TEAM COLLABORATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: ARABIC PERSPECTIVE

K. A. ADEYEMI

Department of Religions Studies, Faculty of Arts, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
Corresponding author: aadeleke21@gmail.com   **Tel: +234**08066577392

ABSTRACT

Arabic language is one of the international languages in the world today. This language has contributed immensely to the development of human lives such as economy, education, politics, sociology and a host of others. The language has been used in the past to bring light of knowledge from other tribes and cultures such as Greco and Persian knowledge through translation. Today, it seems that the language is dwindling in our society in terms of speaking, writing and learning. There are many methods to be used to improve in learning the language to regain its glory. The method suggested in this paper to teach the language effectively is team collaboration approach. The major findings to resuscitate the learning/teaching of Arabic as a language to become a more interesting language to learn in the society include learning outcome and improve the behaviour. There will be quality control and assured evaluation reports being produced as evidence of best value. More hands of professionals on the field will be involved.

Key words: -

INTRODUCTION

The Arabic language is one of the international languages in the world today. It is used to serve many purposes such as religion, science, politics, economy, sociology, history and others. Using this language for any purpose does not and will not change the user to any religion as the studying of English language does not and will not affect the faith of individuals unless he/she decides to accept the religion "willingly".

Going through the history of Arabic as a language in the world, it was used before the advent of Islam in Arabian Peninsula. Abdus-Salam (2010:9) reports that its foundation was formed during the fourth Khalifah after Prophet Muhammed, Ali Son of Abu Talib (566-661 C.E.) who instructed a learned man called Abul-Aswad ad-Dualiyy to draw Arabic grammar including phonological rules. This is the first curriculum formed on Arabic language and morphology. After this period, works were done gradually until it reached its perfection today. Abdul-Raheem (2008:14) is of the opinion that the Quran, in structure and style has profound influence on the language in the volume of new words used to represent new concepts. The language became more powerful in terms of imaginative capability and communicative adequacy when non-Arabs entered

into Islam and used it as the medium of communication, literacy expression and scientific medium. This shows the development of the language in the world. Various methods are used to impart this knowledge to students. Some of them seem to be inadequate that make the learning difficult hence need to be modified so as to ease the teaching and learning the language.

Historical Background of Arabic Language in Nigeria

Ogunbiyi (2005:4) divides the trend of Arabic language in Nigeria into four periods:

(i) Pre 1804: This period was regarded as when the Arabic language entered Borno Empire along side Islam through Muslim Scholars and traders who traversed the major trans-Saharan trade routes. These people were not only teachers of Arabic and Islam but also scribes to non-literate local chiefs and rulers whereby local events and histories began to be documented in Arabic language.

(ii) Period between 1804 and 1903: During this period, Arabic became the official language of religious, political, judicial administration, and major communication tool among the scholars, rulers and all state functionaries in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

(iii) *1903 – 1960:* The introduction of Western education in Nigeria marked the beginning of decline of the Arabic language in the sense that it was replaced by English language. The Quranic schools were not recognized by the colonial authorities as part of the formal education system. Many attempts were made to teach Arabic and Islamic studies by establishing Arabic schools but this did not yield any significant result because of financial constraint.

(iv) From 1960 up to Present: During this time, many attempts were made to revitalize Arabic language education and its wider usage. Today, the post independence period saw the inclusion of Arabic as a separate subject in the National Examinations such as West African Examination Council's (WAEC) syllabus, General Certificate of Education (GCE) and National Examination Council (NECO). Other development on the study of Arabic language in Nigeria today is the introduction of honours in Arabic degree programmes at Bachelor of Arts (B.A. Hons), Masters of Arts (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) levels in many Federal and State Universities as well as private universities in the country.

Ogunbiyi (2005:10) asserts that:
In the last decades of the 20th century, a number of private Arabic schools, especially in the South West be came affiliated to some universities so as to acquire official recognition for their graduates who could then gain direct admission into the affiliated institutions for degree programmes. The consequence of this increase in the locations and avenues for the teaching and learning of Arabic language (irrespective of religious affiliation) was the need to produce more professionally and academically qualified teachers of Arabic language.

Despite the efforts of well-meaning scholars of Arabic language to improve the position of the language in Nigeria today, there are many issues to be addressed in order to yield

positive results. Among the issues is the teaching of the language in schools.

A. Old Method:

Otuniyi (2000:15) frowns at the methods used in teaching Arabic in Nigerian schools before, which contributed to the difficulties facing learners of the language. The teaching of the subject at the initial stage of its introduction to this country started haphazardly through the itinerant Mallams and traders, who forced students to memorize grammatical rules. This system still operates in many Arabic and Islamic schools in the country today.

B. New Method

The new methods to teach Arabic as suggested by Otuniyi (2000:17) are divided into four:

(i) *Ash-Sharhu an tariqil-Mawqif (Self-defining Context)*

This is the use of context to teach the meaning of a new word.

(ii) *At – Tam thiil (Dramatization)*

Through this technique, the teacher acts out the meaning of a new word.

(iii) *Al – Isharah ila Shayn wa Lamsuhu (Use of real object)*

By this technique, the teacher points to the actual objects.

(iv) *Istiqdamus – Suwar war – Rusūm (Use of pictures and sketches)*

One of the most effective and most often used techniques of teaching meaning of new words without recourse to explanation of translation is the use of illustrative pictures or diagrams which the teacher can quickly sketch on a board as they need not be too elaborate or very artistic.

Team Collaboration in Language Teaching

Apart from the methods stated to teach Arabic as a language, there is another method that seems to be more pragmatic to be used to enhance effective learning of the language. This is team collaboration in teaching the language.

Aims in Team Collaboration especially Arabic Language

The following aims are observed in team collaboration especially in Arabic as a language to foster its proper understating for the learners:

(i) To promote the least intrusive positive handling strategy and a continuum of gradual and graded techniques with emphasis and preference from the use of verbal, non-verbal de-escalation strategies being used and exhausted before positive handling strategies are utilized.

(ii) To enable services develop acceptable and authorized responses to disruptive, disturbing, angry and aggressive behaviours in a manner that maintains positive relationship and provides safety for all.

(iii) To reduce the amount of serious incidents involving physical controls in all settings and to emphasize the importance of exhausting behaviour management strategies in the first instance.

(iv) To increase the awareness of staff concerning the importance of recording and reporting, monitoring and evaluating all incidents involving positive handling.

(v) To provide a process of repair and reflection from both staff and students.

The following objectives will be

achieved based on team collaboration technique:

(i) Ability to have knowledge and understanding of relevant legal standards and expectations related to use of force.

(ii) Ability to state the basic values, rationale and principles of the team teaching approach.

(iii) Ability to have knowledge and understanding of reporting, recording, monitoring and evaluating requirements of incidents involving physical controls and reasonable force.

(iv) Ability to have knowledge and understanding of aggression and conflict, being able to recognize typical signs and causes.

(v) Ability to have knowledge and understanding the importance of using de-escalation strategies where possible. Aware of the concept of the conflict spiral, levels of behaviour and the need for an appropriate staff response in order to maximize the opportunity to calm the incident through non-verbal and verbal strategies where possible.

(vi) Ability to have knowledge and understanding of a whole setting holistic approach to behaviour management, including the importance of self awareness and self control whilst managing challenging behaviour.

(vii) Ability to conduct a follow-up process with the service users and its aware of the importance of support and supervision, repair and reflection process for both staff and individuals involved following a serious incident involving positive handling strategies.

(viii) Ability to use positive and protective personal safety skills in order to maximize risk to all involved.

(ix) Ability to perform a range of positive handling strategies, gradual and graded involved in holding, guiding and escorting safety from least intrusive to more restrictive holds.

(x) Ability to use positive handling strategies that provide for a range of appropriate de-escalation's options including keeping standing, from standing into chairs, from standing to the floor, into a knees position where possible. Staff to perform a physical technique specific to smaller children (standing, chairs, and ground options).

(xi) Ability to be aware of the need to avoid sitting down on the floor in a supine or prone position, other than in the most exceptional circumstances, for staff to know how to make safe in such a position.

(xii) Ability to respond to situations where standing fights between service users may happen.

There are two definitions for this approach:

(i) Team collaboration is a group of teachers working together conduct and evaluates the learning activities for the same student.

(ii) It can be defined as a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the students taught.

Based on these definitions, the team teaching approach on Arabic as a language can be used in two major areas viz:

Home Approach

Team collaboration in Arabic language starts at home. Adeyemi (2009:108) asserts that parents who want their children to be Arabic

literate would encourage their children who have pleasant experiences with reading at home to read anything they see. As they see other people reading Arabic books, it becomes natural that they will also imitate them. This approach will acquaint the children with Arabic language from the grass roots.

School Approach

There is a course in the National Commission for Colleges of Education (N.C.C.E.) curriculum under Primary Education Studies (PES) tagged "School Observation". This method is like team teaching in the sense that the student teacher will observe what is going on in the school including watching how teachers teach in the class and all other school activities and then make reports and comment on it after the lesson. This approach can be used in teaching Arabic language instead of self centered teaching method used by individual teachers.

Furthermore, team teaching in Arabic as a language is a specific service delivery option that is based on collaboration. It is designed to meet the educational needs of students with diverse learning options, students of all academic levels of the language benefit from alternative assignments and greater teacher attention in small-group activities that team teaching makes possible. It also allows for more intense and individualized instruction in the general education setting increasing access to the general education while decreasing stigma for students with special needs.

Students under this approach will have opportunity to increase their understanding on the language and respect for student with special needs that will give them opportu-

nity for continuity of instruction. The teachers will also benefit from the professional support and exchange of teaching and practice the language as they work collaboratively.

On this, there are many ways to execute team collaboration in the language. Among them are:

One Teach, One Observe

One of the advantages in this system is that more detailed observation of students engaged in the learning process can occur. With this approach for example, co-teachers can decide in advance what types of specific observation information to gather during instruction and agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterwards, the teachers should analyse the information together.

One Teach, One Assist

On this, one person would keep primary responsibility by carrying out real teaching while other professional goes round the class room providing an obtrusive assistance to students as needed.

Parallel Teaching

There are some occasions whereby students learning would be greatly facilitated if they just have more supervision by the teacher or more opportunity to respond. In parallel teaching, the teachers are both covering the same information, but they divide the class into two groups teach simultaneously if a class is too large for a teacher to manage. This method may require more hands when a class is reduced to a sizeable number of students for effective teaching.

Station Teaching

In this system, teachers divide the students into two according to gender. Each teacher

then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. After that, evaluation will be carried out on them to know the level of performance of each group.

Alternative Teaching

In most class groups, occasions arise in which several students need specialized attention during the teaching. In alternative teaching, one teacher takes responsibility for the larger group while the other works with smaller group.

Co-Teaching

It is when both teachers are delivering the same instruction to students at the same time in the class. Some teachers refer to this as having one brain in two bodies. Most scholars consider this way the most complex of all.

Recommendations on Application:

(i)   Positive handling strategies in Arabic language team collaboration should be constantly evaluated to enhance learning for the students. Therefore, the value of the language will be appreciated in the society.

(ii)   Learning outcome and behaviour should be improved through the provision of safe learning and caring. Therefore, team collaboration technique will reduce stress and enhance team work, cooperation and staff morale.

(iii)   Team collaboration approach in teaching Arabic as a course will be quality controlled and assured with summary evaluation reports being produced as evidence of best value.

(iv)   This approach will create positive handling strategies of the language and will have sufficient range and flexibility to be appropriate across the age and development range.

(v)   Team collaboration in language generally will enable staff to feel more confident and competent in his/her management of disruptive and challenging behaviour, reducing stress by increasing safety and security for all involved.

CONCLUSION

The condition of Arabic language from its inception in Nigeria up to the present time shows that it has passed through many ways. Many methods have been used to impart this knowledge to the learners in order to regain its glory in terms of reading, writing and speaking. For the benefit of its usefulness locally, nationally and internationally, there must be improvement in learning it so as to attract the learners more. To complement the efforts being made so far to actualize the need for Arabists in our society irrespective of religious affiliation; team collaboration technique is suggested to be used as stated in this paper. Since this approach will involve more teachers on the field, it is advisable to recruit more professional Arabic teachers to handle the subject more effectively in the class.

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(Manuscript received: 3rd July, 2012; accepted: 15th April, 2013).