

Preparation and Qualitative Assessment of English Language Teachers in Delta State

Jeffrey Chisunum

Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Delta, Agbor

Roselyn Eboh-Nzekwue

Department of Language and Communication, Federal College of Education (Tech) Asaba

Abstract

This paper discusses teachers' preparation and qualitative assessment of teachers of English in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. The population of the study was 90 teachers while the sample population of 50 was used for the study. Three research questions were raised for the study while simple percentages were used in data analysis. The questionnaire was the instrument for data collection which was in the likert scale of (1) Agree (2) Disagree (3) Undecided. The statistical analysis was based on descriptive statistics. It was revealed that teachers teaching skill should be supervised, that teachers teaching skill and technique affect the performance of students and that both teachers and students should be adequately motivated and rewarded to enable them put in their best. It then recommends that Ministry of Education and schools' management should adequately supervise teachers for optimum performance and adequate preparation for the teaching of English as a subject.

Keywords: teacher's preparation, qualitative assessment, motivated, optimum performance.

Introduction

Teaching refers to the process of imparting knowledge and skills from a teacher to a learner. It encompasses the activities of educating. It is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Simply put, teaching is the imparting of knowledge by a teacher or other knowledgeable person (Danza, 2012). Teaching is an active engagement that always has a result in view and no matter how energetic a teaching period may be, its quality will always be measured in relation to students' performance or assessment. It is so much so that disciplines, faculties, departments and schools keep a close watch of how the teachers are handling the subjects allocated to them, in this instance in the teaching and learning of English language. It is obvious that some jobs can easily and productively be measured in terms of numbers and visible results which makes it deductive in process. But by qualitative assessment we are refer to those types of work that express their results in numbers. They tend to answer questions that border on "how many" or "how much" or "how often" when they are used to compare things such as the results of community programs, the effects of economic development efforts or attitudes about a community issue.

Furthermore, this method of assessment based on numbers is not enough. If one relies on students' performance to assess this, one runs into the discrepancies that would be created by differences in cognitive abilities of students thereby calling for an assessment method that is more organic than statistical. However, this qualitative assessment research work can prove to be more difficult because it is inductive subjective and process oriented with the goal of

achieving the knowledge being sought for from the participants point of view. Another aspect that should be considered is teachers' qualification. A teaching qualification is one of a number of academic and professional degrees that enables a person to become a registered teacher. Depending on country, such qualification may for example include the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGDE) and the Bachelor of Education (BA) (Relid, 2013)

In the education sector, the knowledge of English language is crucial. It is pedagogically important in almost the entire school system from primary to the tertiary level of education. Government will see to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially in the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage English (L2). The English language is so important that all the textbooks used in the subjects except the ones in vernacular are written with it.

Theoretical perspectives on teacher education, has it that schools of education have subscribed to various theories of teacher education which have affected the types of experiences offered to the teacher candidates. Teacher education programmes have been grounded in two perspectives: the *constructivist view* and the *transmissionist views*. Although in recent years, social cultural views have been emphasized (Bainbridge and Macy, 2008). Proponents of the transmission approach focus on the direct transmission of content knowledge, and as such the goals of teacher education are to transmit the skills and knowledge needed for pre-service teachers to become competent. The constructivist learning theories of teacher education shift from transmission models and emphasize linking teacher candidates, prior knowledge with professional learning, leading to the construction of new understandings of teaching and knowledge. Learning for pre-service teachers is cultivated through their interactions with teacher educators and students in classrooms (Daniel, 2014). According to Shulman (2014), the goal of teacher education programme is to provide both theoretical preparation and opportunities for supervised experiences in the field or pre-service teachers. Purcell-Gates, Degener and Jacobson (2004) emphasizes the cultural and cognitive aspects of learning as they asserted "We see cognition as occurring always within the cultural contexts. Hopper and Sanford (2008) support conceptualizations of the socio-cultural nature of learning for preservice teachers as they contend "teacher knowledge is not separate from the knower but is constructed within his or her intellectual, social, and cultural contexts of teaching.

The theoretical foundations of language acquisition believe that there are ways in which languages are learnt. People have taken time to find out the kind of process involved in language learning. We shall here look at some of the views scholars hold about learning and teaching of language. From the Behaviourists' perspective, Olateju M. et al (2014, the first coherent theory of language was the behaviourist theory based on the work of Parlov and Skinner (Hutchinson and Waters, 1986), they believed that language is a mechanical process of habit formation which is processed by means of frequent reinforcement of a stimulus response sequence. It was based on the view that all learning including language learning occurs through a process of imitation, practice, reinforcement habit formation and generalization (Spada and Lightbown, 2002).

The role of specialist teachers of English in the educational system cannot be over-emphasized. The successful implementation of the curriculum of English depends to a large extent on availability of specialist and resourceful English language teachers. The shortages of

specialist English teachers has led to the employment of graduates from other disciplines such as mass communication or political science to teach English language in some secondary school in the state. This constitutes a serious problem to the teaching and learning of English in Secondary schools.

This lack of adequate teacher preparation and development conflicts with the fact that the relationship between literacy proficiency and academic achievement grows stronger as grade levels rise, regardless of individual student characteristics (Biancarosa, Snow, 2004, Kamil, 2003). Therefore, adolescent learners of English as a second language learners need skillful teachers so that they can develop literacy skills for each content area in the second language as they simultaneously learn, comprehend and apply content area concepts through that second language (Garcia and Godina, 2004).

The shortage of qualified English teachers has contributed enormously to the low performance of student in English language in both internal and external examinations as well as in social interaction. Brumfit (2006) asserts that sheer weight of number of students in a class makes it difficult for teachers to teach because for effective teaching, there should be close relationship between the teacher and the students. Ene (2008) rightly points out, that the simple straight-forward meaning of teaching is to enable someone to do or to know. That is to acquire knowledge or to perform an act. Any method or skill used by the English teacher, should aim at enabling the child acquire knowledge of doing something. Furthermore, time is an important factor in learning a language, especially English language. Ifeyinwa (2007) says that the teacher should be responsible for ensuring that much time is reasonably allotted for learning.

English language teaching in Oshimili South Local Government Area has not been encouraging and students in the LGA do not show interest in the learning of the subject. This situation has led to poor performance of students in both internal and external examination which may also be due to poor teaching and preparation of teachers for the teaching of English Language. It is believed that if students are motivated in the course of teaching through the use of teaching materials and the teachers show a greater commitment to the teaching of the subject by being given incentive and also go on further training, greater progress will be made to enhance the performances of students in examination.

Statement of Problem and Research Questions

The number of students who register for English language as a subject in WAEC, JAMB, and NECO examinations as well as undergraduates who undertake compulsory use of English courses in our higher institutions are alarming. Some of the problems associated with the teaching and learning of the subject are: not knowing the requisite skills needed to teach English or lack of effective English language teachers teaching skills, teachers not possessing qualifications relevant to the teaching of English and lack of motivation on the part of the teachers who teach English are some of the contributing factors that may affect the teaching of English language.

Furthermore, it is expected that before teachers are employed or recruited by both government and private schools, they are expected to be well equipped with the methodology of teaching the language such that the students understanding, speaking and writing of English would have been enhanced. Today, the reverse has been the case as so many teachers of English

are not well prepared to teach the subject. The worst scenario is when in some situations, those who belong to any of the arts disciplines like law, mass communication, political science and history are sometimes made to teach the subject. This has led to a woeful performance by those who are entrusted with this onerous task.

The following are the research questions:

1. Is it important to prepare and supervise teachers teaching skills?
2. Does the teacher's teaching skill or method affect the performance of students?
3. Does motivation spur teachers to put in their best in the discharge of their duties?

The following are the objectives of the study: to determine how the qualification of teachers could affect the teaching and learning of English; and to examine the factors responsible for the preparation of teachers in the teaching of English language.

Research Method

The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Amedahe (2003) holds that in descriptive research, accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons are the objectives. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative approaches which involve systematic and objective collection and analysis of data were adopted in the study. This method was used because it was the most appropriate method of collecting data from respondents through the use of questionnaire. The rationale for this approach is that quantitative data and their subsequent analysis provided a general understanding of the research problem, whilst the qualitative data and analysis gave detailed explanation to the statistical results by exploring the participants, views in more depth (Creswell, 2003).

The population of the study comprises 90 teachers drawn from Oshimili South local Government area of Delta State. Out of ninety (90) teachers of English language, fifty (50) teaches representing 55.56% were sampled. In selecting the sample size of the study proportional stratified sampling techniques was used. Data was collected through administration of the questionnaire to the students. The questionnaire was aimed at collecting specific information from the targeted respondents. A total of 50 questionnaires was divided into two sections. Section A; is for the demographic information of the respondents while section B; was the main questions that addressed the research problem. The questionnaire is a three point Likert scale, starting from Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Undecided (UD). The results were used to answer the research questions. For the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was moderated by an expert in the field of measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was computed which yielded the co-efficient of 0.6 and considered reliable (Cronbach, 2006).

On the procedure for data collection, the researchers addressed the selected teachers beforehand to be well acquainted with them. This gave the respondents the free will to respond positively to the questions raised. Thereafter, data were then collected through the use of the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to provide honest response to increase the girth of the reliability of the instrument. Fifty (50) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the teachers and the same copies were collected back in return.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire were quantitatively analyzed in order to answer questions raised in the questionnaire. This was done through the use of descriptive statistics of simple percentages.

Research Question 1: is it important to prepare and supervise teachers' teaching skill in English language.

Table 1: frequency and percentage of the importance of supervising teaching skills of teachers.

Statement	Responses			
	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Total
It is important to supervise teachers teaching skills	32 26.5 71.1%	10 13.3 22.2%	3 5.3 6.7%	45 45.0 100%
Supervising teachers teaching skill help students perform better	32 26.5 71.1%	8 13.3 17.8%	5 5.3 11.1%	45 45.0 100%
Supervising of teachers teaching skills produces better skill	20 26.5 44.4%	22 23.3 48.9%	3 5.3 6.7%	45 45.0 100%
Creating opportunities for students to learn by asking questions providing answers is a way of assessing teachers skills	22 26.5 48.9%	13 13.3 28.9%	10 5.3 22.2%	45 45.0 100%
Total	106 106.0 58.9%	53 53.0 29.4%	21 21.0 11.7%	180 180.0 100%

From table 1 above, it can be observed that 32 (71.1%) of the respondents agree that it is important to supervise teachers' teaching skill. 44.4% of respondents agree that supervising of teaching skill produces better skills. While 48.9% of respondents agree that creating opportunities for students to learn through questions and answers is a way of assessing the teachers' skills. 71.1% of the respondents agree that supervising teachers' skills help students perform better. On the other hand, 22.2%, 17.8%, 48.9% and 13.3% disagree with the questions raised respectively and 6.7%, 11.1%, 6.7% and 25% respectively were undecided on the importance of supervising teachers teaching skill in English.

Research Question 2: Does the teacher’s teaching skill or method affect the performance of students

Table 2: the effect of teachers teaching skills on the students’ performance in English.

Statement	Responses			
	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Total
Lack of teachers’ teaching skills affect students’ performance. In English	28 26.3 62.2%	9 8.3 20.0%	8 10.5 17.8%	45 45.0 100%
The use of relevant illustrations are part of teachers’ teaching skills	30 26.3 66.7%	5 8.3 11.1%	10 10.5 22.2%	45 45.0 100%
Organizing quiz competition for students is part of assessing teachers teaching skills	27 26.3 60.0%	8 8.3 17.8%	10 10.5 22.2%	45 45.0 100%
Students’ competence in spoken and written English is a way of assessing teachers’ teaching skill.	20 26.3 44.4%	11 8.3 24.4%	14 10.5 31.1%	45 45.0 100%
Total	105 105.0 58.3%	33 33.0 18.3%	42 42.0 23.3%	180 180.0 100%

The results of the study in table 2 reveals that 62.2% of the respondents agree that lack of teachers’ teaching skills affect students’ performance in English. 66.7% of the respondents agree that the use of relevant illustrations are parts of teachers’ teaching skills, 60.0% of the respondents agree that student’s competence in spoken and written English is also a part of assessing teachers’ teaching skill. 20.0%, 11.1%, 17.8% and 324.4% of the respondents disagree while 17.8%, 22.2%, 22.2% and 31.1% of the respondents respectively were undecided on how teaching skills affect the performance of students in English.

Research Question 3: Does motivation spur teachers to put in their best in the discharge of their duties?

Table 3: Motivation of teachers by the school management affect teacher’s good preparation.

Statement	Responses			
	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided	Total
Motivation of teachers by the school management affect teachers’ good preparation.	27 27.3 60.0%	10 9.3 22.2%	8 8.3 17.8%	45 45.0 100%
English language teachers performance are poor due to poor remuneration	30 27.3 66.7%	6 9.3 13.3%	9 8.3 20.0%	45 45.0 100%
English language teachers’ effectiveness affected by their qualification and much work load.	25 27.3 55.6%	12 9.3 26.7%	8.3 17.8%	45 45.0 100%
Total	82 82.0 60.7%	28 28.0 20.7%	25 25.0 18.5%	135 135.0 100%

From Table 3, it can be observed that 60.0% of the respondents agree that motivation of teachers of English by the school management affects teachers’ good performance and preparation, 66.7% and 55.6% agree too that motivation is important. 22.2%, 13.3% and 26.7% disagree while 17.8%, 20.0% and 17.8% respectively were undecided on the question that motivation as a factor is responsible for teachers’ good performance and preparation are due to poor remuneration.

Discussion

It is imperative that educators adopt the most effective instructional strategies in order to facilitate the language development of non-native English speaking student, Bourdieu (1991). Also, the goal of teacher education programmes is to provide both theoretical preparation and opportunities for supervised experiences in the field for pre-service teachers. (Shulman, 2004).

It is a common practice in the goal of teacher education programmes that teachers teaching skills be supervised to ensure good performance and adequate preparation. The government of Delta State and management committee should set up proper supervision teams to ensure that teachers of English and other subject teachers are routinely supervised to make them ready and well prepared for the teaching of English and in this process increase the students’ interest and understanding of the subject. A situation where teachers are not supervised, one will find that teachers will not be committed to teaching and will not be also punctual to class. They in turn will not follow the scheme of work and will also not write their lesson notes. This is as a matter of fact will make so many things go wrong. Secondly on the effect of teachers’ teaching skills on student’s performance, it is believed that a teacher’s self-efficacy is a judgment of his/her capabilities to about descried outcome of students’ engagement and learning even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated. Tricarico and

Yendol-Hoppey (2012), Bandura (1997) has contended that in general, successful performance by individuals are affected by many factors including knowledge, skills and strategies they have at their command rather than solely on how they can excel themselves.

Teaching skills and methods are many, depending on the one the teacher employs. There are over one hundred and one teaching skills, techniques and methods in use today. If a teacher employs two or three teaching skill or techniques, there is no way that the students will not gain a better understanding of the topic taught. It is expected that teachers when motivated will put in their best to teach and students also when motivated to learn English through the use of education media will pay greater attention to the teacher thereby increasing their understanding and learning of English Language. Most business are involved in promos with a lot of prizes promised because they want to motivate people to by their products. Government and schools could give teachers a motivation by rewarding the best English teachers whose students performs exceptionally well from others, in the same vein, students could be extensively motivated by the teacher through the use of teaching aids/media, so as to increase their interest in the teaching and learning of English as some of them have lackluster attitude towards the subject. It is also believed that education trust fund be given to best performing teachers to enable them pursue additional academic programmes to upgrade themselves. Teachers of English need to have a clear understanding of different language tools including the strengths, weakness and appropriate use of each of the tools and processes so that they can make informal judgement about how to use these tools with English language learners (Moe, New Zealand, 2006)

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis, the researcher concludes that teachers' well preparedness to teach English language lies on the fact that it is important for teachers of English to receive thorough academic discipline as far as the teaching profession is concerned in order for them to make any meaningful academic impact that can improve their performance in English language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this research, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is important the teaching skills, techniques and methods of English teachers be supervised for effective outcome.
2. The teaching skill, technique and method adopted by English teachers affect the performance of students for optimum result. It is advised that teachers be made to attend in service trainings, seminars and conferences to equip them with the modern trends in the adoption of technology in the teaching of English.
3. Teachers should also be advised to undergo further training to gain more academic knowledge either PGDE or Masters to be well equipped with the teaching of English.
4. And finally, language teachers and students be adequately motivated to make them show interest in the teaching and learning of English.

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