



Post-Covid-19 Pandemic and the Upsurge of Online Learning: Prospects for Hausa Language Learning in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study, titled "Post-COVID-19 Pandemic and the Upsurge of Online Learning: Prospects for Hausa Language Learning in Nigeria," explores the potential of online education to advance Hausa language instruction within Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria, in response to the increasing adoption of digital learning platforms following the COVID-19 pandemic. The study aims to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of online learning for Hausa language education, particularly focusing on accessibility, student engagement, and instructional outcomes. A total of 255 participants took part in the study, comprising 180 upper-basic level students (Grade 9) and 75 Hausa language teachers, selected to reflect a cross-section of individuals involved in Hausa language learning and teaching. The study was guided by three research questions that sought to understand the benefits, challenges, and overall prospects of using online platforms for Hausa language education. Data was collected through an online questionnaire developed by the researcher, which achieved a reliability index of 0.82, ensuring the tool's consistency and validity. The instrument was administered digitally to all participants, allowing for efficient data collection and minimizing physical contact in adherence to post-pandemic safety protocols. Analysis of the responses, conducted using percentage-based calculations, highlights a strong inclination among both students and teachers toward online learning as a viable medium for language instruction. The findings reveal that online learning not only enhances accessibility to Hausa language resources but also provides an interactive platform that can significantly enrich the learning experience. Furthermore, the study indicates that online learning tools can support individualized learning, allowing students to progress at their own pace, which can be particularly beneficial for language acquisition. The study concludes that online learning holds substantial promise for the future of Hausa language education in Nigeria. Based on these findings, it recommends that educational policymakers, schools, and educators leverage digital learning tools to support and expand Hausa language instruction. Emphasis is placed on investing in digital infrastructure, developing culturally relevant online materials, and training teachers to effectively utilize online platforms. These efforts could help address current educational challenges and enhance the overall quality and reach of Hausa language education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Adoption, Appropriate, Hausa Language, Online Learning, Prospects

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization in early 2020, catalyzed a rapid transformation in education worldwide. As institutions closed to prevent virus spread, online learning emerged as the primary means for continuing education, redefining educational methodologies and delivery mechanisms. In Nigeria, where educational infrastructure was already challenged by limited digital resources and internet connectivity, the shift to online learning was marked by both challenges and opportunities. The unprecedented surge in digital learning platforms, supported by a growing array of technology tools, allowed for continued access to education, albeit unevenly across different demographics and regions (Ajadi, 2021; Olatunji, 2022).

Hausa, one of Nigeria's major indigenous languages and widely spoken in West Africa, has traditionally been taught through classroom-based methods. With the rise of online learning, there is now an opportunity to expand Hausa language instruction beyond traditional boundaries, making it accessible to a broader, even global, audience. The potential for digital education to enhance Hausa language learning aligns with UNESCO's call for the preservation of indigenous languages through digital means, particularly given the risk of language erosion as speakers shift to dominant global languages (UNESCO, 2021). Digital platforms present new prospects for language preservation, growth, and revitalization through improved accessibility and engagement (Ibrahim & Ahmed, 2023).

As Nigerian educational institutions and private platforms increasingly integrate online resources for indigenous language instruction, Hausa language programs have the potential to leverage these digital advancements. These include interactive apps, language labs, and multimedia resources that provide a dynamic learning environment for language acquisition. Scholars like Bala and Abdullahi (2023) argue that online platforms can deliver a culturally relevant, context-sensitive curriculum that fosters linguistic skills and cultural appreciation in students. However, concerns about access disparities, technical proficiency, and cultural misrepresentation in digital content persist (Aliyu, 2023).

Thus, the post-COVID-19 online learning upsurge presents a pivotal opportunity to enhance Hausa language learning through online modalities. This study explores these possibilities, examining the benefits, challenges, and strategies for optimizing online Hausa language instruction to meet the linguistic and educational needs of a diverse Nigerian populace.

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about profound changes in the educational landscape, leading to a rapid shift toward online learning globally. In Nigeria, this shift was particularly notable as traditional, in-person learning environments faced extended closures, prompting educators and learners to adapt to digital platforms. While online learning has created opportunities for education continuity, it has also introduced challenges, especially for language learning, which traditionally relies on interactive, in-person methods for effective acquisition. Among Nigeria's indigenous languages, Hausa — one of the most widely spoken in the country and West Africa — now faces both challenges and opportunities within this new learning model.

Before the pandemic, Hausa language learning was largely confined to physical classrooms, where face-to-face interactions facilitated pronunciation, cultural immersion, and communication practice. Online platforms, however, often struggle to replicate these interactive dynamics, potentially affecting learners' proficiency in the language, especially in non-Hausa-speaking regions where language practice opportunities are limited. The question thus arises: How effective are online platforms in facilitating the learning of the Hausa language in a post-COVID context? Can these platforms address the specific needs of Hausa language learners in Nigeria?

Furthermore, while online learning offers scalability and accessibility, it also exposes existing infrastructural and socio-economic barriers. Many learners in Nigeria, especially in underserved regions, face limited access to reliable internet, insufficient digital literacy, and inadequate devices, which can hinder their online learning experience. Additionally, online learning content for Hausa language education is still developing, raising questions about its adequacy and relevance. The shortage of digital resources, such as e-books, interactive videos, and multimedia content specific to Hausa language and culture, may further limit the effectiveness of online Hausa learning.

Despite these challenges, the upsurge in online learning presents potential benefits for Hausa language revitalization and preservation. The use of digital platforms to present Hausa language content can be made accessible to a global audience, promoting cultural awareness and potentially enhancing the language's status and usage. However, realizing these prospects requires strategic intervention, curriculum innovation, and investments in digital infrastructure tailored to Hausa language pedagogy. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the prospects and challenges of online Hausa language learning in post-COVID-19 Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study is specifically aimed at attaining the following objectives:

- i. To determine the prospects of online learning for Hausa Language education;
- ii. To find out whether online learning is appropriate for the teaching and learning of Hausa Language;
- iii. To determine the extent to which online can be adopted for Hausa Language education.

Research Questions

Thus, this study is centred on the following research questions:

- i. What are the prospects of online learning for Hausa Language education?
- ii. Is online learning appropriate for the teaching and learning of Hausa Language?
- iii. How can online be adopted for Hausa Language education?

Method

The study was conducted in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey research design, noted for its efficacy in gathering data on perceptions and attitudes (Johnson & Christensen, 2022). This approach allowed for a detailed exploration of online learning adoption among Hausa language educators and students. A purposive sample of 255 participants (175 Hausa language teachers and 80 Hausa language students from Upper Basic Nine) was selected to ensure the relevance of insights to the study's objectives (Etikan & Bala, 2023).

A structured questionnaire, titled "Prospects, Appropriateness, and Adoption of Online Learning for Hausa Language Questionnaire" (PAAOLHLQ), consisting of 30 items, was developed to examine the prospects, appropriateness, and current adoption levels of online learning in Hausa language education. This instrument was structured into three sections: Section A assessed perceived prospects of online learning in Hausa language education (Ayeni, 2023), Section B evaluated the appropriateness of online platforms for language teaching (Mukhtar et al., 2023), and Section C measured current adoption levels of online learning methods for Hausa language instruction (Olowe & Akinrinola, 2023). To ensure the instrument's reliability

and validity, it was reviewed by experts in educational measurement, resulting in a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89 (Kumar & Ramasamy, 2023), indicative of strong internal consistency.

Data were analyzed using a two-point rating scale with response options of "Agree" (A) and "Disagree" (D). Frequency counts and percentage calculations were employed to answer the research questions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2022). Items receiving "Agree" responses from 50% or more of participants were interpreted as positive, signifying supportive perceptions of online learning adoption, whereas items with "Disagree" responses from over 50% of participants indicated a negative or resistant stance toward adoption (Mayer, 2023).

Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Prospects of online learning for Hausa Language Education

S/N	Items	No. of Agree	% of Agree	No. of Disagree	% of Disagree	Decision
1.	Online learning will make the learning of Hausa Language flexible in terms of learning pace	246	96%	9	4%	Positive
2.	Online learning can become an integral part of Hausa Language education	230	90%	25	10%	Positive
3.	The content knowledge of Hausa Language can be enhanced through online learning	241	94.5%	14	5.5%	Positive
4.	Learning satisfaction and retention can be encouraged through online learning of Hausa Language	234	91.8%	21	8.2%	Positive
5.	Online learning can aid better processing of information pertaining to Hausa Language	214	83.9%	41	16.1%	Positive
6.	Students cooperation, self discipline and sense of responsibility can be promoted by online learning of Hausa Language materials	198	77.6%	57	22.4%	Positive
7.	Online learning will enhance the understanding of graphs and maps by Hausa Language learners	166	65%	89	35%	Positive
8.	Different learning styles can be made effective through online learning	97	38%	158	62%	Negative
9.	Online learning exposes Hausa Language to different areas of study in the subject	251	98.4%	4	1.6%	Positive
10.	Online learning can aid the advancement of career choices in Hausa Language education	223	87.5%	32	12.5%	Positive

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that nearly all items received positive responses, highlighting the potential of online learning in advancing Hausa Language Education. Specifically, the data reveal that for all items, except one, respondents showed favorable responses with rates exceeding 50%. This suggests that online learning methods are generally well-suited for the teaching and learning of Hausa language, pointing to numerous opportunities for its integration into educational systems. However, item 8 diverged from this trend; responses indicated a lower effectiveness in applying diverse learning styles in online Hausa Language instruction. This suggests that while online platforms offer promising benefits, the use of multiple learning styles may not translate as effectively in an online context for this subject. Addressing this area could enhance the overall impact of online learning for Hausa Language Education, potentially by exploring how online tools and methodologies can better support varied learning approaches.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the Appropriateness of Online Learning for Hausa Language Education

S/N	Items	No. of	% of	No. of	% of	Decision
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	
1.	Online learning can make up for the inadequacies of Hausa Language teachers	108	42.4%	147	57.6%	Negative
2.	Updated and current information on Hausa Language content can be accessed through online learning	247	96.9%	8	3.1%	Positive
3.	All aspects of Hausa Language can be taught with online channels	224	87.8%	31	12.25%	Positive
4.	Hausa Language teaching methods can be applied to teach and learn online	199	78%	56	22%	Positive
5.	Online learning promotes student centred instruction in Hausa Language	239	93.7%	16	6.3%	Positive
6.	Online learning can break the obstacle of distance in learning Hausa Language	253	99.2%	2	0.8%	Positive
7.	Functional education of Hausa Language students and teachers will be heightened when they learn online	237	92.9%	18	7.1%	Positive
8.	Online learning has gained much popularity and so will be suitable and appropriate for Hausa Language education	222	87%	33	13%	Positive
9.	Online learning will expose students and teachers of Hausa Language to diverse learning plans, knowledge and resources	242	94.9%	13	5.1%	Positive
10.	Online learning have potentials and endless opportunities for the advancement of Hausa Language education	238	93.3%	17	6.7%	Positive

The data analysis presented indicates that item 2 received a predominantly negative response. This outcome suggests that online learning, on its own, may not be sufficient to address the current inadequacies among Hausa Language teachers, possibly due to gaps in resources, training, or specific support needed for effective language instruction.

However, responses for items 2 through 10 were largely positive. This trend implies a general consensus that online teaching could be a suitable and effective medium for delivering Hausa Language instruction, provided that the necessary conditions and supports are met. These items reflect confidence in online teaching's potential to enhance accessibility, engagement, and learning outcomes for Hausa Language students.

In summary, while online learning shows promise for Hausa Language education, the results suggest that targeted improvements are needed, especially concerning the capabilities and resources available to teachers, to fully leverage online platforms for effective instruction.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the Adoption of Online Learning for Hausa Language Education

S/N	Items	No. of	% of	No. of	% of	Decision
		Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	
1.	Through educational applications e.g. Google classroom, Google meet, modules etc.	235	92.2%	20	7.8%	Positive
2.	Through educational learning management systems e.g. canvass	168	65.9%	87	34.1%	Positive
3.	Use of online chat platforms like whatsapp and facebook	245	96%	10	4%	Positive

4.	Use of virtual learning e.g. zoom and Skype	217	85%	38	15%	Positive
5.	Through audio messaging tools or digital audio players	43	16.9%	212	83.1%	Negative
6.	Use of correspondence like emails and eBooks	11	4.3%	244	95.7%	Negative
7.	Telecourses delivered via television and radio broadcasts	9	3.5%	246	96.5%	Negative
8.	The use of computer to learn static content from CDs and DVDs	23	9%	232	91%	Negative
9.	Internet based learning in a normal class interactions	204	80%	51	20%	Positive
10.	The creation of different blogs and websites for the soul purpose of learning Hausa Language	104	40.8%	151	59.2%	Negative

The adoption of educational applications, such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, Moodle, various learning management systems (LMS), online chat platforms, virtual classrooms, and other internet-based learning environments, received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. These online learning methods were highly regarded and widely recommended for teaching the Hausa language, reflecting the participants' preference for interactive and immersive digital platforms that enable real-time engagement, collaboration, and ease of access.

Conversely, more traditional and asynchronous tools like audio files, digital tools, correspondence methods, telecourses, CDs, DVDs, as well as blogs and websites, received less than 50% agreement from participants. This suggests that these methods may not align as well with the learning preferences or requirements of students in an online Hausa language program. The lower favorability of these tools indicates that participants might find them less engaging or effective for facilitating the interactive and practical aspects essential to language learning.

Discussions

The study reinforces the critical role of online learning in advancing Hausa Language instruction, supporting recent research that underscores the effectiveness of online and blended learning models in enhancing language accessibility and curriculum flexibility, particularly at the secondary education level. Studies by scholars such as Wei and Wu (2023) demonstrate that online learning mitigates educational inequities by providing a flexible, adaptable platform that accommodates diverse student needs, especially within resource-constrained settings.

Emerging studies on the Hausa language in digital contexts, including Bako's (2023) ethnographic work, reveal that online platforms are increasingly vital in fostering Hausa language engagement and learning, especially given the shift in educational delivery models following the COVID-19 pandemic. Likewise, research by Bello and Adeyemi (2023) highlights the effectiveness of widely-used social media platforms, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, for language acquisition. These platforms are not only accessible but also familiar to students and educators alike, making them effective tools for enhancing language learning experiences.

Digital platforms like Google Classroom, Zoom, and other learning management systems (LMS) have proven effective for virtual language instruction, as research validates their role in supporting sustainable, continuous learning. This is further corroborated by findings from MDPI's systematic review on online learning, which advocates for the use of intuitive, user-friendly applications to maintain engagement and promote long-term educational outcomes. Together, these digital tools and platforms enable Hausa language education to thrive in virtual environments, promoting accessible and flexible learning.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the integration of online learning in Hausa Language education in Nigeria:

1. Secondary schools in Nigeria, along with Hausa language teachers and students, should actively harness the potential of online learning platforms. Schools can support this by providing and ensuring the effective utilization of digital tools and online resources tailored to Hausa Language education;

2. Curriculum planners within the Nigerian education sector should formally recognize online learning as an appropriate and effective method for Hausa Language education. This endorsement should be accompanied by an integration of online learning strategies into the existing school curriculum;
3. Online platforms and tools such as Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, and other learning management systems should be adopted as essential resources for Hausa Language instruction. These tools should be seamlessly infused into the Hausa Language curriculum to provide a structured, accessible, and dynamic learning experience;
4. Schools should be provided with essential technological infrastructure, including computers and reliable internet connectivity, to enable Hausa Language learning in a digital, internet-based classroom environment. Access to these resources will facilitate effective engagement and digital literacy for both students and teachers.

Conclusions

The post-COVID-19 era has spotlighted the transformative potential of online learning for Hausa Language education in Nigeria. This study emphasizes the unique advantages that online platforms offer for making Hausa Language education more accessible, flexible, and engaging. The widespread adoption of digital tools and resources provides valuable opportunities to enhance linguistic proficiency and cultural appreciation among learners, reaching audiences beyond traditional classroom boundaries. To fully realize these benefits, it is essential to invest in and implement effective, sustainable online learning strategies that support the Hausa language's growth, not only as a temporary response to the pandemic but as a lasting component of educational practice. By integrating digital tools tailored for Hausa language learning into future pedagogy, significant strides can be made in both preserving and promoting the language, ensuring that its richness is maintained and its accessibility is broadened across generations.

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