Implementation of the English Language Curriculum in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the implementation of the English Language curriculum in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.The study adopted the survey research design. The population comprised English Language teachers in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, while a sample was drawn from five selected schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed in line with the research questions. The instrument was subjected to appropriate validity and reliability procedures before administration. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages and mean scores.The findings revealed that the implementation of the English Language curriculum in the selected schools was generally moderate. The study further showed that teachers made use of instructional materials, although the availability and adequacy of such materials varied among the schools. Teachers also employed different assessment practices to evaluate students' learning, but some challenges limited the effectiveness and regularity of assessment activities. It was therefore recommended that relevant educational authorities and school administrators should provide adequate resources and create favourable conditions for teachers to implement the English Language curriculum effectively.

Keywords: English Language, Curriculum Implementation, Instructional Materials, Assessment Practices, Senior Secondary Schools.

Introduction

The senior secondary English Language curriculum is structured to equip learners with comprehensive language skills encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while also fostering literary appreciation and effective communication in varied social and academic contexts. The curriculum emphasis communicative competence, functional language use, and the integration of language skills rather than isolated grammar instruction. It seeks to move learners beyond rote memorization toward the ability to use English meaningfully for self-expression, critical thinking, and problem-solving. In addition, the curriculum aligns with examination requirements such as the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), while also preparing students for higher education and real-life communication demands.

However, the realization of these curriculum objectives is largely dependent on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Curriculum implementation represents the stage at which curriculum intentions are translated into classroom realities through teaching, learning activities, and assessment practices. It involves teachers' interpretation of curriculum content, selection of appropriate teaching meth ods, use of instructional materials, classroom management strategies, and continuous evaluation of learners' progress. Thus, even the most well-designed curriculum may fail to achieve its intended outcomes if it is not effectively implemented.

In the Nigerian context, several factors have been identified as influencing the implementation of the English Language Curriculum at the senior secondary school level. These include teachers' professional competence and pedagogical skills, availability and adequacy of instructional materials, class size, time allocation, administrative support, and opportunities for in-service training. Teachers, as the primary agents of curriculum implementation, play a decisive role in shaping learners' classroom experiences. Where teachers lack sufficient training in modern language teaching methodologies or are constrained by limited resources, curriculum implementation may be reduced to mere syllabus coverage rather than meaningful learning.

Despite the prominence of the English language within the curriculum, concerns have persistently been raised regarding students' poor performance in English language examinations, particularly at the Senior School Certificate Examination level. Reports from public examination bodies (WASSCE and NECO) have consistently highlighted deficiencies in students' written expression, grammatical accuracy, comprehension skills, and oral communication. This trend has generated widespread concern among educators, parents, and policymakers, leading to questions about the effectiveness of English language teaching and, more specifically, the extent to which the prescribed English Language Curriculum is being faithfully and effectively implemented in secondary schools.

These concerns suggest a possible gap between curriculum policy and classroom practice. In some schools, teaching may be driven primarily by examination demands rather than curriculum objectives, resulting in overemphasis on test-taking strategies at the expense of communicative

competence. In others, challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching aids, limited supervision, and insufficient instructional time may hinder effective curriculum delivery. Such conditions raise critical questions about whether students are being exposed to the full scope of curriculum content and pedagogical approaches envisioned by curriculum planners.

Despite the strategic importance of English language proficiency for students' academic success and future opportunities, there is limited empirical evidence documenting the actual practices involved in the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in senior secondary schools within the Ibadan North Local Government Area. Most discussions on students' poor performance in the English language remain speculative, with insufficient focus on classroom-level curriculum implementation processes. Without a systematic investigation into how teachers interpret and implement the curriculum, the availability of instructional resources, and the challenges encountered in the teaching process, efforts to improve English language education may remain ineffective.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the central importance of the English Language in the Nigerian education system and its role as a core subject and medium of instruction in schools, students' performance in the English language at the senior secondary school level has remained consistently unsatisfactory over the years. This persistent underachievement is not a new phenomenon but has been a recurring issue across various educational assessments and national examinations. In particular, the results of the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) and other standardised tests have often highlighted students' weaknesses in essential language skills, including grammar, reading comprehension, written expression, and oral communication. For example, examination reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) frequently underscore a dismal performance in essay writing, comprehension passages, and grammar, all of which are critical components of the English language curriculum.

This situation is paradoxical, especially considering the wide-reaching policies and curriculum reforms aimed at improving English Language proficiency in Nigerian schools. For over three decades, English has been the dominant language of instruction in Nigerian schools, and it has been ingrained in the curriculum as a core subject from primary school through to the senior secondary school level. However, despite these policies and the structured English Language Curriculum designed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), students continue to face significant challenges in mastering English. This ongoing problem points to deeper issues related to the implementation of the curriculum itself rather than the curriculum's content or objectives.

One major factor that may contribute to the subpar performance of students in the English language is the ineffective implementation of the English Language Curriculum. However, the mere existence of a well-designed curriculum does not automatically guarantee its success in fostering effective language learning. In fact, numerous studies have demonstrated that a gap often exists between what is prescribed in the curriculum and what actually happens in classrooms. This is often due to various barriers that impede the curriculum's proper execution. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the extent and effectiveness of the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in selected senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in selected senior secondary schools in the Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria.

The specific objectives were to:

1.) Examine the profile of the EnglishLanguage teachers adhere to the content of the prescribed English Language Curriculum.
2.) Identify the teaching methods used in the implementation of the English Language Curriculum.
3.) Assess the availability and adequacy of instructional materials for implementing the curriculum.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1.) To what extent do profile of the English language teachers adhere to the prescribed English Language Curriculum in senior secondary schools in the Ibadan North Local Government Area?
2.) What teaching methods are used by teachers in implementing the English

Language Curriculum?

3.) What is the availability and utilization of the instructional materials for the implementation of the English Language Curriculum?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study extends beyond the immediate classroom context, as the findings are expected to provide actionable insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, school administrators, and teachers. By evaluating the extent to which the English Language Curriculum is implemented in selected schools, this research aims to highlight both best practices and areas requiring improvement. The study emphasises the importance of aligning instructional strategies, resource allocation, and teacher training with curriculum objectives to maximise student outcomes. Improved implementation practices, informed by empirical evidence, can enhance students' linguistic proficiency, critical thinking skills, and academic achievement, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of national educational development and human capital formation.

Moreover, this study contributes to the broader discourse on educational quality and curriculum effectiveness in Nigeria. By focusing on the interface between curriculum design and classroom realities, it addresses a critical gap in understanding how educational policies are implemented at the school level. The findings are anticipated to inform reforms and policy adjustments that strengthen curriculum delivery, enhance teacher preparedness, and create conducive learning environments that foster student engagement and achievement.

Hence, this study provides a comprehensive examination of the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in senior secondary schools within Ibadan North Local Government Area, highlighting the interplay of curriculum content, pedagogical strategies, instructional resources, and systemic challenges. By critically analysing the factors that facilitate or hinder effective curriculum delivery, the study seeks to offer evidence-based recommendations that can enhance English language teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary schools. Ultimately, the research underscores the centrality of effective curriculum implementation in achieving educational objectives, promoting student success, and advancing the overall quality of education in Nigeria.

The findings of this study are expected to be of substantial benefit to various stakeholders within the education sector, particularly those directly involved in the teaching, administration, and planning of English language education at the senior secondary school level. By providing empirical evidence on the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in selected senior secondary schools, the study will offer practical and theoretical insights that can contribute to the improvement of English language teaching and learning.

English language teachers stand to benefit significantly from the findings of this study.

The study will provide teachers with a clearer understanding of effective curriculum implementation practices, including appropriate teaching methods, curriculum adherence, and the use of instructional materials. By identifying areas of strength and weakness in current classroom practices, the study may encourage teachers to reflect critically on their pedagogical approaches and adopt more learner-centered and communicative strategies in line with the objectives of the English Language Curriculum. Additionally, insights from the study may highlight the need for continuous professional development, thereby motivating teachers to seek further training to enhance their instructional competence and effectiveness.

School administrators, including principals and vice-principals, will also benefit from the outcomes of the study.

The findings may serve as a basis for improving instructional supervision and monitoring of curriculum implementation within schools. Administrators may use the evidence provided by the study to identify gaps in resource provision, teacher deployment, and classroom organisation that affect the effective teaching of the English language. Furthermore, the study may inform administrative decisions regarding the procurement of instructional materials, the organisation of in-service training programs, and the creation of supportive learning environments that facilitate effective curriculum delivery.

Curriculum planners and educational policymakers will find the study useful in evaluating the effectiveness of the existing English language curriculum at the senior secondary school level. By revealing the extent to which curriculum objectives are being realised in classroom practice, the study may provide valuable feedback on areas where the curriculum requires revision or modification.

The findings may also inform policy decisions related to teacher education, curriculum implementation strategies, and resource allocation. In this regard, the study has the potential to contribute to evidence-based policy-making aimed

at improving the quality of English language education in Nigeria.

The study will also be of academic significance, as it will contribute to the existing body of literature on curriculum implementation and English language education, particularly within the Nigerian context. By focusing on a specific local government area, the study adds to localised empirical research that highlights the realities of curriculum implementation at the grassroots level. This contribution is important for expanding scholarly understanding of how national curriculum policies are enacted in diverse school contexts.

Furthermore, the study will serve as valuable reference material for future researchers who may wish to conduct similar studies on curriculum implementation, English language teaching, or educational quality at the secondary school level. It may provide a foundation for comparative studies across different regions or school types, as well as inform further research into strategies for improving curriculum delivery and student learning outcomes.

Scope of the Study

The study examined the Implementation of the English Language Curriculum in Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined teacher use of instructional materials and assessment practice.

Methodology

The Survey design is used to determine what others are doing with similar problems or situation benefits from the experiences and make future plans and decisions on such problems. It is also used to describe and interpret what the situation is, it assists to record and analyze conditions or relationships that exist among the teachers and students with their parents processes that are going on. These foregoing views therefore make the descriptive survey appropriate and suitable for this study. All English language teachers from secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area constituted the population. From Ibadan North Local Government Area, five Public senior secondary schools were randomly selected. All English Language teachers from SS1-SS3 were enumerated. The instrument used for this study was questionnaire, a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect data on the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in secondary schools.

Two Instruments were used to collect data: They are Use of Instructional Materials Rating Scale (r=0.95) and **Assessment Practices Questionnaire (r=0.79)**

The content of the questionnaire was explained to the students (respondents), they responded to it and some hours back, the questionnaires were collected back for data analysis and interpretation of scores. The data collected for the study were analyzed by using mean and standard deviation to determine the opinion of the respondents on aggregate level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of English Teachers' use of Instructional materials?

English Language Teachers' Use of Instructional Material

Table 1 presents the level of English teachers' use of instructional materials. The table shows a weighted mean of 3.09 which is greater than the threshold set at 2.50, implying that teachers use instructional materials in the teaching-learning process. In addition, the weighted mean value falls within the observation rubric of 'sometimes' to which the number 3 is assigned, showing that English teachers use instructional materials sometimes in the classrooms. Of the twenty (20) items that constitute this instrument, twelve items whose mean values are greater than the weighted mean of 3.09 contributed to the conclusion that English teachers use instructional materials sometimes. In order of magnitude, the items are item 1 – The teacher uses instructional materials judiciously ($\bar{x}$ = 3.65>3.09); item 16 – He/she uses instructional materials at the introductory stage of the lesson ($\bar{x}$ = 3.68>3.09); item 8 – The teacher encourages the use of dictionaries for difficult words ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55>3.09); item 10 – The teacher uses informative posters to reinforce concepts ($\bar{x}$ = 3.43>3.09); item 3 – The teacher uses concrete objects to illustrate the passages ($\bar{x}$ = 3.33>3.09); item 15 – He/she uses pictures to explain concepts ($\bar{x}$ = 3.32>3.09); item 17 – He/she uses instructional materials at the recapitulatory stage of the lesson ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28>3.09); item 6 – The teacher uses dramatization to illustrate the content of the passage ($\bar{x}$ = 3.25>3.09); item 18 – He/she uses instructional materials at the close of the lesson ($\bar{x}$ = 3.21>3.09); item 11 – The teacher uses charts to illustrate concepts ($\bar{x}$ = 3.21>3.09); item 5 – He/she uses cards to explain difficult words ($\bar{x}$ = 3.18>3.09); and item 9 – The teacher uses supplementary readers to buttress the points in the reading comprehension passage ($\bar{x}$ = 3.10>3.09).

Research Question Two: What are the Assessment Practices of English Language Teachers?

S/N	ITEMS	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	$\bar{x}$	Std.D
1	Teacher uses oral questioning to assess learning.	22 (36.7%)	33 (55%)	5 (8.3%)	-	3.28	.61
2	Teacher adequately assesses attainment of instructional objectives.	15 (25%)	42 (70%)	3 (5%)	-	3.20	.51
3	Teacher gives assignments on topics taught.	19 (31.7%)	23 (38.3%)	18 (30%)	-	3.02	.79
4	Teacher corrects students in accordance with their feedback.	17 (28.3%)	36 (60%)	7 (11.7%)	-	3.17	.62
5	Teachers use projects given to their students to enhance teaching.	15 (25%)	24 (40%)	17 (28.3%)	4 (6.7%)	2.83	.89
6	Teacher uses formative and summative evaluation during lesson.	25 (41.7%)	23 (38.3%)	12 (20%)	-	3.22	.76
7	Teacher uses group work to assess learning	21 (35%)	29 (48.3%)	10 (16.7%)	-	3.18	.70
8	Teacher uses quiz and tests to assess learning	23 (38.3%)	18 (30%)	15 (25%)	4 (6.7%)	3.00	.96
9	Students are made to dramatizes certain aspects of the lesson	15 (25%)	25 (41.7%)	13 (21.7%)	7 (11.7%)	2.80	.95
10	Teacher uses the allocated time effectively	31 (51.7%)	27 (45%)	2 (3.3%)	-	3.48	.57
11	Teacher gives assessment for learning feedbacks	28 (46.7%)	25 (41.7%)	7 (11.7%)	-	3.35	.68
12	Teacher made students to recite certain key areas of the lesson	16 (26.7%)	32 (53.3%)	11 (18.3%)	1 (1.7%)	3.05	.72
13	Teacher does corrections promptly	30 (50%)	25 (41.7%)	5 (8.3%)	-	3.41	.65
14	Teacher explains to their best of knowledge	41 (68.3%)	18 (30%)	1 (1.7%)	-	3.67	.51
15	Teacher presents daily teaching efficiently	25 (41.7%)	29 (48.3%)	6 (10%)	-	3.31	.65
16	Teacher gives group assignment for effective and efficient teaching and learning process	28 (46.7%)	25 (41.7%)	7 (11.7%)	-	3.35	.68
17	Teacher encourages the students on reading habits	34 (56.7%)	19 (31.7%)	7 (11.7%)	-	3.45	.69
18	Teacher evaluate daily on work done	23 (38.3%)	28 (46.7%)	9 (15%)	-	3.23	.69
19	Teacher ask questions on prior knowledge	30 (50%)	27 (45%)	3 (5%)	-	3.45	.59
20	Teacher uses the curriculum in figuring the exact topics to teach in classroom	35 (58.3%)	19 (31.7%)	6 (10%)	-	3.48	.68
Weighted Mean = 3.25; Threshold = 2.50							

Table 2: Assessment Practices of English Language Teachers

Table 2 shows the assessment practices of English language teachers. The table presents a weighted mean value of 3.25 which is greater than the threshold set at 2.50, implying that English teachers use assessment practices in their classrooms. Furthermore, the weighted mean value of 3.25 falls within the observation rubric of 'sometimes' to which the number 3 is assigned, demonstrating that English language teachers use assessment practices sometimes. Of the twenty (20) items that constitute this instrument, ten (10) items whose mean values are greater than that of the weighted mean contributed to the conclusion of English teachers use of assessment practices sometimes. In order of magnitude, they are item 14 – Teacher explains to the best of their knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 3.67>3.25); item 20 – Teacher uses the curriculum in figuring the exact topics to teach in the classroom ($\bar{x}$ = 3.48>3.25); item 10 – Teacher uses the allocated time effectively ($\bar{x}$ = 3.48>3.25); item 17 – Teacher encourages the students on reading habits ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45>3.25); item 19 – Teacher asks questions on prior knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45>3.25); item 13 – Teacher does corrections promptly ($\bar{x}$ = 3.41>3.25); Item 11 – Teacher gives

assessment for learning feedback ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35>3.25); item 16 – Teacher gives group assignment for effective and efficient teaching and learning process ($\bar{x}$ = 3.35>3.25); item 15 – Teacher presents daily teaching efficiently ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31>3.25); and item 1 – Teacher uses oral questioning to assess learning ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28>3.25).

Discussion of Findings

Level of English Teachers' use of Instructional materials

The findings revealed that the teachers made use of instructional materials in teaching readings comprehension, although the frequency of use varied across the different materials. The observations showed excellent use of instructional materials judiciously, concrete objects, dramatization and supplementary readers. The relatively excellent use of concrete objects, dramatization and supplementary readers suggest that teachers tend to rely more on instructional that are readily accessible and can be incorporated easily in the classroom activities. This finding is consistent with Obanya (2010), who asserted that instructional materials serve as catalysts for effective teaching and learning by concretising abstract concepts, which helps to explain why concrete, readily accessible resources were the ones most extensively utilised by the teachers observed. It also lends support to Lawal (2012), who reported that instructional materials enhance students' motivation and active participation in language lessons, since dramatization and concrete objects are precisely the kind of materials that draw learners into active classroom participation.

This finding, however, appears to run counter to the position of Adeyanju (2012), who found that the use of audio-visual materials significantly improves students' comprehension and retention in language subjects. Although Adeyanju (2012) established the instructional value of audio-visual resources, the limited use of recorded passages and the complete non-use of projectors observed in this study suggest that teachers are unable to translate this established benefit into classroom practice, largely on account of the resource and infrastructural constraints identified.

Assessment Practices of English Language Teachers

The findings on teachers' assessments practices revealed that teachers employed different assessment strategies in the teaching of reading comprehension. The findings suggest that teachers do not rely on a single assessment method. Rather, they employ a combination of classroom exercises, oral questioning, written tests, assignments and other forms of assessment to determine students' level of understanding. This finding agrees with Dada and Ohia (2014), who studied language teachers (including English Language teachers) in secondary schools in Ekiti State and found that they plan, construct, administer and score their continuous assessment tests well.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is concluded that the implementation of the English Language Curriculum in the sampled senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area is moderate rather than optimal level. The study affirms that the gap between curriculum intention and classroom practice identified in the problem of this study is real, and is most visible in the specific, observable dimensions of instructional-material use and assessment practice examined here.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators and the relevant education authorities in Oyo State should equip senior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area with functional audio-visual and technology-based instructional materials, such as projectors, audio playback equipment, and reliable electricity supply, to complement the conventional materials already in use.
2. English Language teachers should be encouraged to diversify their use of instructional materials in teaching reading comprehension, deliberately incorporating technology-based and audio-visual resources rather than relying predominantly on readily available conventional materials.
3. School administrators and government education agencies should organise regular professional development workshops for English Language teachers, focused specifically on learner-centred and higher-order assessment techniques that extend beyond recall of content to interpretation, analysis, and application of reading passages.
4. Curriculum planners and the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), together with school-based supervisors, should strengthen the monitoring and supervision of curriculum implementation in senior secondary schools, given the gap identified in this study

between the instructional and assessment practices envisaged by the curriculum and those actually observed in classrooms.

5. Future curriculum-implementation reviews and school-level audits should give attention to the remaining dimensions of implementation identified in this study but not directly measured, namely teachers' adherence to prescribed curriculum content, the range of teaching methods employed, and the specific challenges teachers face, so that a fuller picture of implementation in Ibadan North Local Government Area can be established.

6. Parents, guardians, and school communities should be sensitised to the importance of supporting schools' efforts to provide instructional resources, including through school-based associations, so that the material constraints identified in this study can be progressively addressed.

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