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PROBLEMS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING HAUSA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN SELECTED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JAHUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF JIGAWA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges of teaching and learning the Hausa language during the COVID-19 pandemic in selected primary and secondary schools within Jahun Local Government Area of Jigawa State, Nigeria. Using questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and parents, as well as semi-structured interviews with educators and policymakers, the study examined both structural and pedagogical barriers. Findings revealed that poor internet connectivity, lack of Hausa-compatible technological tools, inadequate digital content, and the absence of proper Hausa orthography in digital platforms undermined effective teaching and learning. The unpreparedness of teachers to deliver online lessons, coupled with limited access to smartphones, computers, and affordable data, further compounded the situation. These challenges disproportionately affected rural learners, leaving many without meaningful learning opportunities throughout the lockdown. The study recommends targeted investment in digital infrastructure, development of localized Hausa learning resources, regular teacher training in remote pedagogy, and inclusion of Hausa lessons in radio and television broadcasts. Furthermore, remedial programs should be introduced post-pandemic to recover learning losses, while policy frameworks should ensure the resilience of indigenous language education during future crises.

Keywords: Hausa language, teaching and learning, COVID-19, digital challenges, Jigawa State.

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Introduction

Language is a fundamental pillar of literacy development, providing individuals with the ability to acquire, process, and communicate knowledge effectively. Among the languages taught in primary and secondary in Jahun local government of Jigawa state is Hausa. Hausa language holds a unique position due to its background, cultural, and academic significance in Jigawa state. As a language of instruction in the lower and basic level of education, ensuring continuity and proficiency in the language is crucial for students who are learning the language.

Hausa is one of the Nigerian languages approved to be used in teaching and to be taught in both primary and secondary and later in higher institutions of learning. Also, Hausa language is used as the medium of instruction in the primary school as United Nation spelt out by the National Policy on Education (NPE). The medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue (MT) or the language of the immediate community and, at a later stage English.

In 2019 the world has faced the pandemic of a viral disease called CORONA VIRUS. The pandemic according to United Nation (2020) touches every aspect of society, constituting inevitable social disruption. The virus was first identified in Wuhan China in December 2019 and has spread to almost every region of the world. Olapegba et – al (2020), writes that, the disease is caused by a new and severe type of Corona virus known as severe acute respiratory syndrome. Ebohon O. et al (2021) put that, this disease is spread through airborne Zoonotic droplet, and people can get infected when in close contact with the cough and sneeze of persons who have symptoms from the Virus. The disease is confirmed here in Nigeria on 27th February, 2020 in Lagos when an Italian civilian became an index case.

World Health Organization (WHO) writes that, several countries have demonstrated that, COVID-19 transmission from one to another can be controlled. Their action has saved lives and have provided the rest of the world with more times and confidence to prepare for the arrival of any similar disease. Many countries have increased their capacity to detect and care for patients; hospitals have been provided with the necessary staff and equipment.

Infection control measures were taken to prevent the Virus from further spreading, and to help control the epidemic situation. One of the control measures was the total lock down of all the social and public activities of people. Adekenle (2020), writes that, the pandemic has led to the total lock down of most of the human activities in various parts of the world. The pandemic according to UN (2020), touches every aspect of society, constituting inevitable social disruption, therefore being able to work might be difficult or impossible.

The virus spreads easily when one is in close contact with an infected person or touché a place infected person touch. NCDC (2020), in its report writes that, Covid-19 spreads through droplets released when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The report further displays that; a person can be infected with the virus by being in close contact with a person infected with the virus or touches the place he touches.

Education is a sector where learners meet in close contact and learn mostly under common roofing, thus, transmission in such environment can be rapid, to control the spread, powerful measures should be taken among which is to stop the coming together of the students. On 19th March, 2020, Nigerian government through the Federal ministry of education ordered the closure of all schools at various levels; this was taken to control the transmission among the students.

Adelekun (2020), opines that, to help control the epidemic situation, one of the central measures is the total lock down of schools at various levels in the whole world.

The lock down has induced an unannounced shift from the traditional classroom setting in the educational sector, sequel to the rising concerns about the spread of COVID-19 and the need to contain the virus. Ali (2020) stated that, a growing number of tertiary institutions have shut down in regards to conventional class room delivery.

National Survey on School Resumption during Covid-19 pandemic (2020), puts in their report that, there were consensus on impact of prolonged school closure on school dropout rates, learners' academic achievement, number of out of school children and the effectiveness of remote learning during the period of school closure. In his analysis on the effectiveness of virtual learning during COVID-19 lockdown. Ebonhen et al (2021), opined that, electronic learning introduced during COVID-19 pandemic has not served the purpose due to the difficulties with internet connection, uniqueness teaching methodology of some languages including Hausa among other problems.

It is against this background that this study was conducted to investigate the factors that affect the teaching and learning Hausa during COVID-19 pandemic in the selected primary and secondary schools in Jahun local government of Jigawa state.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine the impact of Covid-19 on teaching and learning Hausa among students of the selected primary and secondary schools in Jahun local government of Jigawa state. The specific objectives are:

i. To identify the challenges faced while teaching and learning Hausa during COVID-19 pandemic in the selectedprimary and secondary schools.
ii. To find out the factors that affect the teaching and learning Hausa during COVID-19 pandemic in the selectedprimary and secondary schools.
iii. To determine the possible solutions to the problems that affect the teaching and learning of Hausa during any pandemic in primary and secondary schools.

Data Collection Method

The study gathered data in the selected primary and secondary schools in Jahun LGAthrough questionnaires administered to students, teachers, and parents and semi-structured interviews with educators and policymakers to explore deeper contextual challenges.Sampling involved purposive selection of schools across urban and rural quarters of Jahun to capture diversity.

Study Area

This study was conducted in four selected primary and secondary schools across urban and rural quartersof Jahun local government of Jigawa state, Nigeria in order to capture diversity.The selected schools are; Government Unity Secondary School Aujara, Government Girls'Science Secondary School Jahun, Aujara Model Primary School and Jahun Special Primary School. Jigawa state is predominantly Hausa-speaking, and Hausa is being taught at primarily and secondary schools and also the language is used as languages of instruction at lower level of primary education in the state. The choice of two primary and two secondary schools as the study area is informed by the problems faced by these educational levels in teaching and

learning Hausa during Covid-19, which became a set back to the language after the schools' closure was lifted at the end of the pandemic, as well as the need to evaluate how such problems will be approach in order to align with foundational literacy objectives.

Study Population

The study target are teachers and students of the selected primary and secondary schools. The population include:

Students – These are students of the selected primary and secondary schools. Their perspectives will provide insight into the problems faced during Covid-19 pandemic, and how such problems influence their Hausa language learning.

Hausa language teachers – These are educators responsible for teaching Hausa language as a subject and also teachers who use Hausa language as a medium of instruction in the selected schools.

Findings & Discussion

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools across Nigeria created a significant disruption in the teaching and learning process, particularly in rural areas such as Jahun Local Government Area of Jigawa State. Among the various academic subjects affected, the Hausa language faced unique and compounding challenges that hindered both instructional delivery and learner engagement. Several critical factors contributed to this situation. Some of the factors are as follows:

Poor Network / Internet Connectivity

One of the most fundamental barriers to effective teaching and learning during the COVID-19 lockdown in Jahun was the lack of reliable internet connectivity. Online learning depends heavily on access to stable, high-speed internet for virtual classes, downloading educational materials, and communication between teachers and students. However, Jahun, like many rural areas in Northern Nigeria, suffers from inadequate network infrastructure.

Most students and teachers in this region were unable to access digital learning platforms due to poor internet signals, lack of smartphones or computers, and the high cost of mobile data. Even where the network was available, it was often too slow or inconsistent to support video lessons or interactive sessions. This effectively excluded a large percentage of Hausa language learners from participating in remote learning and left many without any form of structured instruction for months.

Unavailability of Hausa Technological Tools

During the pandemic, digital education tools quickly became essential for sustaining learning. However, most of these tools such as learning management systems, educational apps, and online learning platforms were primarily designed in English and lacked support for indigenous languages like Hausa.

For learners and teachers in Jahun, this created a major challenge. There were very few technological tools tailored specifically for Hausa language instruction, including applications with Hausa-language interfaces, games, or interactive learning modules. The unavailability of

these resources meant that Hausa teachers had no digital support materials to rely on, and students could not find suitable resources in their language to study independently.

This situation placed Hausa at a disadvantage compared to other subjects that benefited from more readily available digital content, and it highlighted the need for localized language technology development.

Lack of Available Hausa Characters (Hooked Hausa Letters)
Hausa orthography includes **hooked letters** such as **ƙ, ɗ, ɓ,** and **y̓**, which are essential for proper spelling and pronunciation. Unfortunately, many digital tools and devices do not support these characters by default, especially in commonly used word processors, web platforms, or mobile keyboards.

During the pandemic, teachers and students who attempted to use digital devices for Hausa writing often found it difficult to input these characters correctly. In some cases, they had to substitute the correct Hausa characters with similar-looking English letters, which led to confusion and spelling errors. This issue affected the accuracy and quality of Hausa texts created and shared online, undermining literacy efforts and frustrating learners.

Without dedicated keyboards, fonts, or software that support Hausa orthography, digital learning in the language remained limited and ineffective.

Unavailability of Proper Hausa Digital Tools
Beyond character support, there was a broader absence of well-developed digital learning tools for Hausa. While some subjects had access to video lectures, e-books, online quizzes, and interactive platforms, Hausa learners were left with few or no equivalent resources.

There were no comprehensive e-learning platforms offering Hausa curriculum content aligned with national education standards. Furthermore, audio-visual teaching materials—such as educational videos or recorded lessons in Hausa—were scarce. This lack of digital content meant that even where devices and connectivity were available, students still could not access meaningful Hausa learning materials.

This gap prevented continuity in language learning during school closures and contributed to a decline in student engagement and performance in Hausa.

Lack of Trained and Qualified Hausa Teachers Skilled in Online Education
The sudden shift to remote learning exposed a major gap in teacher preparedness, particularly among Hausa language educators. Most teachers in Jahun had limited exposure to digital technologies before the pandemic and were not trained to deliver lessons online.This lack of training meant that even when digital tools were available, teachers were often unable to:

- Set up virtual classrooms,
- Record or share lessons effectively,
- Engage students through messaging platforms or apps, or
- Create interactive and multimedia learning content.

In addition, some teachers lacked confidence in using digital platforms or did not have access to personal devices to prepare lessons. This made it extremely difficult to sustain any meaningful

instruction in Hausa during the lockdown, and it limited the ability of teachers to adapt their teaching methods to fit the new digital environment.

Summary Table of Key Challenges

	Factor	Impact on Teaching and Learning Hausa in Jahun
1.	Poor internet connectivity	Hindered synchronous classes; prevented students without access from participating
2.	Lack of Hausa-compatible tools	Limited meaningful mother-tongue instruction through technology
3.	Missing special Hausa characters	Compromised text clarity, correctness, and literacy development
4.	Absence of Hausa digital content	No localized e-learning materials; students lacked culturally relevant content
5.	Insufficient teacher training	Educators unable to deliver effective online Hausa instruction

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study on the problems of teaching and learning Hausa during the COVID-19 pandemic in selected primary and secondary schools in Jahun Local Government Area of Jigawa State, the following recommendations are made.

It is recommended that the government, in collaboration with stakeholders in the education sector, should invest in improving digital infrastructure across schools in Jahun Local Government. This includes providing stable electricity, internet connectivity, and access to ICT tools that can facilitate online teaching and learning, especially during periods of school closure. Teachers of Hausa language should be trained regularly on the use of digital platforms and remote teaching tools to enhance their capacity to deliver effective virtual lessons.

In addition, there is a need for the development and distribution of Hausa language learning materials in digital formats such as audio recordings, e-books, video tutorials, and interactive mobile applications. These resources would help bridge the gap created by the absence of physical classroom interaction during the pandemic. It is also necessary for the government and non-governmental organizations to provide students particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds with learning devices such as radios, smartphones, or tablets to facilitate access to remote learning.

Furthermore, Hausa language lessons should be incorporated into local radio and television broadcasts to reach learners in rural communities who may not have access to internet-based platforms. Parents and guardians should be adequately sensitized and encouraged to support their children’s learning at home, especially in developing basic reading and writing skills in Hausa.

After the pandemic, it is recommended that schools implement remedial and catch-up programs aimed at recovering the learning losses in Hausa language among students. The Ministry of Education should formulate and adopt a well-structured emergency education policy to ensure the continuity of language education during future crises. Lastly, there should be an effective system of monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies employed during emergencies and to make informed improvements where necessary.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the factors explained above; poor internet, lack of Hausa technological tools, absence of proper Hausa characters, shortage of digital resources, and untrained teachersindividually and collectively disrupted the teaching and learning of Hausa during the COVID-19 pandemic in selected primary and secondary schools in Jahun local government in Jigawa state. The factors highlight systemic challenges in Nigeria's educational landscape, particularly concerning indigenous language instruction. Addressing these issues in the future will require coordinated efforts in infrastructure development, teacher training, digital tool creation, and policy support to ensure that Hausa and other local languages are not left behind in digital education reforms.

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