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The Use of Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool in French Language Education in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in French language education in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent challenges associated with the teaching and learning of French language in secondary schools, particularly students' low motivation, poor classroom participation, inadequate vocabulary acquisition, weak oral expression, pronunciation difficulties, and poor comprehension. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, involving selected secondary school students offering French language in Lokoja Local Government Area. The study used an appropriate sample drawn from the target population, while data were collected through relevant research instruments, including French Language Achievement Test and appropriate questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques appropriate to the research questions. The findings show empirical evidence on the effectiveness of storytelling in improving French language learning outcomes. The study concluded that the use of storytelling can provide meaningful and engaging opportunities for learners to develop vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, and communicative skills. The findings also provide useful information to French language teachers, curriculum planners, school administrators, policymakers, and researchers on the adoption of innovative, learner-centered instructional strategies. The study recommended that integrating storytelling into French language instruction has the potential to make language learning more engaging, contextualized, and communicative, particularly among secondary school students in Lokoja Local Government Area.

Keywords: Storytelling, French Language Teaching, Vocabulary Acquisition, Speaking Skills, Language Learning, Pedagogical Strategies, Oral Communication, Secondary School Students, Lokoja Local Government Area

1. Introduction

Language is an essential instrument for communication, social interaction, cultural transmission and intellectual development. In an increasingly interconnected world, the ability to communicate in multiple languages provides individuals with opportunities for global interaction, education and employment. French language education is particularly important in Nigeria because of the country's geographical proximity to Francophone nations and its strategic role in promoting diplomatic, economic and cultural relationships. The Federal Government of Nigeria has therefore emphasized the importance of French language education in strengthening relations with French-speaking countries (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014).

Despite the importance of French, its teaching and learning in Nigerian schools continue to face challenges, including inadequate instructional materials, shortage of qualified teachers, limited exposure to authentic language experiences and the dominance of teacher-centred instructional methods. These challenges have contributed to low student interest and difficulties in developing effective communication skills (Adebayo & Ogunyemi, 2021; Nnadi, 2022). Consequently, there is a need for innovative teaching strategies that can improve students' motivation, participation and language proficiency.

One such strategy is storytelling, an instructional approach that uses oral, written or digital narratives to communicate knowledge and create meaningful learning experiences. Isbell *et al.* (2020) explain that storytelling engages learners emotionally and cognitively, thereby promoting comprehension and retention. Robin (2021) also observes that stories support language acquisition by presenting vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful and memorable contexts.

In foreign language education, storytelling provides opportunities for developing listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Through stories, learners encounter vocabulary and grammatical structures in context while participating in activities

such as retelling, role-playing, dramatization and group discussions. These activities encourage communication, collaboration, creativity and confidence among learners (Nguyen & Newton, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2023). In French language education, storytelling also exposes students to French culture, traditions and values, thereby promoting linguistic and intercultural competence (Cuq & Gruca, 2022).

The use of storytelling is also consistent with constructivist learning principles, which emphasize active learning and knowledge construction through meaningful experiences and social interaction. Bruner (2019) and Alismail (2022) associate narrative-based learning with improved motivation, creativity, critical thinking and self-expression. These benefits make storytelling a useful alternative to conventional approaches that often emphasize memorization of vocabulary and grammatical rules without sufficient opportunities for practical communication.

In Nigeria, particularly in secondary schools, storytelling offers an opportunity to make French lessons more interactive, interesting and learner-centred. Studies have indicated that narrative-based instructional approaches can improve students' participation, language achievement and attitudes towards foreign language learning (Okafor & Eze, 2022; Adeyemi, 2024). However, the extent to which this approach is utilized in secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State requires further investigation.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine storytelling as a pedagogical tool in French language education in Lokoja Local Government Area. Specifically, it investigates the extent of its use and its contribution to students' language skills, classroom engagement and academic achievement, with a view to identifying how storytelling can improve the teaching and learning of French in secondary schools.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of French language education in Nigeria, students in many secondary schools continue to experience difficulties in achieving satisfactory academic performance, particularly in spoken French, vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation and oral communication. These challenges are often associated with inadequate instructional materials, limited language exposure and ineffective teaching methods.

Storytelling has been identified as an innovative teaching strategy that can improve language learning by presenting vocabulary and grammatical structures in meaningful contexts. It encourages students' participation, creativity, confidence and development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Nguyen & Newton, 2021; Dubreucq & Martin, 2023). However, the extent to which storytelling is employed in teaching French in secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area has not been adequately investigated.

The limited availability of empirical studies focusing specifically on Lokoja creates a research gap regarding the contribution of storytelling to students' interest, classroom participation, communicative competence and academic achievement in French. Therefore, this study seeks to examine storytelling as a pedagogical tool in French language education in Lokoja Local Government Area, with a view to determining its potential contribution to improving the teaching and learning of French in secondary schools.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool and techniques learning French language in Lokoja Local Government Area.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the extent to which storytelling is could be useful in French language classrooms.
2. Determine the influence of storytelling on students' vocabulary acquisition in French language.
3. Assess the impact of storytelling on students' speaking skills.
4. Examine teachers' perceptions regarding storytelling in French language teaching.

1.3 Research Questions

For the objective of this study, the following research questions are carefully structured for guidance.

1. To what extent is storytelling could be useful in French language classroom?
2. How does storytelling influence students' vocabulary acquisition in French language?
3. What impact does storytelling have on students' speaking skills?
4. What are teachers' perceptions of storytelling in French language teaching?

2. Literature Review

2.1.1 Concept of Storytelling

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication through which knowledge, culture, traditions, and values are transmitted from one generation to another. It involves the narration of real or imaginary events in a structured and meaningful manner for educational, cultural, social, or entertainment purposes. According to Alismail (2022), storytelling is a teaching strategy that utilizes narratives to engage learners, stimulate imagination, and facilitate knowledge acquisition.

In educational settings, storytelling has evolved beyond traditional oral narration to include written stories, visual stories, digital storytelling, role-play, dramatization, and multimedia presentations. Robin (2021) describes storytelling as an instructional approach that enables learners to connect emotionally and intellectually with learning content, thereby improving comprehension and retention.

Storytelling promotes active participation and learner engagement by presenting information in meaningful contexts. It helps learners develop language skills, critical thinking abilities, creativity, and communication competence. Consequently, storytelling has become increasingly recognized as an effective pedagogical strategy in language education.

2.1.2 Historical Development of Storytelling in Education

The use of storytelling as an educational practice dated back to ancient civilizations where oral traditions served as primary means of transmitting knowledge. Before the development of formal education systems, stories were used to teach moral values, social norms, cultural heritage, and practical skills.

According to Bruner (2019), storytelling remains fundamental to human learning because individuals

naturally understand and organize experiences through narratives. In contemporary education, storytelling has been integrated into various disciplines, including language arts, social studies, science, and foreign language instruction.

Modern educational technologies have expanded storytelling practices through digital storytelling, interactive narratives, podcasts, animations, and multimedia presentations. These innovations have enhanced the effectiveness and accessibility of storytelling as a learning tool.

A foreign language is a language that is not the mother tongue of the learner, such as French in Nigeria. Teaching such a language is not always easy, because the learners do not hear or speak it outside the classroom. For this reason, teachers need a good method to make learning easy and interesting. One of the most effective methods is storytelling. Storytelling is the art of telling stories in an interesting way to pass information and lessons to learners. One major importance of storytelling is that it creates interest and attention in the classroom. Students love to listen to stories. When a teacher begins a French lesson with a short interesting story, the students will pay attention and be eager to know what will happen next. This interest makes them forget that they are learning a difficult language, and they learn without stress. Storytelling helps learners to acquire vocabulary and grammar naturally. In storytelling, new words are not taught alone, but are used inside sentences and in real situations It also develops the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. First, students listen to the teacher. Then, they are asked to retell the story in their own words, which improves speaking. Later, they can read the story from a book and write their own version. In this way, one story teaches all the skills at once.

In addition, storytelling teaches the culture of the native speakers of the language. Every story carries the culture, beliefs, proverbs, songs and way of life of a people. Through French stories, Nigerian students will learn about French culture, festivals, food, dressing and manners. This cultural knowledge helps them to use the language correctly and to respect other people. Storytelling also helps memory. It is easy to forget a list of grammar rules, but it is very difficult to forget a good story. The characters, the plot, and the lesson of the story remain in the memory of the learner for a long time. Because of this, storytelling makes learning permanent. Storytelling teaches moral lessons. Most stories have a moral at the end, such as honesty is the best policy, hard work pays, and respect your elders. While students are learning the foreign language, they are also learning good character. Therefore, storytelling is very important in the teaching of a foreign language. It makes learning interesting, helps students learn vocabulary and grammar, develops listening and speaking skills, teaches culture, improves memory, and builds good character. Therefore, teachers should use storytelling often to make foreign language teaching successful.

2.1.3 Concept of Pedagogy and Pedagogical Tools

Pedagogy refers to the art, science, and practice of teaching. It encompasses the methods, strategies, techniques, and principles used by educators to facilitate learning. Pedagogical tools are instructional resources and approaches employed to improve teaching effectiveness and learner outcomes.

According to Shulman (2020), effective pedagogy requires selecting instructional methods that align with learners' needs, interests, and learning objectives. Pedagogical tools may include discussions, demonstrations, collaborative learning, games, project-based learning, role-playing, and storytelling.

2.1.4 Objectives of French Language Education in Nigeria

French language education in Nigeria is designed to achieve several educational, social, cultural, and economic objectives. The inclusion of French language in the Nigerian educational system is informed by the country's geographical location among Francophone nations and its commitment to regional and international cooperation. The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes French as an important foreign language and the country's second official language, thereby emphasizing its relevance in national development and global engagement.

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (2001), the major objective of French language education is to equip learners with communicative competence that enables them to interact effectively in French-speaking environments. This objective focuses on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills necessary for meaningful communication. Similarly, Abdulmalik (2024) noted that French language education aims at enhancing interpersonal and international communication while producing competent manpower capable of functioning in multilingual and multicultural settings.

Another important objective of French language education is to foster international understanding and cooperation. Nigeria is surrounded by several Francophone countries, including Benin, Niger, Togo Chad, and Cameroon. Consequently, proficiency in French facilitates diplomatic relations, regional integration, and economic cooperation within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Scholars have argued that the study of French promotes peaceful coexistence, regional collaboration, and mutual understanding among nations.

French language education also seeks to promote cultural awareness and appreciation. Through the study of French language and Francophone literature, learners are exposed to diverse cultures, traditions, values, and worldviews. Such exposure broadens students' perspectives, encourages tolerance, and enhances intercultural competence. Abdulmalik (2024) observed that French language education helps learners appreciate both French and Francophone civilizations while developing positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Thus, learning French language assists the learners of Anglophone environment to compare his/her culture with that of Francophone settings.

Furthermore, French language education aims to prepare learners for higher education and employment opportunities. In an increasingly globalized world, proficiency in French provides access to academic scholarships, international educational programmes, diplomatic services, tourism, translation, interpretation, international business, and other career opportunities. Ogilo (2023) [18] emphasized that French language education contributes significantly to job creation, economic growth, and sustainable national development.

Another objective is the development of linguistic competence in the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Effective mastery of these skills enables learners to communicate accurately and confidently in various social and professional contexts. The

acquisition of these competencies is essential for achieving the broader goals of language learning and national educational development.

Nigeria is surrounded by French-speaking countries such as Benin Republic, Niger Republic, Chad and Cameroon. Many Nigerian traders travel to these countries to buy goods and sell their own products. If a trader does not understand French, it will be very difficult for him to bargain, ask for prices, or understand the terms of trade. Therefore, French in commerce make communication easy between English-speaking traders and French-speaking traders. It expand business and increase profit. The world has become a global village, and many big companies in France, Canada, Belgium, Senegal, and Ivory Coast use French as their official language. A businessman who understands French can easily establish business relationships with these companies, import goods from them, and export his own goods to them. This helps him to grow his business beyond his own country. French language helps to prevent cheating and misunderstanding in business. In commerce, traders sign contracts, read invoices, receipts, and price lists. Many of these documents are written in French, especially when trading with francophone countries. If a trader understands French, he can read and interpret these documents himself. He will not be cheated because of language barrier. French is useful in advertising and marketing. French opens doors to good jobs in the commercial sector. Banks, customs, immigration, import and export companies, international organisations like ECOWAS and the African Union all need workers who can speak French. Therefore, learning French gives a person better employment opportunities in commerce. Therefore, without French, commerce between Nigeria and her French-speaking neighbours would be very difficult.

2.1.5 Storytelling and French Language Learning

French language learning is a complex process that involves the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, communicative competence, and the ability to use language effectively in different social and cultural contexts. Contemporary language teaching approaches emphasize meaningful communication and learner engagement as essential components of successful language acquisition. Within this framework, storytelling has emerged as a powerful pedagogical strategy capable of enhancing language learning by providing learners with authentic, meaningful, and context-rich language experiences.

Storytelling refers to the use of narratives to communicate ideas, experiences, and information in a structured and engaging manner. In French language education, storytelling creates opportunities for learners to French encounter language in realistic contexts rather than as isolated vocabulary items or grammatical rules. According to Nguyen and Newton (2021), storytelling facilitates French language acquisition through repeated exposure to vocabulary, grammatical structures, and communicative patterns embedded within meaningful narratives. Through stories, learners are able to understand how language functions in real-life situations, thereby improving both comprehension and language use. One of the major contributions of storytelling to French language learning is its role in French vocabulary development. Stories expose learners to a wide range of words and expressions in meaningful contexts, making it easier for them to infer meanings and retain new vocabulary. Repeated encounters with words and phrases throughout a story enhance learners' understanding and long-term retention of lexical items. Research has shown that contextualized vocabulary learning through storytelling is more effective than rote memorization because learners associate new words with events, characters, and situations within the narrative (Al-Jarf, 2023).

Storytelling also facilitates French grammar acquisition. Rather than learning grammatical rules in isolation, learners encounter grammatical structures naturally within stories. This contextualized exposure enables students to observe how French language forms are used to convey meaning in authentic communicative situations. Through repeated interaction with stories, learners gradually internalize grammatical patterns and develop a deeper understanding of French language structures and grammars. Such implicit learning often results in greater language fluency and accuracy than traditional grammar-focused instruction.

In addition, storytelling contributes significantly to the development of French language listening skills. Listening to stories requires learners to pay attention to pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, and meaning. As learners follow narratives, they develop their ability to identify key information, interpret messages, and understand spoken language in context. According to Isbell *et al*. (2020), storytelling enhances listening comprehension by exposing learners to meaningful and engaging language input, thereby improving their auditory processing and comprehension abilities. Storytelling further supports the development of speaking skills. Activities such as story retelling, role-playing, dramatization, and group discussions encourage learners to use language actively and creatively. Through these activities, students practice pronunciation, vocabulary usage, sentence construction, and oral communication. Storytelling provides a low-anxiety learning environment that helps learners build confidence and fluency in speaking the target language. Dubreucq and Martin (2023) found that learners who participated regularly in storytelling activities demonstrated significant improvements in oral expression and communicative competence.

French language reading skills are equally enhanced through storytelling. Reading stories exposes learners to authentic French language structures, diverse vocabulary, and different writing styles. As students engage with narratives, they develop comprehension skills, reading fluency, inferential thinking, and the ability to interpret textual information. Stories also stimulate learners' interest in reading by presenting language in enjoyable and meaningful forms, thereby fostering positive reading habits.

Furthermore, storytelling promotes writing skills by encouraging learners to create, modify, and retell stories using their own words. Story-based writing activities enable students to practice French language sentence construction, paragraph development, organization of ideas, and creative expression. Through narrative writing, learners become more proficient in using language to communicate thoughts, experiences, and emotions effectively. The process of composing stories also enhances learners' creativity, imagination, and critical thinking abilities.

Beyond the development of the four language skills, storytelling contributes to learner motivation and engagement. Stories naturally capture learners' attention because they are entertaining, relatable, and emotionally engaging. This increased interest promotes active

participation in classroom activities and creates a positive learning environment. Consequently, storytelling has been recognized as an effective learner-centered approach that supports both linguistic and cognitive development in language education.

In the context of French language learning, storytelling provides learners with opportunities to encounter authentic French vocabulary, expressions, and cultural elements within meaningful contexts. Through exposure to narratives, learners develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while simultaneously gaining insights into the cultures of French-speaking communities. Therefore, storytelling represents a valuable pedagogical tool for promoting effective language learning and improving students' communicative competence in French language education.

2.1.6 Types of Storytelling Used in French Language Education

Storytelling exists in various forms, each serving unique instructional purposes and contributing differently to French language development. In French language education, the selection of a particular storytelling approach depends on the learning objectives, learners' needs, available resources, and classroom context. The integration of different types of storytelling enhances learners' engagement and facilitates the development of communicative competence in French. The major types of storytelling commonly used in French language education include oral storytelling, written storytelling, digital storytelling, interactive storytelling, and dramatic storytelling.

Oral Storytelling

Oral storytelling is one of the oldest and most widely used forms of storytelling in educational settings. It involves the face-to-face narration of stories by teachers, students, or other storytellers without relying heavily on written texts. Through oral storytelling, learners are exposed to authentic language input, pronunciation patterns, intonation, and non-verbal communication cues such as facial expressions and gestures. This one greatly enhances the spoken skills of the French language learner.

According to Isbell *et al*. (2020), oral storytelling promotes listening comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and oral communication skills by engaging learners in meaningful interactions. In French language classrooms, oral storytelling provides students with opportunities to hear correct pronunciation and natural language use while encouraging active listening and participation. Furthermore, oral storytelling helps learners develop confidence in French language speaking and improves their ability to communicate effectively in the target language.

Written Storytelling

Written storytelling involves the presentation of stories through books, textbooks, short stories, novels, and other written materials. This form of storytelling enables learners to interact directly with written language, thereby supporting the development of reading and writing skills. Through written narratives, students of French language encounter diverse vocabulary, grammatical structures, and sentence patterns in meaningful contexts.

Written storytelling encourages learners to interpret texts, infer meanings, and analyze narrative structures. It also provides opportunities for independent learning, allowing students to read at their own pace and revisit texts for better understanding. In French language education, written stories contribute significantly to reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and writing proficiency by exposing learners to authentic language usage and literary expressions.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling refers to the use of multimedia technologies to create and present stories. It combines traditional storytelling with digital elements such as audio recordings, videos, animations, images, graphics, and text. Advances in educational technology have made digital storytelling an increasingly popular instructional strategy in French language education.

Robin (2021) notes that digital storytelling enhances learner engagement by integrating visual, auditory, and textual modes of communication. In language learning environments, digital storytelling provides French language learners with opportunities to develop both linguistic and technological skills. The use of multimedia resources makes language input more attractive and memorable, thereby improving comprehension and retention. In French language classrooms, digital storytelling can facilitate pronunciation practice, listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, and creative language production.

Interactive Storytelling

Interactive storytelling is a learner-centered approach that actively involves students in the construction, modification, or continuation of stories. Unlike traditional storytelling, where learners are passive listeners, interactive storytelling requires active participation and collaboration on the part of French learners. Learners may contribute ideas, create alternative endings, develop characters, or engage in storytelling discussions.

This form of storytelling promotes creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communicative competence. It encourages learners to use French language meaningfully as they negotiate meanings, express opinions, and collaborate with peers. Interactive storytelling aligns with contemporary educational approaches that emphasize active learning and student participation. In French language education, it provides opportunities for learners to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills within engaging and meaningful contexts. All these put together will solidify the four skills needed by the learners to have a quality background.

Dramatic Storytelling

Dramatic storytelling involves the presentation of stories through dramatization, role-playing, simulations, and theatrical performances. In this approach, learners assume the roles of characters and act out events from a narrative. Dramatic storytelling transforms storytelling into an experiential learning activity that promotes active engagement and French language use.

According to Alismail (2022), dramatic storytelling enhances learners' confidence, creativity, and oral communication skills by providing authentic opportunities for French language practice. Through role-playing and dramatization, students develop pronunciation, fluency, and expressive abilities while simultaneously improving their understanding of story content. In French language

classrooms, dramatic storytelling encourages learners to use the target language naturally and interactively, thereby fostering communicative competence and cultural awareness.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Area of the Study

The study will adopt a descriptive survey research design to investigate the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in French language education in selected secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area of Kogi State. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to obtain information from students and teachers concerning the use of storytelling, its influence on vocabulary acquisition and speaking skills, and teachers' perceptions without manipulating any variable. The study will be conducted in five selected secondary schools: Muslim Community Secondary School, Lokoja; Government Day Secondary School, Adankolo; Government Girls' Secondary School, Sarkin Noma; Lokoja Local Government Secondary School, Felele; and Local Government Secondary School, Kabawa.

3.2 Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The population of the study comprises 120 French language students and teachers from the five selected secondary schools. A sample size of 85 respondents will be selected from the population. A multistage sampling technique will be adopted. First, purposive sampling will be used to select the five schools based on the teaching of French. Secondly, simple random sampling will be employed to select the respondents, while proportionate allocation may be used to ensure adequate representation of each school.

3.3 Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the research instrument will be established through a pilot test involving respondents with similar characteristics who will not participate in the main study. The responses will be analysed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above will be considered acceptable. Necessary corrections will be made before the final administration.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire administered personally by the researcher. Permission will first be obtained from the authorities of the selected schools, and the purpose of the study will be explained to the respondents. The questionnaires will be distributed to students and teachers, with adequate guidance provided where necessary. Completed copies will be collected immediately or at an agreed time. Confidentiality and voluntary participation will be maintained throughout the exercise.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected will be coded and analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. A four-point Likert scale will be adopted as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The criterion mean will be determined as (4 + 3 + 2 + 1)/4 = 2.50. Therefore, items with a mean score of 2.50 and above will be accepted, while those below 2.50 will be rejected. The results will be presented in tables and interpreted according to the research questions.

4. Data Analysis and Presentation

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	42	49.4
Female	43	50.6
Total	85	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents according to gender. The table indicates that 42 respondents, representing 49.4%, were male, while 43 respondents, representing 50.6%, were female. This shows that female respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the sample than male respondents.

The relatively balanced distribution of male and female respondents suggests that the findings were not overwhelmingly dominated by either gender. Thus, the responses provide perspectives from both male and female participants concerning the use of storytelling in French language classrooms as a means of teaching techniques.

Table 2: Distribution of Student Respondents by Class

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
JSS 1	12	14.1
JSS 2	13	15.3
JSS 3	14	16.5
SS 1	15	17.6
SS 2	16	18.8
SS 3	15	17.6
Total	85	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 2 indicates that respondents were drawn from all six class levels specified in the study. SS 2 had the highest representation with 16 respondents (18.8%), followed by SS 1 and SS 3 respectively with 15 respondents (17.6%) each. JSS 1 had the lowest representation with 12 respondents (14.1%).

The distribution indicates that students at different levels of secondary education were represented. This is useful because students' experiences with storytelling may vary according to their level of maturity and exposure to French language instruction.

Research Question One: To what extent is the use of storytelling used in French language classrooms in some selected secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area?

Table 3

S. No	Items statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Storytelling is used during French language lessons in my school.	3.01	0.97	Agree
2	My French teacher uses stories to introduce new lessons.	2.95	0.96	Agree
3	French stories are used to explain difficult concepts.	2.88	0.99	Agree
4	Stories are used regularly during French language lessons.	2.80	1.03	Agree
5	My teacher uses short stories to practise French vocabulary.	2.99	0.97	Agree
6	Storytelling is used to make French lessons more interesting.	3.19	0.89	Agree
	Grand weighted Mean	**2.97**		**Agree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 presents respondents' views concerning the extent to which storytelling is used in French language classrooms. The results show that all six items recorded mean scores above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Item 6, which states that storytelling is used to make French lessons more interesting, recorded the highest mean of 3.19. This was followed by Item 1, with a mean of 3.01, and Item 5, with a mean of 2.99. This suggests that storytelling is not completely absent from French language teaching in the selected schools. However, the relatively lower mean for regular use recorded the lowest mean of 2.80, although it was still above the criterion mean.

The grand mean of 2.97 indicates that respondents generally agreed that storytelling is used in French language classrooms. This suggests that storytelling is not completely absent from French language teaching in the selected schools although it might not be regular. However, the relatively lower mean for regular use (Item 4) may indicate that although teachers use storytelling, it may not be employed consistently in every French lesson probably as a result of lack of skill for storytelling by the teacher of the language.

Research Question Two: To what extent does storytelling enhance students' French vocabulary acquisition?

Table 4

S. No	Items statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
7	Storytelling helps me learn new French words.	3.22	0.86	Agree
8	Stories make it easier for me to remember new French vocabulary and some lexical items in French.	3.19	0.86	Agree
9	I learn the meaning of unfamiliar French words through stories.	3.09	0.92	Agree
10	Storytelling helps me understand how French words are used in sentences.	3.19	0.88	Agree
11	I can recall new French words better when I learn them through stories.	3.16	0.89	Agree
12	Stories help me learn French expressions and phrases.	3.12	0.93	Agree
	Grand weighted Mean	**3.16**		**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results in **Table 4** show that all six items recorded mean scores above 2.50. The highest mean score was obtained for Item 7, with a mean of 3.22, indicating strong agreement that storytelling helps students learn new French words and expressions.

Items 8 and 10 each recorded a mean of approximately 3.19, suggesting that respondents agreed that stories make vocabulary and French lexical items easier to be remember and help learners understand how French words are used in sentences. Item 11 also recorded a relatively high mean of 3.16, indicating that storytelling may facilitate the recall of newly learned vocabulary.

The grand mean of 3.16 is considerably higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that respondents generally perceived storytelling as a useful strategy for enhancing students' French vocabulary acquisition.

Research Question Three: To what extent does storytelling enhance students' French speaking skills?

Table 5

S. No	Items statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
13	Storytelling encourages students to speak French during lessons.	3.16	0.89	Agree
14	Retelling stories helps me practise speaking French.	3.21	0.87	Agree
15	Storytelling improves my confidence in speaking and pronuncing difficult words in French.	3.15	0.88	Agree
16	Storytelling helps me construct French sentences correctly.	3.09	0.89	Agree
17	Stories provide opportunities for students to practise French pronunciation.	3.18	0.88	Agree
18	Storytelling encourages students to participate in oral French activities.	3.21	0.86	Agree
	Grand weighted Mean	**3.17**		**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 5 shows that respondents agreed with all six statements relating to storytelling and speaking skills. The mean scores ranged from 3.09 to 3.21, all of which were above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Item 14, concerning the use of story retelling to practice speaking French, recorded a mean of 3.21. Item 18, which concerns participation in oral French activities, also recorded a mean of 3.21. Item 17 recorded a mean of 3.18, indicating agreement that storytelling provides opportunities for pronunciation and speaking skills.

The grand mean of 3.17 indicates that respondents generally perceived storytelling as contributing positively to students' French speaking and production skills.

Research Question Four: What are the perceptions of French language teachers concerning the use of storytelling in French language teaching?

Table 6

S. No	Items statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
20	Storytelling makes French language lessons more engaging.	0	3.60	Agree
21	Storytelling helps students understand French language concepts.	0	3.47	Agree
22	Storytelling is useful for teaching French vocabulary.	0	3.67	Agree
23	Storytelling improves students' oral communication in French.	0	3.53	Agree
24	Storytelling encourages students to participate actively in French lessons.	0	3.60	Agree
25	As a teacher of French, I really use storytelling.	0	3.33	Agree
26	I don't have competence to relate storytelling to my lesson.	4	2.07	Disagree
27	As a teacher of French, I enjoy teaching French with storytelling.	0	3.47	Agree
28	I don't believe in using storytelling while teaching.	6	1.73	Disagree
29	Storytelling distorts the teaching of the language.	7	1.67	Disagree
	Grand weighted Mean	**2.00**		**Disagree**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6 indicates that the teachers generally expressed positive perceptions towards storytelling as a strategy for teaching French.

Items 19–24 all recorded high mean scores above 2.50. Item 22, which states that storytelling is useful for teaching French vocabulary, recorded the highest mean of 3.67. This indicates strong teacher agreement concerning the usefulness of storytelling for vocabulary teaching.

Item 20 recorded a mean of 3.60, indicating that teachers perceived storytelling as a method that can make French lessons more engaging. Similarly, Item 24 recorded a mean of 3.60, suggesting that teachers believed storytelling encourages active participation.

Item 25 recorded a mean of 3.33, showing that teachers generally reported using storytelling. Item 27 recorded a mean of 3.47, indicating that teachers generally enjoy teaching French through storytelling.

In contrast, Items 26, 28, 29 and 30 recorded means below 2.50. This indicates disagreement with the negative statements. The findings therefore suggest that teachers generally did not perceive themselves as lacking the competence to use storytelling, nor did they believe that storytelling distorts or lacks usefulness in French language teaching.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that storytelling is a relevant and effective pedagogical strategy for teaching and learning French in selected secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area, Kogi State. The discussion focused on the extent of storytelling use, its contribution to students' vocabulary acquisition, and its influence on speaking skills.

Regarding the extent of storytelling use in French language classrooms, the findings showed that teachers use storytelling to introduce lessons, explain difficult concepts, teach vocabulary and make lessons more interesting. This suggests that storytelling promotes an engaging and learner-centred classroom environment. However, its inconsistent use may be attributed to inadequate instructional materials, limited teaching time, large class sizes and insufficient storytelling skills among some French teachers.

The findings also established that storytelling contributes positively to students' French vocabulary acquisition. It helps students learn new words, understand unfamiliar expressions, construct sentences and retain vocabulary. This is because stories provide meaningful contexts through which learners encounter and understand new words. The findings agree with Kirsch (2016) [14] and Tachom (2021) [20], who reported that storytelling and retelling activities support vocabulary development and retention among foreign-language learners.

Similarly, the findings revealed that storytelling improves students' French speaking skills by encouraging oral participation, pronunciation practice, sentence construction and confidence in communication. Through storytelling and retelling activities, students have opportunities to practise speaking French in a meaningful and interactive classroom environment. This is particularly important because learners may understand French vocabulary and grammar but experience difficulties expressing themselves orally.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that storytelling is a valuable instructional strategy for improving French vocabulary acquisition and speaking skills. Its effective implementation, however, requires adequate instructional materials, improved teachers' storytelling competencies and regular integration into French language lessons.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that storytelling is a useful pedagogical strategy for teaching and learning French in secondary schools. It provides meaningful opportunities for students to acquire and retain new vocabulary, understand expressions and develop sentence structures within appropriate contexts.

The study also establishes that storytelling contributes to the development of students' speaking skills through listening, retelling stories, answering questions and participating in oral discussions. These activities help improve pronunciation, confidence, sentence construction and classroom participation. Furthermore, teachers generally have positive perceptions of storytelling because it makes French lessons more interesting and interactive. However, its effectiveness depends on proper planning, teachers' storytelling competence, availability of instructional materials and appropriate selection of stories.

The study therefore concludes that storytelling, when properly implemented and combined with other teaching methods, can improve French language teaching and learning in secondary schools in Lokoja Local Government Area, Kogi State.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. French language teachers should incorporate storytelling into their lessons: French language teachers should make storytelling an integral part of their classroom activities, particularly when teaching vocabulary, sentence construction, comprehension and oral communication.

2. Teachers should receive adequate training: Workshops, seminars and professional development programmes should be organised to train French language teachers on how to select, adapt and present stories effectively in French language classrooms. Such training will enable teachers to use storytelling more confidently and effectively. Teachers of French language should equally learn on how to develop skill for story telling in classroom situation.
3. Storytelling should be linked to specific lesson objectives: Teachers should not use stories merely for entertainment. Each storytelling activity should have clearly defined instructional objectives. For example, a story may be used to introduce new vocabulary, practise a grammatical structure, develop pronunciation or stimulate oral communication.
4. Schools should provide appropriate instructional materials: School authorities should provide relevant French storybooks, illustrated stories, audio recordings, pictures, charts, flashcards and other relevant materials that can support storytelling activities. Access to suitable materials can make storytelling easier and more effective.
5. Students should be encouraged to retell stories: Teachers should give students opportunities to retell stories individually, in pairs or in groups. Story retelling can provide learners with additional opportunities to practise vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence construction.

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