EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GOMBE STATE

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Abstract

This study adopted the evaluative survey research design. The area of the study covered Gombe South Educational Zone comprising Balanga, Billiri, Kaltungo and Shongom Local Government Areas of Gombe State. Five research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study population comprised 113 English language teachers in all the study area in the State. Random sampling technique was used to draw one education zone (Gombe South Education Zone) out of the three education zones in Gombe State. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire titled Teachers of English Language Questionnaire (TELEQ). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Arts Education, Science Education and the Institute of Education of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability coefficient of obtained were 0.84, 0.84, 0.85, and 0.75 for section B, C, D, and E respectively, with an overall coefficient of 0.80. Data collected was analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation. The finding of the study revealed that there were many methods used by English teachers in Gombe state secondary schools to teach English language, but there were some methods of teaching English language they do not utilize. Some instructional materials used for the teaching of English language in secondary schools in the state are available, while many of them are not available. Many classroom physical facilities for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state are moderately adequate while few of them are less adequate. Based on the results, it was recommended that there should be adequate engagement of English

teachers in various secondary schools in Gombe State, and teaching facilities should be properly upgraded in various secondary schools in Gombe State.
Keywords: Evaluation, Teaching, English, Language

Introduction

English language was introduced into Nigeria by the colonial masters to help them administer the colonized people, spread their religion, and carry out their commercial activities. Ufomata (2014) argued that the domains of English in an English as a second language (ESL) context like Nigeria tends to be formal. English is the official language which in essence means it serves language of government, education, commerce, and to a limited extent, social integration, especially among the educated elite. Within Nigeria, it is estimated that nearly 400 languages are spoken (Agheiyisi, 2004; Bamgbose, 2007). According to Ufomata (2014), in the context of such multilingualism it is important for the government to stick to neutral language such as English, as the official language. English has the additional advantage of long association being the language of the colonial rulers. It is also a world language with all the advantages accruing to an individual who speaks such a language both nationally and internationally. Kachru (1986) argued that competence in English and the use of this language signify a transmutation added potential for material and social gains and advantages. One sees this attitude in what the symbols stand for; English is considered a symbol of modernism, and an extra area for success and mobility in culturally and linguistically complex and pluralistic societies.

Tiffen (2009) accurately captures all the pervading roles of English in Nigeria when he asserts that:

> *English can now be regarded as one of the major African languages, so widespread is its use and very essential as a tool in everyday life. In many countries, it is the official language, the national language of administration, law, the national press, commerce and political unity, (p.56).*

It is true that English still occupies a pride of place in our national life. The language still serves as the language of communication and interaction amongst the different ethnic groups in

Nigeria whose languages are usually unintelligible. In spite of all the efforts to make Nigerians learn any one of the three dominant languages - Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba as the national language, the English language has remained the common tongue of all tribes and the language of unity of the nation as a sovereign entity.

Oluikpe (1979) in Otagburuagu (1996) cites the *Daily Times* editorial lamentation about the poor performance of students in English language. In his words: "This June all the Universities will produce as usual, thousands of graduates who assume that the nation is theirs merely by the fact of obtaining University education." These assertions are true because an effective and well defined course of instruction in English language enables the learner to have a better grasp of the English language as a subject, as well as other subjects in the school curriculum, since English is normally the medium of instruction for other subjects in the curricula in Nigerian Schools. Banjo (2009) firmly subscribes to this viewpoint of a functional language education influence on other school subjects. According to Banjo, "other school subjects have to be taught and learnt in the medium of English. Thus, success at each level of the educational system depends largely on competence in English." What this means is that to be regarded as an educated Nigerian, some level of proficiency in English language is required. English language is a second language in Nigeria not because it is the second language, the average Nigerian child acquires or learns after his/her mother tongue, but it is so because of the various roles it plays in other subjects taught in the schools. There is the need for the learners to acquire a form of the language generally accepted as the standard form, if such learners are to function effectively in the present day world.

In Nigerian secondary schools, there has been mass failure of students in English language examinations conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) (2009). WAEC Chief Examiner's Reports, particularly, in Gombe State show that the situation seems glaringly very poor. For instance, the analysis of Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) English examination results between 2015-2020 showed a continuous trend of dwindling poor performance of students. The growing concern on the poor performance and the WAEC Chief Examiner's Report further explains that the situation is deteriorating.

Since the goals of nation building is to produce students who pass their examinations in order to contribute their quota towards the business of building the nation, the status of teaching and learning an important subject such as the English language in secondary schools should be

given priority attention. It therefore, becomes necessary that the teaching of English language in senior secondary schools in Gombe State should be evaluated. Evaluation can help to reveal the critical elements in the quality of teaching of the language in the selected area. Majasan (2008) also sees evaluation as an educational strategy that helps to determine the quality or performance of a group or a system.

In the context of evaluating the teaching of English language in senior secondary schools in Gombe State, a good starting point is the evaluation model devised by Phi Delta Kappa Committee on Evaluation in 1971. This approach, known as the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model, has been used in a number of different ways by various organizations either in an adapted or original form. CIPP is an acronym for the four types of phenomena that are typically evaluated by users of this evaluation model: context, input, process, and product. Each type of the phenomena according to Stufflebeam (1991) involves a different set of decisions that are made in the planning and operation of evaluation.

These evaluation models can be applied in the evaluation of the teaching of English language in secondary schools in Gombe State. The purpose of teaching lies in getting students to truly understand the concepts being examined (Ominde, 2006). A teacher must know what to teach in the classroom. It is vital that a teacher most have a solid understanding of the subject matter being taught. A good teacher cannot rely solely on textbooks, but rather must seek out other sources of information to aid in her teaching. A teacher needs to be aware of how to effectively teach her course content. Some important demographic characteristics of teachers should be considered before giving them the job of teaching the English language in secondary schools. Such vital demographic features include: teaching qualification, area of specialization, and teaching experience of the teachers.

Teaching method is another aspect that needs to be evaluated in English language. Abdu (2006) is of the view that teaching methods such as the audio-lingual method, the communicative method, the cognitive method, and the story telling method should be incorporated in teaching English language. Apart from teaching methods, instructional materials seem to make a monumental impact on the teaching of English language in secondary schools. Instructional materials are educational resources used to improve students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, to monitor their assimilation of information, and to contribute to their overall development and upbringing (Mambula, 2005). Instructional materials can be used to aid in the transfer of

knowledge of the English language from an English language teacher to her students in the classroom. Instructional materials suitable for teaching English language in secondary schools include charts, flash cards, television sets, radio cassettes, tape recorders, pictures, documentary films, tapes, film projectors, smart board, video recorder, computers, language laboratory, flannel board, textbooks, and blackboards, among others. Instructional materials need to be utilized in other to get the best out of the students in the English language classroom.

A conducive classroom environment enhances the quality of the instructional materials for language teaching and learning in the classroom environment which makes it suitable for teaching and learning. According to Manu (2007), the classroom is the most important area of a school because it is where students and teachers spend most of their time and where the learning process takes place. Adequate classroom environment should be provided in the teaching of the English language in secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Evidence abounds of the poor performance of Senior Secondary students in English language in Gombe State. The 2015-2020 report of the Chief examiner, West African Examinations Council showed that candidates' performance in the examinations was poor. The report clearly showed that there was no improvement in the performance of candidates who sat for English language in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in some states of the country including Gombe State. The report further indicated that students, who registered for English language, judging by their performance, were not well prepared for the examinations. Their performance fell below standard. These failures, according to the report, were more pronounced among candidates in Gombe State. Therefore, the inclusion of Gombe State in the list of states with candidates whose performances were poor in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, (SSCE) by West African Examinations Council's Report, paints a clear picture of lack of adequate knowledge of English language among Senior Secondary School students in Gombe State. Perhaps, myriads of factors may have combined to account for this ugly state of affairs, which possibly could include motivational and curricula issues, among others as they relate to the teachers in the study area. Again, it is not certain whether the teachers employ proper methods in the teaching of the English language in Senior Secondary Schools in the State.

Modern approaches to the improvement of the teaching of English language as a second language call for language audit or systematic evaluation of the teacher factor and the learning environment as major variables in the language teaching process. To maintain the quality of education, the Federal Ministry of Education (FRN, 2008) has suggested that program evaluation should be conducted at least once in five years. The essence of this evaluation is to look at the demographic characteristics of English language teachers, the quality of English language teachers, and the methods of English language teaching, the use of instructional materials and the adequacy of the classroom environment for the teaching of the English language. To the best knowledge of the authors, no study has shown the status of teachers of English and the state of English language teaching in terms of the prevailing teacher-classroom practices, and learning environment in the Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State. Therefore, the objective of this study is to evaluate the teaching of English language in Senior Secondary Schools in Gombe State in order to fill a knowledge gap in English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogy in the State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is:

1. To determine the methods used by the teachers in teaching English language in the senior secondary schools in Gombe State.
2. To ascertain the instructional materials available for teaching English language in the secondary schools in Gombe State.
3. To find out the adequacy of classroom environment for the teaching of the English language in the senior secondary schools in Gombe State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What methods are used by the English language teachers in Gombe State secondary schools for the teaching of English language?
2. What are the instructional materials available for the teaching of English language in the secondary schools in the state?
3. How adequate are the classroom physical facilities for the teaching of English language secondary schools in Gombe state?

Method

The research was carried out in Gombe State of Nigeria. The design of this study was evaluative survey research design. Evaluative survey is a systematic survey which assesses certain criteria with the intention of making a value judgment on what is assessed (Ali, 1996). It is considered evaluative research design because it focuses on the collection, analysis and interpretation of information on the teaching of English language with the view to making value judgment. According to Marks and Coleman (1989), an evaluative design study is the one which attempts to assess the worth of an event or situation with the sole purpose of making a judgment about it. In the same way, the present study sought to assess the situation of the teaching of the English language in secondary schools in Gombe State with the purpose of making a judgment about it. Hence, evaluative survey research design was suitable for the study.

The population of the study comprised all the senior secondary school English language teachers in Gombe South Education Zone of Gombe State. In the zone, there are one hundred and thirteen English language teachers in the senior secondary schools, twenty three senior secondary schools were used for the study. The schools were purposively selected in this order: Balanga local government 4 schools, Billiri, 7 schools, Kaltungo, 6 schools and Shongom, 5 schools (Post Primary School Management Board, PPSMB, Gombe, 2015). The English language teachers were considered the appropriate population for the study because they are the implementers of the English language curriculum and can give adequate information on the evaluation of the teaching of English language in the senior secondary schools in Gombe State. The researchers used the entire population of 113 English language teachers in the education zone. The rationale for using the entire population was because it was not too large a number to be managed by the researchers. Out of this number of English teachers, 68 were females while 45 were males. In all, 113 English language teachers in Gombe South Education zone of Gombe State were used as sample for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw one education zone out of the three education zones in Gombe State.

Data for this study were collected using the following techniques:

1. **Questionnaire:** Teaching of English Language Evaluation Questionnaire (TELEQ).
2. **Checklist:** Teaching of English Language Evaluation Checklist (TELEC).
3. **Observational Schedule (running record type):** Teaching of English Language Evaluation Observational Schedule (TELEOS).

Observational schedule is a form of checklist used for data collection in a research work. Observational schedule of the “running record type” is a continuous observation of a behaviour stream for a particular period of time. The researchers wrote down the methods used by the teacher in teaching for a length of time in a classroom or in any other setting where teaching process suitably took place. Observational schedule of the “running record type” was used to collect data for section B of this study. The researchers observed the teachers as they were actually teaching with the researchers developed observational schedule (checklist) of the “running record type” and simultaneously ticked the methods used by teachers in teaching the English language in the sample senior secondary schools in Gombe State. The researchers, with the research assistants administered the questionnaire and undertook the distribution of the questionnaire to all the English language teachers in the four local government areas. The respondents worked independently under the supervision of the researchers. This ensured maximum return of the questionnaire and also helped to avoid external influences on the respondents.

The instrument was given to three experts for face validation. One of the experts was from the Department Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation), and two were from the Department of Arts Education, all in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were requested to use their expertise to scrutinize the instrument in terms of relevance, suitability, appropriateness of the content, clarity of language used in developing the items, and satisfactory representation of the items for attaining the purposes of the study.

To ensure the reliability of the instruments, a trial test was carried out to assess the reliability of the instruments. 40 copies of the questionnaire were distributed on a sample of 40 teachers who teach English language in the various secondary schools in Taraba Central Geopolitical Zone, which was not part of the study area but was deemed to possess similar characteristics with Gombe State. The researchers administered the instrument once and the data were collected and analyzed using Kuder-Richardson formula 20 for sections with dichotomous items while Cronbach Alpha statistics for the sections with non-s dichotomous items. Kuder-Richardson formula 20 was used because it is a statistical tool suitable for analyzing dichotomously scored items in a section in which only two possible answers are expected. Data collected was analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Results

Table 1: Methods used by English Teachers in Gombe State Secondary Schools to Teach English Language

S/N	Methods	Used	Not Used	Total Percent
1	Direct method	95%	5%	100%
2	Communicative method	27%	73%	100%
3	Cognate method	0%	100%	100%
4	Silent way method	0%	100%	100%
5	Discussion method	77%	23%	100%
6	Grammar translation method	81%	19%	100%
7	Total physical response	66%	44%	100%
8	Community method	71	29%	100%
9	Reading method	88%	12%	100%
10	The eclectic method	91%	9%	100%
11	The mimicry- memorization method	86%	14%	100%
12	The natural method	0%	100%	100%
13	Audio-lingual method	0%	100%	100%
14	The phonetic method	0%	100%	100%
15	The psychological method	0%	100%	100%

Table 1 shows the outcome of the observational schedule of the "running record type" exercise conducted by the researcher in an endeavor to collect data on the methods used by teachers in teaching English language in senior secondary schools in Gombe State. The running Record from the exercise shows that 95% of the teachers make use of Direct teaching method, while 5% do not make use of the Direct teaching method. 27% of the teachers make use of Communicative method in teaching English language; while 73% do not make use of Communicative method in teaching English language. 77% of the teachers make use of Cognitive method in teaching English language, while 23% of them do not make use of cognitive method in teaching English language. 81% of the teachers make use of Silent Method in teaching English language, while 19% of them do not make use of Silent Method in teaching English language. 66% of the teachers make use of Discussion method in teaching English language, while 44% of them do not make use of Discussion method in teaching English language.

71% of the teachers make use of Grammar translation method in teaching, while 29% of them do not make use of Grammar translation method in teaching English language. 88% of the teachers make use of Total physical response method in teaching English language, while 12% of the teachers do not make use of Total physical response in teaching. 91% of the teachers make

use of Community method in teaching English language, while 9% of them do not make use of Community in teaching English language. 86% of the teachers make use of Reading method in teaching English language, while 14% of them do not make use of Reading method in teaching English language.86% of the teachers make use the mimicry- memorization method of teaching language while 14%of them do not make use the Mimicry method of teaching English language However, none of the teachers makes use of the Audio-lingual Approach, Eclectic method, the phonetic method and Psychological method in teaching English language in secondary schools in Gombe State.

Table 2: The Extent of Available Instructional Materials for the Teaching of English Language

S/N	Items	Available	Not Available	Total Percentage score
1	Charts	56%	44%	100%
2	Flash cards	51%	49%	100%
3	Television	0%	100%	100%
4	Radio cassette	0%	100%	100%
5	Tape recorder	0%	100%	100%
6	Pictures	71%	29%	100%
7	Documentary films	0%	100%	100%
8	Tapes	0%	100%	100%
9	Film projectors	0%	100%	100%
10	Smart board	0%	100%	100%
11	Video recorder	0%	100%	100%
12	Computers	0%	100%	100%
13	Language laboratory	0%	100%	100%
14	Textbooks	95%	5%	100%
15	Blackboard	100%	0%	100%

Table 2 shows the responses of the respondents on the instructional materials available for the teaching of English language in secondary schools in the state with the aid of checklist. It can be deduced from the table that 56% of the teachers indicate that charts are available for teaching English language in their schools, while 44% of the teachers indicate that charts are not available for teaching English language in their schools. 51% of the teachers indicate that flash cards are available for teaching English language in their schools, while 49% indicate that flash cards are not available for teaching English language in their schools. 71% of the teachers

indicate that pictures are available for teaching English language in their schools, while 29% of the teachers indicate that pictures are not used in teaching English language in their school. 95% of the teachers indicate that textbooks are available for teaching English language in their schools, while 5% of the teachers indicate that textbooks are not available for teaching English language in their schools. 100% of the teachers indicate that blackboard is available for teaching English language in their schools. However, 100% of the teachers indicate that television, radio set, tape recorder, documentary films, tapes, film projectors, smart board, video recorder, computers, and language laboratory are not available for teaching English language in their schools.

Table 3: Teachers Mean Ratings on the Adequacy of the Classroom Physical facilities for Teaching English Language in Secondary Schools in the State

S/N	ITEMS	TEACHERS			
		$\overline{X}$	REM	SD	REM
1	Classroom space	3.11	MA	3.63	MA
2	Students' seats	3.45	MA	3.50	MA
3	Students' lockers	2.95	MA	3.41	MA
4	Language laboratory	2.16	LA	3.91	LA
5	Board	2.93	MA	3.41	MA
6	Lightening	3.03	MA	3.50	MA
7	Ventilation	2.90	MA	3.38	MA
8	Computer	2.29	LA	3.81	LA
9	Projector	2.29	LA	3.81	LA
10	Table	3.18	MA	3.72	MA

Key: $\overline{X}$ = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, rem = Remark, MA = Moderately Adequate, LA = Less Adequate.

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents in the research question 5 on the adequacy of the classroom physical facilities for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state.

Table reveals that items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10 have mean scores that is above the cut-off mark of 2.50 which was regarded as acceptable limit as indicated by the researcher. These classroom physical facilities are moderately adequate for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state. Table 7 also disclosed that items 4, 8, and 9 have mean scores that were below the cut-off mark of 2.50 which was regarded as acceptable limit as indicated by the researchers. Therefore, these classroom physical facilities are less adequate for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state.

Discussion

The outcome of the observational schedule of "running record type" with respect to research question 2 on the methods used by English teachers in Gombe State secondary schools to teach English language. The results showed that the English language teachers used some methods in teaching English language in Gombe State secondary schools. Such methods included: grammar translation, total physical response, direct approach, reading approach, discussion, communicative method, community and psychological method. The researcher also observed that some methods were not used by English teachers in Gombe State secondary schools to teach English language. Such methods not used by teachers included: the natural method, audio- lingual method eclectic method, and psychological This result is in agreement with the view of Abdu (2006) that teaching methods such as direct method, reading method, discussion, communicative method, were not usually incorporated in teaching language in some schools. The result may be due to teachers' lack of knowledge in the use of such methods.

With the aid of checklist on the of available instructional materials for the teaching of English language in secondary schools in the state, the research reveals that some instructional materials were available for the teaching of English language in secondary schools in the state. They were: charts, flash cards, pictures, textbooks, and blackboard. The result also revealed that some instructional materials were not available for the teaching of English language in secondary schools in the state. These instructional materials were: television, radio cassette, tape recorder, documentary films, tapes, film projectors, video, video recorder, computers and language laboratory. This result is similar to the statement credited to Adeyemo (2004) that though visual aids are the materials or objects which help the teacher to make lesson explicit to the children, yet they were not adequately used by the teachers in lesson delivery. The provision of teaching materials and infrastructure according to Burns (2009), acts as a stimulant in making the people

literate and in creating the required learning environment. These teaching materials and infrastructure according to Burns charts, pictures chalkboard, among others. Unfortunately the supply of these materials and facilities that are supposed to stimulate the learners to want to read are not there. The importance of using teaching materials have not being emphasized but, surprisingly, the use of teaching materials have not been maximized as a results of teachers not using it in the course of their teaching.

The results also show that some classroom physical facilities were moderately adequate for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state. These classroom physical facilities were classroom space, students' seats, students' lockers, board, lightening, ventilation, and table. The findings also showed that some classroom physical facilities were less adequate for teaching English language in secondary schools in the state. These classroom physical facilities are: language laboratory, computer and projector. The finding is contradicts to earlier report of Obi (2004) that classroom facilities were grossly inadequate in schools in Northern states. Though, classroom facilities were inadequate but some were moderately available in schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were reached:

There are many methods used in teaching English language by English teachers in Gombe State secondary schools, while there were some methods which were not utilized in teaching English language in the state. Many classroom physical facilities for teaching English language in senior secondary schools in Gombe State schools were moderately adequate while few of them were inadequate. Teachers of English language in Gombe State have not assumed the role of resource brokers. The implication of this is that English teachers in the State have not become familiar with a variety of instructional delivery methods. Rather they rely on one best ways. Findings of the study show that English language teachers in senior secondary schools in Gombe State still depend mainly on traditional method in teaching of English language. They do not make use of writing technique such as essay writing technique, and other reading materials such as journals.

Recommendations

1. Variety of methods should be adopted in teaching English language in secondary schools in Gombe State by constantly organizing seminars, conferences and workshops for teachers.
2. Variety of instructional materials should be made available in the teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools in Gombe State by the government and stakeholders.

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