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Thank you.

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SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' FAILURE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BARUTEN LGA, KWARA STATE

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Abstract: The study investigated causes of secondary school students' failure in English language in Baruten LGA, Kwara State. A survey method was explored by means of questionnaire to collect data. Five research questions were raised to guide the study and hypotheses were proposed. Frequency counts and t-test statistical method were adopted to analyze data gathered from the questionnaire distributed. The study showed that no significant relationships exist in the teachers' method of teaching and students' failure, teachers' qualification, school type and experienced and less experienced teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA. It is therefore recommended that more qualified teachers should be employed, who would display positive attitude to teaching of English language, paid promptly and should be given opportunity to attend seminars and conferences to update their method of teaching and enhance knowledge and professional competence.

Introduction

English Language functions as the Language of Education in our schools. Awonusi (1994) observes that some Nigerians flow face a problem of multiple communicative competence in English Languages. Speakers are aware of three standard varieties: British, American and Nigerian. Nigerians are expected to be proficient in them thus the influence of societal structure on linguistic behaviour observed in native speakers of English societies, many equally apply in a society like Nigeria, where English functions as a second language. It is also estimated that over 250 million people in every continent, Nigeria inclusive use English Language for their day to day needs. All areas where decisions affecting life and English constitutes over one sixth of the world's population. For instance, the English Language has serve as the major vehicle to debate at the U.N.O, the major language of communication at the OAU, also it is the official language of international aviation and the pillar for the core subjects in all schools.

The rapid growth and over whelming increase of speakers of English as a second language or first Language can be attributed to two factors: The immigration of Europeans from their countries to new found lands that include the U.S.A and the introduction of English to the indigenous people of British colonies which has led to the existence of numerous countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, where English language continues to be used daily.

Despite the role, status and importance of English language, students continue to record dwindling and retrogressive results. Udofot (2007) affirms that in homes where children are made to acquire both English Language and the Mother

Tongue simultaneously, English gains dominance over the other Languages. Parents feel that since English is the Language of education in Nigeria and therefore enjoys a higher prestige, it is better for a child to equip him/herself with such a Language in order to prepare for the challenges of life. This clearly shows that English is not only an official Languages in Nigeria; it is also the first language of some Nigerians and theref1ore a language of informal communication even among family members.

Firth, A. (1996) sees English as a Lingua Franca (ELF); it is part of the more general phenomenon of English as an international Language' (EIL); of world English'. However, despite being welcomed by some and deplored by others, it cannot be denied that English functions as a global Lingua Franca. This study therefore intends to investigate the causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA, Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian secondary school students do not concentrate on their studies and follow the rule and regulation of the English language. Some stay away from schools and used such time to watch films, visit video clubs, playing, gambling, examination malpractice, drug abuse and alcoholism. They do not respect neither their teachers, parents, authorities nor even head of the schools. All these lead to increase in the numbers of dropout of many students who are not able to cope with school system. Also, poor academic performance is recorded yearly in Nigeria schools which leads to the failing standard of English education in general. As a results of this, the study intends to verify the causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

Objectives

The study is to investigate the causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten Local Government Area of Kwara State. The study also intends to provide suggestions towards enhancing students' performance in English Language in examinations.

Research Questions

RQ_1: Do teachers' qualification cause secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA?

RQ_2: Does school type causes secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA?

RQ_3: Does secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA based on gender?

RQ_4: Does teachers teaching experience have adverse effect on secondary school students' performance in English Language in Baruten LGA?

Research Hypotheses

HO_1: There is no significant relationship between unqualified teachers and students' failure in English Language.

HO_2: There is no significant relationship in the school type of secondary school students' performance in English Language in Baruten LGA.

HO_3: There is no significant relationship between wrong teaching methods and students'

failure in English language in Baruten LGA.

HO_4: There is no significant relationship in teachers' teaching experience in the performance secondary school students in English language in Baruten LGA.

English Language in Nigeria

Language Communication embraces speaking, reading, listening and writing. It has tools called WORDS, a discipline called GRAMMAR and letter arrangement called SPELLING. According to Haggit W. (1998), it is perhaps not an overstatement to say that English is the most influential language in the world over, Nigeria happens to be one of the numerous countries in the world that use it as their official language.

Bragga, L. (1999) asserts that English Language is much wider in use than the French language since it extends practically to the world over. In Nigeria, English Language occupies a very prominent and uncontroversial position as the official language; hence it is a language of unity for her Multi-Lingual society. In Nigeria's educational system, it is the medium of instruction after the first three years in the primary school and as a subject; it is a compulsory subject up to school certificate examination. An excellent or credit in the subject is the only guarantee for advancement in the educational ladder and sometimes for securing good jobs. However, in spite of all the importance attached to the language, there are numerous students whose written and spoken English hardly reflect their level of educational attainment. In the new National Policy on Education, according to Urevhu, D. (1995), there is a threat to the continued dominance of English Language in the country's language scene. In the policy, the teaching and learning of one of the three major languages (Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo) other than that of the learners is emphasized. As the policy stated: "In addition to appreciate the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue".

Afolayan A. (1997) questions the communication competence of some teachers of English Language. To him "They speak faulty and weak English". He stresses further that for most of the children, the school is where the first word in English will be heard or spoken as a separated language hence, the children are incapable of learning English. It is also the view of Joseph, C. (1998) that using any of the local languages in place of English as a means of fostering unity is not realistic and feasible for now. Bamigbose, A. (1998) also views that the use of mother tongue as the medium of communication in the schools is being seriously hampered for the fact that Nigeria is a multi-Lingual society and secondly, there are virtually no text books written in these languages on the subject offered in schools.

Qualities of a Teacher

According to Ajayi, A. (2001), the availability of or otherwise enough highly qualified professional teachers is a veritable factor that could impinge on the performance of the students in English Language study in the schools. In the first National Development Plan, it was highlighted that the problem facing the educational system in

Nigeria is that of structural unemployment which affects development of teachers in schools. In nearly all Nigeria secondary schools, just any fluent teacher could be assigned the job of teaching English became the general problem of lack of adequate qualified teachers for the subject. Professionally qualified teachers are not adequate in the secondary schools; a situation that should be seriously addressed through the new National Policy on Education. To buttress the issue on qualified teachers, Farrant, W. (1995) argues that a teacher cannot enlighten his students of his ignorance. The mark of a good and qualified teacher however, is not only to make teaching brilliant, but to make it wonderfully simple to the students. On the impact of professional training on performance of the teachers of second language, Adeyanju, A. (2000) believes that the teacher's attitude towards language and the goals of English as a second language, his attitudes towards the methods and materials he uses, and his attitude to students are to a large extent determined by the nature and level of professional preparation he has. Stern, P. (2001) also shows that the teachers' attitudes are important in the learning process. He concluded that the basic assumption underlying all those studies is that teachers' attitudes are significant for students learning.

Smith, A. (2003) stresses that achievement in second language is related to measures of attitudes and motivation. Also, the various attitudes and motivation measures are meaningfully related to each other and that they are related to the measures of proficiency in the language. This, thus goes to show that positive attitudes and some motivation could serve as tonic to enhance performance of secondary school students in English Language. The argument is that for any teacher to be favourably disposed to the teaching of a second language, the level of professional training should be high. These will no doubt develop his positive attitudes which would in turn enhance the student's performance. Teachers should possess all the expected competencies for the appropriate level including knowledge of content, methodology, classroom management, lesson planning and organization, utilization of media resources and assessment of students' achievement.

Students' Home Background

On the effect of home background on the students' acquisition and mastery of the language, Ajayi, A. (2001) stresses that students feel alien to the English Language due to lack of exposure to the language within the family unit. (The students transfer this poor background into the school and this hinders their performance).

On the importance of home background on the language learning, Goldman, A. (2001) illustrates that a middle class home tends to provide environments conducive to success on schools than those of the lower families. In the words of Rosen Thel, C. (2002) "Achieving well on English reading and basically is aided where English is the language regularly used at home. Besides the home and the teachers, the type of primary school attended could also determine his later performance in English in secondary school.

Poor acquisition of oral performance in English language in secondary school level.

Individual Differences in Learning Second Language

According to Fillmore, C. (2003) the major dimensions of individual differences in second language acquisition is speed of learning; some are slow and laborious second language learners whereas other pick up language quickly and easily. The implication of this is the individual differences which would account for the differential performance of students in English Language. Lending credence to this fact; Goldman, A. (2001) states that the fact to individual difference has implication not only for theory but for research and educational practice as well.

Writing on intelligence, Castle. W. (2003) opines that intelligence is rather like electricity; we don't know what is it, but we know what it does, it is an inherited capacity and we have ability to excel in a particular subject in schools is the function of our intelligence endowments.

Factors Affecting Students' Performance English Language

According to Banjo, A. (2003), effective teaching and learning of English language consists of three steps, namely; motivation, presentation and follow-up activities.

1. **Motivation:** To motivate is to be creative. The more interesting the teacher makes of English Language the easier it will be to teach.
2. **Presentation:** Variety is a key to success in presenting a reading selection. Hence, if the selection consists of five paragraphs, the teacher might want to use three or four methods of presentation.

According to Bamisaiye, A. (2002) to perform well in English Language students need to read to develop an effective reading techniques. For a student to be able to read successfully, such a student must improve his mastery of the grammar of English Language. The teacher should ensure that the students are familiar with the way sentences are formed, the way words operate in a sentence. A good grasp of the knowledge of the grammar of the language definitely helps student to read much better and be successful in examinations. According to Obi, A. (2001) teachers must encourage students to read actively. An active reader is one who throws himself totally into reading task. An active reader is like a viewer of a television programme who watches a play going on. However, in reading the comments are entirely silent. Students should be made to create an interest in reading to improve their reading speed. Students should be encouraged to read as many books as possible in all sorts of subjects e.g. fiction, biology, adventures, politics and current affairs.

In conclusion, the pronunciation is a more practical exercise. It is meant to equip the learners of English Language with the most appropriate or correct way of pronouncing words in English and to read English passages correctly.

Methodology

This research is a descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The descriptive survey method is used to collect data necessary for finding the causes of secondary school students' failure in English language in Ilorin Baruten LG.A. The population for this study comprises the secondary school teachers. The target sample of the

study consists of twenty-five secondary school teachers randomly selected from five secondary schools in Baruten. In this case, five teachers were selected from each of the five schools selected to make up twenty-five respondents. A stratified random selection technique was adopted for the study. A set design questionnaire was used as instrument for the study which consists of respondents' personal data such as sex, educational qualification, and years of teaching experience, school type and items relating to the subject matter of the study. The data obtained from these questionnaires distributed were analysed and interpreted using frequency counts and simple percentage.

Data analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	15	60%
Female	10	40%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that 15 (60%) of the respondents are male teachers while 10 (40%) are their female counterparts.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
M.A./M.Sc./M.Ed	0	0%
BA/B.Sc/B.Ed	13	52%
NCE/PGDE	12	48%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that none of the respondents has a Master Degree, but 13 (52%) are First Degree holders, while 12 (48%) are NCE/PGDE certificate holders.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
5-10 years	4	16%
11-15 years	6	24%
16-20 years	7	28%

21 years and above	8	32%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Table 3 shows that 4 (16%) of the respondents are between 5-10 years in service, 6 (24%) are between 11-15 years, 7 (28%) have spent between 16-20 years in sense while 8 (32%) are above 21 years in service.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public School	25	100%
Private School	0	0%
Total	**25**	**100%**

Discussion

Table 1 shows that 15 (60%) of the respondents are male teachers while 10 (40%) are their female counterparts.

Table 2 shows that none of the respondents has a master Degree, but 13 (52%) are first Degree holders, while 12 (48%) are NCE/PGDE certificate holders.

Table 3 shows that 4 (16%) of the respondents are between 5-10 years in service, 6 (24%) are between 11-15 years, 7 (28%) have spent between 16-20 years in sense while 8 (32%) are above 21 years in service.

Table 4 shows that 25 (100%) of the respondents are public school teachers while 0 (0%) that is, none is in private school.

Summary

The study investigated causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA. Twenty-five teachers participated in the study by responding to questionnaire survey. Five research hypotheses were proposed for the study, frequency count method was adopted to analyze data gathered from the questionnaire distributed to the respondents.

The study discovered the following results.

i Significant differences exist in the opinions of male and female teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

ii. Significant differences do not exist in the opinions of educated and less educated teachers on causes secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

iii. Significant difference do not exist in the opinions of experienced and less experienced teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

iv. Significant difference exist in the opinions of both public and private school teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

Conclusion

From the result of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

i. There is no significant relationship in the qualification of teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.
ii. There are significant relationships in the opinions of public and private school teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.
iii. There are relationship in the opinions of both male and female teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.
iv. There is no significant relationship in the opinions of experienced and less experienced teachers on causes of secondary school students' failure in English Language in Baruten LGA.

Recommendations

From the foregoing therefore, the following recommendations are suggested:

Employment of adequate qualified English Language teachers is essential to complement the efforts of the existing teachers.

Teachers should make use of various relevant teachings methods to ensure improvement in students' performance in English Language in secondary schools.

Teachers should be put up positive attitude to enhance effective teaching and learning of English language in both private and public secondary schools in Baruten LGA.

Teachers should be paid well and regularly to ensure their efficiency in teaching of English Language in schools.

Teachers in both private and public secondary schools should be promoted timely and when due to ensure their effectiveness in school.

Teachers, irrespective of school type should be provided with opportunity to attend seminars and conferences to enhance their professional competence in English Language.

Lastly, both male and female teachers should be more positive in their attitude towards teaching of English Language in secondary schools in Baruten LGA.

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