Strategies English Studies Teachers Use to Cope With Students' Non-Possession of Textbooks in Junior Secondary Schools in Ibadan North Local Government, Area, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the strategies used by English Studies teachers to cope with students' lack of textbooks in selected public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area. The study adopted a qualitative research design. The sample consisted of thirty (30) English Studies teachers purposively selected from ten (10) public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Data were collected using an interview guide. The teachers' responses were audio-recorded and transcribed, and the transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the level of textbook possession among students in Ibadan North Local Government Area is low. The major coping strategy adopted by English Studies teachers was pairing of students to share the available textbooks Based on these findings, it is recommended that the purchase of recommended English textbooks should be made compulsory for students in public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area. It was recommended that the school authorities should collaborate with book publishers to make textbooks available to students at subsidised rates and the state government should invest in the construction and equipping and maintenance of modern library facilities in public schools, where students can access relevant textbooks that they may not be able to purchase individually.

Keywords: English studies textbook, Textbook shortage, Coping strategies, English studies teachers, Group and paired reading

Introduction

Teaching English Studies effectively requires the availability of adequate instructional materials. Among these, textbooks remain the most indispensable because they provide organised linguistic input, structured exercises, vocabulary development tasks, grammar explanations, and comprehension passages that guide both teachers and learners. They also provide opportunities for independent practice. In the teaching and learning of English Studies at the junior secondary school level in Nigeria, textbooks are not merely supplementary materials but essential pedagogical tools that support both teachers and learners in achieving curriculum objectives.

Despite the importance of English Language in education, the teaching and learning of the subject in Nigerian secondary schools continue to face numerous challenges. In many Nigerian public schools, the shortage of textbooks has become a persistent educational challenge and a major barrier to effective language teaching and learning. The availability, possession, and effective utilisation of English textbooks enable teachers to deliver more effective instruction. They allow teachers to plan lessons properly using organised content and syllabus guidance, teach systematically by following a logical sequence of topics such as reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, provide accurate information and standard language models, and engage students with exercises, examples, and activities. Textbooks also help teachers assess learners through questions, tests, and assignments, and save time and effort in preparing teaching materials. Ultimately, textbooks support teachers in organising, guiding, and improving the teaching-learning process in English.

Despite the important role of English textbooks in the teaching and learning of various aspects of English Studies, only a few students in most public secondary schools possess them. The majority depend entirely on class notes copied from the chalkboard and the teacher's oral explanation. This situation creates serious teaching and learning difficulties. Since English Studies requires regular reading, guided practice, vocabulary reinforcement, and independent study, the lack of English textbooks limits students' ability to read ahead, revise lessons and practice on their own, thereby weakening learning outcomes.

The absence of English textbooks affects not only students but also teachers. English Studies teachers are often compelled to improvise alternative methods to bridge the instructional gap created by textbook scarcity. Instead of relying on standard textbook-guided instruction, teachers prepare handwritten notes, dictate passages, duplicate limited materials, or create improvised worksheets from personal resources. Studies have shown that where textbooks are unavailable, teachers must create substitute teaching materials, a practice that often increases workload and reduces instructional consistency.

Previous studies have focused extensively

on general teaching strategies, including the use of instructional materials, teacher's competence, and classroom methods for improving language skills, Adebayo (2019), Ogunleye (2021).

One of the most common coping strategies adopted by English Studies teachers is the extensive use of dictation. In this approach, teachers summarise textbook content and write it on the chalkboard or dictate it orally for students to copy into their notebooks. Another strategy frequently employed is group sharing of textbooks. In classrooms where only a few students own textbooks, teachers often pair or group students to share available copies during lessons. Although this method promotes collaboration, it often leads to overcrowding around limited materials. It is pedagogically limited because not every student can engage fully with the text at the same pace. Shared textbooks also restrict individual reading practice and slow down independent learning. According to Bello and Hassan (2024), "shared textbook use reduces individual learner engagement and constrains independent reading development", while Olatunji (2023) maintains that "students who lack personal access to textbooks demonstrate slower academic progress compared to those with individual learning materials".

English Studies teachers also make use of improvisation techniques such as producing handwritten extracts from textbooks, designing lesson sheets, and using passages from newspapers, magazines, internet printouts, or past examination papers as substitute reading materials. In some schools, teachers rely on oral teaching methods such as storytelling, role-play, recitation, verbal grammar drills, dramatisation, and question-and-answer sessions to compensate for absent written resources.

Peer teaching is another adaptive strategy used in many junior secondary classrooms. Teachers divide students into groups and assign students who possess textbooks or demonstrate stronger academic ability to assist classmates who lack learning materials.. Ibrahim and Sule (2023) note that "peer teaching can enhance learning, but its success is largely dependent on effective classroom management and adequate supervision". Similarly, Nwosu (2024) argues that "in large classrooms, peer-assisted learning often produces uneven outcomes due to variations in student ability and motivation".

Statement of the Problem

In the teaching of English Studies at the junior secondary school level, textbooks serve as indispensable instructional tools that provide structured lessons, grammar explanations, vocabulary exercises, comprehension passages, and practice activities that enhance students' language competence. However, in many public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, a significant number of students do not possess the prescribed English Studies textbooks required for classroom learning. This persistent lack of textbooks has created serious instructional challenges for both teachers and students. Despite the seriousness of this problem, little empirical attention has been devoted to examining how English Studies teachers in Ibadan North specifically respond to textbook shortages in their daily classroom practices. This study, therefore, investigated the strategies English Studies teachers use to cope with students' lack of textbooks, assess the effectiveness of these strategies, and identify the challenges associated with their implementation.

Objectives of the Study

This study investigated the strategies English Studies teachers use to cope with students' lack of textbooks in selected junior secondary schools in Ibadan North. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the level of English Studies textbook possession among students
2. identify the various coping strategies used by English studies teachers in the absence of adequate textbooks.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of possession of recommended English Studies textbooks among students in public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area?
2. What are the various coping strategies employed by teachers of English Studies in the absence of adequate textbooks in public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area?

Scope of the Study

The study focused on strategies used by English studies teachers to cope with students' lack of textbooks in selected junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State. It was limited to selected public junior secondary schools and English Studies teachers only.

Significance of the Study

Findings in this study will be beneficial to English Studies teachers. By identifying and

documenting the various coping strategies teachers adopt in the absence of adequate textbooks, the study will provide a structured body of knowledge that can guide less experienced teachers. It will also help teachers reflect on their current practices and possibly adopt more effective, innovative, and resourceful instructional techniques. Findings from this study will be valuable to students. Since textbook scarcity directly affects students' learning outcomes especially in key areas such as reading, writing, grammar, and comprehension, the findings of this study may contribute to improving teaching approaches that enhance students' understanding despite limited resources. Ultimately, this can lead to better academic performance in English Studies. This study will be useful to school administrators and policymakers. The findings will expose the extent of textbook inadequacy and its implications on classroom instruction. Findings from this study will also be beneficial to curriculum planners and education stakeholders. Insights into how teachers improvise and adapt instructional materials can guide curriculum development that is more flexible and responsive to resource-constrained environments.

Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative research design, specifically the phenomenological approach. Ten (10) public junior secondary schools were purposively selected from Ibadan North Local Government Area based on the prevalence of textbook inadequacy and accessibility to participants. From each selected school, three (3) English Studies teachers were purposively selected, giving a total sample size of thirty (30) English Studies teachers. The instrument used was an interview guide. Each interview lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes and was conducted in a conducive environment within the school premises. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and completeness of information. The data collection lasted two weeks.

The data generated from the study were analysed using content analysis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Do students possess recommended English studies textbooks in your school?

Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that majority of the students do not possess textbook on English Studies in Ibadan North Local Government Area. Teachers almost unanimously agreed that majority of students in their Schools did not have the recommended English Studies textbooks. In some schools, textbooks owned by students are almost non-existent. The only exception was teacher 16 who mentioned that half of the students at her school had the recommended English text. The general conclusion from all the teachers interviewed is that most students did not possess English Studies textbook. Evidence from teachers' comments is cited below:

Interviewer: *Ma. To what extent is the lack of English studies textbooks a challenge among your students, Ma?*
Teacher: *To a great extent because majority of them cannot afford it. And the parents, probably because they are not educated. So, they don't see it as something that is necessary or compulsory to have, maybe 5% or 10%—do possess textbooks, or they don't have at all, you know, I have taught in various schools. So, there is difference in the number of students that usually have their book. So, like this present school now, out of maybe 30 students, you can see only two...having the textbook.*
Excerpt from Teacher 1
Female 6/7/2026

Interviewer*: Ma. To what extent is the lack of English studies textbooks a challenge among your students, Ma?*
Teacher: *It has really been a great challenge. Yes. Though this place is still encouraging compared to my previous school. Even at that, some of them are not with textbooks… But the ones recommended, some of them find it difficult to buy. Maybe financial constraints and exposure too, because some of their parents may not be learned. You know, if a parent is learned, there's a way they will motivate the children to buy textbooks. So I can say 30% of students possess textbook while 70% do not have.*
Excerpt from Teacher 5
Female. 8/7/2026

Interviewer*: Sir. To what extent is the lack of English Studies textbooks a challenge among your students?*
Teacher: *Yeah, well, it's a major challenge because it's a major part of their learning. And when you don't have textbook, you see them struggling, and it's strenuous to also follow up on what has been taught in class. More than 50 to 60 percent of them don't have the textbook.*
Excerpt from Teacher 10
Male. 9/7/2026

Interviewer: *Ma, To what extent is the lack of*

English Studies textbooks a challenge among your students?
***Teacher**: Lack of English textbooks has created a lot of challenges, because some of the students are left out. Some are not... carried along as... as it should be, like those who have textbooks. Because when you give them assignments, they'll bring it back to you that... all for the excuse that they don't have textbooks. So to a large extent.*
Excerpt from Teacher 15
Female. 15/7/2026

***Interviewer:** Thank you, ma'am. To what extent is the lack of English Studies textbooks a challenge among your students?*
***Teacher:** It's a great challenge. In fact, I used to kind of beg them to get the English Studies textbooks because it's a Studies. I don't know how students will get it right without the textbook. So it has been such a great challenge. Because at times when we need to do comprehension exercises, out of about 50 pupils in a class, like five of them will have the textbook. How do we go about that? So it's very challenging. I believe if they have the textbooks, the job would be much easier for the teacher, and it would be more understandable to the students.*
Excerpt from Teacher 20
Female. 17/7/2026

***Interviewer:** To what extent is the lack of English Studies textbooks a challenge among your students?*
***Teacher**: That's a great challenge, in public school, majority of the students here don't have textbook. So, majority of their parents are poor.*
Excerpt from Teacher 25
Female. 21/7/2026

***Interviewer**: To what extent is the lack of English Studies textbooks a challenge among your students, ma?*
***Teacher**: Erm... That is really a serious issue, most of these students don't have textbook which is really tedious for the teacher*
Excerpt from Teacher 30
Female. 22/7/2026

In conclusion, the responses of the teachers reveal that the majority of students in public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area do not possess the recommended English Studies textbooks. This inadequacy, which is largely attributed to financial constraints, poverty, and poor parental commitment to purchasing learning materials, has adversely affected students' participation, independent learning, assignment completion, and overall classroom engagement. Consequently, teachers experience considerable difficulty in delivering lessons effectively and ensuring that all students benefit equally from classroom instruction.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of non-possession of English Studies textbooks among students in your school?

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts revealed that the main reason for students' non-possession of English textbooks was that parents of the students are financially incapacitated, due to economic downtrend of the country and poverty. Other factors include entitlement mentality of parents in abnegating responsibility of buying textbooks and placing the buck on the table of the government. They believe the government should be responsible for buying textbooks for their wards. Additionally, parents and students display nonchalance towards purchase of text materials; they do not prioritize the purchase of text materials. In all, the main factor responsible for non-possession of text is lack of funds on the part of parents and students to buy the recommended textbooks. Evidence from teachers' comments is cited below:
***Interviewer:** In your opinion, Ma, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English Studies textbooks?*
***Teacher:** Oh, I would really say it's the home factor. You know, it's a public school, and a lot of parents, they believe that their children are government property, that even government are supposed to provide everything to them, which I think is not feasible.*
Excerpt from Teacher 2
Female. 8/7/2026

***Interviewer**: In your opinion ma, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English studies textbooks?*
***Teacher**: I'll say lack of funds on the parents' part—some parents cannot afford it. Also, ignorance; some parents believe that there is no need for it, that as far as they are attending school, it is enough. They also believe that since it is a public school, the government should provide free textbooks.*
Excerpt from Teacher 6
Female. 8/7/2026

***Interviewer:** In your opinion, ma, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English Studies textbooks?*

Teacher: *The main reason or the major reason, I can say it's from the parents, cause if they value it, they'll get it for their wards.*
Excerpt from Teacher 11
Female. 9/7/2026

Interviewer: *Thank you, Ma. In your opinion, Ma, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English Studies textbooks?*
Teacher: *I think the major factor is just monetary—money. The major factor is monetary. Because I don't believe if there is money you wouldn't buy it. English and Maths are among the most important subjects, so it's the monetary aspect.*
Excerpt from Teacher 16
Female. 16/7/2026

Interviewer*: All right, thank you, ma'am. In your opinion, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English Studies textbooks?*
Teacher*: That should be a lack of funds, either from parents or guardians. Students cannot get textbooks themselves, and if the parents do not have enough in their pockets to get them, there is no way they can have them. In public schools, that is why we have the government providing textbooks and books to support them. But if it is a private school, it is the duty of the parents to get them.*
Excerpt from Teacher 21
Female. 7/7/2026

Interviewer*: Thank you, sir. In your opinion, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English Studies textbooks?*
Teacher*: Hmm. Major reasons... I'll say first, many of them complain of financial constraints; that their parents don't have the money and the resources. Then in some other cases, some students don't prioritize getting the textbook—they don't see it as a priority.*
Excerpt from Teacher 26
Male. 21/7/2026

Interviewer*: Ma. In your opinion, what are the major reasons why many students do not have English studies textbooks?*
Teacher: *In my own opinion, it's lack of fund to buy it or something.*
Excerpt from Teacher 29
Female. 22/7/2026

In summary, the teachers' responses indicate that the major causes of students' non-possession of English Studies textbooks are financial constraints, poverty, poor parental commitment to education, and the belief that the government should provide textbooks for students in public schools. The findings also reveal that some parents and students do not regard the purchase of textbooks as a priority, while low parental awareness of the importance of textbooks further contributes to the problem.

Research Question 3: What are the various coping strategies employed by you in the absence of students' non-possession of textbooks?

Thematic analysis of interview transcripts showed that the teachers, in a bid to cope with students' lack of English textbooks, spent personal money to make photocopies of selected comprehension passages for students to read in class; pairing/grouping of students to share limited textbooks available; general reading of comprehension passages by the teacher and students selected by the teacher; use of instructional material e.g., charts, flashcards, pictures, realia, etc., oral assessment of students' comprehension; and class exercises. In summary, teachers spent personal money and pedagogical skills in circumventing students' non-possession of English textbooks. Evidence from teachers' comments is cited below:
Interviewer: *Thank you, Ma. What strategies do you usually employ to ensure effective teaching when many students do not have textbooks?*
Teacher: *I make sure that they share the textbook. Maybe a textbook could be shared like by three students, or two. Three maximum, three students. I also make sure that I read out of the textbook for them to listen. Then after reading, I will have some of them to read as well, so that those that are not with the textbook will be able to know what is inside the textbook.*
Excerpt from teacher 3
Female.8/7/2026

Interviewer: *Ma. What strategies do you usually employ to ensure effective teaching when many students do not have textbooks?*
Teacher*: I ask them to pair up... with students that have. DSometimes reading it out... reading the comprehension passages for them.*
Excerpt from teacher 7
Female. 9/7/2026

Interviewer*: Ma. Which of these strategies do you find the most effective? Please explain, Ma.*
Teacher: *I think pairing up is more effective, because by the time you read, many of them are not concentrating. You have to read and repeat yourself*

so that they would be able to get the questions.
Excerpt from teacher 11
Female. 9/7/2026

Interviewer*: Ma. How do you encourage students without textbooks to participate actively during English lessons, Ma?*
Teacher: *As I've said earlier, they pair up with their mates....those ones that have. So that's what I do mostly.*
Excerpt from teacher 15
Female. 15/7/2026

Interviewer*: Thank you, Ma. How do you encourage students without textbooks to participate actively during English lessons, Ma?*
Teacher: *We write on the board as well. So they see what you have written on the board. Then we teach from the textbook, then they learn from what you have taught them.*
Excerpt from teacher 22
Female. 20/7/2026

Interviewer: *What strategies do you usually employ to ensure effective teaching despite this shortage?*
Teacher: *I am a mother myself and I understand their situation, so I don't believe in punishing them unduly for something that isn't their fault. My main strategy is **grouping**. If I have 10 textbooks in a class of 30, we pair three students to one book. In classes where there are only two books, I allow students to borrow copies from adjacent classes. We also copy exercises onto the blackboard so everyone has the questions written down for home assignments.*
Excerpt from Teacher 29
Female. 22/7/2026

Interviewe*r: What recommendations would you make to improve textbook access in public schools?*
Teacher: *Peer-to-Peer Handover. I actively encourage JSS 3 students who are graduating to hand down their used textbooks to incoming JSS 2 students.*
ii. Student Prioritization: I advise students who participate in local savings schemes (ajo) to prioritize buying essential learning materials.
iii. Library Utilization: Utilizing school library copies for research and homework assignments even when books cannot leave the premises.
iv. Teacher Commitment: Teacher dedication remains pivotal. I commend the Oyo State Government for continuing to recruit qualified teachers, but individual educators must remain deeply committed to speaking to the minds and consciences of their students.
Excerpt from Teacher 30
Female. 22/7/2026

From the findings, the teachers' responses indicate that they adopted a variety of coping strategies to ensure effective teaching despite students' lack of English Studies textbooks. The most common strategies included pairing and grouping students to share available textbooks, reading passages aloud, writing lesson notes and exercises on the chalkboard, using instructional materials such as flashcards and cardboard charts, encouraging the use of library resources, and promoting peer borrowing of textbooks. Some teachers also recommended peer-to-peer textbook handover and encouraged students to prioritise the purchase of learning materials.

Discussion of Findings

Non-Possession of recommended English Studies textbooks

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of students in the selected public junior secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area do not possess the recommended English Studies textbooks. Most of the teachers interviewed indicated that only a small proportion of students owned the prescribed textbooks, while the majority attended English lessons without them. Teachers further explained that this situation makes effective classroom instruction difficult because many students are unable to participate actively in comprehension lessons, complete assignments independently, or revise after classroom instruction.

This finding corroborates the reports of UNESCO (2021), which established that textbooks remain one of the most effective instructional resources for improving students' academic performance and learning outcomes. It also agrees with Aremu (2019), Owoeye (2020), Okafor and Eze (2022), Abdullahi, Garba and Musa (2023), Ibrahim and Hassan (2024), and Yusuf and Jinjiri (2024), who all found that students who possessed English textbooks performed significantly better academically than those who lacked them because textbooks promote independent study, reading practice, vocabulary development and classroom participation.

Coping strategies employed by teachers

The findings of this study revealed that English Studies teachers adopted several coping strategies to minimise the effects of students' lack of textbooks. These included grouping or pairing

students to share available textbooks, reading passages aloud, writing comprehension passages and exercises on the chalkboard, using flashcards and charts, preparing teacher-made instructional materials, spending personal money to photocopy learning materials, encouraging students to use library copies, sourcing instructional materials online using personal mobile phones, and conducting oral assessments and classroom exercises. These findings corroborate Adeyemi (2019), Ajayi (2017) and Odewumi, Dom-Anyanwu and Akanmu (2023all of whom reported that teachers relied on textbook sharing, note dictation, improvisation of instructional materials, classroom explanations, digital resources and cooperative learning to cope with shortages of textbooks.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there is low text possession among junior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State due to the poverty of parents to purchase the recommended texts. To cope with this situation, English teachers have demonstrated dedication and commitment by going out of their way to make copies of reading passages available to students while restructuring the classroom to ensure that students engage the limited materials as much as possible. Other pedagogical alternatives such as instructional materials and classroom tasks are deployed by the teacher.

Recommendations

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

1. Purchase of recommended English textbooks should be mandated and made compulsory for students at Junior secondary schools in Ibadan North LGA.
2. School Authorities can partner with book publishers to supply textbooks at subsidised rates.
3. The government should invest in the construction and adequate equipping of modern library facilities in public schools to provide students with access to essential textbooks and other relevant learning resources that they may be unable to afford.
4. Students should be encouraged to persuade their parents to make purchase of textbooks a top priority and not shift responsibility to government.
5. Schools should establish a dedicated fund to support teachers in providing alternative instructional materials when textbooks are limited or unavailable.

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