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# ACQUISITION AND AVAILABILITY OF FRENCH LANGUAGE RESOURCES IN SOUTH SOUTH ZONE OF NIGERIA.

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources in Federal university libraries in south south zone of Nigeria. A structured questionnaire with reliability coefficient of 0.85 was used to survey the opinions of 71 librarians and 49 French lecturers. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson , Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The result showed that French language resources were not adequately available because librarians did not adopt the proper acquisition procedures. The PPMC analysis of the hypothesis indicated that ( $r_{xy, cal} = 689 > r_{xy, crit} = .174, df = 117, p > .05$ ) the null hypothesis was rejected. There is therefore a significant*



*relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources. It was also found that the extent of the relationship between the two variables was 0.475 (or 47%). It was recommended that librarians should develop adequate French language resources by using guides such as collection development policy, regularly evaluate, weed, and replace obsolete French language resources, and French language specialists should be recruited to render library services that require competence in French language.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The need for a nation to achieve minimum competence in languages other than its own is no longer an issue for debate. By now, it is generally accepted that <sup>learning</sup> ~~Seaming~~ a foreign language contributes in a vital way, to the educational development and total cultural physiognomy of the individual. Byram (1989) put it thus, "Foreign language competence has since ancient times been a sign of the educated man."

In Nigeria, the second foreign language that readily comes to mind after English is French. French language is spoken by about 270 million people all over the world (Ajiboye, 2004). It is an international accepted language used in the United Nations and other world bodies like UNO, UNESCO and WHO. French language, according to (Okoli 1993) is offered in more than 23 universities in Nigeria. It is made an elective course or a compulsory course in most departments in Nigerian universities. Such departments include History and International Studies, Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, Land Surveying, Chemistry, English Language, library and information science, law, etc. Today, all federal universities in South South zone of Nigeria offer French language to at least degree level.

It becomes evident that French language education is crucial to the overall national development and outlook of a nation. Professional and technical competence could be enhanced by learning this language. Librarians, Doctors,

Engineers, Journalists, Scientific Researchers at all levels have come to realize that, with minimum competence in French language, the window to further and faster adventures in their respective fields has been flung open.

Consequently, students studying this language in any university need adequate and relevant French language resources in the library. There is no doubt that qualifications of such students must be followed up through research works, training, workshops as well as seminars. Apart from students, lecturers need up-to-date information resources in French language to support the teaching process. This implies that the quality of teaching, research, national and international services of French students depend on the availability and accessibility of French language resources in the library. Based on this premise, acquisition of French language resources should be considered a crucial issue to library managers in any functional library where French users form part of the library users. It has been observed that only handful copies of current French resources or even replication of the old French resources are available in university libraries in south south zone of Nigeria. This is obviously a situation that needs attention if the library must achieve its objectives. It is in the light of this that this paper focuses on the extent of relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was:

1. To determine the extent of relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources in Federal university libraries.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources in Federal university libraries.

## **Review of Related Literature**

Acquisition of information resources involves all procedures employed to bring to the library all needed print and non-print resources to satisfy the broad purpose of the university. Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) see acquisition process as the key to library user satisfaction; better still, the bedrock of collection development in any type of library.

The value of French resources lies in the information they contain. Information in French language is stored in print and non -print formats like books, periodicals, references, resource, conference papers, technical reports, microfilms, machine - readable databases and visual materials, vertical files and many others. Akwang (2007) postulates that for optimum productivity in the selection and acquisition of the above-mentioned resources, the services of staff with French language competence is a sine qua non.

However, Eze and Eze (2006) stress on the need to Set up library committee in academic libraries. According to the authors, this committee, comprising librarians, lecturers, and student body from each of the departments, should be responsible for selection of suitable titles of their departmental interest(s) for acquisition. Planning for acquisition of French language resources could be effective as if library managers see the process as a collective responsibility, involving students, lecturers of French language and library staff with French language competence.

In an empirical research conducted by Ugah (2006), the relationship between availability of information resources and the use of library services was examined using the opinions of 1508 respondents in Southeast University libraries. The result revealed that the state of availability of information resources was low (9.8%). The inference drawn is that information resources including French language sources were not adequately available because they were not acquired.

In another related study, Bozimo (1983) examined Nigerian university libraries needs of academics as a basis for co-operative planning. With a questionnaire the opinions of 1,020 lecturers and students were sought for and analysed. The result revealed that the state of information resources availability was very low (8.7%). This shows that the non-availability of relevant information resources is related to non-acquisition of such resources.

Akwang (2007) examined the relationship between planning variables and availability of French language resources and established the fact that the two outstanding methods for acquisition of French language resources in Nigeria are purchase and donations. According to the researcher, French resources can be purchased directly or by order. Such opportunity of acquiring the resources by direct purchase is offered in any of the "Alliance Francaise" offices in Nigeria, in Spectrum Books house, Ibadan and in "Village Francais" along Seme-Badagry Expressway, Lagos. Also, a book fair, "Carnivale des livres", organized yearly in "Village Francais" by French publishers and jobbers in francophone countries give library managers, with the assistance of subject (French) librarians), the opportunity of acquiring French resources.

Ordering for French resources could be made using telephone, handwritten slips, suppliers' order forms and multiple order forms (Akwang, 2007). Library managers have several options open to them - ordering from publishers; using the services of booksellers; patronising book hawkers, so as to enhance availability of French language resources. Sonalet (2002) submitted contact (E-mail) addressees of some foreign publishers - [cle@vuet.fr](mailto:cle@vuet.fr), [resaf@clubinternet.fr](mailto:resaf@clubinternet.fr), [nord.sud@culture-deveiooppement.asso.fr](mailto:nord.sud@culture-deveiooppement.asso.fr) and [cle@camnet.com](mailto:cle@camnet.com) these foreign publishers could be contacted for publishers' catalogues which could guide the selection and acquisition of French language titles.

Donations method of acquisition involves valuable donations of French language resources to enrich the library. Among the most valuables are print

materials, audio-visual materials, buildings, money and equipment. Solicited French resources could be donated by a number of foreign associations established for that purpose. Almeida (2002) mentioned some foreign donors as:

- i. ADIFLOR  
210,rue Beranger, 92700 Colobes  
France  
[www.adiflor.org](http://www.adiflor.org)  
[info@adiflor.org](mailto:info@adiflor.org)
- ii. Culture et developpement  
9, rue de la Poste, 38000 Grenoble, France  
Tel: (33) 4 76 44 80 29  
[www.culture-developpement.asso.fr](http://www.culture-developpement.asso.fr)
- iii. Banque regionale du livre PACA  
9, allée du Bois, 13350 Charleval, France  
[Www.bri-paca.org](http://Www.bri-paca.org)  
Mel: [cobiac@bri-paca.org](mailto:cobiac@bri-paca.org)
- iv. Biblonef  
48,bd Diderot, 75003 Paris,  
France  
[www.biblonefinternational.ca](http://www.biblonefinternational.ca)  
[biblonef@wanadoo.fr](mailto:biblonef@wanadoo.fr)

Also, one needs the knowledge of some local organizations established to donate valuable French language resources to libraries. Amosu (2004) opined that there is hardly an institution that approaches the French government for book and other teaching aids through the Embassy in Nigeria without receiving some degree of satisfaction. Apart from the Embassy, Akwang (2007) mentioned the following organisations, which could donate solicited French language



resources.

- I. French Cultural Centre  
2, Aromire Road, opp. Ikoyi Hote  
Ikoyi, Lagos
- ii. CFTD  
7, Lebanon Street,  
CFAO Building,  
Ibadan, Oyo
- iii. Total PLC  
Plot 25, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout,  
P. O. Box 696,  
Port Harcourt - Rivers

All formal and informal requests to these organisations are expected to be presented in French language and that needs the services of library staff with French language competence. The inability of the university libraries in South South zone to meet the information needs of French users could be addressed through acquisition of relevant French language resources using the aforementioned contacts.

### **Research Methods**

The survey research method was used to seek for opinions of the subjects of the study on the relationship between acquisition and availability of French language resources in south south zone of Nigeria. The population of the study comprised librarians and French lecturers in the four federal universities in south south zone, giving a total of 120 subjects. A criterion sampling technique was used to select the 120 subjects. That means, only these 120 subjects were able to meet the criteria for the study, which were: the subject should be a French lecturer, and or a professional librarian. 29 subjects came from University of Uyo, 32 from University of Calabar, 29 from University of Port Harcourt and 30 from University of Benin. Out of this total of 120, 71 were librarians and 49 were French lecturers. A researcher-developed instrument titled "Acquisition and Availability of French Language



Resources Questionnaire (AAFLRQ) was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to determine the reliability coefficient of 0.85. The response rate achieved was 98.3 percent. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Analysis of the Variables

**Table 1: Distribution of Responses on Acquisition French Language Resources.**

Items	Responses											
	SA		A		A Total F&%		D		SD		D Total F&%	
	F	of /o	F	% /o	F	%	F	%	F	Of	F	%
1	17	14.4	36	30.5	53	44.9	36 <sup>H</sup>	30.5	47	39.8	65	44.9
2	16	13.5 <sup>A</sup>	39	33.0	55	46.5	39	33.0	43	36.4	63	46.5
3	6	5.0	14	20.3	30	25.3	56	47.4	32	27.1	88	74.5
4	13	11.0	26	22.0	39	33.0	63	44.9	26	22.0	75	66.9
5	12	10.2	18	15.2	30	25.4	55	49.1	30	25.4	88	74.5

Table 1 shows that 53 (44.9%) respondents agreed that the library acquired French language resources, while 65 (55%) respondents disagreed with the statement. It can be inferred that majority of the respondents disagreed that the library acquired relevant French resources.

Some 55 (46.5%) respondents agreed that libraries identified and implemented steps towards the acquisition of French resources, while 63(53%) respondents disagreed with the statement. This can therefore be inferred that the majority of librarians did not identify and implement steps towards the acquisition of French language resources.

Thirty (25.3%) respondents agreed that French collection is periodically evaluated, while 88 (74.5%) disagreed with the statement. This

shows that the majority of the respondents did not agree that French collection is periodically evaluated.

Some 39 (33%) respondents agreed that librarians replaced obsolete with current French language resources, while 75 (66.9%) disagreed with the statement. This means that current French language resources are not acquired to replace the obsolete copies.

The majority of respondents 88 (74.5%) disagreed with the statement that the selection team makes use of French language selection tools, while only 30 (25.4%) respondents agreed with the statement. The result infers that French selection tools are not used for selecting French language resources.

**Table 2: Distribution of Responses on Availability of French**

Items	Responses											
	SA		A		A Total		D		SD		D Total	
	F	%	F	o/lo	F	%	F	o/lo	F	%	F	o/lo
1	9	7.0	33	27.9	42	34.9	49	41.5	27	22.1	76	64.4
2	4	3.4	15	12.7	19	16.1	60	50.8	39	33.0	99	83.8
3	7	5.7	30	25.4	37	31.3	51	43.2	24	20.3	75	63.5
4	19	16.1	48	40.6	67	56.7	34	28.7	17	14.4	51	43.2
5	1	0.8	14	11.8	15	12.6	54	45.7	49	41.5	103	87.3

Table 2 shows that 42 (34.9%) respondents agreed that library provides French language encyclopedias and other reference sources to its clientele, while the majority of 76 (64.4%) respondents disagreed with the statement. This result indicates that French language encyclopedias and other reference sources are not available in the library.

Nineteen (16.1%) respondents agreed that library has adequate local and international journals in French Language, while the majority of 99 (83.8%) respondents disagreed with the statement. This is an indication that local and international journals in French language are not available in the

library.

Some respondents 37 (31.3%) agreed that relevant literature texts are available in the library, while the majority of 75 (63.5%) respondents disagreed with the statement. This can therefore be inferred that relevant French literature texts are not available in the library.

The majority of 67 (56.7%) respondents agreed that French students' theses and projects are accessible to the users, while 51 (43.2%) respondents disagreed with the statement. This is an indication that French students' theses and projects are available to users.

Some respondents 15 (12.6%) agreed that audio, visual, and audio-visuals resources in French language are available in the library, while the majority of 103 (87.3%) respondents disagreed with the statement. The result shows that libraries do not acquire audio, visual and audio-visual resources in French Language.

**Table 3: PPMC Analysis of Responses on Acquisition and Availability of French Language Resources.**

Variables	Acquisition of information Resources	Availability of French Language Resources
Acquisition of information Resources	1	689**
Availability of French Language Resource	689***	1

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

In table 3, the  $r_{xy}$  - calculated for acquisition and availability of French Language resources is 0.689, while the critical value at 0.05 level and  $df = 117$ , is 0.174. The  $r_{xy}$  - calculated was found to be greater than the  $r_{xy}$  critical. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant positive

relationship between acquisition and availability of French Language resources.

The correlational ( $r^2$ ) value of 0.475 is indicated as the index of the relationship with the implication that 47.5% of the observed variations in availability of French language resources is accounted for by its relationship with acquisition.

From the above results, it is obvious that French collection is not adequate in the libraries because librarians did not adopt proper acquisition procedures. This study is in line with the view expressed by Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) who asserted that acquisition of information resources remains the bedrock for availability of library resources, including French language resources. They postulated that other relevant aspects of acquisition process like evaluation; weeding and replacement of obsolete resources must be done regularly in order to ensure availability of information sources in libraries.

This present study revealed that French language resources are not adequately available. This is seen to be in agreement with Ugah (2006) who observed a low level (9.8%) of availability of information resources in Southeast university libraries. Similarly, Bozimo (1983) found a low level of availability of information resources in Nigerian university libraries. She argued that emphasis must be placed on selection and acquisition processes.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings and their interpretations in this study, it is concluded that availability of French language resources is related to their acquisition.

The findings revealed that libraries do not adopt proper acquisition procedures for French language resources in terms of identifying possible publishers, book jobbers, and donors.

However, if the recommendations put forward in this paper are implemented, the availability of French language resources will be enhanced through acquisition.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained in this study, it is recommended that:

- i. Library managers should develop a more dependable approach towards the acquisition of French language resources. The approach should consider soliciting for relevant French language resources from organizations established for that purpose; sponsoring library managers to international conferences where useful contacts could be made.
- ii. Library managers should regularly evaluate, weed, and replace obsolete French language resources with current ones.
- iii. French language specialists should be recruited to render services that require competence in French language.
- iv. Library staff should be trained to acquire basic skill in French language.

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