

The Linguistic Content of the Iẓon Language Curriculum for Primary Schools

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Abstract—The curriculum is the most important document at any level of the educational system of a country. The manner of its implementation can contribute to the growth and development of a nation, or cause its stunted growth. The Iẓon language curricular for the Basic Education Programme for primaries 1-6 were developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 2010. However, although these curricular have been approved by the relevant authorities including the National Council on Education (NCE) for use in schools, up till this moment the curricular have not been used in the State Government Primary Schools in Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Ondo States. This is a cause for concern by both teachers and pupils who should be teaching and learning the content of these curricula as well as linguists and language experts involved in their development. In this paper, we take a look at the linguistic content of the Iẓon language curriculum for primary 1-6, viz. beḡli emi ẓorū, fie bara, goo bara, poi ma fie, goo ma geḡ. This paper also takes a look at the issues involved in the development and use of the curricular and underscores the need for the State Governments to demonstrate commitment and urgently implement the use of the curricular in their schools and produce reading texts and grammar books for the realization of the goals of the Iẓon language curricular. If this is done soon, the Iẓon language curricula can achieve great success.

Index Terms—linguistics, Iẓon, curriculum, numeracy

I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) having the mandate to develop curricula for use at all levels of education in Nigeria, was directed by the National Council on Education (NCE) to re-structure and re-align the existing primary and junior secondary school curricula to meet the targets of the 9-Year Basic Education programme. This was decided upon by the Federal Government in the context of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The curriculum represents the total experiences to which all learners must be exposed. The curriculum therefore provides the contents, performance objectives, activities for both teachers and learners and evaluation guides. What remains to be done now is the production of reading texts and grammar books for the realization of the goals of the Iẓon curricula.

A. *The Curriculum*

In a formal educational setting, a curriculum refers to all the planned interaction of students with course content, instructional materials, instructional resources, and processes for evaluating the attainment of educational objectives. The curriculum also refers to the total learning experience provided by a school which includes the course content, the teaching methods, statements of desired pupil outcomes, and so on. A primary or secondary school curriculum often covers several classes. The curriculum is the most important document at any level of the educational system of a country. The manner of its implementation can contribute to the growth and development of a nation, or cause its stunted growth.

B. *Iẓon*

Iẓon is one of the six main languages in Nigeria, the others being Fulfulde, Tiv, Kanuri, Efik/Ibibio, and Edo. Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba are the 'major' languages in Nigeria. In 2007, a meta-language for Iẓon was written by this author, Late Dr E.E. Eferè and Mr C.B. Agbegha. In 2011, the present author again worked with Mr C.B. Agbegha of College of Education Warri to produce *A Unified Standard Orthography for the Ijọ Language Cluster (NIGERIA)*. It was approved by the Federal Ministry of Culture and handed over to the Federal Ministry of Education in 2012 to be used in schools and colleges for all the Ijoid languages. Curricula have also been developed for Iẓon through a partnership between the Federal Ministry of Education, Bayelsa State Ministry of Education, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Centre (NERDC) and lecturers in institutions of higher learning. The Iẓon curricula were drawn up by the present writer and Mr B. Perekeme, both of Niger Delta University and Mr C.B. Agbegha of College of Education, Warri.

II. THE IẐON LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

A. The Primary One *IzOn* Language Curriculum

The linguistic content of the *IzOn* language curriculum for primary one includes:

1. *IzOn* abidi. *IzOn* geɛ ʊmgbomɔ poi, lelei, goo, ma geɛ kiiriimo.
2. *IzOn* ɛrebijama lelei. t.a. sei, beni, geɛ, oki, bunu, akasi, wari, bara, ofoni, fun, boi, buo, bugo.
3. Ma fie ʊmgbɔ *IzOn* ɛrebijama t.a. mu, bo, go, du, mo; tara fie ʊmgbɔ ɛrebijama mo t.a. sei, sei, lei, dei, soɔ, oki, fun.
4. Dɔa *IzOn* kule bijama lelei, ma ifie-ifie kule bara. t.a. pekei, erein biri ma buboru, yo duo bo ifie, ye toru korɔ kule bijɔ, kosi otu kule bara, t.a. doo, i serido, dii mu, baiyo, i miɛ kami, ukoido, nua.
5. Kɛnbiri. Kɛn ʊmgbomɔ 1-50 lelei, ma kɛn. Kɛnyemi ɛrebijimo lelei, kɛn ma geɛ.

B. The Primary Two *IzOn* Language Curriculum

The following is the linguistic content of the *IzOn* language curriculum for primary two:

1. *IzOn* geɛ ʊmgbomɔ (abidi). Mamu aki kenɔ geɛmɔ ʊmgbomɔ (diagirafumɔ) poi, lelei kiiriimo, goo, geɛ kiiriimo, ma aki ɛrebijɔ miɛ.
2. *IzOn* aki goo. Bijisunmɔ ma egberi itu mo poi, goo kiiriimo, ma bii bijama parai. Selɛ wonimi ɛrebijama aki bijisun miɛ.
3. *IzOn* kule baramo. Dɔa *IzOn* kule baramo gba, ma pekei, erein biri, buboru ma dein ifie dii kule bara. Kule baramo t.a.: nua, doo, i serido, dii mu, baiyo, i miɛ kami, ukoido, Dɔdu kule, ma beɛɛ kule bara aki ɛre toi.
4. Kɛnbiri. Kɛn ʊmgbomɔ 50 - 100 lelei, ma kɛn. Kɛnyemi ɛrebijimo lelei, kɛn kiiriimo ma geɛ.
5. Eɛama (nouns). La gbelenghi eɛama (concrete nouns) t.a. akasi, aru, fun, wari, beɛ. La gbelenghi yeama ɛre tin, ma la gbelenghi ye eɛama aki bijisun miɛ.
6. Emi bara gba (descriptive adjectives) t.a. pina, dɔba, zau, kosu, danghain. Ye emi bara gba ɛrebijama lelei, tin, ma yeama emi bara gba ɛrebijimo aki na bijisun miɛ.
7. Toki/agbuda (riddles). Toki poi, toki lelei, kiiri toki tua/bii ma toki parai.
8. Dein kɛn. Wiki ereinmɔ kɛn, ma fou ereinmɔ. (The days of the week and market days.)
9. Kɛn bijɔ ʊmgbɔ. Kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛrebijama t.a. kimi/kimjama (kimibo); aru/arɔama; agbaka/agbaka-ama; fun/fun-ama. Kenɔ ɛrebijɔ dei kenɔ denghi ɛrebijɔ ghɔ mu, kenɔ denghi ɛrebijɔ/ɛɛama dei kenɔ ɛrebijɔ ghɔ mu, ma kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛrebijama gba, poi, lelei, geɛ, parai, aki bijisun miɛ.

C. The Primary Three *IzOn* Language Curriculum

The linguistic content of the *IzOn* language curriculum for primary three includes:

1. Kɛn ʊmgbɔ. Kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛrebijama t.a. kimi/kimjama (kimibo); aru/arɔama; agbaka/agbaka-ama; fun/fun-ama; anga/angamɔ, anga-ama; bugo/bugomɔ, bugo-ama; wari/warimɔ, wari-ama; ololo/ololomɔ, ololo-ama. Kenɔ ɛre dei kenɔ denghi ɛre ghɔ mu, ma kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi mo eɛama gba, poi, lelei, geɛ, parai, aki bijisun miɛ.
2. ɛre dei yeama (Pronouns). Kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛreɛɛi yemɔ t.a. eri/omini; arau/omini; ari/woni. Kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛreɛɛi yemɔ poi, lelei, gba, geɛ, parai, ma aki bijisun miɛ.
3. Beɛɛ-itu mo lei-itu mo (Antonyms and synonyms). Beɛɛ-itu t.a. bo/mu; owei/ere; zau/dɔba; danghain/kesi; emi/fa. Lei-itu t.a. ovuru/akarabiri, akikabiri, oturu, oturubiri; egba/di; ogbonomo/bunuye, ebine, obine, ; apapa/esawo; butuwei/aru. Beɛɛ-itu mo lei-itu mo ɛrebijama lelei kiiriimo, ma ɛrebijama aki beɛɛ-itu mo lei-itu mo diemɔ.
4. Miɛ-ɛrebijɔ (verbs). Miɛ-ɛrebijɔ t.a. geɛ, tuo, goo, yeri, desi, banghi. Dɔa miɛ-ɛrebijama poi, lelei, gba, geɛ ma aki bijisun miɛ.
5. Toki/agbuda (riddles). Tokjama t.a. Toki poi, toki lelei, toki tu gba, kiiri toki tua/bii ma toki parai.
6. *IzOn* goo. Goo funbɔ egbeɛ egberi-itu. Gori egberi-itu goo, gori ɛrebijɔ tin kiiriimo, ma tuu nimi da biibijɔ parai. Bijisunmɔ ma egberi itu mo poi, goo kiiriimo, ma bii bijama parai.
7. Kɛn ʊmgbomɔ 100 - 1000. Kɛn ʊmgbomɔ 100 – 1000 lelei, goo, kɛn kiiriimo ma geɛ.

D. The Primary Four *IzOn* Language Curriculum

The linguistic content of the *IzOn* language curriculum for primary four includes:

1. Ye emiyo gba ɛrebijimo gba, tin, tuu gba. Ye emiyo gba ɛrebijimo lelei t.a.: ogoɔ, bulou, anga, bolou, ukukuru, boɔ, ghɔ. Ye emiyo gba ɛrebijimo geɛ. Ye emiyo gba ɛrebijɔ aki bijisun miɛ. Ye emiyo gba ɛrebijɔ aki biibijɔ bii.
2. Benimɔ gba. Nimideɛ egberimɔ aki benimɔ gba. I disɛ fiibi, Uge tei bara, I dau wari bi, inɛ amabi. ɛioɔ
3. Eɛama. Gesiye ɛremɔ lelei. Papaye ɛremɔ lelei. Gesiye ɛremɔ mo ma papaye ɛremɔ mo aki beɛ lelei. Gesiye ɛremɔ mo ma papaye ɛremɔ t.a.: Gesiye ɛre-ama. t.a.: Timi-ebi, Pere-owei, Ebi-ere, Zidu-badoɔ, Ebi-owei. Papaye ɛre-ama. t.a.: obori, beriba, aru, ilia, oun.
4. Eɛɛɛ ɛrebijɔ-ama. Biɛɛɛɛ ɛrebijimo lelei. Kenɔ mo kenɔ denghi ɛreɛɛi yemɔ lelei. Bei ɛreɛɛi yemɔ aki kiiri bijisun miɛ. Biɛɛɛɛ ɛreɛɛi yeama. t.a.: eri, omiɔ, arau, omiɔ, ari; woni, ari; omiɔ. Nanabo ɛreɛɛi yemɔ lelei. Nanabo ɛreɛɛi yemɔ aki bijisun miɛ. Nanabo ɛreɛɛi yemɔ, t.a.: inei, inein, woi, woi, orei, ɔrei. Ani, aniyo, biyo.
5. Kimimoseɛ duɔ-ama. (folk tales). Duɔ bo emi tolumɔ bijimɔ lelei. Duɔ bolou bo emi kimimɔ tonmɔ. Duɔ gba. Tolomɔ-duɔ. Tuu gba duɔ t.a.: tibi okpokpo, ipion tua iwiri, don mo iwiri mo, ogbono mo ere mo, otiti mo uge mo.
6. Toki (agbuda). Toki tua. Toki parai. Toki t.a.: Toki:- Tɔboɔ gbala arau fou ghɔ bonimi. Parai: osun/osi. Toki:- Zauɛnghi ɛrema ama wenɔ bein mi. Parai: oku. Toki:- I dau opu aru pou igbenimi. Parai: biyain

7. Goo. Gori sele wonimi erēbībī-ama goo. Egberī-itu goo kīrīīmō. Egberībō tunimi da biībībī mō parai. Kīlasī goo-fun bolou bō sēlē wonimi egberī-itu goo ma biībībī bii.

8. Oruseri kumō wēnīyemi fīrīmō. Oruseri kumō wēnīyemi fīrīmō tīn, t.a.: indi dō, kiri gboro, bou tein, iye deri, aru kara, koro pin, lii gbein. Fīrī wēnīyemi ikpesemō, t.a.: dei, igbo, dii, zuye, ekerē, ogou, ogidi, asubai, agba, anga.

9. Kīnbiiri. 1000-5000 lelei, kīn ma gē.

10. Mīē-īfīe erēbībīmō lelei tīn. Mīē-īfīe erēbībī leleimō tīn. Tīē kiri bonghimi ma bōdē mīē-īfīemō lelei mō kīrīīmō. Bībīsūn boloubō mīē-īfīemō dei. Tīē kiri mīē-īfīe t.a.: tū, gboro, mu. Bōdē mīē-īfīe, t.a.: tūmī, gboromī, mumī. Bonghimi-īfīe t.a.: tūngħimi, gborongħimi, munghimi.

11. Oruseri kumō birii bīdē. Dūa oruseri kumō birii bīdē tīn. Ere mō oweī mō biri bīdē pamō akī bēbē lelei. Oruseri kumō birii bīdē-ama: Oweī birii bīdē. Bīdē mō etībō mō Egburu mō etībō mō, Saka mō etībō mō, Tum ugbele (akolō) agbaka, owoḳo, ebulō. Ere birii bīdē. Kēnī bīdē kubu mō butei mō, ma bīdē kubu mō butei mō, kala-lōsī, opu-lōsī, agbaka, ela, koḳon tuaye, beri-tekelei (beri-tuaye), urūka, ebulō, egbine.

12. Gē pēlē lelei-ama. Gē pēlē leleimō lelei kīrīīmō ma gē pēlē leleimō akī bībīsūn ghō tua kīrīīmō. Gē pēlē lelei-ama t.a.: dū pele (.), gbiki (.), dorou (-), biībībī (?), ke (!), opu gē umgbō t.a.: (A, B, C, D).

E. The Primary Five IẏOn Language Curriculum

The following is the linguistic content of the Iẏon language curriculum for primary five.

1. Daamīē. erēgha bara ye daamīē. Kēšī zoru daamīē. Daamīē pamō: Vi bō mīē bara di mīē, oḳo akī tōnmō, bībī fini nī erē kumō erēgha bara.

2. Tīn ghō sei erēbībīama. Tīn ghō sei erēbībīama lelei, gba, tīn ma goo. Tīn ghō sei erēbībīama t.a.: Arī Iẏon kīmī, arī Ajegunle ghō oḳowō jēunjējē uwoḳo kō emi. Farun farun fun bun bou bangħi abedi mō lei mo. I dau daba kala koro kala koro.

3. Gbelemēn erēbībī. Gbelemēn erēbībīmō lelei ma akī bībīsūn mīē. Gbelemēn erēbībīmō, t.a.: mō + mō, kpō, dē, sē, barī, daba.

4. Okoyai. Kēšī okoyai goo. Tībī biri ghō okoyai ukie. Okoyai: t.a.: Uge o peri yo peri yo peri yo. Ikisa bira yon mo werere. Boi yo boi, Boi bala bala boi.

5. Lei-itu mō Bēbē-itu mō. Dua lei-itu erēbībīama lelei. Erēbībī akī lei-itu mō bēbē-itu mō dīē mō. Lei-itu mō Bēbē-itu mō t.a.: Erēbībī: dō, duba, ikisa. Lei-itu: kīrīkīrī, opu, omgbō; kēšī, kēlū, kolu. Bēbē-itu: ofīrī, afuru, zau, kala, dīn, dangħai.

6. Emiyo-gba. Ye emiyo-gba erēbībīmō lelei, ma akī bībīsūn mīē. Emiyo-gba erēbībīmō t.a.: 1). Erēbībīama: oḳo ghō, ukukuru, bolou, toun, tuu. 2). Bībīsūn: Ofonibi tīn oḳo ghō emi. Iliabī mezē ukukuru ghō emi. Tōbōuma warī tounbō emi. Eyingi warī bulou ghō emi.

7. Oroupa otu dū. Oroupa otu dū lelei. Egidebō oroupa otu gba. Oroupa otu dū gba. Oroupadē otumō t.a.: Ozidi, Orīamī, Temu gedegē, Azizabifī, Isaac Boro, E.K. Clark, Tompolo.

8. Goo. Gori erēbībīmō tīn. Sēlēwonimi erēbībīama akī bībīsūn mīē. Tunimi da bii bībī mō parai. Egbeinimi kīlasī goo fun. Sēlē wonimi egberī-itu.

9. Iḳomū fīrīmō pamō. Oruseri kumō iḳomū fīrīmō pamō lelei. Aya oḳo iḳomū fīrīmō pamō lelei. Bei iḳomū fīrīmō pamō yela nimi baramō gba. Oruseri kumō iḳomū fīrīmō pamō yeama: Eze bībī tua. Ekpe kpe gbele. Iḳomū tua. Fun tua (lētā gē). Aya oḳo iḳomū fīrīmō pamō yeama: Telefonu, Bara fonu, Redio, Intanētī tua wonimi koḳputa, Televisonī.

10. Kīn-umgbō. 1-500 kīn-umgbōmō tīnīmī yomō gba kīrīīmō. Igbali ghō tīnīmīyō kīn-umgbōama tīnīmī t.a.: 1st Bōlō bōlō. 2nd Mamū karamō. 3rd Tarū karamō. 4th Noin karamō. 5th Sōnrōn karamō. 6th Sondie karamō. 7th Sōnoma karamō. 8th Ningina karamō. 9th Ise karamō. 10th Oi karamō. 20th Maa oi fini karamō. 30th Tara oi fini karamō. 50th Sōnrān oi fini karamō. 7th Sōnoma oi fini karamō. 90th Ise oi fini karamō. 100th Odozō karamō.

11. Lētā Gē (Fun tua). Palīnīmī otu dūdū gē lētā lelei. Palīnīmī otu lētā emi tōrū gba. Palīnīmī otu lētā pabī gē. Palīnīmī otu dūdū gē lētā emi tōrū. Gē-bō yenriyemī yō. Gē bai. Kule bībī. Gba fini. Lētā oḳobī. Tupēlē kule ma erē mō.

12. Oruseri kumō wēnī yemō fīrīmō. Oruseri kumō wēnīyemī fīrīmō lelei. Oruseri kumō wēnīyemī fīrīmō yela nīmī baramō gba. Bei fīrīmō duo pangħi yemō gba. Akī fīrīmō wēnīyemī ikpesemō gba. Oruseri kumō wēnīyemī fīrīmō: Kiri gboro, Indi dō, Koro pīn, Lī gbein, Oun sou. Fīrī wēnī ikpesemō: Arū, Di (Ariri), Ogoun, Asubai. Fīrīmō duo pangħi yemō: Taba pulou, Uru, Indi, Osi, Ofoniyān.

F. The Primary Six IẏOn Language Curriculum

The linguistic content of the Iẏon language curriculum for primary six is as follows.

1. Puyai. Gori na erēbībīmō tīn pamō. Sōnī-sōnī egberī tībīmō gba. Puyai emi tōrū: Gbafini, Būlō būlō, mamū karamō, kūrō dengħī, iyela dengħī, tukunīmō, Sōnī-sōnī.

2. Oruseri kumō gbanai wonīmī yeama. Dūa gbanai wonīmī yeama lelei. Bei gbanai wonīmī yemō yelanīmī bara gba. Iẏon otu gbanai wonīmī yemō mō, oḳo yelanīmī bara mō t.a.: Dii ye (tōnye), Karībū, Gbanai bolou, Kōnō bara.

3. Ereama. Laa kīnyemī ye erēama lelei. Kīngha ye erēama lelei. Erēbībī akī kīnyemī ye erēama mō ma kīngha ye erēama mō dīemō. Bei erēmō akī bībīsūn mīē. Kīnyemī ye erēama: Warī, Akasī, Kīmī, Gbasa, Buru. Kīngha ye erēama: Oun, Beni, Ude, Pulou, oḳō.

4. Tõnmõ eredei erëbìbìmõ. Tõnmõ eredei erëbìbìmõ lelei. Dei erëbìbìmõ akì bìbìsun mìe. Tõnmõ eredei erëbìbìmõ: Eni, Bisa, Bei, Ani. Tõnmõ eredei erëbìbìmõ akì bìbìsun mìe: Bei erema Iẗõn ere. Bisa kìmìmõ bodõ. Anì tõbõu kì gbamì.

5. Biibìbì. Biibìbì lelei. Bii bìbì akì bìbìsun mìe. Bii bìbì erëbìbìmõ t.a.: Tuba? Tubara? Dënghì seri? Dënghì yõ? Tei kì donì a?

6. Iẗõn otu duo payõ. Iẗõn otu duo payõ lelei. Orõ ibe/ama koromõ otumõ gba. Iẗõn otu duo boyõ bii, kpëti, parai ma gëe.

7. Aya-õkpõ isõmù firimõ pamõ. Aya-õkpõ isõmù firimõ pamõ lelei. Orõ yelanimi bara mõ gba. Aya-õkpõ isõmù firimõ pamõ: Redio, Televisõnì., Kõmputa, I-meli (Intanëti), Telefõnu, Bara fonu.

8. Akarìbìbì. Akarìbìbì lelei. Orõ wëniyemi firimõ gba. Akarìbìbì ghõ tuu gba. Akarìbìbì-ama t.a.: Përe-owei ba pumu fùrùgha. Inë la bonghi benibì e tëin bogha. Tin pounimi anga kiri kì koroyemi. Fõn gbëinbõ kõ tuduoyemi.

III. A SUMMARY OF THE LINGUISTIC CONTENT OF THE IẗõN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARIES ONE TO SIX

A. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary One

The topics to be taught in primary one include: Iẗõn alphabets (and words in which they are found), matching Iẗõn words with pictures, members of the immediate family (i.e. father, mother, brother, sister, elder/younger brother/sister), writing Iẗõn words, greetings, counting and recognizing one to fifty (1-50), means of transportation (on water, on land, and in the air), Iẗõn songs, places of origin (hometown, quarter, State), occupations, diagraphs in Iẗõn (gb,gh,kp,ng).

B. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary Two

The topics to be taught in primary two are: reading in Iẗõn, greetings (at different times of the day), counting and recognizing fifty to one hundred (50-100), moonlight plays and songs, ways of receiving visitors, names of objects and using the names in simple sentences, adjectives and using them in simple sentences, riddles, children's plays, days of the week and market days, singular and plural of words and using them in simple sentences.

C. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary Three

The topics to be taught in primary three include: singular and plural of words and using them in simple sentences, olden days songs, words of same and opposite meanings, festivals, parts of the body, verbs and using them in simple sentences, riddles, reading words and simple sentences, counting and recognizing one hundred to one thousand (100-1000), crops and their planting season.

D. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary Four

The topics to be taught in primary four are: prepositions (above, in, beside, inside, under, etc.), making simple sentences, names of persons (proper nouns) and names of objects (common nouns), singular and plural of pronouns, folk tales and fables, possessive pronouns (mine, his, theirs, etc.), riddles, reading and understanding selected words and simple sentences and answering questions based on them, occupations and their tools, counting, recognizing and writing one thousand to five thousand (100-1000), present, past and future tenses, Iẗõn traditional dresses of men and women, punctuation marks.

E. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary Five

The topics scheduled to be taught in primary five are as follows: imitation and miming, words that are difficult to pronounce, conjunctions, rhymes, words of same meanings and opposite meanings, prepositions (above, under, in, behind, at the back of, etc.) and their use in sentences, stories of great men - epics and legends (of Ozidi, Isaac Boro, E.K. Clark, Tompolo, etc.), reading words and using them in making simple sentences and answering questions, old and modern ways of sending information and messages, ordinal numbers from first to hundredth (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.), informal letter-writing (address, date, greeting, introduction, body and complimentary close), Iẗõn traditional occupations (fishing, farming, palm wine tapping, etc.).

F. A Summary of the Linguistic Content for Primary Six

The topics to be taught in primary six are: linking words (introduction, firstly, secondly, more importantly, most importantly, lastly, etc.), ancient beliefs (forbidden things, religious worship, religious belief, left-handedness), countable and uncountable nouns, demonstrative pronouns and their use in making simple sentences, question words and their use in asking simple questions, the origin of the Iẗõn people and the founders of their towns and clans, modern ways of sending information and messages and their importance, proverbs and wise sayings.

IV. AN APPRAISAL OF THE LINGUISTIC CONTENT OF THE IẗõN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARIES ONE TO SIX

Although the Iẗõn curricula for primaries one to six were developed from that of English as requested by the Federal Ministry of Education through the NERDC, the following pertinent observations have to be made concerning their linguistic content.

A. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Iẗõn Curriculum for Primary One

Ịzọn alphabets, diagraphs, words, greetings are the linguistic topics in primary one. Counting from one to fifty (1-50) i.e. numeracy is part of Mathematics, while members of the immediate family, means of transportation, Ịzọn songs, places of origin and occupations are part of Social Studies.

B. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Curriculum for Primary Two

Reading in Ịzọn, greetings, singular and plural of words, names of objects, adjectives and using them in simple sentences, riddles, children's plays and moonlight plays are the linguistic topics in primary two. Counting i.e. numeracy is part of Mathematics, while songs, ways of receiving visitors, days of the week and market days are part of Social Studies.

C. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Curriculum for Primary Three

Singular and plural of words and using them in simple sentences, words of same and opposite meanings, verbs and using them in simple sentences, and riddles are the linguistic topics in primary three. Counting from 100-1000 i.e. numeracy is part of Mathematics, olden days songs and festivals are part of Social Studies, while parts of the body, crops and their planting seasons are part of Integrated Science.

D. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Curriculum for Primary Four

Prepositions, reading and understanding selected words, making simple sentences and answering questions based on them, proper nouns and common nouns, possessive pronouns, singular and plural of pronouns, present, past and future tenses, punctuation marks, riddles, folk tales and fables, are the linguistic topics in primary four. Counting from 100-1000 i.e. numeracy is part of Mathematics, while occupations and their tools, Ịzọn traditional dresses of men and women are part of Social Studies.

E. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Curriculum for Primary Five

Imitation and miming, words which are difficult to pronounce, conjunctions, rhymes, words of same meanings and opposite meanings, stories of great men - epics and legends, using words in making simple sentences and answering questions, and informal letter-writing are the linguistic topics in primary five. Ordinal numbers i.e. numeracy is part of Mathematics, but old and modern ways of sending information and messages, Ịzọn traditional occupations are part of Social Studies.

F. An Appraisal/Academic Analysis of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Curriculum for Primary Six

Linking words, countable and uncountable nouns, demonstrative pronouns and their use in making simple sentences, question words and their use in asking simple questions, proverbs and wise sayings are the linguistic topics in primary six. Ancient beliefs, the origin of the Ịzọn people and the founders of their towns and clans, modern ways of sending information and messages, and their importance are part of Social Studies.

V. DISCUSSION

A. General Discussion of the Linguistic Content of the Ịzọn Language Curricula for Primaries One to Six

Firstly, topics which broadly fall under other primary school subjects such as Social Studies, Integrated Science, Mathematics, and so on (as can be seen from section 9 above) are to be taught under Ịzọn for now. However, as time goes on and we start implementing the teaching of the other primary school subjects in Ịzọn, as required by the National Policy on Education, such topics that fall under other subjects may have to be taught under their appropriate subjects.

Secondly, the serial and chronological arrangement of the linguistic topics in the Ịzọn Curricula (following the recommendation by the FME and thus the NERDC) seems to be faulty. The topics are hereby arranged as they ought to be. Ultimately, the core and peripheral linguistic topics in the Ịzọn Curricula for Primaries one to six are as follows:

- a. Reading Ịzọn alphabets, diagraphs and words. Punctuation marks. Greetings.
- b. Reading and understanding selected words, making simple sentences and answering questions based on them. Singular and plural of words and their use in making simple sentences and answering questions.
- c. Verbs and using them in simple sentences. Adjectives and using them in simple sentences. Prepositions. Conjunctions (linking words). Countable and uncountable nouns, proper nouns and common nouns (names of objects). Present, past and future tenses.
- d. Imitation and miming. Words which are difficult to pronounce. Words of same meanings and opposite meanings.
- e. Singular and plural of pronouns, and their use in making simple sentences. Demonstrative pronouns. Possessive pronouns. Question words and their use in asking simple questions.
- f. Informal letter-writing. Proverbs and wise sayings. Riddles. Stories of great men: epics and legends. Folk tales and fables. Rhymes, children's plays and moonlight plays.

B. Responsibility of the Government in Implementing the Ịzọn Language Curricula

The Ịzọn language curricula for the Basic Education Programme for primaries 1-6 were developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 2010 and Ịzọn has been approved by the relevant authorities including the National Council on Education (NCE) for use in schools, but the actual implementation has not

yet started in Bayelsa State and other Izõn-speaking States. Up till this moment the curricular have not been widely used in the State Government Primary Schools in Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Ondo States. Prezi (2014) notes that “Izõn is taught only in a few government-owned and private primary and secondary schools in Bayelsa State which include Ayakpo Group of Schools, Benny’s International Group of Schools, Faith Comprehensive Secondary School, and Tare Pet Group of Schools all in Yenagoa,” and in the Diploma in Izõn Language Programme of the Centre for Niger Delta Studies of Niger Delta University. (pp. 265-266, 272). This is a major cause for concern for both teachers and pupils who should be teaching and learning the content of these curricula, as well as for linguists and language experts involved in their development. The manner of implementation can contribute to the growth and development of a nation or state or language (as in this case), or cause its stunted growth. It is the responsibility of the Governments of Bayelsa, Delta, Edo and Ondo States especially as well as their Local Governments in their various domains of authority to demonstrate commitment and assiduity as well as urgently take the right steps to start implementing the use of the curricular in their schools and encourage writers to produce reading texts and grammar books for the realization of the goals of the Izõn language curricular.

Second, it is the duty of Izõn linguists and literary authors to aid the development of Izõn by publishing texts such as primers, grammars, educational books, and cultural materials, lexical innovation, lexical expansion, and so on in Izõn as well as developing a suitable numeral system (Prezi, 2013 and 2014).

C. Teaching Methods

In order to achieve proficiency in Izõn, the learner must use it for communication, that is, in conversations. More class time should be spent on developing listening, reading abilities as well as speaking practice.

Teachers should supply appropriate materials for pupils learning, and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of language teaching practices in promoting Izõn language acquisition and learning by pupils schooling in the Bayelsa State Educational System.

Izõn language teachers should do a Contrastive Analysis of English and Izõn to bring out the differences between the two languages which are expected to pose problems to learners and also bring out the similarities between the two languages which would facilitate learning.

D. Responsibility of the School

Time-table planning: The various schools should ensure that there is enough time on the class and general school time-table for the teaching of Izõn in Bayelsa, Delta, Ondo, Edo and other Izõn and Ijõ speaking states in Nigeria. We recommend teaching these languages at least for two lesson periods of 40-45 minutes each, at least three days a week.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper looks at the issues involved in the development and use of the Izõn language curricular for primary schools and underscores the need for the State Governments to demonstrate commitment and assiduity as well as urgently take the right steps to start implementing the use of the curricular in their schools and produce reading texts and grammar books for the realization of the goals of the Izõn language curricular. If this is done soon, the Izõn language curricular can achieve great success. Izõn, has been accepted for use in schools, but the actual implementation has not yet started in Bayelsa State and other Izõn-speaking States. As the author noted in section 10.2 above, Izõn is taught only in a few government-owned and private primary and secondary schools in Bayelsa State which include Ayakpo Group of Schools, Benny’s International Group of Schools, Faith Comprehensive Secondary School, and Tare Pet Group of Schools all in Yenagoa. (Prezi, 2014, pp. 265-266, 272).

Second, it is the duty of Izõn linguists and literary authors to assist the Government of Izõn-speaking States in the development of Izõn by publishing texts such as primers, grammars, educational books, cultural materials, lexical innovation, lexical expansion, and a modern numeral system in Izõn (Prezi, 2013, p. 245-257; and Prezi, 2014, p. 267, 272).

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The author wishes to reiterate here his recommendations to Bayelsa State Government in his paper titled “The State of Izõn in Bayelsa State Schools”. (Prezi, 2014, 272-274).

First, we recommend to Bayelsa State Government and other Izõn-speaking States, the immediate urgent and compulsory implementation of the teaching and learning of Izõn as a school subject in all classes of the primary schools and as the mother-tongue of the immediate environment in our UBE system, from Primary One to JSS 3 in all public and private schools in their States.

Second, Izõn language planning activities (status planning and corpus planning) vis-a-vis other mother tongues in the states, English (as the second and official language in Nigeria), and French (as the recommended Foreign language in Nigeria) should therefore be carried out by the Governments of Izõn-speaking States.

Third, we recommend the establishment of a Bayelsa Readers Project. Bayelsa State and Local Governments, through its Ministry of Education, its UBE Board and its Local Government Education Authorities need to finance the training and retraining of teachers on how to use the readers and other language materials that were published by the

defunct Rivers Readers Project. There is also the need to rejuvenate, revise and re-edit the materials to make them suitable for current use in our primary and secondary schools in Bayelsa State. This should be done in conjunction with the Language lecturers in the Department of English and the Faculty of Education at Niger Delta University as well as the Kay Williamson Language Centre. Iẓon-speaking State Governments and Local Governments should also encourage and sponsor Iẓon (and Ijọ) language teachers, scholars and linguists to cooperate and write textbooks, documents and articles on Iẓon language, literature and other school subjects such as religion which should be printed and published free of charge by the State printing and publishing corporation for use in Bayelsa and other State schools and colleges. Specifically, to attract more readers in Iẓon language, authors and publishers have to diversify from publishing only primers, grammars and course books and go into interesting literary publication of folk tales, fables, and children story books. Also, a standard Ijọ dictionary should be produced with dialectal cross-referencing.

Fourth, the Bayelsa State Government should organize a series of Iẓon language, linguistics and training Workshops, Conferences, Symposia and Seminars at the CNDS at NDU or at Kay Williamson Language Centre in and on Iẓon language for indigenous Bayelsa State language teachers at all levels of Education. The Niger Delta University Inter-disciplinary Studies Committee should work with the CNDS or Kay Williamson Language Centre and collaborate with the Department of English and Literary Studies at NDU, the Faculty of Science at NDU, and the Department of Linguistics and Communication Studies of the University of Port Harcourt for the development of scientific and technical terminology such as square, cylinder, etc. in Iẓon.

Fifth, payment of undergraduate and post-graduate scholarship awards, bursaries and research grants to students of Linguistics and Iẓon, as well as scholarship to serving teachers in the Universal Basic Education system who are doing the Diploma in Iẓon Language Programme of the NDU Centre for Niger Delta Studies should be sustained by the Bayelsa State Government over the next three to five years to enable the State have at least an average of one trained Iẓon teacher to one primary or secondary school. This will encourage both those who are interested in teaching Iẓon and those who are interested in learning Iẓon. (Prezi, 2014, 272-274).

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