilingual proficiency as pupils became more adept at navigating Yoruba and English. The package's structured alphabet comparison and phonetics approach helped pupils bridge linguistic gaps, aligning with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Olawe, 2021), which suggests that teaching two languages in parallel eases language acquisition.

Additionally, teachers observed that pupils' pride in Yoruba literacy increased, reinforcing the Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the role of language in shaping thought processes and community belonging. This is consistent with Tackie-Ofosu et al. (2015), who found that bilingual education fosters a deeper connection to cultural roots, strengthening linguistic continuity.

However, while bilingual education through EYPAP showed clear advantages, Ngowari et al. (2020) caution that if indigenous language learning is not reinforced beyond the classroom, students may struggle to maintain fluency and cultural connection. Thus, continued support for Yoruba literacy beyond structured lessons is critical.

Comparison with Existing Literature on Mother-Tongue Education and Cultural Identity

The study's findings confirm existing literature on the importance of mother-tongue education in cultural preservation. Research by Phiri et al. (2024) supports the argument that when children engage with their mother tongue in school, they develop a greater sense of belonging and pride in their cultural heritage. This aligns with the increased linguistic pride among Yoruba pupils using EYPAP.

Moreover, Sakti et al. (2024) emphasized that educating children in their native language enhances cognitive skills and strengthens their cultural identity. This study's findings reinforce this claim, as pupils using EYPAP showed improved reading proficiency while deepening their connection to Yoruba culture.

Nonetheless, the potential risk of cultural and linguistic erosion remains, as noted by Ugwu (2021), who argues that if indigenous languages are not actively maintained, their long-term survival is threatened. The study's findings align with this concern, given that Yoruba was still primarily restricted to classroom settings, making it imperative for policymakers to expand bilingual education beyond formal learning spaces.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that EYPAP is an effective tool for fostering bilingual literacy while preserving Yoruba cultural identity. However, structural limitations—such as school policies limiting Yoruba use—present barriers to sustained language preservation. The study reinforces existing research advocating for mother-tongue education as a means of linguistic and cultural continuity and highlights the need for policy reforms to support indigenous language integration beyond structured classroom periods.

CONCLUSION

The English-Yoruba Parallel-Alphabets Package (EYPAP) has demonstrated significant cultural and linguistic benefits for primary school pupils, fostering a stronger sense of cultural identity and linguistic pride. By integrating Yoruba and English into the curriculum, pupils developed enhanced bilingual proficiency and an increased connection to their cultural heritage, making them more engaged in their mother tongue. The structured comparison between the two languages also supported their academic success while preserving linguistic continuity.

The broader impact of bilingual education, as evidenced by EYPAP, underscores the importance of integrating cultural and linguistic aspects into educational programs. To further support cultural preservation, it is recommended that bilingual education programs incorporate community involvement, extend mother-tongue instruction beyond the classroom, and advocate for policy reforms to enable the sustainable use of indigenous languages like Yoruba in educational settings.

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