



## CHALLENGES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE OF ENUGU STATE

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### ABSTRACT

This study focused on the challenges of teaching and learning of English Language as a second language in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. The study was guided by two research objectives and two research questions. The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study is made up of English teachers Public Secondary Schools in Enugu Educational zone, numbering 980, out of which 10% (98 respondents) were sampled for the study using random sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Mean rating was used for data analysis. The study revealed, among others, that the shortage of specialist English Language teachers; inadequate instructional materials; teaching strategies adopted by teachers; and students mother tongues militate against the teaching of English Language as a second language to a great extent in secondary school in Enugu education zone. The study therefore recommended that, government should endeavour to employ specialist teachers for the teaching of English language in secondary schools and that instructional materials should be provided by government and every other stakeholders bearing in this responsibility.

### KEYWORDS

English Language, second language, instructional materials and Secondary School



## Introduction

English is the language of education in Nigeria. It is the language of instruction from upper primary education, through secondary and tertiary education in Nigeria. The state of English as a Second Language in Nigeria coupled with the numerous roles it plays, compels every Nigerian citizen to learn and to speak it (Njoku, 2017).

*Okugo (2022) noted that 'English as a Second Language' is a traditional term for the use or study of the English language by non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment (it is also known as English for speakers of other languages.) That environment may be a country in which English is the mother tongue (e.g., Australia, the U.S.) or one in which English has an established role (e.g., India, Nigeria). English as a Second Language also refers to specialized approaches to language teaching designed for those whose primary language is not English (Nordquist, 2018).*

English language in Nigeria is very essential. Its importance is such that a credit in the Language including four other subjects at the Western African School Certificate offers one a space in the job market and is a prerequisite to vie for Nigeria elections. English is the major language of commerce, international relations, politics, science and technology. English is now the world's language and it is spoken by one in five of the world's population. It is the language of international commerce, population culture, the internet and holds an unassailable position among world's major languages. Nigeria has over four hundred ethnic languages, the need for a Lingua Franca, the language that every citizen can understand when spoken has actually heightened the need for English language.

The English language is a prerequisite for admission to universities and is also compulsory for all first year students in the universities as specified by National Universities Commission (NUC). It becomes very pertinent that secondary school teachers who are English experts should teach this all important language efficiently and effectively to produce a transparent change in the students.

## English as a Second Language of Study

English is a West Germanic language that was first spoken in early medieval England and is now a global lingua franca. Named after the Angles, one of the Germanic tribes that migrated to England, it ultimately derives its name from the Anglia (Angeln) peninsula in the Baltic Sea. It is closely related to the Frisian languages, but its vocabulary has been significantly influenced by other Germanic languages, particularly Norse (a North Germanic language), as well as by Latin and Romance languages, especially French (Adelabu, 2017).

English has developed over the course of more than 1,400 years. The earliest forms of English, a set of Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the 5th century, are called Old English. Middle English began in the late 11th century with the Norman Conquest of England, and was a period in which the language was influenced by French. Early Modern English began in the late 15th century with the introduction of the printing press to London, the printing of the King James Bible, and the start of the Great Vowel Shift (Aina, 2016).

Through the worldwide influence of the British Empire, modern English spread around the world from the 17th to mid-20th centuries. Through all types of printed and electronic media, and spurred by the emergence of the United States as a global superpower, English has become the leading language of international discourse and the lingua franca in many regions and in professional contexts such as science, navigation and law (Hong, Wendy, and Heather 2014,).

## English Language as a Subject in Secondary Schools

The role assigned English in Nigerian education is outlined in the 2004 National Language Policy on Education. It states that English shall be the medium of instruction in the upper primary, secondary and tertiary level of education. Thus, the status of English is enhanced as it is not only a course of study in school but also the language after the first few years of primary up till tertiary education. The National Policy on Education (2013) stipulates the importance of English language as one of the core subjects that will enable a student to offer any course in higher institution. As one of the core subjects, it is naturally expected that the level of attainment of the students in English will be revealed on their performance in other subject areas. In the light of the above, the English language teachers need the active cooperation of the students of other subjects (Adekola, Shoaga and Lawal, 2015).

English language is the language of education, the only major medium of instruction in Nigerian schools, from elementary to the University level. Apart from being a subject itself, it is used to teach other subjects. As Adekola, Shoaga and Lawal (2015) puts it “the good command of the language is needed to master other subjects taught such as History, Geography, Economics, and so on”. Moreover, English is the language of communication in examinations.

Failure in English language automatically invalidates grades obtained in other subjects no matter how high the grades may be. The general attitude towards the English language is hostile. Consequently, the poor performance in English language in Nigerian schools is a matter of great interest to researchers, and great concern to teachers and educational administrators. Many researchers have been able to come out with a number of factors which could behold responsible for the downward trend in proficiency in English language by students in Nigerian schools. These include:

- i. Lack of qualified and dedicated teachers;
- ii. Poor method of teaching;
- iii. Lack of interest, zeal and zeal on the part of the students due to a very low motivation given to them by their parents and teachers and so on.

Summarily, in the Nigerian educational system, English Language is taught from pre-nursery to nursery, primary school (lower basic school), junior secondary (upper basic school), to senior secondary school. It is a mandatory subject in all these levels of education. It is a must pass subject if any student aspires to go into the tertiary institution of learning in Nigeria.

## Learning/Studying

In education, learning and studying are often used interchangeably. In other words, they are synonymous and it is from this point of view that they are explained in this work.

Learning is the process of acquiring new or modifying existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences.<sup>[1]</sup> The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals, and some machines, and there is also evidence for some kind of learning in some plants (Karban, 2015). Some learning is immediate, induced by a single event (e.g. being burned by a hot stove), but much skill and knowledge accumulates from repeated experiences. The changes induced by learning often last a lifetime, and it is hard to distinguish learned material that seems to be "lost" from that which cannot be retrieved (Oribabor, 2014).

Human learning begins before birth and continues until death as a consequence of ongoing interactions between person and environment. The nature and processes involved in learning are studied in many fields, including educational psychology, neuropsychology, experimental

psychology, and pedagogy. Research in such fields has led to the identification of various sorts of learning. For example, learning may occur as a result of habituation, or classical conditioning, operant conditioning or as a result of more complex activities such as play, seen only in relatively intelligent animals (Gagliano, 2014). Learning may occur consciously or without conscious awareness. Learning that an aversive event can't be avoided nor escaped may result in a condition called learned helplessness. There is evidence for human behavioral learning prenatally, in which habituation has been observed as early as 32 weeks into gestation, indicating that the central nervous system is sufficiently developed and primed for learning and memory to occur very early on in development (Gagliano, 2014).

### **Teaching strategies/methods and the effective study of English language**

Teaching according to Malu (2023) is a deliberate effort by a mature or experienced person to impart information, knowledge, values skills, norms (standard behaviour) more (moral values) attitude, language and so on to an immature or less experienced person through the process that is morally and pedagogically acceptable. According to Obiakor and Malu (2020), method is a way in which you organize and present learning materials to pupils/student. Method of teaching has a great role to play in teaching learning process and it contribute a lot for effective teaching and learning.

Teaching methods therefore can be defined as the method in which a teacher delivers his/her subject matter to students, based on pre-determined instructional objectives in order to promote learning in the students.

The two basic types of instructional methodology are the teacher – centered and student centered. Teacher-centered instructional approaches are traditional and didactic students acquire knowledge by listening to the teacher by reading a textbook or both. In such an approach, the student is a passive recipient of information.

In secondary schools, most common teaching method is lecturing and reading textbook and when it comes to interaction, teachers only ask closed questions like yes or no to check whether the students have memorized the textbook information.

Furthermore, the quality of teachers and the method teachers used in teaching play important role towards effective teaching and learning (Fakeye, 2017). Onwuka (2013) in his own contribution inferred that a good science teacher should see scientific method as a necessary condition in the resolution of scientific problems emphasizing that appropriate methods, such as a discovery / inquiry activity, demonstration and project, if judiciously employed by the teacher will lead to the acquisition of those skill which are the bedrock of scientific method.

Performance in English Language at secondary school level remains poor and one reason is that the teaching approach adopted by teachers which teacher – centered approaches is being pre-dominant.

Other challenges include:

- (1) Teachers do not possess the necessary skills for conducting practicals
- (2) Teachers do not know how to manipulate some of the equipment
- (3) Teachers are not sponsored to workshops, seminars and conferences to acquire practical
- (4) **Large Class Size:** The English Language class is normally large and difficult for English Language teacher to manage

## **Instructional Materials and the Effective Study English Language**

The role of instructional materials in teaching and learning process cannot be over emphasized. The World Book Encyclopedia Americana indicated that one of the principles teachers have to continually bear in mind is that man learns through his senses. Some learn better by one or more senses, to some seeing is believing, to others, the sense of hearing, touch, smell and taste dominate in acquiring knowledge. Hence for the intended learning to take place, the teacher must communicate effectively with the learner. Instructional materials such as television, motion pictures, carefully prepared tape sequence, helps the teacher in extending his learners' horizon of experience. They also help the teacher in providing meaningful information to the learner. When learners make use of resources in the school library, educational technology center, laboratories and in their community environment, they get meaningful information that will help them solve their problems. Their interaction with primary visual sources (realia or real objects) will also provide them with useful information.

In order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency during instructional process between the teacher and the pupils, the classroom teacher must try as much as possible to illustrate the subject matter with appropriate instructional materials to the learner. This is done by using real things to represent real life situation. In view of this, Onwuka (2019) maintain that common sense taught us that in the present phase of development the child will be faced with insurmountable difficulties if left to learn unaided. Besides there is much to learn in so little time that utmost economy should be practiced in effect the learning. Instructional material stimulate learners' interest. It is to be noted that when the child's interest is stimulated, the teacher has to sustain such interest. The teacher needs to seek better, more life long realistic functional and significant problem solving activities for learners to sustain their aroused zeal and interest. For instance, when a classroom teacher takes her pupil out for field work, their interest will likely be stimulated. Instructional materials are used as checks to the teacher's knowledge and means of transmission.

Instructional materials help both the teacher and the learner to overcome physical limitation during the presentation of subject matter. For example the use of films, television, slide, tape and programs in presenting information help greatly in overcoming physical difficulties. Nwoji (2018) asserted that instructional materials assist a teacher to transmit to a learner the facts, skills, attitude and knowledge that aid the understanding and appreciation of concepts. Instructional material serves as diagnostic and remedial tools for the teacher. When instruction becomes individualized and practical, teachers are placed in a better position to observe, analyze learning process and learning outcome. Hence he discovers that every learner needs one assistance or another. The teachers' role will shift from presentation role to that of diagnostics, testing, research and remedial work. Thus, the learners' weakness are corrected and their strong points enhanced and sustained.

Instructional materials like audio-visual materials (television, video, slides films and film strips, multimedia) heighten motivation for learning through its concreteness and interest, provides freshness and variety in teaching learning process. This is because these appeal to the students or pupils at variety of abilities. A systematic use of audio-visual materials can make the subject matter clearer and appealing to the pupils of diversified background and different abilities. Thus, audio-visual materials can foster effective learning not only for the child who reads and writes easily but also for the pupil who is not verbally gifted. Audiovisual materials encourage active participation, give needed reinforcement, widen the range of pupils experiences, ensure order and continuity of thought and also improve the effectiveness of other materials.



The use of instructional materials is an eye opener to the teacher and promotes their better planning and scheduling. It gives the teacher enough guidance, co-ordination, supervision and more time for correction. Oyeyemi (2016) discussed the inherent advantages of improvisation and use of instructional materials. Thus, it makes lessons real, useful for the ever teeming population of pupils/students in our schools. He stated that when materials used are easily available within the environment, the teacher plans, uses and evaluates the materials and such materials can easily be improved upon and can be used efficiently and effectively since they are designed to meet specific instructional objectives.

Instructional material brightens the classroom and brings variety in the class lesson. They aid the slow learn to brighten up and bright students/pupils learn faster. They are very effective in establishing sense or spirit of team work among learners. For example the use of computer during instructional process. Oribabor, (2014) noted that with the computer relevant aspects of the target communicative situation can be modeled and the pupils can take in that which they are likely to meet latter. He equally recognized that adding a computer component to arts, science, and language instruction introduces variety to the resources and learning styles used. Learning, especially English Language becomes fun and the learners can be divided into small groups or pairs to work on the projects either collaboratively or competitively. Instructional materials spur learners to learn and develop better and effective skills. The last but not the least, instructional materials help to promote the understanding of teaching and learning process, among others (Okpalaoka, 2019).

In summary, Oribabor, (2014) asserted that instructional materials are important tools for enriching, visualizing, simplifying, transmitting and accelerating the teaching and learning processes, thus enhance students' academic performance in English Language. He further said that, effective instruction with instructional materials in the classroom requires careful planning by the English Language teacher. This implies that English Language teacher should take time to apply special knowledge and skill with respect to selecting, producing and using different kinds of instructional materials.

## **Research Questions**

Based on the statement of research problem and the objectives of the study, this research will seek answer to the following questions:

- (1) To what extent does shortage of specialist English teachers militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone?
- (2) To what extent do inadequate instructional materials militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a survey research design. The area used by the researchers for the study is Enugu Education Zone. The population of the study consists of 98 English teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu Education Zone. The researcher used systematic sampling technique to obtain sample of 98 made up of all the total population. Therefore the sample size is 98. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire items were constructed based on the five research questions guiding the study. It has sections A – E. All sections used response options of Very Great Extent (VGE), Great Extent (GE), Little Extent (LE) and Very Little Extent (VLE) with

nominal values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively were assigned to each item statement. The instrument for data collection was presented to an expert in measurement and evaluation and two English Language. A test, retest reliability was carried out on 10 teachers outside the study area (IgboezeLocal Government Area precisely) in order to establish the reliability of the instrument. The same questionnaire were given to the same respondents after two weeks in order to compare the two results of the instrument responded to (correlated) using a Spearman’s product movement correlation Coefficient method. The computation yielded 0.82 which was high enough for the study showing that the instrument is reliable.

The instrument was administered personally to 98 teachers in Enugu Education. The researcher collected the questionnaires personally from the respondents. Data collected was analysed using mean. To determine the mean score of agreeing and disagreeing on an item, mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as great extent while score below 2.50 was indicated as little extent.

## Results

### Research Question 1

To what extent does shortage of specialist English teachers militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone?

**Table1: Responses on the extent to which shortage of specialist English teachers militating against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	VGE 4	GE 3	LE 2	VLE 1	N	$\Sigma fx$	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1	Shortage of specialist English leads to unqualified teachers teaching English Language	30	27	20	21	98	262	2.67	Great Extent
2	Shortage of specialist English language teachers makes the learning of English Language uninteresting to students	31	26	17	24	98	260	2.65	Great Extent
3	Teachers lack the classroom management skills	18	35	20	25	98	242	2.50	Great Extent
4	English teachers cannot make their classes interactive to carry students along	21	32	21	24	98	246	2.51	Great Extent
5	Lack of specialist English Language teachers causes poor students preparedness	30	27	20	21	98	262	2.67	Great Extent

	for oral English examinations								
6	Lack of specialist teachers reduces students confidence in written English	18	35	20	25	98	242	2.50	Great Extent
7	English teachers do not teach according to approved curriculum hence student become unfamiliar with exam questions	17	17	36	18	98	209	2.13	Little Extent
8	Qualified teachers review past external examination questions for improved student exposure	21	32	21	24	98	246	2.51	Great Extent
9	Without specialist English teachers, students excellent performance in WAEC and NECO cannot be ensured	22	22	18	15	98	199	2.58	Great Extent
	<b>Grand mean</b>							2.51	<b>Great Extent</b>

From table 1, all items, except item 7, have mean scores above cut off point of 2.50. This implies that all items are to great extent. Furthermore, the grand mean is also above the mean cut off point of 2.51. This implies that shortage of specialist English Language teachers is a problem that militate against the study of English Language to a great extent among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.

### Research Question 2

To what extent does inadequate instructional materials militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone?

**Table2: Responses on the extent to which inadequate instructional materials militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.**

S/N	Questionnaire Items	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	N	$\Sigma fx$	$\bar{X}$	Decision
		4	3	2	1				
1	Inadequate instructional materials hampers effective communications in teaching English Language	31	26	17	24	98	260	2.65	Great Extent



2	Students horizon on English language are limited without instructional materials	30	27	20	21	98	262	2.67	Great Extent
3	Lack of Instructional materials breeds physical limitation between teachers and students of English Language	18	35	20	25	98	242	2.50	Great Extent
4	There is no diagnostic and remedial tools for English teachers without instructional materials	18	17	35	18	98	210	2.15	Little Extent
5	Teaching and learning of English Language lacks precision and enthusiasm without instructional materials	22	22	18	15	98	199	2.58	Great Extent
6	Inadequate instructional materials breeds deficiency in the four areas of learning: reading, writing, listening and speaking	21	32	21	24	98	246	2.51	Great Extent
<b>Grand Mean</b>								<b>2.63</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>

Table 2 showed that all items, except item 4, have mean scores above the 2.5 cut off point. This implies that to a great extent, they militate against the study of English language among secondary school student. The grand mean is 2.63, which further affirm that instructional materials is a problem that militate against the study of English Language among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.

### Summary of the Findings:

From the above analysis, the following findings were made:

- (1) The shortage of specialist English Language teachers militate against the study of English Language to a great extent among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone. Precisely, it was found out that to a great extent, shortage of specialist English leads to unqualified teachers teaching English Language; Shortage of specialist English language teachers makes the learning of English Language uninteresting to students; unqualified teachers lack the classroom management skills; English teachers do not make their classes interactive to carry students along; lack of specialist English Language teachers causes poor students preparedness for oral English examinations; lack of specialist teachers reduces students confidence in written English; English teachers do not teach according to approved curriculum hence student become unfamiliar with exam questions; and that to a great extent, qualified teachers review past external examination questions for improved student exposure.
- (2) Inadequate instructional materials is a problem that affect the teaching of English Language to a great extent among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone. Teaching

strategies adopted by teachers is a problem that affect the teaching of English Language to a great extent among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.

## **Conclusion**

Sequel to the findings the study concludes that shortage of specialist English Language teachers, lack of instructional materials, the challenges affecting the teaching and learning of English Language in secondary school in Enugu Education Zone.

## **Implication of the Study**

This study has identified the challenges of teaching and learning English Language as a secondary school subject in Enugu Education Zone. The implication of the findings made here is that the study of English Language is faced with many challenges and that these factors – shortage of specialist teachers, lack of instructional materials, teaching strategies, mother tongue and school environment – have hampered the effective teaching and learning of English Language as a subject in secondary schools.

## **Recommendations**

Sequel to the findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- (1) Government should endeavour to employ specialist teachers for the teaching of English language in secondary schools. The minimum qualification standard for English language teachers should be increased
- (2) Instructional materials should be provided by government and every other stakeholders bearing in this responsibility. English Language specific materials like audio and visual materials must be prioritised
- (3) English language teachers should be creative in their methods of teaching. They should learn to make the subject interesting to the students

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