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# Exploring the Problems and Solutions of the Language of Communication in the Delivery of Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract: This paper explored the problems and solutions facing the effective implementation of language of communication policy of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted the case study type of the qualitative research design. The target population for this study consists of NMEC officials, facilitators and learner, while sample was selecting using the multistage sampling procedure. An interview schedule was used as instrument to collect data for this study. A pre-test of the instrument was carried out on a group of 12 samples who did not participate in the main study. The reliability of responses was ascertained by crosschecking responses with verifiable data. Data were collected through interview sessions, and analysed via thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti software. The responses elicited from the participants of the study were developed into themes and sub-themes in order to critically analyze the subject of discussion. The study revealed that challenges of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme include inadequate funding, poor remuneration, lack of incentives for staff, little or no incentives for learners, insufficient manpower, high workload for staff, unavailability of necessary facilities and materials and challenges of language communication policy. The study recommends that Government and other stakeholders should make provision for more manpower, provision of infrastructural facilities, provision of financial aid and support, empowerment of learners, provision of learning materials, provision of incentive for staff, provision of electronic gadgets, provision of support and encouragement for learners in the implementation of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme.

Keywords: Problems; Solutions; Staff; Facilitators; Learners; NMEC; Nigeria.

## Introduction

The Federal Government of Nigeria founded the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC) in 1990 with the goal of organising, overseeing, and evaluating adult literacy initiatives across the nation. With offices spread across the 36 states, all 774 local government units, and the country's six geopolitical zones, the commission's operations are decentralised. The Commission, in conjunction with local adult education officers, supervisors, and literacy teachers, is solely responsible for organising and supervising literacy classes. Any local government should have 10 literacy lessons at the very least; extra sessions should be overseen and paid for by non-governmental organisations. The core abilities of all literacy programs—reading, writing, numeracy, and life skills—are tested by examinations (Aderinoye, 2007).

According to Bridge (2018), those who lack literacy run the risk of being shut out of their groups and society. In today's globalised and modern society, literacy encompasses much more than just reading a book and comprehending what has been read; it also includes digital literacy. For instance, digital literacy refers to the capacity to comprehend and utilise information in a variety of media, including cell phones, computers, and the internet. Written communication now predominates in social interactions due to the widespread use of messaging apps like WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook Messenger, and email in the office.

Therefore, not being literate restricts one's opportunities in life and makes it more difficult for them to engage with most aspects of society. Any nation's ultimate goal is to provide its people with the literacy, numeracy, and other skills they require to take charge of their lives and realise their potential (Bridge, 2018). This clarifies Audrey Azoulay's remarks made on International Literacy Day in 2018 as the Director-General of UNESCO: "Literacy is the first step towards freedom, towards liberation from social and economic constraints." It is a requirement for both individual and group development. It produces wealth, lessens poverty and inequality, and aids in the eradication of public health and nutrition issues (UNESCO, 2018, p. 12).

A variety of non-formal and continuing education programmes were introduced by the Nigerian government through the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education as a supplemental option to care for disadvantaged, marginalised, and difficult-to-reach children, youth, and adults. This was done in an effort to significantly reduce the high level of illiteracy in Nigeria in line with the EFA goals and make basic education accessible to all citizens. Literacy centres were set up by

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the Federation's 774 local governments to provide adults without formal education and young people who are not in school with practical literacy skills. These individuals are primarily from rural and urban slums. Non-formal education initiatives provide flexible learning options to underprivileged children, teens, and adults who are unable to attend traditional schools because of financial hardship, cultural differences, or other social impediments. At different levels, learners can be mainstreamed into the formal system through the use of non-formal education. As a result, many adults and young people who previously would not have been able to attend a formal education system have acquired reading skills and are now succeeding in their aspirations.

The policy shall include and encourage the development and use of smaller languages for literacy and non-formal education delivery. The linguistic diversity of Nigeria shall be a source of cultural and linguistic wealth that promotes education and understanding among citizens. In other words, it appreciates the essence of language as a tool of instruction and its potential as a unifying factor. English, the official language, should serve as a medium of facilitation in NMEC centres at post-basic, continuing and tertiary levels education. The geo-political zones where the three major languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) predominate should be used in the first three years of basic education (NMEC, 2017).

It is the duty of the NMEC to provide literacy skills to individuals who, for whatever reason, were unable or did not profit from the traditional education system. These include young people who are not in school, kids who live on the streets, women who are fasting, victims of casualties, adolescent moms, nomadic illiterates, almajiri, and other migratory fishermen. Beneficiaries who learn reading skills will be forced to apply such talents in their day-to-day socioeconomic activities. the pledge made in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 2014 National Policy on Education, which places a strong focus on the need to end mass illiteracy by establishing adult, mass, and non-formal education.

Additionally, it involves launching effective advocacy and communication campaigns, educating the public and sensitising target communities, creating a system of equivalency and certification for literacy and non-formal education (NFE) that recognises the competencies acquired in NFE, creating a competency-based education pathway that is graded and modular, beginning with the basic education module, setting up learning centres for children, youth, and adults who are not in school, encouraging adult and youth distance learning, and creating and producing audio-visual learning materials to rally the support of local and political figures as well as different funding organisations for literacy, adult education, and non-formal education. The programme is scheduled to run for nine to twelve months, although the policy allows for consideration of the learners' performance and psychological maturity.

Only very few studies have explored the problems and solutions of the Language of Communication in the Delivery of Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes (NMEC) in Nigeria. the Eze (2021) study found that terrorism, self-determination agitation, ritualism, kidnapping, corruption, and insecurity were among the issues that Nigeria's NMEC was confronting. For the intended development of the country, the author suggested that educational corruption and insecurity be aggressively addressed. In their 2017 study, Sakir, Kalli, and Ebireri explored the issues, opportunities, and constraints surrounding adult literacy and the provision of non-formal education in Northeastern Nigeria. The study was qualitative research. Six focus group discussions were conducted for the study. The findings of the study showed amongst others that all states were faced with the concerns/challenges of inadequate funding, lack of logistics for monitoring and evaluation; low level of political commitment; inadequate instructional materials; inadequate facilitators and existing laws establishing the Agencies are still edicts.

Few other studies have explored the factors affecting the smooth operations of several government programmes in Nigeria. Osiesi (2023) conducted a mixed methods study that explored the challenges militating against the Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) Programme of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), as well as the solutions. Findings reveal that the challenges that militated against the programme were inadequate funds, power outage, low motivation of teachers, poor remuneration/salary scale for teachers, lack of ICT facilities for teachers' use, lack of laboratories, non-provision of medical care for the participants, poor oganisation of professional development programmes, time constraint, family responsibilities, failure of school management to support teachers, lack of prompt payment of facilitators and participants, inadequate supply of instructional materials, lack of coverage of practical lessons and experiments, lack of workshop/seminars rooms, lack of good public address system for teaching and learning, and lack of guidance and counseling services in training centers.

The author also listed some solutions to these challenges to include adequate funds available, provision of ICT facilities, proper remuneration/increased salary scale for teachers, adequate and constant electricity supply, provision of laboratories for practical, provision of medical care for the participants, conducive learning environment, prompt payment of facilitators and participants, provision of instructional materials, practical lessons and experiments, provision of workshop/seminars rooms, provision of public address system for teaching and learning, and provision of guidance and counseling services in training centres.

Similarly, Okwilagwe and Olanloye (2017) conducted a study which assessed the challenges of and solutions facing the Universal Basic Education teachers' professional development intervention programmes in south west, Nigeria. Findings showed that lack of adequate funds, conducive learning environment, securing training venues and lack of medical care personnel to attend to the trainee participants were the notable constraints hindering the effective implementation and achievement of teachers' development and training programmes. The study recommended that lesson plan development, student-centered techniques, provision of adequate funds for UBE teacher development programmes, provision of conducive environment and medical personnel during training be ensured for continued programmes effectiveness. This is the gab this current study intends filling in the extant

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literature. Thus, this study explored the problems and solutions of the Language of Communication in the Delivery of Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes (NMEC) in Southwest, Nigeria.

# Statement of problem

The National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) of the Nigerian government introduced non-formal and continuing education programmes to address the educational needs of disadvantaged, marginalised, and hard-to-reach children, youth, and adults. This was done in an effort to reduce the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria, align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and make basic education accessible to all citizens. There haven't been many research on the assessment of the National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education's language of communication policy in South-West Nigeria. There don't seem to be many, if any, empirical research on the issues NMEC faces and potential fixes to eliminate or lessen such issues. Therefore, this study examined the related problems that the programme is experiencing and makes recommendations for potential fixes.

# Objective of the study

The major objective of the study was to identify the problems militating against the effective implementation of the NMEC language of communication policy, and proffer possible solutions to the problems.

#### **Research Ouestions**

- (i) What are the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes?
- (ii) What are the possible solutions to the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes?

## Methodology

This study adopted the case study type of the qualitative research design.

# **Population**

The target population for this study consists of NMEC officials, facilitators and learners (who have been enrolled in the literacy classes at the Mass literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education Centres) in South-West, Nigeria.

#### Sampling Techniques and Sample

Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the samples for the study. There are six States in the South-West, Nigeria. These States are Oyo, Osun, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo and Ekiti. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one State from the existing stratified States in South-West, Nigeria based on their geographical proximity (sharing of common boundary) and historical communalities. Since the States do not have the same number of LGAs for urban and rural areas, stratified and proportionate to size sampling techniques was used to select urban and rural local government areas based on LGAs with more than 200,000 population (as Urban) and less than 200,000 population (as Rural) in each State, except Lagos State. At this stage, simple random sampling technique was used to select two NMEC officials (one Admin staff and one Education Officer), three facilitators, and five learners each from Lagos, Ondo and Oyo NMEC centres.

## Instrumentation

A structured interview schedule was used as instrument to collect data for this study. Questions bordering on the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes, as well as the perceived solutions to these problems. A pre-test of the instrument was carried out on a group of 12 samples who did not participate in the main study. The reliability of responses was ascertained by crosschecking responses with verifiable data.

#### **Method of Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected by the researchers through the conduct of structured interview sessions, were responses and views of the participants were obtained using interview schedules and audio recording devices, and transcribed for further thematic analysis.

#### Method of Data Analysis

Data for this study were analysed via thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti software..

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#### Results

**Research Question 1:**What are the problems militating against the effective implementation of language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes?

The question explored challenges militating against the implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. The responses elicited from the study respondents showed various challenges faced by NMEC staff and the challenges were grouped into eight sub-themes to be able to critically examine and discuss the challenges militating against the implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. The eight sub-themes and challenge identified from the responses generated from the data of the study are: inadequate funding, poor remuneration, lack of incentives for staff, little or no incentives for learners, insufficient manpower, high workload for staff, unavailability of necessary facilities and materials and challenges of language of communication policy.

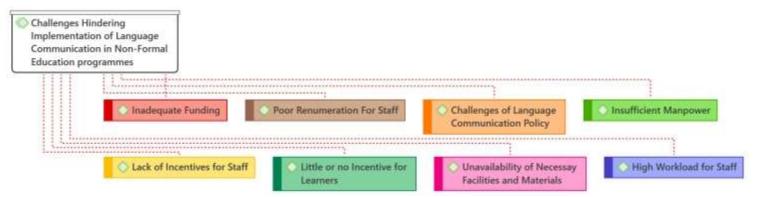
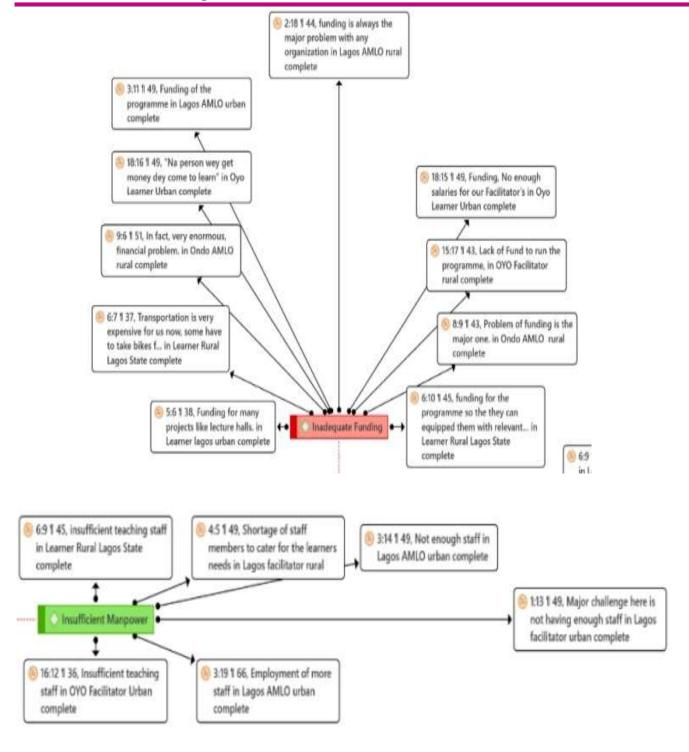


Figure 1: Problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes

communication

Responses elicited from the respondents were grouped under each sub-theme and a critical analysis was conducted on the responses generated and they were discussed in details in each sub-section below:



 ${\bf 2:}\ In a dequate\ Funding,\ In sufficient\ Man power\ and\ Challenges\ of\ Language$ 

**Figure** Communication Policy

**Theme 1: Inadequate Funding** 

The result of the analysis conducted on the textual information elicited from the responses of the study respondents showed varying responses of the respondent's view on inadequate funding. Respondents gave similar responses on inadequate funding. A respondent asserted that "the problem of funding is a major one" (Ondo AMLO). Also, a respondent asserted that "funding is always the major problem with any organization" (Lagos AMLO). While another respondent affirmed that "funding is always a major problem with any organization".

In addition, one respondent asserted that "funding for the programme so they can equip them with relevant ..." (Learner, Lagos State). In line with this response, another respondent affirmed that "funding for many projects like lecture halls, in Learner Lagos complete". Furthermore, a respondent asserted that

"...Na person wey get money dey come to learn" (Oyo learner).

In line with the response, a respondent affirmed that there is "enormous financial problem" (Ondo AMLO). Other respondent stated that "inadequate funding for many projects like lecture halls".

#### Theme 2: Poor Remuneration for Staff

The result of the analysis conducted on the textual information gotten from the study respondents showed similar responses of the respondent's view on poor remuneration of staff. The study recipient asserted that "'facilitator's salary not substantial in Oyo facilitator complete" (OYO Facilitator). Other respondent affirmed that "no sufficient payment of salaries to our facilitators in Learner Lagos urban complete". Summarily, the result of the critical analysis done on the responses of the study respondents showed that there is poor remuneration for facilitator of language of communication non-informal education programme staff.

#### Theme 3: Lack of Incentives for Staff

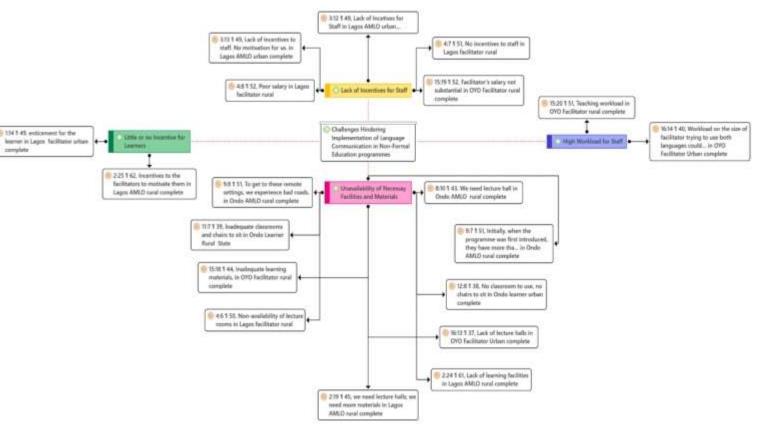


Figure 3: Lack of incentives for staff, High Workload for staff, Little or no incentives for learners as a challenge of the implementation language communication in non-formal education programme

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Multiple responses were generated as majority of the study respondents asserted that lack of proper incentives for staff is a major hindrance to the implementation of language communication in non-formal education programme. One of the respondents asserted that there is "lack of incentives to staffs. No motivation for us" (Lagos AMLO), another respondent affirmed that "no incentives to staffs" (Lagos Facilitator). In addition, a respondent asserted that "lack of incentives for staff in Lagos AMLO" (Lagos AMLO). In addition, another respondent stated that there is "poor salary" (Lagos Facilitator) for staffs and this in a way affect the implementation of language communication in non-formal education programmes. To further corroborate the responses of the study respondents earlier highlighted, another respondent affirmed that "facilitator salary not substantial" (Oyo Facilitator).

#### Theme 4: Insufficient Man Power

The result of the analysis conducted on the textual information gotten from the study respondents showed similar responses of the respondent's view on insufficient manpower. One of the respondents asserted that "major challenge here is not having enough staff" (Lagos facilitator). Another respondent asserted that "insufficient teaching staff" (Oyo facilitator). In addition, another respondent affirmed that "not enough staff" (Lagos AMLO). Also, another respondent asserted that "employment of more staff" (Lagos AMLO).

## Theme 5: High Workload for Staff

The result of the analysis done on the responses elicited from the study respondents aimed at examining the perception of the study participants on the workload of staffs. It was discovered from the study responses elicited from the study respondents that high workload on staff contributes to the challenge of non-implementation of language communication policy. One respondent asserted that "workload on the size of facilitator trying to use both languages could" (OYO Facilitator). In line with this response, another respondent affirmed that "teaching workload" (Oyo facilitator). Although few responses were generated on high work load for staff, however it is important to know that this factor contributes largely to the challenge faced in NMEC where the Language of communication is not properly implemented in NMEC centers.

## Theme 6: Unavailability of Necessary Facilities and Materials

The result of the analysis conducted on the textual information gotten from the study respondents showed varying responses from the respondents on unavailability of necessary facilities and materials. One of the study respondents asserted that "lack of lecture halls" (OYO Facilitator). Another respondent affirmed the statement as the respondent asserted that "we need lecture halls; we need more materials" (Lagos AMLO) In line with these responses, a respondent also affirmed that "we need lecture halls" (Ondo AMLO). Another respondent also affirmed it further by stating that there is "non-availability of lecture rooms" (Lagos Facilitator).

Furthermore, other responses elicited from the study respondents follows the trend of the responses stated by other study participants as the respondents all highlighted the necessary facilities and materials that are unavailable. One of the respondents said "to get to these remote settings we experience bad roads" (Ondo AMLO). Another respondent asserted that "lack of learning facilities" (Lagos AMLO).

## Theme 7: Challenges of Language Communication Policy

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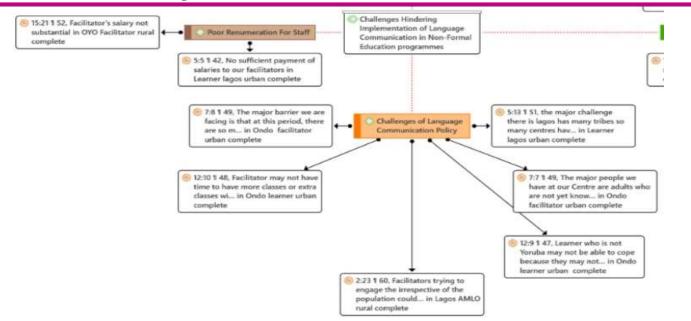


Figure 4: Challenges of Language Communication Policy

The result of the analysis conducted on the textual information gotten from the study respondents showed varying responses of the respondent's view on challenges of language communication policy. Multiple responses were generated from the question posed to the respondent to examine their understanding of the challenges of language communication policy.

A critical analysis of the responses showed that the understanding of challenges of language communication policy differs from one respondent to the other. One of the respondents said:

The major challenge there is Lagos has many tribes so many centers thereby making it difficult for facilitators to introduce a uniform non-formal language to facilitate teaching and learning. (Lagos Learner)

In line with the response of the previous respondent, another respondent asserted that:

Learner who is not Yoruba may not be able to cope because they are not ... (Ondo learner).

Another respondent asserted that "the major people we have at our center are adults who are yet to know ..." (Ondo Facilitator). Furthermore, one respondent asserted that "facilitator may not have time to have more classes or extra classes" (Ondo learner).

Summarily, from the responses of the study respondents and from the critical analysis conducted on the responses generated by the researcher to examine the challenges of language communication policy, the researcher can conclude that differences in tribal ties and non-formal languages spoken by learners makes it difficult to implement and adopt a non-formal language for teaching and learning because it will be difficult to choose a uniform language in a setting where there are multiple learners speaking different languages.

**Research Question 2:** What are the possible solutions to the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes?

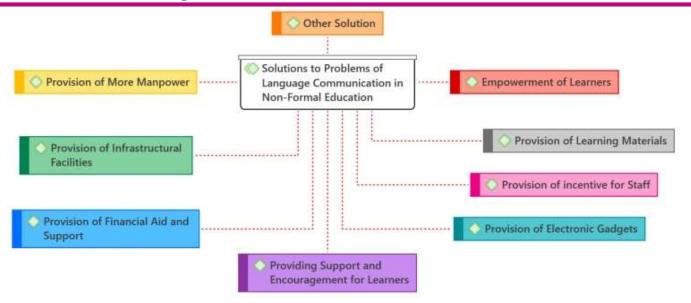


Figure 5: Solutions to problems of Language Communication in Non-Formal Education

Thus, the nine sub-themes are:

- Provision of Financial Aid and Support
- Provision of More Manpower
- Provision of Infrastructural Facilities
- Empowerment of Learners
- Provision of Learning Materials
- Provision of Incentive for Staff
- Provision of Electronic Gadgets
- Provision of Support and Encouragement for Learners

Each of the sub-themes which are the solutions that were discovered from the responses elicited from the study respondents were grouped and discussed in details below.

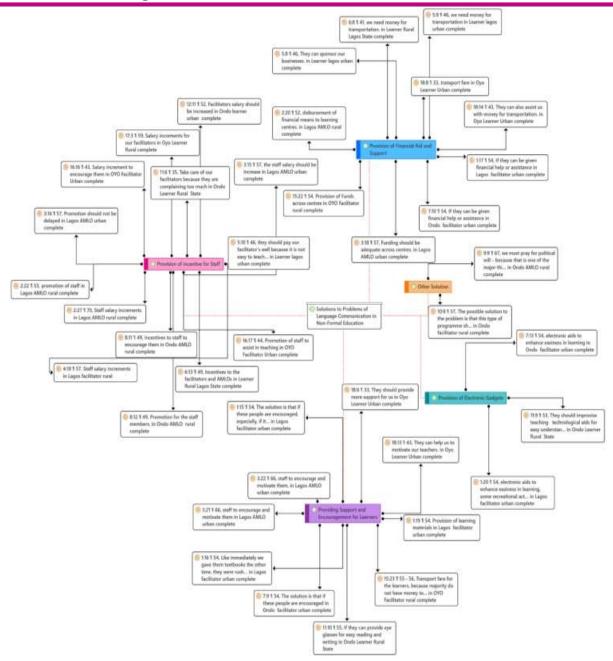


Figure 6:Cummulative Responses of Respondents to the Possible Solutions

# Theme 1: Provision of financial Aids and Support

To establish the roles of provision of financial aids and supports in solving the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes, responses were generated from respondents based on the questions posed to them. A respondent in Lagos AMLO submitted that "disbursement of financial means to learning centres" (Lagos AMLO centres) will solve the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. In the same vein, a respondent in Oyo Facilitator asserted that "provision of funds across centres" (OYO Facilitator) has the capacity of solving the above stated problem. Likewise, a respondent in Lagos AMLO s complete also said "funding should be adequate across centres" (Lagos AMLO) in order to solve the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes.

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## Theme 2: Provision of More Manpower

In the provision of more manpower to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme, a respondent (a learner) from Lagos State submitted that "employment of facilitators" can solve the problem stated above. Other respondents made similar assertions. Thus, a respondent in Learner Lagos complete asserted posited that "we need more facilitators" (Learner Lagos) in order to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. In addition, another respondent in Ondo AMLO complete said that "employment of more staff" (Ondo AMLO) can solve the problem mentioned above.

#### **Theme 3: Provision of Infrastructural Facilities**

Qualitative Analysis is done on participants' responses on Solutions to problems militating against the effective implementation of the language in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. Multiple responses were generated from the question posed to the respondents to examine the possible solutions on provision of infrastructural facilities.

One of the respondents from Lagos State said that "lecture hall that can accommodate many learners with convenience should be built" (Lagos state). Another respondent also asserted that "lecture halls is needed" (OYO learner) while another respondent from Oyo rural also affirmed that "lecture hall should be built" (Oyo learner). Likewise, a respondent in Oyo learner urban also stated that "we need lecture halls" (Oyo learner).

# Theme 4: Empowerment of learners

In order to further ascertain the solution to be provided on problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes, responses were generated to examine empowerment of learners can be used to solve the problem stated above. The responses generated by the researcher showed similar responses as the respondents' responses connected together and agreed on the Empowerment of learners as solution to the problems militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes.

In the Empowerment of learners to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme, a respondent from another Learner Lagos State submitted that

Dev fit buy us sewing machines, grinding machines, monocycles and so on (Learner Lagos)

## **Theme 5: Provision of Learning Materials**

In the provision of learning materials to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme, a respondent from Ondo facilitator urban submitted that "provision of learning materials" (Ondo Facilitator) can solve the problem stated above. Other respondents made similar assertions. Thus, a respondent in Oyo facilitator rural emphasized on "learning materials" (Oyo Facilitator) in order to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes. In addition, another respondent in Oyo Learner Urban complete said that "We need more books" (Oyo learner) to solve the problem mentioned above.

# Theme 6: Provision of Incentive for Staff

In the Provision of Incentive for Staff to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme, a respondent from Learner Lagos submitted that "they should pay our facilitators well because it is not easy to teach..." (Learner Lagos). Other respondents made similar assertions. Thus, a respondent in Ondo State learner pleaded that

Take care of our facilitators because they are complaining too much" (Ondo learner)

#### **Theme 7: Provision of Electronic Gadgets**

In the provision of electronic gadgets to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme, a respondent in Ondo facilitator complete submitted that "electronic aids to enhance easiness in learning" (Ondo Facilitator) should be provided to solve the problem stated above. Another respondent made similar assertions.

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Thus, a respondent in Lagos (a facilitator) stated that "electronic aids to enhance easiness in learning, some recreational act..." is needed in order to solve the problem militating against the effective implementation of the language of communication in the delivery of literacy, adult and non-formal education programmes.

#### Discussion

This study explored the problems and solutions of the Language of Communication in the Delivery of Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes (NMEC) in Southwest, Nigeria. Arising from the findings of the study, the challenges confronting NMEC in the Southwest are inadequate funding, poor remuneration, lack of incentives for staff, little or no incentives for learners, insufficient manpower, high workload for staff, unavailability of necessary facilities and materials are the challenges of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme. This supports the findings and assertions of Eze (2021), Okwilagwe and Olanloye (2017), Osiesi (2023), and Sakir et al. (2017), which reaffirms the findings of this current study.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study explored the problems and solutions of the Language of Communication in the Delivery of Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education Programmes (NMEC) in Southwest, Nigeria. The study concludes that inadequate funding, poor remuneration, lack of incentives for staff, little or no incentives for learners, insufficient manpower, high workload for staff, unavailability of necessary facilities and materials are the challenges of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme. Governments as well as education stakeholders are to tackle and provide lasting solutions to the problems militating against the NMEC. Essentially, governments and other stakeholders should make provision of more manpower, provision of infrastructural facilities, provision of financial aid and support, empowerment of learners, provision of learning materials, provision of incentive for staff, provision of electronic gadgets, provision of support and encouragement for learners in the implementation of literacy, adult and non-formal education programme.

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