Assessment of Quality of English Language Teaching and Learning in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ondo City, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the quality of teaching and learning of English in senior secondary schools in Ondo City. The study adopted the survey research design. The population comprised all SSII students in Ondo City. A total of 500 SSII students were randomly sampled from 10 schools (50 per school) in Ondo City. Classroom Teaching and Learning Activities Observation Schedule (r=0.81) and the English Language Achievement Test (r=0.78) were the instruments used. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. The results showed that the teachers' activities during English Language teaching and learning process were good. Lastly, the students' activities during English Language teaching and learning process were equally good. It is, therefore, concluded that the quality of English Language teaching and learning at senior secondary schools in Ondo City was high

Keywords: English language, Quality of teaching, Teacher activities, Students' activities, Teaching and learning

Introduction

Language is central to communication. English language is the official language of administration and education in Nigeria. English language plays an important role and facilitates overall learning in schools. It is taught in schools in almost every country on earth. In Nigeria, English is a second language which is a compulsory subject at all levels of education. The knowledge of the English language is important both for the educational, economic and national development of a country.

The teaching and learning of English Language are fundamental for secondary schools in Nigeria. Secondary schools prepare students for university education in Nigeria. It is a fundamental level of education that the lays foundation for admission and choice of career options for students in Nigeria. Secondary school curriculum in Nigeria is designed to encourage all students to achieve their career, intellectual and social potential as well as to understand the relevance of learning in their daily lives (Ogunremi, 2021).Literacy in English language is very important to all human development in Nigeria and anyone who wishes to be relevant in the Nigerian policy, as well as the global world, should learn English by all means (Njoku, 2017).

As laudable as the goal of English language teaching and learning is, it has its challenges and problems. There has been a gradual decline in the quality of English teaching and learning in the last thirty years, and the situation has deteriorated so much that it has become a major national concern, especially with the failure rate recorded in the last decade in English and other subjects in the Secondary School Certificate Examination (Ogunremi, 2021).

Many writers have expressed dismay at students' linguistic and communicative incompetence (Ike-Nwafor, 2013). No wonder, the seemingly fallen standard in our educational system is attributed primarily to our linguistic failure, since all education is education in language. The two important factors that affect the development of English in Nigeria and in any second language situation are the linguistic environments in Nigeria and the quality of teaching and learning (Anyanwu, 2017). The first factor is derived from the interference from the native languages and other languages in contact. Problems emanating from this factor are referred to as inter-lingual problems. The second problem points to the teacher and the learners who are the pivot on which the teaching and learning process depends for success. Whether the problem is an inter-language or intra-language problem, an enormous responsibility revolves around the teachers of English in Nigeria. They must have the special training needed for adequate teaching of English.

Due to its importance, an overall assessment of the quality of teaching and learning of English in secondary schools in Nigeria, especially in Ondo city is needed to examine the reasons for the decrease in the standard of teaching and learning in secondary schools, which has led to students' poor performance in public and private examinations.

Assessment can help to reveal the critical elements in the quality of teaching of the language. Oduwole (2021) sees assessment as an educational strategy that helps to determine the quality or performance of a group or a system. Assessment is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth, and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards. It can assist an organization to assess any aim, realizable concept/proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision-making; or to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regard to the aim and objectives and results of any such action that has been completed, (Adediran, 2019). The primary purpose of assessment, in addition to gaining insight into prior or existing initiatives, is to enable reflection and assist in the identification of future change (Simon, 2009). Assessment is often used to characterize and appraise subjects of interest in a wide range of human

enterprises, including the arts, criminal justice, foundations, non-profit organizations, government, health care, and other human services.

In the context of assessing the quality of the teaching and learning of the English language in selected senior secondary schools in Ondo City, 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 phenomenon according to Stufflebeam (2002) involves a different set of decisions that are made in the planning and operation of evaluation.

This evaluation model can be applied in the assessment of the quality of the teaching and learning of English language. The purpose of teaching lies in getting students to truly understand the concepts being examined (Ominde, 2016). A teacher must know what to teach in his or her classroom. It is vital that a teacher must have a solid understanding of the subject matter being taught. A good teacher cannot rely solely on textbooks, but rather must seek other sources of information to aid in his or her teaching.

A teacher needs to be aware of how to effectively teach his or 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.

Teachers' educational qualifications should serve as a yardstick in appointing them to any of the secondary schools. Educational qualification is simply the level of education attained by an individual in an academic institution. Examples of education qualifications include NCE, B.Ed, M.Ed, and Ph.D. among others. Area of specialization is vital in the appointment of an English language teacher. Area of specialization is the act of specializing, or pursuing a particular line of study or work; a particular area of knowledge, or the process of becoming an expert in a particular area (Simon, 2012). It is the act or process of focusing on one particular area of activity or field of research. Teachers who specialize in English language studies tend to perform better than their counterparts in other areas of specialization when they are given the job of teaching the English language as a subject in secondary schools. Omotola (2019) suggested that teachers should be appointed to teach in the area of their specializations in order to bring out the best in them.

Teaching experience is another demographic factor to be considered before appointing teachers to teach in secondary schools. Teaching experience is an active involvement in teaching or exposure to teaching activities over a period of time which leads to an increase in knowledge or skill in teaching vocation (Oyekunle, 2021). It can be said to be knowledge or skill gained through being involved in or exposed to teaching career over a period of time. The experienced teachers give the schools stability and serve as mentors to the new teachers. The new teachers bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Experience is certainly important but Olakunde (2023) asserts that the benefits of experience become evident after just a few years of teaching and seem to be at the peak at four or five years.

Teaching method is another aspect that needs to be assessed in English language teaching and learning. Teaching methods refer to a broad set of teaching styles, approaches, strategies or procedures used by teachers to facilitate learning (Curzon, 2010).The teaching methods in English should emphasize the four skills in English subject. That is reading, writing, listening and speaking. The main goal is to develop literary mastering of the language. Teachers of English around the world prefer some form of communication, teaching and learning method (Ogunremi, 2021). However, a successful teacher is not biased in favour of one method or another. He should be competent and comfortable with the methods he wants to use. Different teaching strategies will be selected from different methods and blend them to suit the needs of the materials and students. A diligent teacher continuously learns new techniques and knows the new directions in teaching of English (Manu, 2017). The four language skills are interdependent in many ways although sometimes they can be taught independently to some extent.

Teaching methods that enable learners to actively participate in their learning should be adopted instead of those that reduce them to passive recipients of knowledge (Olaniyan, 2022). In cases where the teaching methods adopted are not consistent with learners' preferred learning styles, discomfort sets in and interferes with the learning process; hence the acquisition of the desired English knowledge is impaired. The use of teaching methods should take cognizance of the learner's preferred learning styles and balance them with the less effective but popular methods of teaching (Olaniyan, 2021).

Several studies (Adebileje,2017) shows that the majority of the English learners, most importantly, in public schools, cannot competently express themselves in English. But it is not so in privately owned schools, which suggests that the method of teaching could be faulty in public schools. It is apparent that without communicative competence in English, opportunities for a better life remain elusive, and the poverty level of young graduates deepens abysmally despite being educated. One major cause of this incompetence is due to improper English language teaching by unqualified teachers (Opoola & Fatiloro, 2014). If it is not well taught, it certainly cannot be correctly learnt and competently used by learners.

Availability and use of instructional materials

is another important factor in attaining success in the teaching and learning process. Jire-Alao (2023) defines language-learning materials as anything which can be used by teachers or learners to facilitate the learning of a language such as cassettes, videos, CD-Roms, dictionaries, workbooks or photocopied exercises. Materials can be in the form of pages of texts, textbooks, workbooks, reference materials, pictures, realia (e.g. bus timetables, event flyers, posters, sales receipt), virtual artifacts (website and computer programs), teacher-prepared worksheets, exercises and activities, students-prepared texts (poems, diary) and other forms of materials (Bateye, 2017). The selection of proper instructional materials during classroom instruction is definitely significant. Materials are keys element in language teaching. Besides, the use of suitable learning materials will motivate students in learning English by bringing a slice of real-life situation into more complete communication situation (Alonge, 2022).

The use of instructional materials provides the teacher with interesting and compelling platform for conveying information since they motivate learners to learn more (Balogun & Fakeye, 2023). Using instructional materials in the classroom helps the teacher in overcoming physical difficulties that could have hindered his effective presentation of a given topic. By preparing good instructional materials will help teachers to achieve the learning objectives, deliver the lessons, communicate with students, to visualize abstracts course, and to facilitate learning for better results. Especially, in English learning, using suitable and a variety of instructional materials can help motivate learning and develop all the language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing the English language (Adediran, 2019).

In addition to the utilization of instructional materials, adequacy of the classroom environment seems to be another important determining factor for the successful teaching of the English language in secondary schools. Adequacy of the classroom environment is the sufficiency in 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 (2017) 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 established in the teaching of the English language in secondary schools.

Statement of the problem

Evidence abounds of the low performance of senior secondary students in the English Language in Ondo City. The majority of parents, guardians, and teachers complain about the declining state of English language teaching and learning in secondary schools in Nigeria, and this concern has been buttressed by the official reports of public school students in both internal and external examinations over the years. Perhaps, a myriad 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. This study, therefore, assessed the quality of the teaching and learning of English Language in selected senior secondary schools in Ondo City, Nigeria

Objectives of the study

The study set out to assess the quality of teaching and learning of English Language at Senior secondary schools in Ondo City. Therefore, the specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the level of students' knowledge of English language.
2. Assess the quality of teachers' activities in English language classroom
3. Investigate the quality of students' activities in English Language classroom

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed by the study:

1. What is students' knowledge of English language?
2. What is the rating of teachers' activities in English language classroom?
3. What is the rating of students' activities in English language classroom?

Methodology

The design of this study is the survey research design. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique to select 10 senior secondary schools from Ondo City. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 50 students from each of the 10 schools to make up the sampling size; thereby, making a total of 500 senior secondary school students as sample for this study. Classroom Teaching and Learning Activities Observation Schedule (r=0.81) and the English Language Achievement Test (r=0.78) were the instruments used. All the SSII English language teachers in selected public secondary schools were included as sample for this study.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the rating of teachers' activities in English language classroom? To answer this question, English Language teachers' lessons were observed and rated as follows.

Table 1: Ratings of teachers' activities in English Language classroom

Sn		Exc	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	M	Std.
1.	Clear statements of behavioural objectives in measurable and performance terms.	0 0	4 20.0	16 80.0	0 0	0 0	3.20	.410
2.	Activation of relevant prior knowledge	1 5.0	12 60.0	7 35.0	0 0	0 0	3.70	.571
3.	Presentation of the learning topics in a stimulating way	0 0	7 35.0	13 53.0	0 0	0 0	3.35	.489
4.	Clear definition of concepts with adequate examples	0 0	12 60.0	8 40.0	0 0	0 0	3.60	.503
5.	Soliciting examples/answers from the students	0 0	9 45.0	11 55.0	0 0	0 0	3.45	.510
6.	Logical sequencing and presentation of the lesson	0 0	12 60.0	6 30.0	2 10.0	0 0	3.50	.688
7.	Adequacy of content selected for teaching during the lesson	1 5.0	12 60.0	7 35.0	0 0	0 0	3.70	.571
8.	Teacher’s demonstration of adequate knowledge of the subject matter	0 0	12 60.0	6 30.0	2 10.0	0 0	3.50	.688
9.	Provision and adequate use of instructional materials	0 0	11 55.0	8 40.0	1 5.0	0 0	3.50	.607
10.	Teacher’s use of technology	0 0	8 40.0	12 60.0	0 0	0 0	3.40	.503
Weighted Mean: 3.54 Threshold: 3.0								

Table 1 shows the responses of the rating of teachers' activities during English Language teaching and learning process. It reveals a weighted average of 3.54 which is higher than the threshold of 3.0. This implies that the teachers' activities during English Language teaching and learning process were good.

Research Question 2: What is the rating of students' activities in English language classroom? To answer this question, English Language students' activities were observed and rated as follows.

Table 2: Rating of Students' Activities During English Language Teaching and Learning process

Sn		Exc	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	M	Std.
1.	Students responding to teacher’s questions	0 0	10 50.0	10 50.0	0 0	0 0	3.50	.513
2.	Students initiating questions	0 0	10 50.0	10 50.0	0 0	0 0	3.50	.513
3.	Students contributing to discussions	0 0	10 50.0	10 50.0	0 0	0 0	3.50	.513
4.	Students copying notes	0 0	12 60.0	8 40.0	0 0	0 0	3.60	.503
5.	Students writing answers to questions individually	0 0	11 55.0	9 45.0	0 0	0 0	3.45	.510
6.	Students working in groups	0 0	9 45.0	11 55.0	0 0	0 0	3.45	.510
7.	Students interacting with instructional materials	0 0	11 55.0	9 45.0	0 0	0 0	3.55	.510
Weighted Mean: 3.51 Threshold: 3.0								

Table 4.3 shows the responses of rating of students' activities during English Language teaching and learning process. It reveals a weighted average of 3.51 which is higher than the threshold of 3.0. This implies that the students' activities during English Language teaching and learning process was good.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the teachers' activities during the English Language teaching and learning process were good. This implies that the teachers adequately presented the instruction to the students by engaging in the set teacher activities effectively. This is not unconnected with the fact that many of the selected teachers were qualified and highly experienced in the teaching of English language. Haven bagged the bachelor degree in English Education and haven taught English language in the secondary schools for more than five years, it is expected that such teacher would be able to engage in activities that are geared towards effective lesson delivery. This finding corroborates previous studies such as Oyedeji (2019), Manu (2017) and Omotola (2019) who reported that teachers' activities were as a result of their qualification and experience. These further stresses that teachers that are highly qualified and experienced will delivery classroom activities more accurately than teacher that are not. This is also in line with the submission of Njoku (2017) that the quality of any school system has been considered to be a function of the aggregate quality and commitment of teachers who operate it. The study also supports the finding of Staff (2012) that direct methods of teaching, discussion method reading method were the common methods employed by teachers in carrying out their activities during the English language instruction. This shows that teachers always look for a good way of engaging in instructional activities that would benefit the students.

The finding of the study further revealed that the students' activities during English Language teaching and learning process was good. This implies that the students were carried along by their teachers in the course of the instruction. That is, the students were given the opportunity to participate in the instruction by engaging in some set activities. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Their teachers were qualified and experienced and therefore could engage them in the activities. This finding corroborates Simon (2019) who have also reported that students' activities are important to the success of every instructional delivery.

Conclusion

It could be concluded from the study that the quality of teaching and learning of English Language in senior secondary schools in Ondo City is good, but instructional materials should be made available and utilized by teachers to make for better teaching and learning of the subject.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. School environment and classrooms should be made conducive for teaching and learning.
2. Teachers should be abreast of different strategies of teaching English language and apply same to their teaching appropriately.
3. Instructional materials and English language teaching resources should be made available in the senior secondary schools.

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