

The Role of Language and Communication in Disseminating Agricultural Knowledge in Ogun State, Nigeria

OYEBOLU, Ifeoluwa D. ¹JINADU, Damilola C. ²

^{1, 2} General Studies Department, Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Nigeria

*Corresponding author email: damilola.jinadu@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

Introduction

Agriculture remains a vital sector in Ogun State, contributing significantly to the state's economy and employment. However, the efficiency of agricultural production depends largely on the ability of farmers to access and implement new knowledge and technologies. The dissemination of agricultural information is often hindered by language barriers and ineffective communication strategies. Many farmers in Ogun State are literate only in indigenous languages such as Yoruba, which may limit their ability to understand agricultural information presented in English. This research explores how language and communication influence the dissemination of agricultural knowledge in Ogun State and proposes strategies for improving communication effectiveness. Agriculture remains a vital sector in Nigeria, contributing significantly to food security, employment, and economic growth. Ogun State, a predominantly agrarian region, faces unique challenges in ensuring sustainable farming practices and adapting to climate change.

Materials and methods/Methodology.

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to explore how language and communication influence the dissemination of agricultural knowledge in Ogun State, Nigeria. A case study approach was adopted to provide an in-depth examination of farmers' and extension agents' experiences during an agricultural training program. The case study design is ideal for exploring complex social phenomena, such as communication barriers, language preferences, and knowledge retention, in real-world agricultural settings (Yin, 2014). The study focuses on 80 farmers and 40 agricultural extension agents who participated in a farmer training program in October 2024. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of individuals actively engaged in agricultural knowledge exchange.

Results and discussion

The study's findings underscore the critical role of language and communication in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge among farmers in Ogun State. It was observed that farmers who received training in Yoruba demonstrated better comprehension and retention of agricultural practices compared to those trained in English. This supports the argument by Adedoyin (2004), who asserts that agricultural extension services are more effective when communicated in local languages rather than foreign or colonial languages. Language is a fundamental factor in knowledge transfer, as it enhances farmers' ability to internalize, recall, and apply farming techniques in their daily agricultural activities (Obidike, 2011).

One of the primary challenges identified in agricultural communication was the limited availability of bilingual training materials. Many of the training manuals and extension documents were written in English, which created barriers for non-English-speaking farmers. This finding is consistent with the study by Ogunbameru and Idriisa (2013), which found that the language of instruction in agricultural training programs significantly influences knowledge retention. Another major barrier was the difficulty in translating technical agricultural terms into Yoruba. While some farming concepts could easily be conveyed in the local language, others lacked direct translations, leading to misinterpretations or incomplete understanding. This aligns with the findings of Asiabaka (2002), who emphasizes that technical knowledge in agriculture often requires simplified language and culturally relevant terms to be effectively communicated to local farmers.

Conclusions

This study has demonstrated the critical role of language and communication in the dissemination of agricultural knowledge among farmers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings underscore the importance of using local languages, such as Yoruba, in agricultural training programs to improve knowledge retention and application. It recommends the development of bilingual training materials, language training for extension agents, and the expansion of radio programs in local languages, have significant policy and practical implications for agricultural development programs in Nigeria by adopting a multilingual approach and prioritizing local language communication, agricultural extension services can increase engagement, improve knowledge dissemination, and contribute to increased agricultural productivity and food security in Nigeria. Ultimately, this study highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between language, culture, and agricultural knowledge transfer by recognizing and addressing these complexities, we can work towards creating more effective and inclusive agricultural development programs that benefit all stakeholders.