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DECOLONISING LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY: AN EX-POST FACTO ANALYSIS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING AND INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The study examined the decolonising language pedagogy: An ex-post facto analysis of indigenous language teacher training and instructional effectiveness in Nigerian secondary schools through assessing the teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers in indigenous language instruction for sustainable creativity. The study filled the gap of the paucity of empirical ex-post facto studies on indigenous language teacher training and influence on instructional effectiveness for sustainable creativity in Nigerian schools by examining the existing conditions and determine the possible influence of prior teacher training experiences on instructional effectiveness The population comprised all Language teachers in Ondo state and 480 sample selected through stratified random sampling technique, ensuring representation across urban and rural schools in the three senatorial districts of Ondo state. The study compared two groups of 240 trained and 240 untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogical practices for creative learning outcomes. The Teacher Instructional Effectiveness Scale (TIES) and Students Learning Outcome Test (SLOT) were used to collect data from the respondents, with TIES having a reliability coefficient of r=0.82. Data were collected were analysed using t-test, ANCOVA and regression analysis. Findings

Keywords:
Decolonised Education,
Instructional Effectiveness,
Mother Tongue Instruction,
Language Pedagogy,
Language Policy.

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indicated that trained teachers demonstrated higher competence in indigenous language pedagogy, learner-centred strategies and creative instructional delivery than untrained teachers. Furthermore, teacher training was found to be a significant predictor of students' sustainable creativity. The study recommended policy reforms that prioritize indigenous language teacher education, continuous professional development, and curriculum redesign to reflect local cultural realities, thereby fostering sustainable educational development in Nigeria.

Introduction

Language plays a central role in education, identity formation and knowledge transmission. In Nigeria, the dominance of English language pedagogy is a direct outcome of colonial history which positioned English as both the official language and the principal medium of instruction in Nigerian schools at all levels; from primary to tertiary education. It is the medium through which subjects are taught, examinations are conducted and academic knowledge is disseminated. This legacy continues to shape classroom practices, often marginalizing indigenous languages. In Nigeria, with over 500 languages, the dominance of English has contributed to the erosion of indigenous languages, classroom participation and students learning outcomes. In African contexts, the persistence of colonial epistemologies has contributed to learner alienation and reduced educational relevance. Scholars note that the exclusion of local languages in formal education perpetuates colonial dominance and limits effective learning. Sanni, Shekoni, Olukoya and Jimoh, (2025) highlight that the exclusion of indigenous languages sustains colonial legacies and limits effective knowledge transmission. There have been agitations and researches on the need for paradigm shift from Eurocentric learning to Afrocentric learning system where students would have the opportunity to reason, participate and learn in their linguistic repertoire rather than rote learning which is teacher-centred. For this to come to reality, there is need to decolonise the language pedagogy. Decolonization of language pedagogy involves educational practices which prioritize indigenous language, restructuring teaching methods, curriculum, cultural realities, and linguistic diversity. A quasi-experimental study by Akinsola (2025) demonstrated that culturally responsive instruction using Yoruba orature significantly improved students' academic performance and engagement. The study revealed that students exposed to indigenous content outperformed their peers taught using conventional English-only methods.

Ayankojo (2026) argues that effective English teaching in Nigeria requires integrating learners' linguistic repertoires through culturally responsive and multidisciplinary approaches. A large-scale survey in Niger State revealed that teachers overwhelmingly

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support the integration of indigenous languages in teaching, particularly for improving comprehension and engagement (Akpokiere, Niyi and Salihu 2025). The marginalization of indigenous languages has created a disconnect between learners' socio-cultural realities and classroom instruction. Akinsola (2025) demonstrated that resource-person-mediated instruction where community knowledge holders participate in teaching significantly improves students' participation, understanding and cultural awareness. Similarly, studies on Efik language pedagogy show that cultural elements such as storytelling and communal participation enhance language acquisition and retention (Ebu, Alobo, Nabiebu and Inyang 2025). Also, Mullen (2021) argued that indigenous knowledge and education provide the pedagogy for the decolonisation of Education, both in theory and practice. Teacher training is a critical factor in the success of decolonized pedagogy. Empirical studies in Nigeria consistently show that teachers trained in indigenous pedagogy demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness. Adéẹ̀kọ́ (2021) posits that teacher training is a critical factor in the success of decolonized pedagogy. Empirical studies in Nigeria consistently show that teachers trained in indigenous pedagogy demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness.

The role of indigenous languages in education has been a subject of global discourse, particularly in multilingual societies where language barriers may affect learning outcomes. In Nigeria, where multiple indigenous languages coexist with English as the official language of instruction, Research has shown that the use of mother tongue in education can positively impact students' academic performance (Oginni and Owolabi, 2013). Studies such as those by Tsaure and Sani (2024) and (Niyi, Akpokiere and Salihu 2024) have highlighted the significance of indigenous languages in education. The study therefore, investigated whether training teachers in indigenous language pedagogy is a key component of decolonisation that could improve instructional effectiveness and students' learning outcomes

There are limited empirical and policy-oriented studies that connect decolonised language pedagogy, teacher training in indigenous languages and instructional effectiveness in Nigerian educational system. Therefore, the study is significant because it attempted to bridge these interconnected gaps by examining how indigenous language teacher training can support decolonised pedagogy and improve instructional effectiveness for sustainable creativity in Nigerian education system.

The study would contribute to improving language pedagogy by promoting culturally relevant and indigenous approaches to teaching and learning in Nigerian school, it would also provide insights into the effectiveness of indigenous language teacher training programmes and help teacher education institutions develop better training models for language teachers, furthermore, the study may assist educational policy makers in strengthening the implementation of the National policy on education regarding mother-

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tongue and indigenous language instruction. The study would strengthen cultural identity, self -reliance and appreciation of indigenous knowledge systems among learners and educator.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the policy recognition of indigenous languages in Nigeria' national policy on education, classroom practices remain largely dominated by English. This creates disconnection between learners' linguistic realities and instructional delivery resulting in low comprehension, poor academic achievement and cultural alienation. The problem is further compounded by lack of teacher training in indigenous pedagogy, continued reliance in colonial teaching methods and minimal empirical studies using robust statistical designs. Thus, there is need to empirically examine how decolonising language pedagogy through teacher training influences learners' achievement in English language.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

- examine the effect of indigenous language pedagogy on students' academic performance in English language.
- determine the influence of teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy on students' comprehension.
- assess the influence of teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy on classroom participation and critical thinking of students
- evaluate differences in teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers.
- investigate the relationship between decolonised pedagogy and students' critical thinking skills.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- There is no significant effect of Indigenous language pedagogy on students' performance in English language.
- There is no significant influence of teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy on students' comprehension.
- There is no significant influence of teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy on students' classroom participation and critical thinking.
- There is no significant difference in teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy.

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- There is no significant relationship between decolonized pedagogy and students' critical thinking.

Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded on Decolonisation Theory by Fanon (1967), Sociocultural Theory by Vygostsky (1986) and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Framework by Smith (2012)
Decolonisation theory critiques the dominance of Western epistemologies and advocates for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in education. It seeks to dismantle colonial power structures embedded in language and pedagogy. Sociocultural Theory posits that learning is mediated through social interaction and cultural context. Decolonised pedagogy aligns with this by embedding local cultural realities into instruction and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Framework which argue that integrating indigenous knowledge enhances relevance and learner engagement. There is no gainsaying that learning can only be sustained in Nigerian schools when teaching and learning is tailored towards using indigenous language for classroom instruction.

Literature Review

The concept of decolonisation of education is a process of dismantling colonial structures, epistemologies, languages and pedagogical practices that continue to dominate educational systems in formerly colonised societies. In Nigeria, decolonisation seeks to reposition indigenous knowledge systems, African languages, cultural values and local experiences at the centre of teaching and learning. Rather than merely adding African content to existing curricula, decolonisation aims to transform the assumptions about what counts as legitimate knowledge and whose voices are represented in education. African scholars argue that colonial education privileged European histories, languages, and worldviews while marginalising indigenous African knowledge systems. Consequently, many African learners encounter curricula that are disconnected from their sociocultural realities. Decolonisation therefore advocates curriculum reform, epistemic justice and educational practices that reflect local contexts and indigenous ways of knowing. Adeniyi (2020) explained that the relationship between decolonisation and culturally responsive pedagogy is particularly significant because both approaches challenge Eurocentric educational models. In the African context, culturally responsive pedagogy encourages teachers to:

- Integrate indigenous knowledge systems into classroom instruction;
- Use local examples, cultural practices, and community experiences in teaching;
- Value African identities and cultural heritage;
- Promote collaborative and communal learning traditions common in many African societies; and

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- Challenge deficit perceptions of indigenous cultures and languages.

Decolonising language policy therefore involves promoting indigenous African languages within educational systems. Such policies seek to enhance learners' comprehension through mother-tongue instruction, preserve linguistic and cultural heritage, increase educational access and participation, promote cognitive development and critical thinking and challenge linguistic hierarchies established during colonial rule. Research has shown that the use of indigenous languages in education can have a positive impact on student outcomes and cultural preservation (Bamgbose, 2020). For example, a study conducted in Southwestern Nigeria found that students who received instruction in their indigenous language performed better academically and had a stronger sense of cultural identity compared to those who received instruction in English (Adeniyi, 2020). This highlights the importance of promoting indigenous languages in education and underscores the need for policies that support the use of indigenous languages in instructional settings. The indigenous language is an agent that redirects people's culture away from and far from the colonial features and historical legacies of the colonial masters. Indigenous language refers to the native or local language spoken by the indigenous people of a particular region or country (Ndimele, 2019). In the context of Southwestern Nigeria. Despite growing support for decolonisation, Prah (2018) highlights several challenges which includes:

1. Continued dominance of colonial languages in education and governance.
2. Limited teaching resources in indigenous languages.
3. Inadequate teacher preparation for culturally responsive instruction.
4. Globalisation pressures that prioritise English and other international languages.
5. Institutional resistance to curriculum transformation.

Methodology

An ex-post facto design was adopted for the study since the independent variable (teacher training and the results of the students had already occurred and could not be manipulated. The population of the study consisted of all Language teachers in Ondo state. Ondo state consisted of three (3) senatorial districts; North, central and south. Each of them has six (6) local government areas with a total of eighteen local government areas. The sample consisted of 480 secondary school teachers, two hundred and forty (240) trained and two hundred and forty (240) untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy. Through Stratified random sampling technique, eighty (80) English language teachers were selected from each senatorial district to ensure representation across urban and rural schools. The Centre of excellence For Applying Indigenous Languages Pedagogy is a Nigerian government programme through the intervention of The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETfund) domiciled in Adeyemi Federal University of Education,

Ondo, organised a capacity building training programme for Language teachers on the use of indigenous languages for classroom instruction in the three senatorial districts using eighty (80) Language teachers per district with a total of two hundred and forty (240). The major objective of the training was to train teachers on the use of indigenous language for classroom instruction. This is in tandem with the language policy implementation of the National policy on education which aimed at using indigenous language for classroom instruction for basics one to nine, in order to enhance students' critical thinking, participation and comprehension. The Teacher Instructional Effectiveness Scale (TIES) and Students Learning Outcome Test (SLOT) were used to collect data from the respondents. The TIES was a self-constructed questionnaire using Likert type four-point rating scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with a benchmark of 2.5. The SLOT was test adopting Multiple choice questions (MCQs) to determine the performance of the students taught using indigenous language. The instruments were used before and after the teachers had undergone training in indigenous language for instruction. The students learning outcome, (periodic test1) of the students taught by trained and untrained teachers were compared to determine their comprehension, participation and critical thinking. The first periodic test served as pretest, because the teachers had not received training in indigenous language pedagogy. After their training, the second periodic test, (test 2) was conducted. This served as posttest. The pretest and posttest were compared to determine students' level of comprehension, participation and critical thinking. The TIES was subjected to face, content and construct validity by language experts and experts in test and measurement, Corrections arisen from their observations were amended in the final drafts. The reliability of the Teacher Instructional Effectiveness Scale (TIES) was ascertained through pilot testing on forty (40) language teachers who were not part of the study. Data collected were subjected to statistical analyses using Cronbach alpha and the result yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82 which considered the instrument adequate and reliable for the study. The validity and reliability of the SLOT could not be determined since it was a school-based assessment score. The researcher visited the sampled schools where permission was sought from the school managements, monitored the process of the indigenous language pedagogy training and collected the concluded school-based scores. The learning outcomes of the students taught by trained and untrained indigenous language teachers were compared. Data collected were analysed using independent t-test, ANCOVA and Regression analysis.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant effect of trained and untrained teachers on students' academic achievement in English Language

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Table 1: t-test showing effect of trained and untrained teachers on students' academic achievement in English Language

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std	Diff Mean	t-value	df	Sig.
Academic achievement	Trained	240	68.50	10.20				
	Untrained	240	61.30	11.00	7.20	7.42	478	0.000

Findings of table 1 reveal that training of teachers in indigenous language improves students' academic achievement in English language. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significantly influence of indigenous language pedagogy on classroom participation of learners

Table 2: t-test showing significant influence of indigenous language pedagogy on students' comprehension

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std	Diff Mean	t-value	df	Sig.
Comprehension	Trained	240	72.40	9.50				
	Untrained	240	64.10	10.30	8.30	9.22	478	0.000

P<0.05

Table 2 results show that indigenous language pedagogy has positive significant influence on students' comprehension. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy on students' comprehension, participation and critical thinking.

Tabl3: ANCOVA Analysis of the Influence of Teacher Training in Indigenous Language Pedagogy on instructional effectiveness, students' comprehension, Participation, and Critical Thinking

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F-value	Sig.
Corrected Model	5,984.721	2	2,992.361	34.587	.000*
Intercept	12,765.483	1	12,765.483	147.536	.000*
Covariate (Pre-test Score)	1,245.670	1	1,245.670	14.395	.000*
Teacher Training	4,739.051	1	4,739.051	54.757	.000*
Error	41,268.279	477	86.517	—	—
Total	2,845,700.000	480	—	—	—
Corrected Total	47,253.000	479	—	—	—

*Significant at p < .05

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Since the p-value associated with Teacher Training is .000, which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The ANCOVA results of table 3 indicate that teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy has a statistically significant influence on instructional effectiveness, students' comprehension, participation, and critical thinking after controlling for pre-test differences. The obtained value of $F(1, 477) = 54.757$, $p < .05$ shows that students taught by trained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy demonstrated significantly higher levels of comprehension, participation, and critical thinking than those taught by untrained teachers.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy

Table 4: Independent t-test showing significant difference in teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy

Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	Sig.
Trained	240	79.00	8.00	15.85	478	.000
Untrained	240	66.20	9.10	—	—	—

P<0.05

Result of table 4 shows that there is a significant difference in teaching effectiveness between trained and untrained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between decolonized pedagogy and students' critical thinking skills.

Table 5: Regression analysis showing significant relationship between decolonized pedagogy and students' critical thinking skills

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	12.45	2.10	—	5.93	.000
Decolonized Pedagogy	0.68	0.05	0.72	13.60	.000

p<0.05

Result of table 5 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between decolonized pedagogy and students' critical thinking skill. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in table 1 confirms that indigenous language pedagogy significantly enhances students' academic achievement. This result is strongly supported by Sanni et al. (2025)

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that the integration of indigenous languages in Nigerian classrooms improves pedagogical relevance and enhances learners' engagement and academic success. Similarly, research on decolonizing the medium of instruction in Nigeria indicates that students often struggle academically when taught in English due to limited proficiency, whereas indigenous languages improve comprehension and learning outcomes. This assertion supports Akinsola (2025) that culturally responsive instruction using indigenous language contexts significantly improves students' learning outcomes in Yoruba orature. These findings align with Decolonization Theory, which argues that learning becomes more meaningful when rooted in learners' linguistic and cultural environments. In contrast, Gondo and Gondo (2012), in their study of indigenous language teacher preparation in Zimbabwe, reported that despite the existence of teacher training programmes, inconsistencies in training models, weak supervision, poor curriculum implementation, and inadequate pedagogical support limited the effectiveness of trained indigenous language teachers. The study concluded that teacher training alone did not necessarily translate into improved instructional outcomes

Table 2 result shows that students participate actively when instruction is delivered in familiar linguistic contexts. This aligns with findings that foreign-language instruction often creates anxiety and limits participation. The result is in support of Akinsola (2025) which demonstrated resource-person-mediated instruction where community knowledge holders participate in teaching significantly improves students' participation, understanding and cultural awareness. Hence, decolonization literature emphasizes that learners engage more effectively when their identities and languages are recognized in the classroom. However, Kareem and Abdulrahman (2026) asserted that the implementation of indigenous language education in Africa continues to face challenges such as inadequate teaching materials, shortage of qualified personnel, poor funding, and weak policy implementation. The authors argued that these challenges often reduce the potential impact of teacher training on students' learning outcomes.

Table 3 result indicates that teachers who received training in indigenous language instruction performed significantly better in promoting instructional effectiveness, improve students' comprehension, classroom participation and critical thinking skills than teachers who had not received such training. This supports contemporary arguments that pedagogical competence in local languages enhances meaning-making in classrooms. Recent studies show that indigenous languages enhance clarity and understanding. This finding is in tandem with a large-scale survey in Niger State, Nigeria, which revealed that teachers overwhelmingly support the integration of indigenous languages in teaching, particularly for improving comprehension and engagement (Akpokiere et al., 2025). However, Okudo (2023) investigated teacher qualities and academic performance among indigenous language students in Nigeria and found that although teachers had undergone

professional training, many continued to employ teacher-centred instructional approaches. He further said that training did not significantly improve students' learning outcomes because instructional practices remained largely traditional.

Table 4 result shows that training in indigenous language pedagogy significantly improves teaching effectiveness. Teachers who understand learners' linguistic backgrounds can deliver instruction more effectively. This supports empirical evidence that teacher competence is a key determinant of educational quality and learning outcomes. It also supports the findings of Adéẹ̀kọ́, (2021) that teacher training is a critical factor in the success of decolonized pedagogy. Empirical studies in Nigeria consistently show that teachers trained in indigenous pedagogy demonstrate higher instructional effectiveness. In contrast, Ndibe (2026) found that while teachers' educational qualifications significantly influenced the integration of oral traditions in Igbo language teaching, teaching experience and professional exposure did not significantly influence teaching effectiveness. Ndibe further declared that the mere presence of teacher training may not be sufficient unless accompanied by adequate instructional resources, curriculum support and continuous professional development.

Table 5 result shows that decolonized pedagogy promotes critical thinking by connecting learning to real-life contexts and indigenous knowledge systems. Scholars argue that colonial education systems often encourage rote learning, while decolonized approaches promote analytical and reflective thinking. The findings corroborate with Decolonization Theory by Fanon (1967) which posits that embedding local cultural realities into instruction and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Framework which argue that integrating indigenous knowledge enhances relevance and learner engagement. However, Asante (2009) argued that while the promotion of indigenous knowledge is important, educational reforms that focus excessively on cultural affirmation without sufficient emphasis on analytical inquiry may inadvertently reduce opportunities for rigorous critical engagement.

The disparity between the present study and the earlier studies may be attributed to differences in research settings and design, educational levels, availability of instructional resources, policy implementation and the quality of teacher professional development programmes. While previous studies focused on systemic constraints limiting the effectiveness of teacher training, the present study suggests that where adequate training opportunities and supportive learning environments exist, teacher training in indigenous language can significantly improve instructional effectiveness, students' comprehension, participation, and critical thinking.

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Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that, indigenous language pedagogy significantly improves students' performance, teacher training in indigenous language pedagogy enhances students' comprehension, indigenous pedagogy increases classroom participation, trained teachers in indigenous language pedagogy are more effective in delivering instruction and decolonized pedagogy enhances students' critical thinking. Consequently, the findings collectively demonstrated that decolonizing language pedagogy is a powerful tool for improving educational outcomes in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- Educational authorities should enforce the use of indigenous languages alongside English as media of instruction so as to enhance comprehension and academic achievement
- Teacher education institutions should incorporate indigenous language pedagogy into pre-service and in-service training to improve classroom delivery and effectiveness
- Teachers should adopt culturally responsive teaching strategies that encourage students' active participation and critical thinking
- Philanthropists are encouraged to partner with the government by equipping the schools with resources and support systems that could facilitate indigenous language instruction
- Government should ensure effective implementation of the National Policy on Education regarding mother tongue instruction, with clear monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

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