

An Investigation into The Content Validity of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum in Oyo North, Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study was aimed at investigating the content validity of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum in Oyo North, Oyo State, Nigeria, based on the views of Arabic language teachers. It also examined the influence of teachers' qualifications and teaching experience on their assessment of the curriculum. A descriptive research design was adopted, involving the administration of a questionnaire for data collection. One hundred and thirty-six qualified Arabic language teachers were purposively sampled from 82 Upper Basic schools where Arabic was offered. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage indices, and mean scores to answer research questions 1–6, while nine hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using the t-test. The findings indicated that teachers perceived the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum as valid for achieving the stated objectives. The results also revealed that teachers' qualifications and teaching experience had significant influences on their assessment of the curriculum. Consequently, it was recommended, among others, that sufficient qualified Arabic language teachers should be employed at the Upper Basic level and that teachers with lower qualifications should be encouraged to acquire additional qualifications to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum in Oyo State.*

KEYWORDS: Arabic Language, Basic Schools, Curriculum Implementation, Content Validity, Assessment

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Introduction

A curricular content is the body of knowledge carefully selected and organised for learning to achieve a laid down goals, aims and objectives of education. The contents of Arabic in Nigeria Basic Schools curriculum were purposefully selected to develop in the pupils and students, the four basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in Arabic; to acquaint the pupils and students with Arab civilization; to enable the pupils and students understand the meaning of Arabic words and short sentences; to enable the pupils and students speak fluent Arabic Language; to enable the pupils and students communicate in Arabic Language; to motivate the pupils and students to have the determination to study Arabic Language; to encourage the pupils and students to imbibe the love of the nation through Arabic poems; to give the pupils and students the opportunity of reading Arabic literary works; to give the pupils and students the opportunity of relating with Arab nations; and to motivate the pupils and learners to continue their studies of Arabic Language in future. (Translated from NERDC ARABIC BEC: 1-3, 2012, p. 5); (Abdul-Hamid, 2015).

Literature Review

Content Validity in Curriculum Studies

Content validity is the degree to which the contents of a curriculum, test, or educational instrument adequately represent the intended learning domain or construct (Polit & Beck, 2006). In curriculum evaluation, content validity examines whether the content, objectives, activities, and assessment align with the competencies that the learners should acquire (Alkhateeb, 2018). It therefore offers evidence that the written curriculum actually represents the knowledge and skills it is working to develop. As opposed to construct or criterion validity, which are based on statistical correlations with external variables, content validity relies on systematic expert judgment and consensus (Yusoff, 2019).

Curriculum validity has its foundations in the traditional educational measurement and curriculum design theory. Tyler's (1949) model is based on alignment among educational objectives, learning experiences, and assessment practices. Poor alignment among them renders the curriculum invalid. Similarly, Stufflebeam's CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product) considers content validity as part of context and input evaluation ensuring that curricular inputs are consistent with societal and learner needs (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). In language curricula, content validity ensures that the content selected exhibits balanced coverage of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as grammar, vocabulary, and culture (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Students might lack the linguistic capacity to perform well if some of the essential components are excluded or underrepresented. Hence, Nigerian Upper Basic level Arabic curricula need to be validated in order to ascertain that what is being taught corresponds with both the communicative and cultural aspects of Arabic language learning. Also, communicative and sociocultural theories also influence content validation. Sociocultural theory by Vygotsky focuses on contextual relevance—curriculum content must be relevant in the cultural and linguistic context of the learners. An Arabic curriculum for Nigerian learners, for instance, must incorporate familiar themes, contemporary communication needs, and actual linguistic usage to be valid (Al-Zubaidi, 2020).

There has been some Nigerian research into curriculum quality and relevance by subject, but not much of this has been in Arabic. Obanya (2014) described Nigerian curriculum effectiveness as being too often compromised by low internal validity learning objectives do not always match

content and examination. Similarly, Ibe and Ofordun (2017) identified secondary curricula as often containing redundant or out-of-date subjects, highlighting the need for continuous review. Specific to Arabic and Islamic Studies, researchers have reported consistent misalignments between curriculum intent and classroom practice. Abdullahi (2019) found that the majority of Junior Secondary School (JSS) Arabic teachers in Oyo and Kwara states employ teacher-centered methods and textbooks that partially reflect the NERDC curriculum. Abdul-Hamid (2015) noted that in spite of the curriculum's prescription of communicative and literacy outcomes, classroom practice leans towards rote memorization. These gaps also suggest possible weaknesses in the content coverage of the curriculum itself.

Similarly, Al-Yousef (2020) in Saudi Arabia used content analysis on Arabic textbooks with CVI procedures and demonstrated that grammar and literature topics were over-represented compared to speaking and listening skills. Such imbalances are also suspected in Nigerian Arabic curricula, particularly at the Upper Basic level, where communicative competence is low (Adebayo & AbdulRahman, 2022).

Arabic has a unique position in the Nigerian education system as an academic and religious language (Bamgbose, 2020). The NERDC-designed Nigerian Arabic curriculum aims to promote functional Arabic literacy and appreciation of Islamic culture. However, scholars have criticized the curriculum for the absence of sufficient integration of modern linguistic trends and communicative objectives (Adamu, 2019; Olagunju, 2023).

The Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum (JSS1–JSS3) aims to develop foundational competence in pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, and writing. Yet, teachers' anecdotal reports in Oyo North reveal content discrepancies between prescribed syllabus and learners' cognitive level. For instance, higher-order morphology (*ṣarf*) and syntax (*naḥw*) are prematurely introduced with little emphasis on daily communication and listening exercises. Such content mismatch could decrease curriculum validity and learners' interest.

The objectives of the Upper Basic Language Arabic Curriculum include:

- (1) To enable the students understand what they hear in Arabic conversation and to compose oral speech by themselves;
- (2) To equip the students with the capacity for natural language processing;
- (3) To equip the students with linguistic and grammatical principles required for correct speech composition;
- (4) To improve the students' writing skills; and
- (5) To equip the students with the capacity to relate symbols with sounds between symbol and voice.

(Translated from NERDC ARABIC BEC: 7-9 2012, p. 6).

Based on these objectives, the selected Arabic Language curricular contents at the Upper Basic educational level include: Al-Qawā'id - القواعد (Grammar skill), Al-Istimāc - الاستماع (Listening skill), 'Al-Qirā'ah - القراءة (Reading skill), 'Al-kitābah - الكتابة (Writing skill) and Al-Muhādathah - المحادثة (Speaking skill). The educational experiences are further divided into units for effective achievement of the goals and objectives of teaching and learning the language skills as shown below:

Table 1: The Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum Topics per Skill for the 3-year Duration of the Upper Basic Level.

YEAR	SKILLS	TOTAL NUMBER TOPICS PER SESSION
UPPER BASIC 1	Grammar	2
	Listening	-
	Reading	1
	Writing	-
	Speaking	-
UPPER BASIC 2	Grammar	7
	Listening\Speaking	4
	Reading	5
	Writing	2
UPPER BASIC 3	Grammar	3
	Listening\Speaking	1
	Reading	7
	Writing	2
	TOTAL	34

Source: Translated from Arabic BEC 6-9, 2006

Table 1 shows that out of the 34 topics contained in the curriculum, 12 topics are on Grammar, 5 are on Listening and Speaking, reading carries 13 while the Writing Skill is given 4 topics. It could be observed therefore that the Listening and Speaking aspects are poorly represented and too much emphasis is placed on Grammar and the Writing Skills.

The contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum are written in a broad-field pattern. They are prepared to cover and integrate many areas of Arabic Studies in a continual, sequential and vertical style. The contents are broadly written a in 3-session duration. They are not divided into weekly and terminal works.

A recent study on Arabic curriculum implementation in Kwara State by Abdulsalam and Hassan (2021) noted that the majority of teachers adapt lessons according to individual discretion because official content does not align with the ability levels of the learners. This necessitates empirical validation of the curriculum content to check if it truly represents intended learning outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the views of Arabic Language teachers on:

1. the validity of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum contents, for achieving the stated Aims, Goals and Objectives;
2. possible differences in the assessment of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curricular content by Arabic teachers with high qualifications and their counterparts with low qualifications;
3. possible differences in the assessment of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curricular content by experienced and less experienced teachers of Arabic

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the course of the study:

- i. Are the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum valid for achieving the stated aims goals and objectives of the curriculum?
- ii. Is there any difference in the assessment of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum by teachers of Arabic with high qualifications and teachers of Arabic with low qualifications?
- iii. Is there any difference in the assessment of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum by experienced and less experience teachers of Arabic?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the course of the study:

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference between teachers of Arabic with high qualifications and their counterparts with low qualifications in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced Arabic Language teachers' assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive method to investigate and report teachers' views on the content validity of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum based on their reactions to questionnaire items designed specifically for this purpose. 136 Arabic teachers were involved in the study. The population was drawn 86 Basic schools in the 13 local governments of Oyo North area of Oyo State using the purposive sampling technique. Questionnaire was used to obtain relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire contained a brief introduction, followed by two sections (A and B). Section "A" of the instrument was structured to elicit teacher's bio-data, such as the teacher's school, gender, educational qualification and years of teaching experience, while section "B" contained 10 items to elicit information on the validity of the curriculum contents. The respondents were given four options against each of the questionnaire items. The options were: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with the values 4,3,2,1 respectively. Respondents were asked to tick any of the four options that represented their assessment of the curriculum.

The face and content validity of the instrument was established by making it available to a team of experts consisting of two Language Education lecturers and one Measurement expert. The suggestions of the experts were reviewed. The reliability of the instrument was established by the use of the test re-test method. The questionnaire was administered twice, at an interval of two weeks on thirty (30) Arabic teachers from other schools not included in the sample. The results obtained were subjected to Pearson-Moment Coefficient Correlation and the value of .80 was obtained. The instrument was therefore assumed to be reliable. Frequency counts, percentage indices and mean scores were used to answer the research question, while the t-test statistic was employed to test the two hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Teaching Qualification

QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Low Qualification (NCE)	123	90.4%
High Qualification (B. A. Ed.) Arabic	13	9.6%
Total	136	100%

Table 1 shows that 123 (90.4%) of the teachers were holders of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) while 13 (9.6%) were holders of the Bachelors' of Arts Degree in Arabic Education, indicating that teachers of Arabic with the NCE were more than teachers with B.A (Ed) degree in Arabic.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Years of Experience

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Less Experienced (0-5 years)	94	69.1%
Experienced (6years above)	42	30.9%
Total	136	100%

Table 2 shows that 94 (69.1%) of the teachers were less experienced while 42 (30.9%) teachers were experienced, indicating that less experienced teachers of Arabic were more than the experienced ones.

To analyse the teacher's responses to the 3 major research questions, the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" options were collapsed to "Agree", while the "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" options were collapsed to "Disagree". These were converted to their respective frequency counts and percentage indices for appropriate comments and discussions.

Research Question One

Are the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum valid for achieving the stated aims, goals and objectives of the curriculum?

From the second research question, ten questionnaire items were generated and the respondents' responses to them are presented in table 3

Table 3: Teachers' Assessment of the Validity of the Contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum

S /	Statements	Strongly Agree Frequency	Agree and Percent	Strongly Disagree Frequency	Disagree and Percent	Raw Scores	Means Scores
N							
1	The contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are valid for the achievement of the stated goals and objectives.	74	54.4	62	45.6	349	2.64
2	The contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are not capable of meeting the students' needs.	58	42.7	78	57.3	374	2.7
3	The contents of Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are not feasible in terms of the facilities available at the Upper Basic level.	83	61	53	39	353	2.3
4	The Contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum cannot prepare the students for higher study.	41	30.2	95	69.8	402	3.0
5	The Arabic vocabularies used in the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are too difficult for the students to understand.	45	33.1	91	66.9	421	3.6
6	The topics on the grammar skills of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are not relevant for the achievement the stated objectives.	34	25.0	102	75.0	402	3.0
7	The topics on the listening skills of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are not valid for the achievement of the stated objectives.	80	58.8	56	41.2	278	2.04
8	The topics on the speaking skills of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are not valid for the achievement of the objectives.	15	11.0	121	89.0	453	3.3
9	The topics on reading skills of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are valid for the achievement of the stated objectives.	118	86.8	18	13.2	439	3.21
10	The topics on the writing skills of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are valid for the achievement of the stated objectives.	98	72.1	38	27.9	398	2.93

Table 3 shows that 74 (54.4%) of the respondents agreed to the item 1, that the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum were valid for the achievement of the stated goals and objectives, while 62 (45.6 %) respondents disagreed with this item. The total score of the item was 349 with a mean score 2.64. Also, 58 (42.7%) of the respondents agreed that the contents of

the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum are not capable of meeting the students' needs while 78 (57.3%) respondents disagreed with this item. The item attracted a total 379 and a mean score of 2.7.

Moreover, 83 (61%) of the respondents supported the second questionnaire item, while 53 (39%) respondents disagreed. This item attracted a total 353 and a mean score 2.3. As regards the fourteenth item, 41 (30.2%) of the respondents agreed to the item, while 95 (69.8%) respondents disagreed. The total score of this item was 402 with a mean score 3.0. Also, 45 (33.1%) of the respondents agreed to the fifteenth item, while 91 (66.9%) respondents disagreed to the item. The item attracted a total score 421 and a mean score 3.6. Thirty-four (25.0%) of the respondents agreed to the sixteenth item of the questionnaire, 102 (75.0%) disagreed to the item. This item attracted a total score 402 and a mean score 3.0.

Furthermore, 80 (58.8%) of the respondents agreed to the seventeenth item while 56 (41.2%) respondents disagreed with this item. The total score was 278 with a mean score 2.04. Fifteen (11.0%) of the respondents agreed to the eighteenth item, while 121 (89.0%) respondents disagreed to the item. This item attracted a total score 453 and a mean score of 3.3. Also for the nineteenth item, 118 (86.8%) of the respondents agreed to the item, and 18 (13.2%) respondents disagreed. The item attracted a total score 439 and a mean score 3.2. As regards the twenty statement of this table 10, 98 (72.1%) of the respondents agreed with the item and 38 (27.9%) respondents disagreed. The item attracted a total score 398 and a mean score 2.9.

The above table indicates that except for the thirteenth questionnaire item with a mean of 2.3 and the item seventeenth with a mean 2.0. The mean scores of all the other items are above the 2.5 mean of the scale. Therefore, it could be inferred from the table 10 that generally, the teachers assessed the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum to be valid.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between teachers of Arabic with higher qualification and teachers of Arabic with lower qualification in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

In testing this hypothesis, the mean score of the responses of the Arabic Language teachers with high qualification was computed and compared the mean score of the Arabic Language teachers with low qualification in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum, using the t-test statistical technique, at the alpha level of 0.05. The result is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: A t- test Analysis showing difference between teachers of Arabic with high qualification and their counterparts with low qualification in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

Teaching Qualification Of Respondents	No	Mean	SD	df	t-cal Value	Sig
Low Qualification (N.C.E)	123	20.00	.912	134	5.404	.000
High Qualification (B.A.Ed. Arabic)	13	26.61	4.39			

Table 4 shows that the B. A. (Ed) Arabic degree holders have a high mean score (Mean = 26.61, SD = 4.39) compared to the NCE holders who have a low mean score (Mean = 20.00, SD = .912). This implies a statistically significant difference, $t(134) = 5.404$, $p < 0.05$ in favour of the

B. A. (Ed) Arabic degree holders. The null-hypothesis is rejected, meaning that, there is a significant difference between teachers of Arabic with high qualification and teachers of Arabic with low qualification in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

Research Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference between experienced and less experienced Arabic Language teachers' assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

In testing this hypothesis, the mean score of the responses of the experienced teachers was computed and compared with the less experienced Arabic language teachers in their assessment of the validity of the adequacy of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum, using the t-test statistical technique, at the alpha level of 0.05. The result is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: A t-test Analysis showing difference between the experienced and less experienced Arabic Language teachers in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

Year of Experience	No	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	Sig
				Value		
Less Experienced (1-5 Years)	94	20.76	1.21	134	13.49	.000
Experienced (6 Year and above)	42	28.31	3.53			

Table 5 reveals that the experienced Arabic Language teachers have a high mean score (mean = 28.31, SD = 3.53) compared to the less experienced who have a low mean score (Mean = 20.76, SD = 1.21). This implies a statistically significant difference, $t(134) = 13.49$, $p < 0.05$ in favour of the experienced Arabic teachers. The null-hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between experienced and less experienced Arabic language teachers in their assessment of the validity of the content of the Upper Basic Arabic Language Curriculum.

Discussion of the Results

The findings of this study shown in Table 4 indicated that most of the contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum are valid for achieving the stated Aims, Goals and Objectives: 54.4% of the respondents agreed that the curriculum content is valid for the achievement of the stated goals and objectives; 57.3% of the teachers responded positively to the capability of the curriculum contents to meet the students' needs; and 69.8% of the respondents opined that the curriculum contents can prepare the students for further studies in Arabic Education. Moreover, vocabularies used in the curriculum content are not difficult, as 66.9% of the respondents agreed to the item; the topics on grammar, the speaking, reading and writing skills are valid to achieve the stated objectives as 75%, 89%, 86.8% and 72.1% of the respondents agreed to these items respectively. However, the majority of the respondents (61%) opined that the curriculum contents are not feasible in terms of time, facility and teachers available at the Upper Basic level. In addition, 58.8% of the respondents observed that the topics of the listening skills are not valid for the achievement of the stated objectives. The findings corroborate the conclusions of Ibrahim (2006) and Abdul-Hamid (2015), whose studies established that some curriculum contents of Islamic Studies and Hausa language are difficult and they need to be redefined.

Moreover, the findings showed that significant difference exists between the mean scores of the Arabic teachers with high qualification and their counterparts with low qualification in their assessment of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum in terms of adequacy of its aims, goals and objectives, validity of its contents and suitability of its learning experiences. This corroborates Bello (2010), Akanbi (2010), Owolabi and Adebayo (2012), and Thomas (2014) who found in their studies that teachers' qualification is significantly related in teaching Physics, evaluation of Physics curriculum and Mathematics. The findings also disagree with Ogbonna (1998), and Edu, Edu and Kalu (2010) and Abdulhameed (2015), who found that teachers qualification has no influence on their works.

Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant difference between the experienced and the less experienced Arabic teachers in their assessment of validity of content of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum. The study findings is in agreement with those of Ogbonna (1998), Ishaq (2009), and David (2012) who found a difference between practicing professional teachers and less-experienced teachers' performances in Arabic, English and Social Studies respectively. The study finding also disagreed with Ibrahim (2006) who established that teaching experience of Hausa teachers in Kano State did not affect their opinions on the adequacy of the curriculum objectives, contents, instructional materials and the teaching methods.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that:

The contents of the curriculum are valid for the achievement of the stated objectives.

Teachers' qualification has influence on their assessment of the validity of the contents of the curriculum.

Teachers' experience has influence on their assessment of the adequacy of the aims, goals and objectives, the validity of the contents and the suitability of the learning experiences of Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- a. The aims, goals and objectives of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum that were assessed to be adequate should be left as they are.
- b. The contents of the Upper Basic Arabic Curriculum that were assessed to be valid should be adequately implemented.
- d. Sufficient qualified Arabic teachers should be employed to teach Arabic Language at the Upper Basic level and teachers with low qualification should be encouraged to add additional qualifications.

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