



Assessment of Language Testing on ... Aimasiko, O. G. & Salako, J. A. (2025)

Assessment of Language Testing on Language Development among Pupils in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

AIMASIKO, Omobolaji Ganiyu¹

Abufolarin4all@gmail.com/aimasikoog@eauedoyo.edu.ng

08066665414

SALAKO, Janet Adenike¹

janetadenike830@gmail.com

07032571124

¹Department of Educational Foundation and Curriculum, Faculty of Specialised and Professional Education
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo

Abstract

This paper assessed language testing on language development among pupils in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. This study adopted the survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five schools from the public primary schools in Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State. Forty primary school pupils were randomly selected from each school, making a total of 200 pupils. In all, 200 pupils participated in the study. One research instrument was used for data collection: Questionnaire on Impact on the enhancement of language development ($r=0.76$). The instrument was trial tested on 20 pupils that are not part of the schools selected for the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Finding of the study indicated that a weighted mean of 2.74 which is greater than the threshold of 2.50. Based on the finding of this study, it was recommended that pupils should not allow their level of language development to decrease. Government should organise seminars and workshops for teachers on methods, strategies and techniques of using language testing to enhance language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools.

Keywords: Language testing, enhancement, language development, early childhood education

Introduction

Education is one of the vital factors that help in the development of a human being. The fundamental right of every child is to learn and develop to his or her full potentials through equal access to quality education regardless of their age, gender, origin ethnicity and social background. However, Early Childhood Education provides the foundation of education in the pre-school education which forms an integral part of a child's early education, given formally or informally, in an educational institution to children ages two five years prior to entering the primary school (Nakopia, 2011). Education starts from cradle to grave. Experts opined that catching children young with quality education remains a veritable tool for lifelong development. Similarly, education is an indispensable tool in nation building. It is a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and acquisition of skills, potentials and abilities which will enable an individual to contribute efficiently to the growth and development of society and nation. It involves all round development of an individual physically, socially, morally, intellectually, and mentally (Osakwe, 2009). Therefore, education is the right of every child and must not be denied for any reason. Early childhood care and education have thus been included and expanded in the worldwide Education for All Programme as a result of the World Summit on the Status of worldwide Children (Ajayi, 2008). This is yet to be a reality for every child, because some do not get the opportunity to start early; that is, having the early childhood school experience between the ages 3 and 5 years before embarking on primary education. Early childhood education is an activity that takes place before formal school. In this case, pre-school is part of early childhood, and the aim is the versatile development of child's personality and also helping the child to be ready and mature for a smooth transition to school. In other words, early childhood programme encompasses both qualitative education and care, which should not be separated but provided for a complementary fashion. Good early childhood education will earn a child a position or state of readiness for learning in a formal and non-formal setting. Disposition to learn refers to development of social skills and behaviour in formal educational environment, while readiness to learn is related to the fact that children will start schooling on a solid (footing) foundation to develop their potential. Emphatically, early childhood education is seen as an evolving field of study, research and practice, which concerns itself with all aspects of early life experience, from separation of anxiety to early literacy development. Early childhood education sometimes



Assessment of Language Testing on ... Aimasiko, O. G. & Salako, J. A. (2025)

called early childhood care and education or early childhood care Development education refers to the education that children obtain during early stages of life. The nature of the educational environment, including the facilities, instructional materials, and environment to which the child is exposed throughout the first six years of life, is recognised to have a significant impact on learning (Bowen, Donovan & Burn 2001). Early Childhood is the first eight years of a child's life (Pre-school). Explicitly, it is the period before full-time schooling begins, for children aged 3 to 5. It includes the crèches, the nursery and kindergarten, while the primary education refers to education given to children between 6 and 11 years plus. The period is seen as a turning point in child development for building human capital in the form of the basic social, cognitive, and scholastic skills needed for educational achievement. It is also seen as a preventive measure to reduce the incidence of remedial classes, grade repetition, getting assigned to special-education classes, and later dropping out of school. As an equity issue, ECE is viewed as an equaliser between rich and poor, a way of providing children from disadvantaged backgrounds some of the human capital builders experienced by children from more advantaged households (Hammond & Plesca, 2010). Childhood development is the key to a full and productive life for a child and to the progress of a nation. Early Childhood is, therefore, a critical stage of development that forms the foundations for children's future well-being and learning. Research has shown that half of a person's intelligence potential is developed by age four and that Early Childhood interventions can have a lasting effect on intellectual capacity, personality, and social behaviour. Integrated programmes which focused on children in their very early years are critical for their mental and psychosocial development, as opined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2000). In other words, a comprehensive and quality ECE programme can meet the educational and developmental needs of disadvantaged children and can help to equalise opportunities early in life. If every child can benefit from an early introduction to education whether provided by parents or professionals either at home or in a school environment, it is likely that it would have an impact on the academic achievement, social and moral behaviour of the child. For children of parents with full-time jobs, early childhood education may be the only opportunity these youngsters have to develop crucial social learning skills. Hence, today's increased demand for educational excellence combined with the economic need to work longer hours by parent is an equation that highly favours early childhood education.

In the past, Nigeria had experienced various forms of early childhood programmes across the regions of the country. For instance, in the Northern part of Nigeria, early childhood programmes were religious-based education. In their communities, Mallam teaches children as old as three years and above in Qur'an and the pronunciation of Arabic alphabet. Children were taught the practical skills needed to function successfully in traditional society by Mallam. Children within age three years above belonged to the same group, together they learned the custom of their community and were placed on specific duties within the village such as sweeping the lanes with the sole aim of keeping them busy while their parents were busy with their works (Ibrahim, 2010). In South-west Nigeria, the introduction of 'Jele-O-sinmi' currently reformed to 'modern day-care centres to children of aged 2 to 5 years was enriched by the informal traditional methods of bringing up children and makes them ready for pre-primary education. During this period of Jele-O-sinmi, significant numbers of parents willingly accepted the mode of the education which gave them a platform to rest and plan for their daily work before their children returned. In the Eastern part of Nigeria, early childhood programmes came in the form of Gospel religion through missionary. Children centres were established in the worship places in villages and communities to train and nurture children while their parents were not around mostly they were working in the farm. The churches then take the responsibilities of poor and average children by training them spiritually and academically (Gabriel, 2014).

The significance of the status accorded this level of education is also reflected in the role of the Federal Government towards the achievement of the objectives. For example, government in this period undertook to encourage private efforts in the provision of early childhood education which meant that she would not establish any, even as a model for other stakeholders to emulate; make provision in Teacher Training Institutions for student teachers who want to specialise in pre-primary education; ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community; develop the orthography for the many more Nigerian languages, and produce textbooks in Nigerian languages; ensure that the main method of teaching in the pre-primary institution will be through play, and that the curriculum of Teacher Training Colleges is appropriately oriented to achieve this; regulate and control the operation of pre-primary education as well as ensure that the staff of pre-primary institutions are adequately trained and that essential



Assessment of Language Testing on ... Aimasiko, O. G. & Salako, J. A. (2025)

equipment is provided (FGN, 2013). In spite of the importance of early childhood education, studies have shown that there are numerous problems facing early childhood education in Nigeria. Efforts to address these problems have made scholars and researchers to carry out numerous studies. All these studies came up with useful insights to early childhood education but with less research focus on impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools especially in Ibadan South west Local Government Area of Oyo State. Messick (1994) argues that all testing involves making value judgements, and therefore language testing is open to a critical discussion of whose values are being represented and served; this in turn leads to a consideration of ethical conduct. Messick (1994, 1996) has redefined the scope of validity to include what he calls consequential validity - the consequences of test score interpretation and use. Davies (1997) argues that since tests often have a prescriptive or normative role, their social consequences are potentially far-reaching. He argues for a professional morality among language testers, both to protect the profession's members, and to protect individuals from misuse and abuse of tests.

Spolsky (1997) points out that tests and examinations have always been used as instruments of social policy and control, with the gate-keeping function of tests often justifying their existence. Shohamy (1997) claims that language tests which contain content or employ methods which are not fair to all test-takers are not ethical, and discusses ways of reducing various sources of unfairness. She also argues that uses of tests which exercise control and manipulate stakeholders rather than providing information on proficiency levels are also unethical, and she advocates the development of critical language testing (Shohamy, 1997). She urges testers to exercise vigilance to ensure that the tests they develop are fair and democratic, however that may be defined. Lynch (1997) also argues for an ethical approach to language testing and Rea-Dickins (1997) claims that taking full account of the views and interests of various stakeholder groups can democratize the testing process, promote fairness and therefore enhance an ethical approach.

Statement of the Research Problem

Early childhood education is an activity that takes place before formal school, in this case, preschool is part of early childhood. The aim is the versatile development of child's personality and also helping the child to be ready and mature for a smooth transition to school. In spite of the importance of early childhood education, studies have shown that there are numerous problems affecting the language development of pupils in early childhood stage of education in Nigeria. Efforts to address these problems have made scholars and researchers to carry out numerous researches. All these studies came up with useful insights to early childhood education but with less research focus on impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools especially in Ibadan South West Local Government Area of Oyo State. Therefore, this study assessed language testing on language development among pupils in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria

Objectives of the study

The study determined:

1. the level of impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools

Research Question

The following research question was answered in the study:

1. What is the level of impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools?

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select five public primary schools from public primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State. Forty primary school pupils were randomly selected from each school, making a total of 200 pupils. In all, 200 pupils participated in the study. One research instrument was used for data collection: Questionnaire on Impact on the enhancement of language development ($r=0.76$). The instrument was trial tested on 20 pupils that are not part of the schools selected for the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation.



Assessment of Language Testing on ... Aimasiko, O. G. & Salako, J. A. (2025)

Presentation of Result

Research Question one: What is the level of impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools?

Table One: Level of Impact of Language Testing on the Enhancement of Language Development

s/n	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.
1	I ask myself language-related questions to help me focus on learning	71 (35.7%)	69 (34.7%)	33 (16.6%)	26 (13.1%)	2.92	1.02
2	I often skim for main idea in whatever I read	71 (35.5%)	89 (44.5%)	30 (15%)	10 (5%)	3.10	.835
3	I usually read in a place where I can concentrate	33 (16.5%)	37 (18.5%)	82 (41%)	48 (24%)	2.27	1.00
4	I scan for a specific piece of information in whatever I read	53 (26.5%)	79 (39.5%)	45 (22.5%)	23 (11.5%)	2.81	.958
5	I guess the meaning of difficult words	44 (22.1%)	52 (26.1%)	60 (30.2%)	43 (21.6%)	2.48	1.06
6	I draw inferences from whatever I read	61 (30.7%)	94 (47.2%)	28 (14.1%)	16 (8%)	3.00	.879
7	I draw conclusions from what I read	46 (23.1%)	41 (20.6%)	59 (29.6%)	53 (26.6%)	2.40	1.11
8	I distinguish facts from opinion	49 (24.5%)	50 (25%)	51 (25.5%)	50 (25%)	2.49	1.11
9	I suggest an alternative end to what I read	43 (21.5%)	41 (20.5%)	86 (43%)	30 (15%)	2.48	.992
10	I add details to support the main ideas in whatever I read	69 (34.5%)	96 (34.5%)	21 (10.5%)	14 (7%)	3.10	.850
11	I often feel bored anytime I read	68 (34%)	108 (54%)	22 (11%)	2 (1%)	3.21	.669
12	I try to read on my own without anybody's help	56 (28%)	85 (42.5%)	47 (23.5%)	12 (6%)	2.92	.867
13	I ask my teacher to clarify concepts that I don't understand	62 (31%)	106 (53%)	19 (9.5%)	13 (6.5%)	3.08	.813
14	I don't read passages that are not interesting.	41 (20.5%)	49 (24.5%)	59 (29.5%)	51 (25.5%)	2.40	1.07
15	I get confused anytime I read	49 (24.6%)	44 (22.1%)	53 (26.5%)	53 (26.5%)	2.44	1.13

Standard Mean = 2.50; Weighted Mean = 2.74

Table I shows the impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State. The result indicates a weighted mean of 2.74 which is greater than the threshold of 2.50. This implies that the impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State is high. Eight out of the fifteen items used contributed to this high level, since their means are greater than the weighted mean. In their order of magnitude, the items are: item 11 – I often feel bored anytime I read (Mean = 3.21>2.74); item 2 – I often skim for main idea in whatever I read (Mean = 3.10>2.74); item 10 – I add details to support the main ideas in whatever I read (Mean = 3.10>2.74); item 13 – I ask my teacher to clarify concepts that I don't understand (Mean = 3.08>2.74); item 6 – I draw inferences from whatever I read (Mean = 3.00>2.74); item 1 – I ask myself language-related questions to help me focus on learning (Mean = 2.92>2.74); item 12 – I try to read on my own without anybody's help (Mean = 2.92>2.74); and item 4 - I scan for a specific piece of information in literary texts that I read (Mean = 2.81>2.74). This implies that the impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State is high.

Discussion of Findings

Table I revealed that the impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State is high. This is in line with the study



Assessment of Language Testing on ... Aimasiko, O. G. & Salako, J. A. (2025)

of Adepoju (1985) who reported that students' level of self-regulated learning was high. This is contrary to the study of Shobayo and Ogunbaigbe (2019) who revealed that students' level of self-regulated learning was moderate.

Conclusion

The study has provided a better understanding of the impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State. The level of impact of language testing on the enhancement of language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools in Ibadan South Local Government Area of Oyo State was found to be high. Therefore, it could be concluded from the study that language testing is essential in enhancing the language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the finding of the study:

1. Pupils should not allow their level of language development to decrease.
2. Government should organize seminars and workshops for teachers on methods, strategies and techniques of using language testing to enhance language development in early childhood stage of education in primary schools
3. Teachers should encourage pupils to improve on their language development.
4. Parents should provide all the necessary materials for their children.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the scholars and researchers whose works were consulted and cited in the course of this study. Their rigorous scholarship, insightful analyses, and pioneering research provided a strong intellectual foundation upon which this work was built. Through their published works, these scholars have advanced knowledge in the field and offered critical perspectives that enriched the conceptual framework, methodology, and discussions presented in this study. The author is deeply indebted to these academics for their commitment to research excellence and knowledge dissemination, which continue to inspire further inquiry and scholarly engagement. Their contributions not only guided the direction of this study but also strengthened its academic relevance and credibility. To all the researchers whose ideas, findings, and arguments informed this work, the author expresses sincere appreciation.

References

- Ajayi, H.O. (2008). Early Childhood Education, Education in Nigeria: A Reality or a Mirage? Contemporary issue in Early Childhood, 9(4) 375-380. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2009.4.375>. (<http://web.it.edu/work/replacement/doc/pdf/2005>).
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). National Policy on Education Abuja: NERDC, 2013 Press.
- Hammand, A. & Plesca, M. (2010). Impact of Preschool Early Childhood Education on Adult Human Development ahammand@uoguelph.ca
- OECD, (2002). —Strengthening Early Childhood Operational reasoning. A Neo-Piagetian Analysis. Journal of Research in Science teaching 28(1) 19-40.
- Messsick, S. (1994). The interplay of evidence and consequences in the validation of performance assessments. Educational Researcher, 23(2), 13-23
- Messick, S. (1996). Validity and washback in language testing. Language testing, 13(3), 241-56.
- Osakwe, R.N (2009). The Effect of Early Childhood Education Experience on Academic Performance of Primary School Children Student Home Science. Tud Home Comm Sci, 3(2): 143 – 147
- Shohamy, E. (1997a). Testing methods, testing consequences: are they ethical? Language Testing, 14(3), 340-9.
- Shohamy, E. (1997b). Critical language testing and beyond, plenary paper presented at the American Association for Applied Linguistics, Orlando, Florida. 8-11 Marc (1) (PDF) *Language testing and assessment (Part I)*.