

APPLICATION OF SCAFFOLDING STRATEGY IN IGBO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AMONG UPPER BASIC STUDENTS IN EDUCATION DISTRICT IV, LAGOS STATE.

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Abstract

This study examined the application of scaffolding strategy in the Igbo classroom instruction among Upper basic school students in Education District IV, Lagos State. The study specifically examined the perceptions of integrating scaffolding pedagogical strategy in Igbo education classroom, as well as its challenges. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The sampled population of the study consisted of 200 Igbo language teachers and students in 10 purposively sampled Upper basic schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using a 4-point Scale, frequency and percentages. The findings showed that many of the Igbo language teachers and their students have positive perceptions on the use of the scaffolding strategy for Igbo classroom instruction at the JSS in Lagos State, because it improves academic performance but that many factors militate against its effective implementation. However, that the Igbo students should be encouraged to develop interests in the learning of the Igbo language through the use of scaffolding strategy especially at the JSS; Also, there should be allocation of more time to the practical aspects of teaching and learning of language skills.

Keywords: Scaffolding strategy; teaching, learning, the Igbo Language; Upper basic students;

Introduction

Language (including the Igbo language) is the hallmark of any group of people, community or society. It gives man the power to deal with changes in his environment, to organize his society, to face various emergencies in life. Language defines man's humanity and enables him to survive because it is the binding force for people within a particular geographical entity. Tobias (2016) was of the opinion that acquisition and ability to use any language as a means of communication, is one of the most impressive pieces of learning that an individual achieves in life. Again, the socio-economic development of a child depends essentially on the development of his language (especially the mother tongue) competence because it is the major means of communication and interaction especially in Nigerian education system. Man's ability to speak his indigenous language makes him unique and it is a potent factor in his intellectual and cultural processes. The teaching and learning of the Igbo language is being implemented in the Upper Basic schools as stated in the curriculum of Nigeria education system, teachers and students usually use the conventional methods which include lecture, teacher-talk and student-passive listening, among others, to teach and learn the subject in the classrooms.

Scaffolding in education, is a concept developed in the 1970s, and is akin to the temporary platform construction, providing support for students as they learn new concepts and skills. The process involves gradually reducing support as students gain confidence and proficiency. This approach is linked to Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development', where teachers provide targeted support based on a student's current and potential development levels, gradually reducing it as the student becomes more knowledgeable and independent. Thus, what children

can do without help is referred to as ‘level of actual development’ and what children can do with help is referred as ‘level of potential development’ by Vygotsky. Scaffolding pedagogical strategy as propounded by Vygotsky (1978), provides teachers and learners the opportunities to teach and learn through structural building of knowledge from the realm of the known to the realm of the unknown. He opines that scaffolding strategy is a learner-friendly, learner centred process which gives the learner an ample freedom and opportunity to learn how to learn in the learning environment

Thus, the scaffolding strategy is a teaching process that is capable of helping teachers to discover effective and intelligent learners in the classroom. This is because the scaffolding strategy is a learning tool which allows learner participation and active learning process, which makes them to practically grasp the major points of learning by doing. Scaffolding techniques allow teachers to clarify the purpose and give instructions. Furthermore, teachers use them to promote cooperative tasks and encourage safe relationships. These techniques help learners to extend their level of understanding and complete tasks successfully.

In the categorization by Belland (2019), scaffolding is divided into three main types: one-to-one, peer, and computer-based scaffolding. One-to-one scaffolding involves a teacher working with a student to assess their current level, provide tailored support, and adjust the assistance as needed. Peer scaffolding, on the other hand involves students supporting each other, which has been shown to improve cognitive outcomes and helps with low self-regulation effectively to solve problems. Computer-based scaffolding is beneficial for students as it allows them to tackle complex problems using a computer-based approach, thereby developing new skills. Another type of scaffolding known as reciprocal scaffolding involves collaborative work by a group of students to complete a task or project. Celce-Muria (2013) added that scaffolding is an instructional technique in which a teacher or adult structures a learning task and uses dialogue to provide directives and clues that guide the learner’s participation in the learning task.

In education, scaffolding involves teachers using specific methods to help students bridge cognitive gaps and make progress in learning. Teachers tailor these strategies based on students’ existing competencies and provide continuous feedback as the learning task progresses. Various scaffolding strategies are employed to support student learning, and the effectiveness of these strategies is dependent on the context in which they are used. The theoretical principles of scaffolding outline the educational objectives behind its use, focusing on the teacher’s intentions and the scaffolding process. Bradley and Bradley (2014) identified three types of scaffolding as being helpful for second language learners. They entail Simplify the language-here, the teacher can simplify the language by shortening selections, speaking in the present tense, and avoiding the use of idioms; Asking for completion, not generation- the teacher can have students choose answers from a list or complete a partially finished outline or paragraph; and Using visuals- the teacher can present information and ask for students to respond through the use of graphic organizers, tables, charts, outlines, and graphs.

In language classroom, scaffolding is an effective teaching and learning strategy because it engages learners in collaborative activities through adequate awareness. Learners interact by means of helping each other on tasks, become effective participants and develop their understanding (Salma, 2020). When learners through the application of scaffolding strategy, practice Igbo tasks and activities in a reliable learning environment with someone knowledgeable such as teachers, mentors, facilitators, directors among others, they are at an

advantage in acquiring the language. Thus, an interactive activity with the assistance of an expert person has influence on learning and development.

With the use of scaffolding strategy in Igbo classroom instruction, the learner is not forced to learn, but allowed to form his/her own knowledge and ideas accordingly through the accumulation of previous experience(s) and or information. Thus, there are great benefits of the application of scaffolding strategy on the enhancement of teaching and learning processes in Igbo classroom instruction. This is in congruence with Mundi (2017) who states that scaffolding is a suitable, reliable and successful strategy of teaching and learning in every subject-matter due to its learner-friendliness and high productivity in learning outcomes.

Here are some effective strategies recommended by Mulvahl (2018) to help teachers scaffold students' to improve on their language performance:

- Break down new concepts into manageable chunks through mini-lessons to ensure deeper understanding.
- Demonstrate and provide examples for students to learn from, while explaining thought processes to guide their own understanding.
- Introduce new concepts from various viewpoints and learning styles, encouraging students to try and understand the material themselves.
- Use visual aids such as videos, images, or concrete objects to enhance learning.
- Allow students to discuss and express their thoughts in groups, facilitating cooperative learning.
- Encourage students to practice translation tasks with guidance from the teacher and among themselves.
- Regularly check for understanding to gauge student engagement and identify areas that may need additional support.
- Prompt students to link new concepts to their prior knowledge and experiences.
- Provide concept-specific vocabulary in advance to minimize the impact of new vocabulary on performance.
- Create an environment conducive to effective learning by defining the purpose of the task, providing relevant examples, and offering clear guidelines for successful completion.

In addition, there are also many factors militating against the use of scaffolding strategy in the language classroom instruction. They are: lack of training; limited resources; large class sizes; limited time; lack of motivation; language barriers; cultural differences; assessment challenges; resistance to change; and lack of support. Many concerned stakeholders have been worried about the poor performance of Igbo students in Lagos State. Thus, Anyanwu (2013) added that the critical challenges militating against the learning of Igbo amongst students emanates due to the improper use of the conventional methods such as teacher-talk and student-listening without active participation in the classrooms. Teachers usually apply the conventional methods to teach Igbo in the classrooms (Okudo, 2017). These conventional methods pose many challenges and hinder Igbo students' achievement and performance in Igbo. These wrong instructional methods lead students to study the subject mechanically without a significant effect on their academic achievements in school. This results to rote-learning, and by extension, to cram-pour-forget syndrome with great negative effect on learners' learning outcomes in the schools. Kargar (2014) found that scaffolding improves the reading comprehension skill of students.

Thus, there is a compelling and urgent need for a total shift from the use of conventional methods to the application of scaffolding strategy, which teachers and students can apply in

order to achieve effective and result-oriented teaching and learning of the subject especially in government owned junior secondary schools.

In view of these facts, the study investigated, the study investigated the perceptions of applying scaffolding strategy in the teaching and learning of Igbo among junior secondary school students in Education District IV of Lagos State, Nigeria.

It is also hoped that this study would contribute to the growing knowledge regarding the use of scaffolding as a pedagogical tool in the teaching and learning of Igbo and other Nigeria languages at large.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed at looking into the perceptions of the Igbo language teachers and students on the use of scaffolding pedagogical strategy in the teaching and learning of Igbo in some selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The objectives emanating from the study are to:

1. Identify different instructional strategies being used in Igbo classroom instruction.
2. determine the extent to which the Igbo language teachers and students perceive the application of the scaffolding pedagogical strategy in teaching and learning.
3. Highlight the challenges that may emanate while using scaffolding pedagogical strategy in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language.

Research Questions

The questions formulated to guide the study are as follows:

1. What are different instructional strategies are being used in teaching and learning during of Igbo?
2. How do students and teachers of the Igbo language perceive the use of scaffolding strategy in Igbo classroom instruction?
3. Highlight the perceived challenges of using scaffolding pedagogical tool in Igbo language classroom instruction?

Significance of the study

The study would help school administrators to ascertain the level of the awareness of both the teachers and the students in using scaffolding strategy in teaching and learning practices. The study would offer invaluable information to teachers of the Igbo languages on the benefits of integrating scaffolding as a pedagogical tool in their teaching and learning. Furthermore, the study would again be helpful in identifying possible challenges of using scaffolding strategy in Igbo classroom instruction so that remedial measures would be instituted to solve the problem, and to use the situation as an avenue to seek for more intervention from the federal government and other concerned stakeholders.

Methodology

Ten junior secondary schools were purposively chosen out of 45 junior secondary schools in Education District IV, Lagos State. They are government – owned and were used as case study. These junior secondary schools have been selected because they are the only junior secondary schools where the Igbo language is offered and being taken as their class subject. Igbo is being taught, and taken in both internal and external examinations in Lagos State in those schools as far as that Education District IV is

concerned. 180 purposively selected students of Igbo and their 20 class teachers were the samples used for the study.

A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. It was face and content validated by values. The content related technique measure the degree to which the question items reflected and the areas covered and was subjected to rigorous scrutiny in order to ascertain the clarity, relevance, adequacy and other attributes which a good research instrument should possess. Data collected were analysed using frequency, percentages and Likert Scale of Agreed (A), Strongly Agreed (SA) disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD)

To establish the reliability of the research instruments, test re-test method was used. The researcher personally carried out a trial-test of the instrument using Federal Government Secondary School, Akoka- Lagos using the sampled population of thirty (30) students and their six teachers who possess similar characteristics as the target of the study.

The researcher visited the selected schools to administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered personally to Igbo students and their 3 class teachers of 2022/2023 academic session.

Thirty questionnaires were administered and same were collected the same day during their free period. For the study, 205 questionnaires were distributed but only 200 participants returned theirs. Thus, there was an almost 97.56% return of the questionnaires used for the study data collection

Results:

Table 1: Different strategies being used in teaching and learning of the Igbo language among the Upper basic secondary schools students

S/N	Items	A	SA	D	SD	Total/%
1	I use the discussion strategy to teach and learn Igbo in the classroom	120 (60)	20 (10)	35 (17.5)	25 (12.5)	200 (100)
2	Teaching and learning of Igbo from the realm of the known to the unknown is the best strategy to teach the subject	110 (55)	60 (30)	20 (10)	10 (5)	200 (100)
3.	Using the dialogue strategy as part of scaffolding in teaching and learning of Igbo to teach and learn better in Igbo.	104 (52)	50 (25)	26 (13)	20 (10)	200 (100)
4.	Cooperative learning as part of scaffolding adequately is being used in the classroom learning of Igbo with ease.	22 (11)	18 (9)	130 (65)	30 (15)	200 (100)

Table 1 shows that 60% (n=120) of the respondents agreed that they use the discussion strategy to teach and learn Igbo in the classroom, 10% (n=20) of them strongly agreed with the opinion, while 17.5% (n=35) and 12.5% (n=25) of the respondents disagreed and strongly with the item. Also, 55% (n=110) of the respondents agreed and 30% (n=60) of them strongly affirmed that teaching and learning of Igbo from the realm of the known to the unknown is the best strategy to teach and learn the subject, while 10% (n=20) and 5% (n=10) of the respondents did not agree with the statement. Equally, 52% (n=104) and 25% (n=50) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that using the dialogue strategy as part of scaffolding in teaching and learning

of the Igbo language help to teach and learn Igbo better, while 13% (n=26) and 10% (n=20) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Again, 65% (n=130) and 15% (n=30) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that, the use of cooperative strategy as part of scaffolding is being used in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language with ease, while 11% (n=22) and 9% (n=18) of them agreed and strongly agreed with the statement.

This showed that majority of the respondents agreed that different strategies of scaffolding pedagogical strategies are not being used in teaching and learning of Igbo language at the junior secondary schools in Education District IV, Lagos State.

Table 2: Perceptions of teachers and students on the application of scaffolding strategy for the teaching and learning of Igbo at the Upper Basic Level

S/N	Items	A	SA	D	SD	Total %
5	Use of the scaffolding strategy helps teachers and students to teach and learn Igbo effectively.	60 (30)	50 (25)	50 (25)	40 (20)	200 (100)
6	Adequate use of the scaffolding strategy in the Igbo language classroom, can promote efficient teaching and learning of the subject in JSS.	120 (60)	45 (22.5)	20 (10)	15 (7.5)	200 (100)
7	Good use of the scaffolding pedagogical strategy will enhance classroom outputs positively.	100	50	20	30	200
8	Adequate application of Scaffolding strategy will enhance effective instructional delivery in Igbo at the Upper Basic level	(50)	(25)	(10)	(15)	(100)
		115 (57.5)	60 (30)	10 (5)	15 (7.5)	200 (100)

Table 2, shows that 30% (n=60) and 25% (n=50) of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that the use of the scaffolding strategy is the best for teaching and learning of Igbo, while 20% of them disagreed with the statement. Also, 60% (n=120) and 22.5% (n=45) of the respondents agreed and strongly disagreed that the adequate use of the scaffolding strategy in Igbo classroom, can promote efficient teaching and learning of the subject in JSS and 10% (20) and 7.5% (15) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Similarly, 50% (n=100) and 25% (n=50) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that adequate use of the scaffolding strategy in Igbo classroom, can promote efficient teaching and learning of the subject in JSS, while 10% (n=20) and 15% (n=30) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. In addition, 70% (n=140) and 15% (n=30) of the respondents agreed and strongly affirmed that good use of the scaffolding teaching and learning strategies can affect teachers' and students' classroom outputs positively and 15% (n=30) of the respondents did not agree with the statement. Finally, 57.5% (n=115) and 30% (n=60) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that teachers' and students' positive perceptions in the use of scaffolding strategy can create greater instructional delivery in Igbo at the junior secondary schools, while 5% (n=10) and 7.5% (n=15) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the item respectively.

Table 3: Perceived challenges of using scaffolding strategy as a pedagogical tool in the Igbo language classroom instruction at the junior secondary school level

S/N	Items	A	SA	D	SD	Total %
9	Assessment challenges for teachers and students due to complex nature of scaffolding strategy in Igbo	100 (50)	50 (25)	20 (10)	30 (15)	200 (100)
10	Lack of promoting critical thinking skills in the Igbo language due to strict involvement in the traditional methods of teaching and learning in the classrooms	115 (57.5)	60 (30)	15 (7.5)	10 (5)	200 (100)
11	Inability to provide timely feedback in the teaching and learning of Igbo in the classroom	120 (60)	50 (25)	20 (10)	10 (5)	200 (100)
12	Lack of motivation from teachers and students in the of scaffolding strategy in teaching and learning of Igbo.	100 (50)	70 (35)	30 (15)	- (0)	200 (100)
13.	Lack of necessary training for the implementation of the Scaffolding strategy in the Igbo language classroom.	116 (58)	64 (32)	15 (7.5)	5 (2.5)	200 (100)

Table 3 reveals that 50% (n=100) and 25% (n=50) of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that there are assessment challenges for teachers and students due to complex nature of scaffolding strategy in Igbo, while 10% (n=20) and 15% (n=30) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. Also, 60% (n=120) and 22.5% (n=45) of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that lack of promoting critical thinking skills in the Igbo language due to strict involvement in the conventional instructional methods of teaching and learning in the classrooms, while 10% (n=20) and 7.5% (n=15) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Similarly, 50% (n=100) and 35% (n=70) of the respondents agreed and strongly affirmed that the inability to provide timely feedback in the teaching and learning of Igbo in the classroom is the cause of the inability to learn the subject effectively, while 10% (n=20) and 15% (n=30) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Also, 57.5% (n=115) and 30% (n=60) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that lack of motivation from teachers in the of scaffolding strategy in teaching of the Igbo, while 5% (n=10) and 7.5% (n=15) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Finally, 58% (n=116) and 32% (n=64) of the participants agreed and strongly believed that lack of necessary training for the implementation of the use of scaffolding strategy in the Igbo language classroom poses a conspicuous challenge in the teaching and learning of the Igbo language, while 7.5% (n=15) and 2.5% (n=5) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Discussion of Findings

In this study, different scaffolding pedagogical strategies were identified that can be used in Igbo instructional classrooms. The results of this study were discussed based on the results of the research questions analysed in this study. The result of the analysis revealed that there are significant different strategies being used in teaching and learning in the Igbo language at the junior secondary schools in Education District IV, Lagos State. This is in congruence with Okudo (2021) that many teachers and students apply different strategies to teach and learn the Igbo language at junior secondary school levels. It is believed that the teaching and learning of the Igbo language are important in schools, because Igbo is a one of the three major Nigeria languages; and is also a compulsory subject at Upper basic level of Nigeria education system.

Research question two indicated that ‘What are the perceptions of teachers and students in the use of the scaffolding strategy for the teaching and learning of Igbo at the junior secondary schools in Education District IV, Lagos State?’ The result of the research question shows that majority of the teachers and students perceive the use of scaffolding strategy positively in the school. Furthermore, Mcleod (2023) supports this result by stating that the use of scaffolding strategy to teach and learn the any language is a welcome development at the Upper Basic level. Thus, using scaffolding strategy in the teaching and learning of Igbo has added an impetus to the teaching and learning of the subject at the junior secondary schools. Okudo (op.cit) supported the fact that Igbo should be taught and learnt with the use of some new strategies for better understanding by the learners in the classrooms.

Research question three was analysed using the percentage frequency counts. At the end of the analysis, it was realized that many factors are responsible for the poor teaching and learning of Igbo language at the junior secondary school level. For Gass (2019) stipulated some factors such as poor feedback syndrome, poor provisions of effective teaching and learning materials, lack of conducive classrooms, government neglect in the provisions of essential environment needed for effective teaching and learning of the subject at the junior secondary schools. Rigolosi (2022), also added some factors such as teachers’ lack of required experiences in the use of the scaffolding strategy for the effective teaching and learning of Igbo in the school system in Education District IV, Lagos State.

Conclusion

Teaching with scaffolding is a powerful approach that guides students towards independent learning and so its application into educational practice continues to be viewed as having the potential to transform teaching and learning of Igbo. This study delves into different aspects of scaffolding, including its definition and concept as well as emphasizing its pivotal role in the teaching and learning process. Additionally, the practical phase of the study involves administering a questionnaire to Upper basic school students to strengthen and authenticate the application of scaffolding in their Igbo instructional classes. The analysis of the data collected provides valuable insights into the utilization of scaffolding by Igbo language teachers at the Upper basic school level, encompassing a diverse range of scaffolding strategies. Based on the analyses of data, the following conclusions were reached. For instance, it was concluded that there are different strategies used in teaching and learning of Igbo at the junior secondary schools in Education District IV, Lagos State. It was also concluded that both teachers and students have good perceptions concerning the use of the scaffolding strategy for the teaching and learning of Igbo at the junior secondary schools in Lagos State and that there are also many factors militating against the use of scaffolding strategy for the teaching and learning of the Igbo language at the junior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommends that there should be constant feedback on use of scaffolding strategy as a pedagogical tool in order to allow or help students focus, on the learning goals, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments in their learning process.

It is recommended that Igbo students should take the ownership of their learning process in the classroom by engaging in self-tasks and seeking opportunities in what they have learnt.

Teachers of Igbo should imbibe as a matter of necessity, adopt the use of scaffolding strategy in the instructional delivery of the subject at the secondary school level in both the public and private secondary schools in Lagos State. Government should provide adequate instructional materials for effective teaching learning of language skills in schools through the utilization of

scaffolding strategy. This will help teachers of Igbo to teach the subject with effectiveness. Teaching and learning of Igbo through the application of scaffolding strategy should be included in the curriculum of Igbo at every stage of the Nigeria education system.

The government should train and re-train the Igbo teachers on how to effectively apply and utilize scaffolding strategy in their instructional classroom.

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