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LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY, LITERACY, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Honouring the Imprints of HRM,
Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide
(The *Òlolà* of Ollà Kingdom)

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A Festschrift for HRM, Professor Stephen Billy Olajide
(The *Òlolà* of Ollà Kingdom)

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University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

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LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY, LITERACY, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

FOREWORD

I consider it a great honour for me to be called upon to write a foreword to this collection of well-researched academic papers that constitute a festschrift in honour of His Royal Majesty (HRM), the *Òlolà* of Ollà Kingdom, Professor Stephen Billy Olajide at 70.

Ever before the idea behind this festschrift was conceived, the Almighty God, in His infinite mercies, had honoured the honoree by giving him the grace to ascend the throne of his forebears. He was officially and formally installed as the Paramount Ruler of Ọ̀llà Kingdom, in Isin Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, by His Excellency, Dr. Abdulfatah Ahmed, the Executive Governor of Kwara State, on the 19th December, 2016.

I knew the honoree as a professional colleague at the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, but we became closer when he transferred his services to the Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin. Our interaction became deeper when the Department of Arts Education appointed me as the internal-external examiner for Master's and Ph.D. Programmes in the Department. HRM, Prof. S. B. Olajide, is known to be cheerful, amiable, caring, kind, honest, dependable and diligent. Many of his close associates know him to be a great lover of Yorùbá culture and tradition; with special interest in drumming and hunting. He is talented with very fanciful handwriting that can attract any potential reader of his hand-written work. He is a doyen of English Language Education.

As a Professor of English Language Education and Applied Linguistics, the honoree has contributed immensely to the field in many aspects. He has expertly deployed his knowledge of applied linguistics in making the teaching and learning of English language easier for learners of English as a second language. This is evident in his teaching of the major language skills: listening and speaking (the skills of oracy), reading and writing (the skills of literacy), preparation of relevant language teaching materials, curriculum development and implementation, language testing, and the study of mother-tongue interference in learning English as a second language.

In addition to teaching regular students, He had many years of teaching in the Sandwich programme and other affiliated programmes like the Use of English under the General Studies Unit, with students from various disciplines; both at the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, and at the University of Ilorin. By virtue of his professional calling, the honoree had for many decades engaged in supervision, mentorship and counselling of students at different levels of tertiary education. As a prolific writer and versatile researcher, the honoree has to his credit seventy-two (72) well-researched academic publications in reputable local, national and international journals. He has rendered useful services to many universities as visiting scholar, within and outside Nigeria. Such universities include the University of Kwazulu Natal, Durban, in South Africa, University Grenoble, France, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria, and many others. He also served as external examiner to allied departments in many universities within and outside the country. He has severally been involved in National University Commission (NUC) universities accreditation within Nigeria.

Administratively, HRM, Prof. S. B. Olajide, has served as the Sub-dean of Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin; and Head of the Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. He was Coordinator of the General Studies Unit; Managing Editor, University of Ilorin Institute of Education Journal of Education (IJES); Member, Editorial Board of the *Ilorin Journal of Education*, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin; and many other reputable journals within and outside Nigeria.

With this brief information about the calibre of the honoree, I consider this festschrift to be the most appropriate enduring legacy to celebrate and honour HRM, Prof. S. B. Olajide at 70. A proper skimming through the abstracts of the thirty-three (33) well-researched academic papers in this festschrift reveals the rigorous research efforts of the contributors in many areas of English Language Education, across many states of the federation. The focus of the festschrift, within the scope of English Language Education, is reflected in the following aspects: blindspots in language education, teaching strategies and relevant resources. The major English language skills, attitudes to language learning, integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into teaching methods, the principles of effective assessment, reading logs for borstal homes, the influence of social media on students' performance, the effects of mother-tongue interference in learning English as a second language, parental involvement in students' digital-reading habits, and the students perception of ICT-based assessment.

The others cover aspects on English language curriculum for *Almajiri* education programme in the Northern Nigeria, influence of English language in the implementation of curriculum for religious studies, expositions on the application of pedagogical and formal theories of linguistics such as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language and cultural studies, bilingualism and mother-tongue influence, human resource management and quality assurance in public secondary schools in Nigeria, and issues of security in Nigeria.

It is also very important to note the diverse domains and the geographical spread of the various research efforts in Nigeria. The spread of the research areas include the Federal Capital Territory(FCT), Abuja, and eight other States of the federation. The States include Anambra, Cross River, Imo, Kaduna, Kwara, Ondo, Ọ̀yọ́, and Sokoto. The major languages of research include Arabic, English and French; while specific references were made to indigenous Nigerian languages.

I, therefore, recommend this invaluable academic compendium for people who value knowledge, researchers in Applied Linguistics and specifically for both teahers and students of English Language Education as a resourceful material.

Once again, I wish to commend the frantic efforts of all the contributors for deeming it right to honour a highly dedicated teacher and a man of honour and integrity.

In conclusion, I sincerely wish HRM, the Ololà of Ọ̀llà Kingdom, Prof. S. B. Olajide, happy and enjoyable retirement from regular university academic engagement; as intellectuals do not retire from rendering active academic services for the benefit of humanity.

May your reign be long and peaceful, Amen!

Professor Issa O. Sanusi
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January, 2026

From the Editorial Desk

The festschrift is a collection of well-researched articles to celebrate the imprints of over four decade's highly meritorious teaching career of a distinguished humane and humility personified academic, His Royal Majesty (HRM) Professor Stephen Billy Olajide. The collection consists of submissions from academics, colleagues, mentees and others across Nigeria. The articles are on diversified topics, which have yielded highly revealing findings that constitute invaluable contributions to scholarship in areas of English language education, language use, curriculum development and educational management.

For over several decades, Prof Olajide has mentored several notable individuals across levels of the school system and at the university. Several of his protégées have risen to become distinguished scholars and high-ranking respected civil and public servants. He has bequeathed a legacy of uncommon impressions in the academia such that many ex-students refer to their continuous relationship with him as learning beyond the classroom. Prof Olajide epitomises the perfect description of a teacher: damn right resourceful, brilliant and innovative, uncommonly humble and a completely detribalised highly objective and compassionate mentor. At every point, he would always have a justification to understand and be compassionate with his students and everyone. Only a deviant would pass through Professor Olajide and exhibit arrogance, doubtful integrity and bully. He lives by his words with simple clear principle of satisfaction with little, strong will and uncommon commitment to excellence.

The thirty-three articles put together in this volume address different contemporary issues in language education and its influence on other fields of study. From across different locale in the country, authors report informed studies' findings towards addressing different educational challenges. Readers are invited to intensively read and reflect on the various perspectives of the studies to get refreshed, educated and challenged. It is indeed a contribution to knowledge to celebrate the elegant imprints of an academic icon graciously retiring at 70!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	i
Editorial Board	ii
Copyright	iii
Foreword	iv
From the Editorial Desk	vii
Table of Contents	viii
Interview with HRM, Professor Stephen Billy Olajide (The Ololà of Ollà Kingdom, Kwara State.)	1
Blindspots in Language and Literature Education AMUSEGHAN Sunday	11
The Screen and the Syllabus: Home Video Influence on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in English Language in Ilorin Imran YUSUF, PhD	25
Assessment of Undergraduates' Use of Meta cognitive Listening Strategy During Lectures at the University of Abuja, Nigeria Rasaq Ayodeji ILIYAS	43
Assessment of Senior Secondary School Teachers' Methods and Resources use in English Grammar Pedagogy in Ilorin, Nigeria Abdulkareem Farooq ISHOLA, Ph.D.	55
Integrating Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Secondary School Essay Composition in Abuja Emmanuel Edafe OJAKOVO, Ph.D.	70
Effective Assessment Principles In Second Language Learning: A Literature Review Fatima Seif Eldeen Mohammed Abdallah	83
A Review of Practice of Curriculum Development in Language Pedagogy Yetunde Grace OLUWOLE, Ph.D. & Rosemary Foluke OLANREWAJU, Ph.D.	101

Reading Logs for Borstal Homes: Implications for Flexible Pedagogy 111
Alice Oluwagbemisola FASOLA & Graceful Onovughe OFODU, Ph.D.

Challenges to Effective Teaching and Learning of Oral English in Secondary Schools 122
Francis Bepeh Ugbe

Influence of Social Media Instructional Platforms on Secondary School Students' Performance in Spoken English in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State 137
Rachael Adefunke ADEGBOLA & Professor Joseph Olurotimi BABALOLA

Effect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Method on Students' Essay Writing Content Competence in FCT College of Education, Abuja, Nigeria 151
Salihu Khadijat IBRAHIM, Ph.D. & Gbenga Samuel BAMIDELE, Ph.D.

Effect of Communicative Language Teaching on Secondary School Students' Use of Emphatic Stress in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria 163
Atete Catherine AUDU, Ph.D.

Effect of Process-based Approach on Students' Writing Ability in English Language Classrooms in Abuja, Nigeria 176
Prosper Onyekachi OKORO, Ph.D. & Salihu Khadijat IBRAHIM

Effect of Language of Instruction on Primary School Pupils' Achievement in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria 188
Sunday Abua OGBOR, Ph.D. & Amos Gideon LANDI, Ph.D.

Effect of Reciprocal Instructional Strategy on the Reading Comprehension Performance of Public Secondary School Students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria 203
Emmanuel OKECHALU, Ph.D.

Effect of Digital Learning Resources on Pre Service Teachers' Performance in Fiction Writing in Kwara State Colleges of Education 214
Hassana Taiye UMAR, Ph.D.

Parental Involvement and Students' Digital Reading Habits: Implications on Comprehension Performance of Secondary School Students in Ondo State, Nigeria 226
Temitope Ann TOPE-LEBILE & Bolajoko Margaret TUNDE-AWE, Ph.D.

Secondary School Students' Perception of Ict-based Assessment's Influence on Achievement in English Languagein Ilorin East, Kwara State 237
Nike SULYMAN-GIDADO, Ph.D. & Abdulkarim Salimon GIDADO, Ph.D.

Influence of Translanguage on Reading Comprehension Lessons of Secondary School Students in Abuja 252
Nanahauwa Ohunene ALIYU, Ph.D.

Assessment of Availability and Utilisation of English Language Curriculum for Almajiri Education Programme in North-West Nigeria 266
Udochukwu Daniel ONUOHA, Ph.D.

Teachers' Assessment of English Language Curriculum for Almajiri Education Programme in North-West, Nigeria 278
Udochukwu Daniel ONUOHA, Ph.D. & Professor, Folakemi Oyeyemi ADENIYI

Barriers to Effective Qur'anic Memorizaion: A Review of National Board For Arabic And Islamic Studies (NBAIS) Curriculum Implementation in FCT Abuja 299
Issa MUHAMMAD-JAMIU Ph.D. & Abdulhameed Muhammed SANNI, Ph.D.

Influence of English Language on the Implementation of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools 310
Damilola Ezekiel AYENI, Abdulkareem Farooq ISHOLA, Ph.D. & Oludare David OJO Ph.D.

Arabic Student-teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise: Focus on Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State
Musibau, Adebayo LAWAL Ph.D. & Saheed, Ojo ADELEGAN 327

Critical Discourse Analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural Speech in Nigeria
Babatunde Mustafa AJADI, Ph.D. & Kazeem Sabi AHMED 337

Roles of Language in Reshaping Cultural Identity in Awka as A Bilingual Community
Ude-Akpeh C. E. Ph.D, Ruth Banke OZEWE, Safi LAWAL & Abdulwaheed Abiodun ABDULRAHMAN 354

Bilingualism and Mother Tongue Interference: A Case of French Language in Nigeria
Margaret Vincent EKI, Olufunke Janet ADELEKE & Florence Nneka AJAEGBU 369

Application of Bernstein's Elaborated and Restricted Codes to Teaching English as Second Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools Across Contexts
Isa AHMED, Ph.D. 374

Influence of Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies on Quality Education Implementation in Nigerian Public Secondary Schools
Kafilat Adeola AFOLABI, Ph.D. & Professor, Wasiu Olugbenga GABADEEN 389

Exploring the Influence of Ethnographic Social Security in Promoting Entrepreneurial Stewardship in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria
Abraham Ray JAMBALANG, Ph.D. 405

Perceived Influence of Ai-powered Instructions on Language Skill Development among English Language Students in Federal Capital Territory (FCT) College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria
Motunrayo Kemi OMOTOSHO, PhD 417

Attitude of Students Towards Poetry in Abuja Municipal Area Council: Implications for Literature in English Pedagogy and Practice
Don Okoh OBOH, Ph.D. 433

Relationship Between Teacher Characteristics and Senior School Students' Performance in English Language in Obowo, Imo State
Comfort Chisara EMMANUEL, Ph.D. 445

Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

Interview with HRM, Professor Stephen Billy Olajide
(The *Ololà* of Ollà Kingdom, Kwara State)

Interviewer: Good day sir, can you share your early life experiences that shaped your interest in language and literacy?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: Thank you. My early childhood days were very interesting. I was born into a humble family in 1956, precisely on March 17th, and I grew up under an old woman then, my paternal grandmother, who decided to take me as from the age of three months and breast fed me. She took absolute care of me and in the process, I observed her use of language. She was not formally educated but she was rich in language use and general communication. She had great powers for the use of proverb and this woman I am talking about was a very brave woman, well connected, but local and traditional to the core.

She asked my parents to go and work on the cocoa farm that my presence there would distract them. So, she took absolute care of me but then, I had robust contact with my parents. My father was a good talking drummer who explored language to entertain people and my mother had great talents as a singer. So, I was born into a family that used language very well. Further, I was fortunate to have an uncle, now late, Mr. Rueben Olodi. He was a great user of the English language. He insisted I should go with him to a primary school in Elesinmeta in the present day Ilorin East Local Government Area. That was when I was in primary 6, so I read primaries 6 and 7 with his supervision. Linguistically, I can say I had a fairly rich but challenging background. My early childhood was interesting, it exposed me very well to the nature, scope and effectiveness of language.

Interviewer: Sir, how did your undergraduate study at the University of Ibadan influenced your career path?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: Yeah, University of Ibadan! I thank God, I attended that great University. My learning was quite fulfilling under great scholars, living and late, like Professors Ayo Bamgbose, Augusta Umamo, Tunde Adeniran, Niyi Osundare, Solomon Unoh, Mrs. Ebiola Odejide, and S. H. Olu Tomori. The pleasure of being exposed to the ways of Professor Madugu, a Nupe scholar to the core, who attended the UCLA in the US, and Professor Gwate, a Tanzanian, who did very well as a teacher, and then Dr. Schubert, a German was superlative. I remember Dr. Schubert helped me to acquire one great book prepared by a couple, *The Grammatical Structures of African Languages*. So, I could say that my experience in the University of Ibadan enriched and prepared me well for a career in education and language studies. I was very lucky to have passed through the tutelage of these great scholars at the University of Ibadan. There were so many of them. I can also remember: Professors Latunji Olatunde and Olukoju. Even though I did not read Yoruba, I watched them very closely, and I admired their dedication to true scholarship.

Interviewer: So, what inspired you to join the Kwara State Teaching Service Commission in 1982?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: I had the opportunity of working with the Nigerian Television Authority, where I had my NYSC as a programme producer at the NTNTPC, Victoria Island, Lagos, and I was actually being considered for a job. However, I had my younger brothers and sisters back at home, who I was afraid they might turn to other things if I was not close to them. I could not have been close to them in Lagos. The week after the NYSC, I took appointment with the Kwara State School Board in Ilorin after interaction with one Alhaji Omoyayi who asked me a few questions and he said he was interested in me. He said he was going to employ three people. He said he would put one in Okene, Abdulaziz Atta College. He would put the other person in Lokoja, and he would put me in Idofian Grammar School on his own. When I got to Idofian, the Principal of the school, Mr. N. A. Onishola was baffled and asked how I got the offer as they were not employing then. He insisted I had to be living beside him and I moved to a quarter beside his. However, later the NYSC ordered we could not take a permanent job offer in July that it has to be a month after and we were first disengaged to be re-engaged on 1st August, and not July that the letter initially read.

Meanwhile, I thought teaching at the secondary school level would give me the opportunity to prepare not only my siblings but help other people in the school. It really paid off because, about four years ago when the school, Idofian Grammar School celebrated her 50th year anniversary, I possibly was the only teacher invited for an honorary award. I think they concluded my stay there was impactful on the school. So, I thought I would be more useful to humanity teaching than being a broadcaster or something. Even though I had the opportunity to stay with the NTA with Mr Jide Awoniyi from Oro Ago who was a relation and a very senior staff in Engineering department, I declined. In fact, he was visibly angry when I declared I would be returning to my lovely Kwara State but I apologised to him. As a teacher, I was able to farm and I enjoyed my hobbies, including hunting. I had a large farm. I was able to maintain a number of people who are very successful today. I was able to feed all of them. I was able to care for my families, the nuclear and extended. At the same time, I was able to educate myself. I was in Idofian Grammar School under then Kwara State School Board, when I pursued the PGDE programme. Contributions of scholars like the late Professor S. O. Daramola, our indefatigable Professor A. Y. Abdukareem, who taught me aspects of Statistics with Professor Durosaro, and a few other people passionately encouraged me to further pursue a career in Education. After the PGDE, I opted for the Master's degree programme that year, 1986, which was the year, I think, the late sage Chief Obafemi Awolowo died.

I was in the M.Ed. English Language Education programme with one of my very good friend, Professor Demola Jolayemi. We were under the same supervisor on the Master's programme, the distinguished Professor AGAS Oladosu. Great scholars like Professor R. A. Lawal and Dr Noel Ihebuzor taught us. Professor Lawal had encounters with me on the M.Ed. programme and more powerfully on the Ph.D. programme. He has been my mentor. So, the interactions I had later with the people that led me to what I am today starting from the Kwara State Schools Management Board. In fact, the contributions of the Kwara State Government to my development is well acknowledged.

Interviewer: Sir, what were the defining moments of your career as a teacher and academic up to the University of Ilorin?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: My service under the Kwara State Schools Management Board prepared me for general interactions with people through my teaching of English language and Literature at the secondary school. I left that level for the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, where I served in different capacities and I had the fortune of serving under great people, like Dr. J. Y. Bello and Dr. Toyin Akanbi. I was given a lot of latitude to develop at the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin. I enjoyed my stay there. The College really fired my scholarly inspiration for teaching, research and community service. The secondary school and the College systems prepared me for the height I attained today, apart from the universities that I attended: University of Ibadan and the great University of Ilorin.

Interviewer: As a mentor to many at postgraduate level, what principles guide your professional style?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: My principle draws mainly from Biology because I am in the humanities. There is something we call symbiosis in Biology, which is take from me and I give to you. So, I have always believed it is just an opportunity that I happen to be everybody's supervisor. God, ultimately, is the greatest supervisor and that knowledge does not reside with me alone. That I can also learn from my students and that I have nothing to impose on my students are at the centre of what governs my actions. I just want us to grow together as we do things. I feel the principle of symbiosis also entails mutual respect for each other. I believe that in learning, the learner-centred curriculum is not ideal for me. The teacher-centred curriculum is even worse. Mine is that curriculum should be learning-centred, so that the teacher learns from the student, the student learns from the teacher and the concept of knowledge is ever there and progressing.

Interviewer: Kabiyesi, Sir, among your research interests, such as reading and literacy, mother tongue education and English syntax, which do you find most impactful and why?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: The one I find most impactful is the 2010 publication that has to do with establishing a link between reading and writing, which implies that listening and speaking are involved. Practically, when you write, it is like you are speaking. The person who is reading is listening to you. You are talking as the text is talking to the reader. So, it is like a conflux of the language skills. This thought has gained global concurrence and widely cited. This is followed by another study on the mother tongue. That one on the mother tongue has also been found to be very interesting. I find it quite illuminating for me as a scholar of language, feeling that there is a place for the mother tongue for English language teaching and mastery to succeed. By implication, if Africa wants to make any progress at all, it should overhaul the curriculum to be sensitive to native language intervention.

Interviewer: What do you see as the future of applied linguistics in Nigeria and Africa?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: The future of Applied Linguistics in Nigeria and Africa is promising. The future is bright because more and more African languages are getting exposed and the foreign languages that are proud that they are dominating are losing their facilities because they are looking more and more like African languages. African languages accommodate English more and more but with some damage to English phonology, even semantics and, if you like, pragmatics. It is heartwarming to note that African languages are getting stronger. They are making waves and that's why when you get to other parts of the world, outside Africa, people are becoming more and more interested in African languages. Even foreigners are finding duties in African languages. These foreign languages have been vehicles for teaching African languages and in the process, the way English is written, the way it is presented to the whole world, and the way it is used locally are becoming weakened. Even though it has almost the largest amount of absolute globalisation matrix, English is losing its original quality, original identity. And that's why today you talk of even Nigerian Englishes. All this is due to the enriched scholarship in language and the applied linguistics generally.

Interviewer: So interesting! How has your work as a resource person to governments, United Nations agencies, and publishers influenced language policy or education?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: It is really difficult for one to say because when you see your idea reflected in a particular situation, what you call your idea is not actually your idea because your idea stems from other people's ideas through what we call research. Research means going through what other people have gone through before. So, anything I see that looks like my thoughts, I always realise it is not entirely mine, I mean, my thought alone. So, if I am cited and recited, I feel elated. If I am not cited but I find out that thoughts written are similar and they echo my thoughts, I equally feel elated. And that is what we call scholarship. It is difficult to find anybody's own thoughts dominating any policy. Such domination is difficult because the policy you see is not actually anybody's policy. It is government's policy. It is what government wants people to do, that they will do. In Language Education, in Physics Education, in Linguistics, even in Physics Studies, it is what the government wants people to study or to preach that gets done. If you do not preach it, then you are not doing a good job. That was why somebody like Efere (1971/72) talks about the pedagogy of the oppressed. Yes, pedagogy of the oppressed is a kind of education that does not allow individuals to do exactly what they want to do.

If government is not moderating, then education will be lawless. It will have lawless products. Or its products will go to the extreme. We know it has produced individuals like Bill Gates. The formal school system did not view him as somebody who was competent enough. He dropped out of Harvard University, maybe at 200 level, but he became the richest person at the moment in the world. So, that means he did not run well in the curriculum. He desired a goal to promote society.

Special education is not for those who have disabilities alone. Those who are well endowed, gifted, those that fall to the extreme right of the intelligence curve also need special attention. And if curriculum is not fast or sensitive enough, it won't take care of them. The question is how much does the language curriculum take care of them in education? Those who fall on the extreme left, how much do the language and curriculum planners take care of them for the purpose of acquiring functional education? So, the majority are at the centre. It is easy to really

interact with those people and get them to fall along the line. However, those who are at the extreme may see what the government has not seen.

Interviewer: Sir, how did you balance academic responsibility with administrative roles like when you served as a Deputy Director, a Head of Department and now as a royal father?
Prof. S. B. Olajide: Since my secondary school days, I have been involved in administration. I attended Oke-Ode Grammar School (1972-1978), and I was fortunate to be the Head Boy of my set. The school emphasised family thinking and hard work, and it has worked very well such that my set has produced at least five or six professors as we speak. There are others who have made it in business, the core civil service, etc. and we remain as family till today. The proprietor of K-Domes, Architect Kamal Audu was my classmate, Professor Rotimi Ogidan, who headed the Open University Education Council of Africa, was my classmate, amongst several others. Wherever I served, whether as a member of the University of Ilorin Bulletin, whether as an acting Head, Department in Arts and Social Sciences Education up to the time I emerged as a royal father, I believed in integrative leadership. I donot care about your religion. I donot care what your tribe is. What has always mattered to me is that you are a human being and I always want to reflect on good goals. I do not subscribe to the idea of wanting to work against the authorities because it is God who chooses the leadership. Once you are a leader, you have a leader above you as God is the ultimate leader. So, if somebody is above you at work, you have to support them, pray for them, and do your own bit to promote what will make them succeed.

Interviewer: What lesson did you learn from serving as National Secretary of the University of Ilorin Alumni Association?
Prof. S. B. Olajide: Ah! That gave me the opportunity to see the greatness and affirm the greatness of the University of Ilorin. There was a thesis study that involved Professor Durosaro, Professor Yahaya, and my humble self. It took us around the country. We spent almost twenty-three or twenty-five days doing the work. We were well commended by the University of Ilorin. It exposed me to the greatness of the products of the University of Ilorin across the world.

As at 2005 when we carried out the study, there was one Olushola Adeyeye, a 1991 first-class graduate of Physics who was pronounced as one of the best 100 researchers in the world! When we got to Shell, an oil company in Port Harcourt, we met one Orson Olorunishola who was the head of Shells. So many great men. My membership of the University of Ilorin Alumni Association and as National Secretary was really an expose. Undoubtedly, it is a University of the future that is very lucky to have good leaders all the way. Look at JAMB in 2026, the waves it is making, the one making it possible is God Almighty but using our own product; Professor Ishaq Oloyede, and so many silent achievers like Professor Ambali and others. We thank God with my little experience in the University of Ilorin, I believe it has made me a more complete individual. It has helped me to function as a royal father because I believe I should pursue and project the ideals of my great University.

Interviewer: Does being the *Òlolà* of Ollà Kingdom complement or contrast with your academic life?
Prof. S. B. Olajide: It really complements rather than contrasts. It complements because all that you learn in the classroom, all that you teach and all that you do through research are humanity-based. The leadership at the local level and the royal leadership at this level give me the opportunity to apply the gamut of experiences I have had, including from the pages of texts, from research, interactions, all of which centre on humanity. In sum, this is where I am able to show that I have education. I have been lucky to attend great universities like Ibadan and Ilorin, and raised well by a set of dedicated secondary school teachers at Oke-Ode Grammar School. It is a way of bringing gown to town, which is the goal of the university education.

Interviewer: Sir, what legacy do you hope to leave for students, colleagues, and the academic community?
Prof. S. B. Olajide: The legacy I would like to leave is dedication to duties. Whatever duty you are assigned, be dedicated to it. I spent much of my time pursuing scholarship at different levels. When I was at Idofian Grammar School, I had the opportunity to pursue hunting. I was a very good hunter. I was given a leadership title in the world of hunting in my community back

then, aside from the fact that I was a good farmer, but I never allowed those accomplishments to deter my pursuance of education. My father didnot go to school formally. Though he was initially put in school by the white men, he was withdrawn because my grandmother felt it was not good enough for his son to be working for somebody else without having time to work for the family. My father once said, "Oh! You are doing so well in school. You must go to school. You must be like Dr P. O. A. Dada who was the first person to earn a Ph.D. in History in the whole of Northern Region. He is from Oro Ago here. I know you can be like Dada". And that was it. The day I got my Ph.D., I went home weeping. I wished my father were alive. I later asked myself, "If somebody who didn't go to school would insist I get a Ph.D., why shouldn't I get professorship?" That was the day I said, I will make sure I get professorship, and that was why I left the Kwara State College of Education, the beautiful College of Education, Ilorin for the University of Ilorin. When I got to the University of Ilorin, on paper, it seemed disadvantageous because I happened to be placed on a grade that I thought was lower than my financial status at the College. But then again, I knew the university had greater opportunities than the College, so I came. It has been wonderful going through these journeys.

Interviewer: Could you share a memorable anecdote or moment with a mentee that demonstrates your mentoring philosophy?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: Yes, maybe one day on my Master programme, I had just started working on my dissertation. So the first encounter was a file submission that I made to Professor AGAS. Oladosu. He was a great man, very calm and gentle. He took the file and went through it. I got back to him days later. He beckoned me to sit and asked, "You are Billy?" I said, "Yes". He said, "For the first time in a long while, I have just encountered a fine prose". That excited me. That further spurred me to work very hard. So, I enjoyed his supervision. Professor Abe was my Ph.D. supervisor. He equally did very well as my supervisor. Professor Bayo Lawal was also there for me. He did much of the work. So, I have enjoyed very good mentorship all the way. I thank them all.

Interviewer: What area of Language Education research do you believe requires urgent attention today?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: Today, Language Education and Applied Linguistics research should pay more attention to integrating technologies into Language Education.

Interviewer: As you bow out of the academia, what are your future plans for scholarship and service to the community?

Prof. S. B. Olajide: I am praying that I should remain committed to research in Language Education. It might be a little difficult because when you retire, I do not know whether retired professors have access to funding because those who are already in service have not enjoyed enough. All the same, I will continue to be involved in research, collaborating with my ex-students. For service to the community, the royal status is a significant and unique call to service because it is a different challenging world and there is enough to learn there. No matter how well you wish to be there, you cannot be there forever and better people will come after you. So, for leadership, I will continue with service.

One of my happiest moments was when one of my students, I have quite a number of them, Rasaq Ayodeji Iliyas was elevated to the rank of full Professor at the University of Abuja. I was so excited to receive the news because that was the cap on my achievement as a teacher and researcher. I had same feeling when Mrs Tunde-Awe had her elevation to the professorial rank. So, I will continue to collaborate with my students and many of them are fine scholars already making palpable impacts in the world of academics and beyond. I will continue to collaborate with them in research engagements.

Interviewer: We appreciate your time and insight which will be valuable in celebrating your academic journey and guiding future scholars. Thank you so much, Sir.

Prof. S. B. Olajide: You are welcome.

BLINDSPOTS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT
Blindspots in language and literature education are considered as some neglects of fundamental aspects in the curriculum content and pedagogy in teaching and learning experiences. This paper focuses on blind spots in language and literature education. They are things that need drawing the attention of "language and literature experts" in order to address them. The following questions for discussions are considered in this paper: What is vision? What is blind spot? What are blind spots in language and literature education? Why do blind spots occur in language and literature education? What are the challenges and strategies of exploring potential blind spots in language and literature education? How do we create platforms for innovation to improve and expand our collective field of vision to bring about adjacent possibilities in language and literature education? Theoretical and empirical language and literature curriculum studies by experts are extensively reviewed to identify missing gaps or blind spots in language and literature education. Beside this, the experience of the author as a teacher and researcher of language and literature education for more than three decades also counts. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate insightful discussion and individual or group re-actions that will lead to seeing and imagining adjacent possibilities in language and literature education blind spots.
Keywords: Blindspots, Communication, Innovation, Teaching, Skills

Introduction
Long time ago, according to Hutmacher (2019), Aristotle ranked sight (vision) first among the five senses. However, since the evolution of man, human beings obviously have physiologic blindspots in each eye where the optic nerve meets the retina, resulting in our inability to see behind us. Our field of vision spans only 210 degrees in front of us, leaving us unable to see the remaining 150 degrees behind us unless we turn our heads or see through the eyes of others. What we perceive is further limited by our attention. Even when we have an overwhelming amount of visual information before us, yet we can only truly "see" and focus our attention at one thing at a time. While each individual has blindspots, groups can share blindspots that limit expectation and innovation or even systematically disadvantage certain other groups (Luft & Ingham, 1961). We can notice more of what is in our field of view, but it takes time and effort to do so. The point is that, we can be collectively blind as well particularly if we are all looking in the same direction and ignoring what is behind us, or not exploring what may be in the dark.

We can also envision more possibilities through reflections of the past to link the present and connect the future. Transforming language and literature education requires more than merely seeing what is around us today with clear vision; we must also imagine with a spirit of creativity what the future holds for us. Our current computer and digital world could not have been imagined 70 years ago but someone expanded the vision to see and imagine the "adjacent possible".

For instance, in 2023 the National Universities Commission (NUC) re-defined the vision of which the Nigerian universities should follow in order to attain our educational goals of making university education in Nigeria more responsive to the needs of the society and meeting global standards and international best practices towards preparing for relevance in the fourth revolution world economy today and in the future. It therefore re-designed and organised new curricular to equip graduates with skills, knowledge and core character values that are locally, nationally and globally relevant and acceptable. The statement of such vision is revealed through the philosophy and objectives, goals, curriculum contents, methods of teaching, feedback and evaluation mechanisms for possible periodical review or reform. In the English Language, vision has been the subject of popular aphorisms from "seeing is believing" to "I can't believe my eyes," and the subject of a disproportionate amount of scientific research (Hutmacher, 2019). This implies that there are blind spots that every scholar experiences in every discipline. If we accept this, it follows that those involved in language and literature education scholarship and practice experience them too.

In other words, a blind spot is conceptualised as what others can see or know about you but you do not see or know about yourself. For example, in Oedipus Rex, Oedipus, the title character kills his father and marries his mother. Because Oedipus is blind to his own identity, he is blind to his crimes - he even volunteers to hunt down the criminal. He summons someone to come in and help him shed light on the mystery. Blind spots in language and literature education are just like what happens in the literary illustration. They include some aspects of neglects or limitations creating gaps in knowledge and skills acquisition in the curriculum content and pedagogy or wrong applications of theory and/or practicing professional teachers disconnecting with current research in their fields. The term "blind spot" is now also commonly used to refer to the unexamined beliefs, assumptions or biases of an individual or group. Titles from many popularresearch topics and titles from popular journals, books and other media have referred to blind spots that cause individuals to give inadequate attention to fundamentals of language and literature content areas and right pedagogy or to make poor decisions in the class, at work or in business.

Without changing direction or seeking help from other language and literature education experts, this can perpetuate inequities, especially when such blind spots are unacknowledged by a good number of language and literature education experts or learners.

While being an expert in our subject helps us retain and explain specific topics, it can also distance us from our students who are often experiencing our content and pedagogical styles for the first time with diverse experiences and judgements. Judging from research activities, experts' blind spots have become serious research investigations not only in language and literature education, but also in all other disciplines.

Language and Literature Education

Language is a means of communication. It is central to all we do in schools, including teaching, learning, understanding and communicating at all levels of our educational system. While teachers may be experts in pedagogy and particular language content areas (phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics), there is need to build awareness of linguistic blind spots. In other words, teachers interested in helping their students learn the content deeply will need to carefully consider the effectiveness of language and communication skills as well as the constructivist pedagogy needed to teach and assess the curriculum content. Oracy (listening and speaking) and literacy (reading and writing) skills are the fundamentals of effective communication. Out of these language skills, listening is most considered as a neglected language skill because a good number of teachers themselves lack listening training skills during their pre-service programme. Writing is also affected. Most literature on language and literature research shows that the root problem of writing is that teachers themselves have little training on how to teach writing and are often weak or unconfident writers themselves. In fact, grammar is often most focused and even in teaching grammar, many teachers do not do things right. Although focusing on the fundamentals of grammar in writing is a process-writing approach to teaching writing but grammar by no means should not be the predominant one. Many teachers are great readers but when you ask most of them about their comfort with writing and their writing experiences, they do not do very much or feel comfortable with it.

The need to be more sensitive to language has never been greater as language challenges that people are facing in the digital literacy and language manipulating world today. Text messages (immediacy demands of interactive typing and responsive reading) and conversations have almost overtaken conventional reading and writing in our society. The students' attitudes towards reading and writing cultures are very low nowadays. For example, people used to write letters and so they were more concerned with what their actual writing looked like.

The immediacy of our communication today causes people to write more speedily, focusing less on punctuation and grammar, which spirit or practice has crept into academic activities and professional writing as well. Writing skill which comes from reading good works, and writing itself is more negatively affected on digital media. Many language teachers can share their observations that many students who can produce reams of text on their cellphones are unable to work effectively at a laptop or even in a paper notebook because they have become so anchored to the smartphone which almost requires writers to eschew rules of grammar and punctuation, exactly the opposite of what is wanted on the page. Nonetheless, often we do not stop to critically consider these oracy and literacy skills in language and literature education curriculum and how they might deter or promote student critical and creative learning and achievement at school where students actively and interactively use language to develop and deepen content understandings to achieve educational goals within and outside the school system.

Despite far-reaching changes in the English curriculum content and pedagogy along with serious critiques of traditional premises of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) developments, there are serious blind spots in language and literature education to pay serious attention to and address accordingly. Literature has been integrated into language curriculum since the early 20th century. The use of literature was considered worthy of concern when the Grammar-Translation Method enjoyed its popularity in language instruction ((Richards & Rogers, 2001). The core courses of language and literature education deal with language and literary works, providing a theoretical background but also including more practical components of pedagogy.

Reading and analysing literature are designed to help students develop reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, creative skills and critical thinking skills. Literature was once the major teaching tool in the language classroom to master vocabulary and grammatical structures (Richards & Rogers, 2001). However, in the 1960s and 1970s the Grammar Translation Method was viewed as un-prestigious in language learning; thus, literature was excluded from language curriculum. In particular with the onset of communicative language teaching, the use of literature in language learning was downgraded and the emphasis was placed on the development of reading and writing and implication was that listening and speaking skills were neglected (Richards & Rogers, 2001). It goes without saying that the attainment of communicative competence relies on the use of language four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) competently. However, the inclusion of literature in language teaching in the 1970s resulted rather insufficient since it had little functional application. However, literature once again in the late 1970s and 1980s came into prominence and played a preeminent role at all levels of language learning (Richards & Rogers, 2001).

After a long contentious debate, literature today is welcome at all levels in the language classroom because it has been found conducive to language learning (Amuseghan, 2007; 2015). The use of literary texts is suitable in the language classroom because it can enrich vocabulary, promote reading proficiency, develop language acquisition and enhance language skills. Vocabulary is central to language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary, students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Many research reports show that most learners identify the acquisition of vocabulary as their greatest single source of problems. Many researchers have attempted to investigate this neglect but the results leave many with a number of questions which have not been investigated in any depth. The implication is that research in vocabulary acquisition at the beginning has been largely atheoretical and unsystematic.

There are still no clear theories of vocabulary acquisition and this is affecting vocabulary instruction in our schools. At the secondary school level in Nigeria where vocabulary is assumed to be taught at all, it is done only during coaching or preparation for examinations to create awareness of “Lexis and Structure and Register” Sections in the external examinations. Textbooks on objective questions and answers are practised in the classroom without vocabulary instruction or teaching techniques. This gap is reported in Linguistic research journals and books. The apparent neglect of vocabulary instruction has become a great concern to researchers and language teachers who are showing outpouring interests in searching for different approaches, strategies and techniques of vocabulary instruction in the recent times. Despite this development, many teachers still neglect vocabulary instruction or demonstrate lack of interest in research-based vocabulary instructions or strategies. In most vocabulary instruction cases, many teachers fail to provide teaching technique opportunities such as contextualisation, collocation, the use of vocabulary network and dictionaries, homonym, polysemy, hyponym, antonym, and synonym in the vocabulary instruction.

Vocabulary consists of the words we can speak aloud, words we can understand through hearing them said aloud, words we can understand when reading either silently or aloud, and words we can make use in writing to communicate. This assertion places vocabulary very important in language and communication. Vocabulary development through Literature as a subject (prose, drama and poetry) is more seriously affected at the junior secondary schools. The integration of English Language with Literature as one subject and tagged 'English Studies' at the junior secondary level does not provide the teachers with proper opportunities to teach Literature exhaustively, as most teachers use all the available periods for grammatical rules.

Undoubtedly, this development is affecting students' communicative competence because they are not exposed to varieties of styles in language usages, vocabularies and expressions in literary genres – prose, drama and poetry. The available English Language textbooks only provide few reading exercises on literary works as summary and comprehension passages for the sake of normal reading comprehension lessons. The students are, therefore, missing the Literature educational goals of appreciating the language of literary works as well as gaining practical communicative skills through stories, drama, music, dancing, chanting, recitation of poems, and others.**Blind Spots in Language and Literature Education**

Truly, effective teaching centres on sharing knowledge enthusiastically and confidently between the instructor and the learners in a conducive teaching and learning situation. However, instructors sometimes get so enthusiastic about conveying knowledge that they skip foundational technical aspects of language in phonology (particularly, use of stress and intonation, neglect of listening training skills), morphology (vocabulary), syntax (grammar), semantics (meaning) and pragmatics or linguistic stylistics employed in analysing literary genres – prose, drama and poetry, leaving students feeling frustrated or behind. When students develop the ability to communicate with language, they are developing all these areas – phonology, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Navigating an expert blind spot can be a challenge for both novice and experienced language and literature educators, but doing so thoughtfully can result in stronger lessons for your course and a higher student success rate. The truth must be said. When a lecturer designs a course outline to cover what are expected to be taught and does not cover all but set questions to cover all of them, the “uncovered aspects” constitute blind spots to students and the consequences may be that students commit one form or the other examination misconducts by copying each other during examinations, bringing “scraps” to examination halls, leading to receiving various relevant punishments as prescribed in the student handbook published and circulated by the school authorities.

What defines humans' humanity is language, which is the foremost cultural identity of any ethnic group. Indeed, people preserve their culture and tradition by promoting their indigenous languages. The colonial masters came and discouraged the use of our indigenous Nigerian languages by labelling them “vernaculars” prohibited in Nigerian schools with a fine for the breaking the “imposed law.”

After gaining Independence, Nigerian teachers still continue to enforce the law. Backed up with Nigerian elite's preference for English as the official language of communication, the learning, teaching and use of many indigenous Nigerian languages in Nigeria are almost extinct. This colonial mentality has dire cultural consequences for the country because as our indigenous languages face extinction, so are other aspects of our cultures, including history, traditions and values. One of the ominous signs of danger of our traditions and cultures today is the incremental loss of our rich arts forms, particular in music, dance and fashion as our youths have taken to the western genre, threatening our cultural identity as African people. This constitutes a serious blindspot in our cultural values that are disappearing (endangered) and some completely wiped out (gone into extinction), and many are devalued (receding).

Recently, there was a privilege of observing a chatting group of language and literature teachers about a common instructors' blind spots that students tend to struggle with: problem-solving. The group shared with one another how they strategically identified and addressed the challenges in their classrooms. The conversation inspired some inclusion of information in this paper and exactly that was an excellent demonstration of passionate educators collaboratively navigating their own expert blind spots just like what this Conference is aimed to achieve. Some teachers pride themselves too much on their subject expertise – but sometimes this can hinder lesson delivery if the experts fail to critically consider the background knowledge of a newly admitted class of students in an introductory undergraduate class in either language or literature. Some language experts might go too technical above the level of the class or too simplistic below their level or skipping some fundamental foundational aspects with the wrong perceptions or assumptions or showing biases that students would have had much more previous knowledge about the topic or subject in their previous schools – this is taking things for granted. This will definitely constitute a blind spot for students to be struggling to resolve.

Again, blind spots in language and literature education can be thought of as issues or ideas that are not seen or not receiving enough attention. Individuals can have blind spots. Evidence suggests that many are blind to, or unfamiliar with the research being accrued in language and literature education (Horsley, et al., 2020). Someone's vision may also be obscured when they are too close to something; stepping back may be needed to refocus and obtain perspective. Trying to see one's implicit biases, which can profoundly influence how they see the global language and communication of educational needs, make decisions and render judgements, often requires efforts and may be accompanied by discomfort when seeking to reduce their negative influences (Sukhera et al., 2020).

Kachru (1994), for example, argued that known facts about bilinguals' use of language had not been taken into account in SLA research and that the explanation for this phenomenon lies in a pronounced monolingual bias among Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers. Nigerian indigenous language teachers today are often labelled “acting white” (trying to be western) because English is predominant in their indigenous language teaching, for example, while teaching Yoruba or Igbo as a subject to native speakers, “acting white teachers” speak more English than Yoruba or Igbo in the class. This development causes psychological implications and demotivates the student from learning his or her indigenous language.

Apart from a Translation Class, acting to be “white” (blind spot) in teaching indigenous languages could lead to language loss. Again, the mentality of targeting native British or American accents or standards may be considered an unrealistic approach or a misconception of SLA theory and principles. While many blind spots among individuals and groups can be due to a failure, neglect, assumption, bias, lack of attention on some specific areas in language and literature education, many researchers have found blindspots in theories, methods or approaches in teaching English and learning English as a second language, which are commonly reported in language and literature education journals and other media (Wyatt et al., 2021). The uncontrollable postings and “unedited internet language reading materials” from “the-so-called-language-expert-websites or bloggers” are confusing to some language teachers. These self-acclaimed language experts, who post unverified language materials on daily basis, may blind spot the expertise of some SLA professional teachers and confuse them under the cover of “research findings.”

The mentality of “Straight-to-English” policy in Nigerian private schools right from kindergarten/ nursery, primary and secondary schools just to make their pupils speak like the native speakers or acquire Queen's English or speak like British or American native English speakers is nothing but a mirage! The biases and assumptions of this group of schools that are so-called “International Schools” have defiled all known and popular theories, principles and practices of MT or L1, L2 and FL and expectations which identify language and literature with culture and environment. The elite sponsored national language policies in Nigeria also constitute a blind spot in promoting English over Nigerian indigenous languages as well as failure of the government to enforce some fundamental indigenous language policies. We envisage that actively participating in this Conference through robust discussions on all the relevant streams of “Blind spots on Language and Literature Education” can provide a useful approach to advancing meaningful pragmatic change in language and literature education at all levels of our educational system.

Why should We Look for Blindspots in Language and Literature Education?

Evidence from the neurosciences indicates that our frames of reference determine what we are capable of seeing and thinking and subsequently the new ideas that can be pursued. Collectively and systematically looking for blind spots offers a new metaphor and a framing that centres on the innate flaws that each of us has; thinking in this way may make it easier to acknowledge a variety of blindspots that require more attention. This could further help us recognise complexity, achieve inclusion from all stakeholders and bring coherence to disparate conversations with respect to reform in language and literature education. One contemporary example of where a frame shift that incorporates the idea of blindspots could be helpful is the problem of language and curriculum content and pedagogy inequities. Unquestionably, we all have a role to play in reducing blindspots in language and literature education. Reforming longstanding blind spots that have become stereotypes may not be easy or happen quickly. Our starting point would become trying to see our own blind spots by inviting the perspectives of those who think differently rather than defending our stance or putting others on the defensive. "Complexifying" in this way could increase collective learning and facilitate cooperation (Grant, 2021). An awareness that blind spots may decrease expertise deficit and promote language and literature effective teaching and learning.

Not only might it be useful to reframe certain problems as being the result of blind spots, as language and literature education scholars, we are part of a tradition where we should be the first to examine our own blind spots. For example, definitions of scholarly inquiry require critical reflection on one's work to point out its limitations. Currently, however, drawing attention to potential weaknesses is disincentivized as the pressure to publish remains and there is growing acceptance of promoting one's "brand" (Borman-Shoap et al., 2019). The peer review process is intended to illuminate blind spots not seen by those closest to an output, although reviewers themselves are likely to have blind spots. Peer reviewers placed into a position of authority, for example, may have difficulty acknowledging their lack of familiarity with a methodology or subject matter. For instance, at a public lecture some time ago, a professor of Geography (specialising in GIS) cited a decline case of a request from a federal university (after the package had been sent to him) to review a reader (specializing in Transport Management) for full professorial appointment on the basis of lack of competence to do so despite the fact that the assignment would attract a good financial reward. The fact remains that recognizing appropriately the blind spots that inevitably limit our scholarship performance and doing things right will strengthen it and the trust placed on it by others.

Challenges and Strategies of Exploring Potential Blindspots in Language and Literature Education

As defined in Mitchell Nathan's, Kenneth Koedinger's, and Martha Alibali's (2001) study, an expert blindspot is "the inability to perceive the difficulties that novices will experience as they approach a new domain of knowledge." While being an expert in our subject matter helps us retain and explain specific topics, it can also distance us from our students who are often experiencing our content for the first time with diverse experiences and judgements. Exploring potential blind spots in your course content can be a challenge; if you are unsure of where to start, consider some of the following strategies:

a) Think through what students typically struggle with. Is there a particular assignment that students consistently score low on? A trend in your end-of-semester feedback? What questions do you find yourself answering again and again? These student struggles can be an indicator of a missed step, lapse in important connections, or underestimation of time to completion.

Explore pedagogical literature specific to your field. What pedagogical topics are being written about in your field? Does your discipline focus heavily on primary source analysis, oracy skill, literacy skill, vocabulary, prose literature, dramatic literature, poetic literature, orature, mother tongue education, second language education, visual literacy, critical reading, or writing? What researches have other scholars done to work with students on ?

a) These crucial language and literature education? If you are unsure of where to start, you may consider consulting appropriate relevant journals in your discipline to be current with facts and the latest research findings.

b) Enlist the help of an advanced novice. Advanced novices are those with knowledge of your field, but who may be closer to the earlier stages of learning. This can include undergraduate teaching assistants, graduate students, or someone in an adjacent field. Advanced novices can help you pinpoint challenging areas of your topic and provide suggestions on clear instruction. Self-evaluation, course exposition, external examiners' reports and students' feedback are also useful evaluation mechanisms to identify blind spots and pay attention to them for improved quality assurance in language and literature education programmes.

Seeing and Imagining Adjacent Possibilities

In Steven Johnson's book, "Where Good Ideas Come From" (Johnson, 2011), the author describes core principles that result in the generation of "good ideas." One principle is that innovative ideas occur in the realm of the "adjacent possible," a concept first defined by theoretical biologist Stuart Kauffman (2000) that refers to a future state near enough to be conceptualized but not so distant as to be unimaginable. As we actively solicit diverse points of view to identify blind spots, we will inevitably create platforms for innovation to improve and expand our collective field of vision to bring to light more possibilities. The unifying principle is to ask others for help in seeing our blind spots. Asking for help is an act of expertise reviewers' best practices to enhance quality achievement. Trying to see blind spots through the eyes of others create opportunities to stop making the same mistakes and to advance. When each of us acknowledges that we are prone to ignoring our own blind spots and adopts a practice of valuing the perspectives of others, we may develop a culture in which seeking out and scrutinizing blind spots is routine.

Along this path, it is imperative that we examine our own blind spots and carefully listen to other views by inviting feedback or new ideas from other experts involved in our daily practice, including learners and faculty members. We must make sure that language and literature education experts do actively and meaningfully participate on a regular basis to discuss how to move language and literature education forward. We must encourage learners and teachers to come together to weigh in on the future directions that language and literature education should take. Bringing together from other relevant disciplines in ways that are meaningful and constructive could not only remove biases, but help us generate more creativity (Galinsky et al., 2015), see more "adjacent possibilities" and select the right content and constructivist pedagogy to pursue innovation.

Platforms for innovation within and across institutions can also be developed to generate "good ideas." Interactions can be facilitated synchronously, such as through "unconferences" (Ross et al., 2020), in which a group first gathers around a shared interest, then collectively creates and proceeds through an agenda. These can also be conducted asynchronously, such as through social media or crowdsourcing platforms. As more of language and literature education's experts or stakeholders participate in identifying blind spots, they can also develop a core set of principles that may encourage research collaboration leading to a meaningful reform.

I, therefore, raise a "wake-up call" for training teachers in process-oriented literacy and oracy language and literature education strategies for language curriculum development, innovation and implementation in Nigeria. We can start with "Writing Project Workshop" and use the workshop to reinforce grammar by asking students to read a literary work and copy down some sentences from a favorite book and then discuss how the author uses a tool like punctuation marks or tenses.

Conclusion

Language and literature education blind spots are impediments to seeing and imagining quantity and quality language curriculum content and constructivist pedagogy to achieve the educational set goals of language and literature. Awareness of individual and collective blind spots in language and literature education can provide a useful approach to advancing meaningful pragmatic reform in language and literature education at all levels of our educational system. For language and literature education to attend to its blind spots, there needs to be increased participation among all stakeholders and a commitment to acknowledge them for remediations. Ultimately, the better we can see blind spots and imagine new possibilities, the more we will be able to adapt, innovate and reform language and literature education. To prepare and sustain language and literature experts and encourage scholarship in language and education that will serve society's needs and develop individuals' potentials attention must be drawn to blind spots in language and literation education. In contrary, any nation that makes language and literature education policies in favour of foreign languages and cultures, and promote them over and above its indigenous ones is driving its peoples' socio-cultural identities from blind spot to "dead spot" – extinction. The resultant effect will be for such nation to remain dependent for everything foreign.

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THE SCREEN AND THE SYLLABUS: HOME VIDEO INFLUENCE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ILORIN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of home video viewing on the academic performance and English language proficiency of secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The research was motivated by national concerns over consistent student failure in public examinations, particularly in English language. Using a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 340 students, evenly divided between public and private secondary schools. Data was collected using a 20-item questionnaire with a four-point Likert scale, and analysed using frequency tables, percentages, a t-test and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicate that most students consider English to be their best subject and believe their English teachers' methods are satisfactory. However, a significant number of students reported watching home videos while doing their assignments. The study revealed no significant difference in the English language performance of students from public versus private schools based on the influence of home videos. However, it found a significant relationship between video access, parental reaction and the purpose of watching, on students' academic performance and proficiency in English based on gender. The research concludes that while home videos can be a source of educational enlightenment, excessive and unsupervised viewing, especially of uneducative content, negatively impacts academic performance by displacing time for schoolwork. The study recommends that parents, educators and students collaborate to promote the viewing of educative videos and enforce time restrictions to improve academic outcomes.

Keywords: VideoViewing, Performance, Proficiency, Screen, Writing

Introduction

Students in every modern society are exposed to the screen and the syllabus for development. Through the screen, the film industry in Nigeria, colloquially known as Nollywood, has grown into one of the largest film-producing industries in the world. It had an estimated turnover that increased from about 2.5 million in 1994 to 3.4 million in 1999 (Larkin, 2006). Nollywood films are significant forms of entertainment, information and education (Anyagu, 2024) but with the influx of diverse themes into the market, there are concerns about their potential adverse effects on the morals and academic performance of children. Nollywood's financial performance has shown remarkable growth in recent years, with box office revenues indicating a strong upward trajectory. In 2024, Nollywood films grossed over ₦3.5 billion in Nigerian cinemas, representing a 125% increase from the previous year (Nairametrics, 2024). By the first quarter of 2025 alone, box office revenues had already reached ₦3.48 billion, a 54.7% increase compared to the same period in 2024 (Nairametrics, 2025; Pulse, 2025).

Overall, the Nigerian box office—including Nollywood and international films—generated ₦11.5 billion in 2024, reflecting a 60% year-on-year growth (Vanguard, 2025; ThisDay, 2025). Beyond cinema, projections from PricewaterhouseCoopers' (PwC) Africa Entertainment and Media Outlook suggest that Nigeria's entertainment industry—driven largely by Nollywood—will generate about $14.82 billion (₦7.5 trillion) by 2025 (Premium Times, 2024; Forbes Africa, 2024). These figures underscore Nollywood's growing contribution to Nigeria's creative economy and highlight its increasing importance as both a cultural and economic force (Aondover & Aondover, 2023). Research indicates that children spend a significant amount of time watching television and movies, sometimes more than any other activity besides sleep. This exposure is a key influence on behaviour, as children often perceive what they see in home videos as acceptable cultural norms and may imitate the behaviours (Aondover & Aondover, 2023), whether positive or negative.

While home videos can be educative and a source of entertainment, they have also been associated with depicting violence, anti-social behaviours and may lead to negative traits like hostility. Critically, home videos can consume a child's time, potentially depriving them of concentration on schoolwork, assignments and domestic chores. In Nigeria, English is the official language and serves as the primary medium of instruction in schools. It is also a prerequisite for admission into higher institutions and for employment. However, there is great concern among parents, educators and the nation at large regarding the low performance of students in English language examinations (Ibrahim & Maude, 2022; Jerome, 2023).

A major challenge contributing to this poor performance is the widespread distraction caused by television and home video viewing among secondary school students. This concern is further compounded by the socio-economic situation, where many parents are busy with work and may not have time to monitor their children's activities, leading to neglect of homework and studies. Therefore, the study addressed this issue by investigating the influence of home videos on students' academic performance, specifically focusing on English language proficiency.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing prevalence of home videos with unscrutinised and unsupervised content has raised serious concerns about their impact on the behaviours and academic performance of Nigerian students. Reports of consistently high failure rates, especially in English Language, in public examinations, such as the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO) (Ibrahim & Maude, 2022), highlight a pervasive problem in the nation's education system. While some of the poor performance has been attributed to factors such as teacher motivation, school facilities and curriculum content (Jerome, 2023), the influence of modern entertainment media like home videos has not been thoroughly examined in this context.

The problem is multi-faceted because home videos are often filled with violence and immoral behaviours that may erode social values (Theophilus, 2023; Muttaqin et al., 2023). Unsupervised viewing takes valuable time away from academic activities, leading to attention deficit, behavioural issues and faltering academic abilities, particularly in areas like language comprehension and problem-solving. The depressed economy and parents' hectic lifestyles often result in a lack of parental supervision, leaving children to make their own decisions about how to spend their time as emphasised by Mukherjee (2022). This study therefore seeks to determine how home video viewing specifically influences academic performance in English language among secondary school students in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. It also aims to explore the comparative performance of students based on their gender and the type of school they attend (public or private).

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to determine the influence of home videos on students' academic performance in English language in some selected secondary schools in Ilorin, Kwara State. The specific objectives are to:

a. describe the socio-economic characteristics of the students in the selected schools.
b. Determine if there is a difference in the influence of home videos on the academic performance of students in English language based on gender.
c. Determine if there is a difference in the influence of home videos on the academic performance of students in English language based on school type (public or private).

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. Do home video contents have any influence on the students' academic performance in English language?
2. What is the influence of home video on students' academic performance in English language based on their gender?
3. What is the performance of students in English language based on the school type (Public and private schools)?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are tested in the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between students' academic performance in English Language based on their gender.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the performance of public and private secondary school students in English Language.

Literature Review

Home video is a pre-recorded medium sold or rented for home entertainment, a concept that originated during the Video Home System (VHS) and Betamax era and has since expanded to digital formats like Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), Blu-ray, and streaming services. A key characteristic of home videos as a medium is their capacity to inform, persuade, entertain and educate (Adaeze, 2024). Their functions include: informative/educative function - films are produced to present accurate and insightful information, contributing to the development of a good nation; cultural function - home videos document and preserve cultural consciousness, serving as a visual custodian of a people's traditions and history to prevent their erosion by civilisation; and entertainment function - they provide an escape from the monotony of daily life and offer a form of activity that holds the audience's attention and gives pleasure.

With the uncontrolled sales and rentals of films in Nigeria, children are increasingly exposed to home videos that can affect their morals, behaviour and academic performance. Research shows that by age 18, children spend more time watching television than on any other activity besides sleep (Oladunjoye, 2012).tested Home videos, as cultural instruments, influence attitudes and behaviours with adolescents often imitating what they see (Adaeze, 2024).

While videos may have positive or negative effects depending on content and parental control, studies show that violent and sexually explicit films encourage aggression, fear and anti-social behaviours such as sexual addiction (Adieza, 2004; Adesanya, 2004; Omojuwa, Timothy & Obiekezie, 2009). Pornographic films especially heighten sexual urges and distract from academics (Adesanya, 2004).

Television, a product of globalisation, has educational potential but often competes with academic work (Fehintola & Audu, 2012). Studies in the United States also show children spend more time-consuming media than on academic activities with negative implications for school performance (Shin, 2004; Burgess, Stermer & Burgess, 2012). Similarly, in Nigeria, economic hardship often leaves children unsupervised, fostering truancy and poor study habits (Sharif, Wills & Sergeant, 2010). Although films were originally intended to inspire, motivate and educate, most Nigerian home videos lack educational value and may negatively affect students' academic performance. Nonetheless, films still remain powerful tools for entertainment, information and cultural influence (Omojuwa, et al., 2009).

English serves as the official and dominant language in Nigeria, a country with over 520 native languages (NERDC, 2022). Its introduction can be traced back to missionary activities and colonial administration in the 19th century. While it has become a lingua franca that facilitates communication among diverse ethnic groups, its dominance has also been criticised for marginalising
indigenous languages. By 1882, English became the official language of communication in schools, government and corporate environments (Olusola, 2023; Ijoko & Letom-Bagbi 2024). It soon acquired prestige among elites, while indigenous languages were relegated, with students even punished for speaking them. Today, English remains Nigeria's lingua franca, a requirement for higher education and an indispensable tool for national development (Ijoko & Letom-Bagbi 2024; Ukonu, 2025).

The ability to speak and write Standard English is often used as a benchmark for determining a person's educational standard and competence. The English language is not only a subject in the school curriculum but also the medium of instruction for all other subjects, making proficiency in it essential for academic success. Thus, English is Nigeria's second language; it is a dominant one, taught across all educational levels. Home video is popular among children but has both negative and positive implications for learning. Excessive viewing displaces productive activities, weakens attention and undermines language skills (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2004; Christakos et al., 2004). Poorly produced videos with bad English also affect learners negatively (Onuebgu, 2004; McCain, 2013; King, 2022). However,

When used constructively, videos provide visual and audio stimuli, support English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and expose learners to real language and cultural contexts (HaratAla, 2024; Lan, 2024). They also stimulate interest in literature and vocabulary development through dramas, quizzes and debates—for instance, *Akeelah and the Bee* or Nigerian productions like *Super Story* (Onukaogu, 2002). English films thus foster inter-ethnic understanding in Nigeria's multilingual setting and can serve as valuable instructional tools when carefully selected. The influence of home videos on students is a function of the content they are exposed to. While some home videos, particularly educative ones, can have a positive effect by helping with vocabulary and comprehension, others can be detrimental. A major concern is that excessive viewing of home videos can displace time spent on academically profitable activities like homework and reading. In addition, home videos can hinder language acquisition (Gok, Bozoglan & Bozoglan, 2023) because they reduce the child to a passive listener, offering little opportunity for them to practice speaking or receive feedback on their speech.

The disjointed language of some home videos, particularly those with rapidly changing scenes and commercials can promote "kaleidoscopic thought" rather than the linear thought required for complex intellectual tasks like storytelling and persuasive arguments. However, there are also positive aspects; for instance, the use of visual and audio qualities in home videos appeals to both the sense of sight (75% of information transmission) and hearing (15%), which can increase the rate of learning and comprehension to 85-90% (Sehad et al., 2024; Mobin, 2025). It can be inferred that both the screen and the syllable, though distinct in form, function as powerful media for transforming individuals and society. Home videos can also be used as an instructional material to teach aspects of English grammar and literature and can enhance students' interest in learning. The online and asynchronous nature of videos also makes them a flexible tool for teaching and learning, with studies showing that 93% of teachers believe they improve the learning experience.

The study on the influence of home videos on students' academic performance and English language proficiency can be strengthened by anchoring it in two key theoretical perspectives: Cultivation Theory and the theory of World Englishes. Cultivation Theory, developed by George Gerbner in the 1960s, argues that long-term cumulative exposure to mass media subtly shapes individuals' perceptions of reality (Ruddock, 2024). It explains both general worldviews (first-order effects) and specific attitudes and values (second-order effects) (Potter, 2014; Ruddock, 2024). Applied to this research, the theory highlights how students may adopt behaviours modeled in home videos—such as distraction from academic tasks or imitation of violent conduct—thereby affecting academic engagement and overall performance. The concept also accounts for the subconscious ways prolonged media consumption can alter social norms and expectations, aligning with findings that students often prioritise entertainment over schoolwork.

Complementing this is the sociolinguistic framework of World Englishes, developed by Braj Kachru, which challenges the idea of a single "standard" English and emphasises the legitimacy of localised varieties shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts (Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022; Kanwal, Akram & Ullah, 2024). Nigeria, positioned in the Outer Circle, exemplifies this through Nigerian English, a nativised form shaped by interaction between English and indigenous languages. Home videos, particularly Nollywood productions, often showcase this variety, exposing students to a form of English distinct from the prescriptive, formal English demanded in schools (Akinsola, 2020). This can create a linguistic mismatch, potentially explaining poor English language outcomes in examinations. By integrating Cultivation Theory with the World Englishes framework, the research gains a dual lens: one that captures the behavioural implications of media exposure and another that contextualises the complex linguistic realities students navigate in Nigeria's multilingual environment.

Methodology

The study utilised a descriptive survey design to investigate the influence of home videos on students' academic performance in English language. This design was deemed appropriate as it allows for the collection and analysis of data about the opinions and characteristics of a population. The researcher employed a multistage, stratified probability design to obtain a representative sample of n = 340 secondary students from Ilorin East, South and West Local Government Areas (LGA). In Stage 1, the researcher stratified schools by LGA and school type (public/private) and selected two public and two private schools using probability-proportional-to-size (PPS) while ensuring all three LGAs were represented. In Stage 2, within each school we allocated quotas proportionally by gender based on enrolment records. In Stage 3, students were selected by systematic random sampling from gender-specific lists. The final design yields approximately balanced analytic cells (Public–Male, Public–Female, Private–Male, Private–Female; ~85 each), supporting 95% confidence descriptive estimates (MOE ≈ 5.3%) and ~80% power to detect ≈15-point differences in key subgroup comparisons at α=.05. Non-response minimisation, standardised consent/assent, and complete sampling logs were used; survey weights would be applied if proportional allocation deviates from balance.

The primary instrument for data collection was a four-point Likert scale questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A - collected personal data on the students, including name of school, gender and school type, while Section B - contained 20 questions designed to measure the influence of home video on academic performance, including aspects like video access, time spent, words learned, parents' reaction and viewing purpose. The instrument's validity was ensured through content and construct types, and its reliability was established using a test-retest method which yielded a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.83, considered reliable for the study. Furthermore, the data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency tables and percentages were used to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents and their level of agreement with the questionnaire statements. A t-test was used to analyse Hypothesis 1 (difference between public and private school performance). Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to analyse Hypothesis 2 (relationship between academic performance and gender).

Results

Social Characteristics of Respondents

Table1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Gender and School Type

Gender	Frequenc	Percen
Male	192	56.
Female	148	43.
Total	**340**	**100**
School type	Freque	Percen
Public	184	54.
Private	156	46.
Total	**340**	**100**

Table 1 reveals the demographic characteristics of students sampled. Out of 340 students sampled, 192 (56.5%) were male, while 148 (43.5%) were female. This implies that male students were more than their female counterparts. More so, out of 340 students sampled, 184 (54%) were from public schools, while the rest 156 (45%) were from private school. Thus, this shows that public school students were more than their private school counterparts.

Research Question: Do home video contents have any influence on the students' academic performance in English language?

The results from the survey on the influence of home videos on students' academic performance are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: The Weighted Mean Score (WMS) on Rank Level of Agreement with Each Statement

Statement	Frequency (%)	WMS	Rank
	A	**ST**	**S**
English language is my best subject	72(72.0)	23(23.0)	4(4.0)
My English teacher teaching method is satisfactory	69(69.0)	28(28.0)	2(2.0)
I watch homevideo when doing my assignment	61(61.0)	28(28.0)	6(6.0)
Learning English in school is of little useful in the society	46(46.0)	43(43.0)	14(10.0)
I watch home videos that are expressed in my local languag	46(46.0)	43(43.0)	9(9.0)
Watching home video hasinfluenced my spoken English	46(46.0)	43(43.0)	10(10.0)
I enjoy home videos without subtitles	33(33.0)	57(57.0)	9(9.0)
I like interacting with people in English language	34(34.0)	53(53.0)	12(12.0)
. . . . .	30(30.0)	55(55.0)	14(14.0)
My English teacher uses educative videos as an instructiona material	25(25.0)	56(56.0)	19(19.0)
I learn new words in home videos that I watched	34(34.0)	35(35.0)	29(29.0)
I enjoy home videos with subtitles	38(38.0)	32(32.0)	19(19.0)
I watch home video	17(17.0)	59(59.0)	24(24.0)
My parents watch home video with me	16(16.0)	56(56.0)	23(23.0)
My parents allow me to watch all home videos that they watch	20(20.0)	42(42.0)	28(28.0)
My parents select films that I watchfor me	26(26.0)	32(23.0)	27(27.0)
My school shows educative videos to students every term	16(16.0)	48(48.0)	19(19.0)
I watch movie late in the night	7(7.0)	26(26.0)	39(39.0)
I learnt new words in movies that I watched	13(13.0)	24(24.0)	23(23.0)
I spend above eight hours watching home video	9(9.0)	18(18.0)	32(32.0)

The results in the Table 2 show that the respondents ranked "English language is my best subject" first, with a weighted mean score of 2.66, and "My English teacher teaching method is satisfactory" second, with a score of 2.65. However, "I watch home video when doing my assignment" was ranked third (WMS = 2.45), indicating a high frequency of distraction. The study also found that watching home videos has significantly influenced students' spoken English, ranked sixth (WMS = 2.30).

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant relationship between students' academic performance in English Language based on their gender.*

Table 3: PPMC Analysis on Significant Relationship between Students' Academic Performance in English Language Based on Gender

Variables	**Correlation Co-efficient**	**P-value**	**Decision**	**Remark**
Video Access	0.307**	0.002	S	Rejected
Time Spent	0.026	0.797	NS	Accepted
Words Learnt	0.119	0.238	NS	Accepted
Type Watched	0.097	0.339	NS	Accepted
Parents Reaction and Watched Purpose	0.277**	0.005	S	Rejected

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed); NS: Not significant; S: Significant*

Table 3 shows the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis indicated a significant relationship between certain variables and students' academic performance based on gender. The results show that video access ($r = 0.307, p \leq 0.002$) and parents' reaction/watch purpose ($r = 0.277, p \leq 0.005$) have a significant relationship with academic performance based on gender, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the performance of public and private secondary school students in English language.

Table 4: t-test Analysis on Significant Difference between the Performance of Public and Private Secondary School Students in English Language

Pair Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**df**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Result**	**Decision**
Public School	184	2.33					
			398	-4.465	0.0369	S	Rejected
Private School	156	2.50					

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis where the t-value p<-4.465 at 0.0369. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the influence of home video on the performance of public and private school students.

Discussion of Findings

The study's finding that students' academic performance is negatively influenced by home video viewing can be effectively analysed using George Gerbner's Cultivation Theory. This theory posits that the long-term, cumulative exposure to media content, such as home videos, gradually shapes a person's perception of social reality. The finding tallies with that of Gok, Bozoglan & Bozoglan (2023) home video viewing hinders students' academic performance especially if they are not well guided. However, videos provide visual and audio stimuli for English Language instructions and expose learners to real language and cultural contexts (Lan, 2024; HaratAla, 2024).

The research found that a significant number of students "always" or "sometimes" watch home videos while doing their assignments. The outcome of the study refutes the submission by Christakos et al.'s (2004) and American Academy of Pediatrics (2004) that excessive viewing displaces productive activities, weakens attention and undermines language skills, thus affecting learners negatively – especially videos with poorly produced English (Onuebgu, 2004; King, 2022). From a cultivation perspective, this is not just a simple distraction but a competition between two "storytelling systems": the academic world of the school and the mediated world of entertainment as stressed by Ruddock (2024). The theory's “drip-drip-drip” effect suggests that the more time students spend on entertainment, the more likely they are to prioritise it over academic tasks, leading to the low scores and faltering academic abilities noted in the study's problem statement.

Furthermore, the study's results indicating a significant relationship between parents' reaction and students' academic performance can also be interpreted through this framework. Research on cultivation has shown that the effect of media messages can be enhanced or mitigated by family dynamics and parental supervision, either directly or indirectly (Potter, 2014). The outcome tallies with Robin's (2004) that co-viewing with adults can enhance children's language ability. This corroborates the study's conclusion that parental monitoring is a critical factor in mitigating the negative effects of unsupervised media consumption on a child's educational outcomes.

While Cultivation Theory explains the behavioural and academic impact of home video consumption, a Sociolinguistic Framework, specifically the World Englishes theory by Braj Kachru (Kanwal, Akram & Ullah, 2024), provides a valuable lens for understanding the linguistic findings.

This theory recognises that English, as a global language, has been adapted in various contexts, leading to distinct, legitimate varieties, with Nigeria belonging to the "Outer Circle" where English serves a vital institutional role (NERDC, 2022; Sadeghpour & D'Angelo, 2022). The study found that watching home videos "has influenced my spoken English" for a large number of students. In the Nigerian context, home videos, particularly those from Nollywood, are a key source of exposure to Nigerian English (Akinsola, 2020), a "nativised" variety of the language (McCain, 2013). This variety, which is a creative product of language contact with local indigenous languages, possesses unique lexical and semantic features (McCain, 2013).

The high failure rates in public English examinations, a central concern of the study, can be re-interpreted in light of this theory. The problem may not be that students are unable to learn English, but rather that there is a conflict between the variety of English they are acquiring through social and media exposure (Nigerian English) and the formal, often prescriptive, standard of English expected by the school curriculum and examination bodies (McCain, 2013). The study's finding that students' English proficiency is influenced by their media consumption points to the need for pedagogical approaches that acknowledge this linguistic reality. This outcome is supported by the findings of Oladunjoye (2012) Fehintola and Audu (2012) Oladunjoye, (2012), Akinsola (2020) and Adaeze (2024).

This suggests that the solution may lie not in condemning home videos, but in developing a curriculum that bridges the gap between the students' communicative competence in their local variety of English and the academic demands of the Standard English they are expected to produce in formal settings. The study also underscores the critical role of parental supervision. Similar with the submission of Timothy & Obiekezie (2009) and findings of Robin (2004) and Jerome (2023), the results indicate that parents' reactions and monitoring are significantly related to a student's academic performance. This is particularly relevant in a context where parents, due to work schedules, may not be able to actively monitor their children's viewing habits.

The finding that there is no significant difference in performance between public and private school students suggests that the negative influence of home videos is a widespread problem affecting all students, regardless of the school type. This corroborates the findings of Ibrahim and Maude (2022) and Jerome (2023) that the low performance of students in English language examinations is influenced by some factors among which is the widespread distraction caused by television and home video viewing among secondary school students (Theophilus, 2023; Muttaqin et al., 2023).

The findings reveal that while most variables examined—such as time spent on videos, words learnt, and type of videos watched—show no significant relationship with students' academic performance in English Language based on gender, two variables stand out. The analysis indicates that video access ($r = 0.307$, $p = 0.002$) and parents' reaction/watch purpose ($r = 0.277$, $p = 0.005$) significantly correlate with performance, prompting the rejection of the null hypothesis for these factors. This suggests that the extent to which students have access to videos, as well as how parents respond to or guide their viewing habits, are important determinants of academic outcomes across genders. Conversely, the non-significant results for other variables imply that simply spending time on videos, the type of content watched, or the vocabulary encountered does not, on its own, account for gender-based differences in performance. Generally, as stressed by Robin (2004) and Mukherjee (2022), parental influence and regulated access appear to play more critical roles in shaping students' academic success. Thus, it is inferred that a solution requires a broader, societal approach beyond just school-based interventions. The study's focus on English language performance is significant given its importance as a medium of instruction and a prerequisite for higher education.

Conclusion

This study concludes that while home videos have the potential to be a positive tool for entertainment and education, particularly for enhancing spoken English, their pervasive and often unsupervised consumption has a detrimental effect on the academic performance of secondary school students. The findings confirm that excessive time spent on viewing home videos directly displaces the time needed for academic work. Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of parental monitoring in mitigating these negative effects. The problem is not confined to a single group, as the findings show that students from both public and private schools are similarly affected. The study's results are a call to action for all stakeholders in education to address the challenges posed by technological advancements and cultural lag.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should actively monitor and regulate the types of films their children watch. They should encourage their children to watch educative programs that can boost their spoken English and academic performance.
2. Students should exercise self-discipline and be mindful of the content they consume, recognising that not all home videos have a positive effect on their language skills or academic performance. They should prioritise schoolwork over excessive screen time.
3. There is a need for producers and directors to be more mindful of the content they create. They should produce more educative videos that promote the acquisition of English language skills and are suitable for young audiences, avoiding violent, immoral, or explicit content.
4. Teachers should be motivated to give sufficient homework to students, thereby reducing their leisure time that could be spent on watching television. Teachers should also adopt the use of educative videos as instructional materials to make learning more engaging and to help students with comprehension.

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ASSESSMENT OF UNDERGRADUATES' USE OF METACOGNITIVE LISTENING STRATEGY DURING LECTURES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. The study, a survey research design type, used accidental sampling technique through e-questionnaire involving one hundred and fifty-five participants across fourteen undergraduate faculties of the locale of the study. An adopted questionnaire, Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) by Vandergrift et al. (2006) was adopted to gather data and the collated data was analysed using mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA. The study found that undergraduates use metacognitive listening strategy and lecturers encourage them to use the strategy. The study, therefore, recommends that undergraduates should become peer-mentors to get other colleagues to master the practice of using metacognitive listening strategy to derive maximal comprehension during lectures; and that lecturers should forthwith take brief moments in class to explicitly teach and practice specific metacognitive listening strategies (e.g., summarizing, questioning, predicting, evaluating understanding) to ensure that undergraduates comprehend the most and become conscious users of metacognitive listening strategy across every plane of oral communication

Keywords: Awareness, Learning Strategy, Listening Comprehension, Metacognitive, Monitoring

Introduction

Listening comprehension depicts the process of constructing effective meaning from oral input sufficient enough for continuous engagement in the path towards the realisation of the basis for communication. Listening, being the most used skill, comes with complaints of its being abstract and difficult to master, especially among English as second language (ESL) users. Concerted effort has to be made to ease learners' attainment of higher comprehension from oral communication through the use of different strategies.

Listening comprehension plays crucial role in understanding the teacher's speech, making meaningful progress in ESL learning and sustaining interpersonal relationship (Hardiyanto et al., 2021). For those and other fundamental concerns there is the need to confront listening with tact to ensure all benefits derivable from being master listener are not compromised; and

using metacognitive approach to listen make learners self-regulatory listeners able to retain information/ knowledge in long-term memory for immediate and life-long use. The metacognitive strategy offers learners ability to control listening inside and outside the classroom through awareness of the phonological features of spoken forms with relevant preparatory skills (Vandergrift, et al, 2006).

Assessment is a concise effort to determine the value of a procedure or event, and in this case, the use of metacognitive listening strategy by undergraduate students during lectures at the University of Abuja. This was done to determine extent of use and how helpful the strategy has been to listening comprehension from lectures almost completely delivered through verbal communication. The University of Abuja, established in 1988, has 14 undergraduate related academic faculties. Studies in the University are run on semester basis with two semesters constituting one academic session. The University is located in the Nigeria Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja and the political capital of the 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Overtime, it has been discovered the neglect listening comprehension suffer in the implementation of the English language syllabus has been due largely to inadequate skill on how to teach listening (Iliyas & Abdulmalik, 2017; Iliyas, 2022). To change the inhibitive listening teaching drought and expand awareness on strategies for improved listening comprehension culture, this study examined undergraduates' use of metacognitive skills at the University of Abuja. It is believed conscious use of strategies in listening across levels will make English as a Second Language (ESL) users benefit from the ample advantage listening offers like confidence building, speaking skill mastery and general competence in ESL contexts.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent do undergraduates of University of Abuja use metacognitive listening strategy during lectures?
2. Have lecturers of the University of Abuja encouraged undergraduates' use of the metacognitive listening strategy during lectures?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are tested in the study

Ho_1: Significant difference does not exist in undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures on the basis of their courses of studies in the Faculties of Humanities, Management and Science and Technology.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures at University of Abuja on the basis of sex as male and female.

Literature Review

Listening strategies are manners that undergraduates deploy to interact with and manage spoken instructions to derive value from lectures almost entirely delivered in universities across Nigeria through verbal communication. Studies (Iliyas & Olanipekun, 2024; Fadily, 2023; Ramathiani & Sonota, 2021) have found problems of anxiety, strange theme and unfamiliar accent, less attention to listening and limited vocabulary among others as prevalent hindrances to listening comprehension. These findings and several others have not only affirmed there are challenges to learners' listening, but also challenge studies on how best to remedy these obstacles.

Metacognitive strategy refers to deliberate awareness, continuous checks and control of one's own listening procedure. Vandergrift and Goh (2021) describe metacognition as consciousness about mental or the monitoring of cognition during listening. Rezhai et al. (2023) identify three constituents of metacognitive listening as: metacognitive awareness, metacognitive monitoring and metacognitive control. These constituents: awareness is applicable to the use of skills like schema and advance organiser on the topic; by monitoring it refers to listener's checking own comprehension to determine where void exist and source of the void for remedy; and by control, it entails procedure for choosing what measure to deploy to attain meaningful comprehension from listening like tying meaning to tangible entity in form of translanguaging/ note-taking (Iliyas, 2014; & Rezhai et al. 2023).

Several studies have advocated the use of metacognitive strategy in listening comprehension instruction based on its process-oriented procedures to make learners prepare for listening through planning, monitoring, self-regulation, evaluation and increased comprehension (Rezhai et al. 2023; & Bozorghan & Ahamsi, 2023). In'ami et al. (2023) note that metacognitive listening strategy is an example of shift from outcome-process approach to input-process, which makes leaners independent constructor of meaning from oral communication.

Goh (2010) describes metacognitive listening as one of the process-based strategy that is gaining general use. He describes the strategy as "pedagogical procedures that enable learners to increase their awareness about the listening process and at the same time develop effective skills for self-appraising and self-regulation listening and the progress of their overall listening development. However, put in another way, metacognitive listening covers the information the listener has about the listening tasks, the context and the strategy that can be deployed to attain comprehension (Bozorghan & Ahamsi, 2023). Iliyas and Abdulmalik (2017) demand the use of metacognitive strategy during lecture by tying comprehension to activation of schema and through note taking

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While a few studies in Nigeria have focused on listening for sound discrimination and approaches to achieving genuine comprehension, very few, if any, have specifically examined which listening strategies can help students in the Federal Capital Territory become more aware and self-monitor to enhance their comprehension of lecture content, which is the focus of this study. It is a common feature that listening is mostly rather tested and rarely taught at the secondary school level for reasons of being too abstract, lack of skill on how it could be taught and misconception drawing from uninformed view that anyone without ear defect can just listen and comprehend (Iliyas & Olanipekun, 2024)

Metacognitive listening strategy is anchored on Schema theory derived from cognitive psychology theory pioneered by Piaget (1890-1980), which deals with human memory and human thinking. Nesseir (1981) states that cognition "refers to all the processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered and used…(including) such terms as sensation, perception, imagery, retention, recall, problem-solving and thinking" (p.4).Schema, or schemata, as it can also be called, is a theory that revolves around the brain structure and how it processes knowledge drawing from past event to make related experience available to current event for ease of understanding (Anderson, 2000). Schema is dynamic for its ability for auto update, it influences how human interpret new information; and 'what' (declarative) and 'how' (procedural) of novel information (Iliyas, et al., 2017).

Schema evolution brought the idea of Hampson and Morris (1996) to reckoning. The scholars declare that psychologists focus has gone beyond just the controversy over human cognition versus behaviourism, especially, with the common use of computers in later part of 20thcentury. This, the scholars add, change discourse from small scale information structure to large scale and how they interact. In the same vein, Merriam et al. (2007) re-echo that schema strengthens the significance previous understanding, and use of instruments like advance organisers and memory aids to connect new information with older ones get retained in memory. The reality of handling large-scale information involving the use of computers, advance organisers and memory aids clearly underscore the significance of tying new information/learning to tangible elements for sustained update of previous knowledge.

Reflections on the practical implications of managing complex and large-scale undergraduate instructions accessed by listening bring the idea of metacognitive listening comprehension. Bandura (1994) in self-efficacy theory submits that comprehension is less inhibited by failure in listening but for failure to plan ahead. Comprehension gets less susceptible to confusion when it is pre-planned around challenging goals that sustain focus and relevance, which constitute use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures.

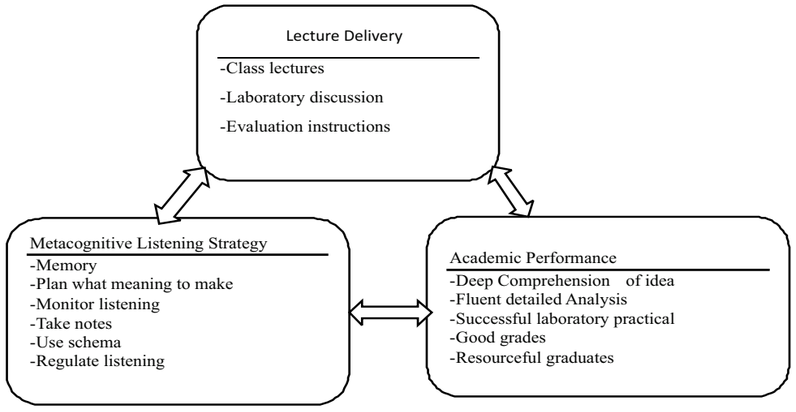

Fig 1: Researcher's Designed Model to Describe the Conceptual Framework

The model, as captured above, identifies key domain of interactions (Lectures delivery; Metacognitive strategy use; and Academic performance) and some sub-sets under each that when interconnected will yield value for the essence of the educational programme. These three key domains intersperse in a continuum by which lectures, almost entirely verbally presented is comprehended with the use of metacognitive listening strategy is not only preserved in long-term memory but reduplicated and culminating naturally to improved academic performance beyond just English language as a subject, but leading to evolution of resourceful graduates to build self-reliant nation.

Methodology

This study is a survey design form that examined the disposition of undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures across the 14 faculties offering academic programmes at the undergraduate level at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. A survey is a research procedure deployed to collect information from a sample of participants to draw general inference of outcomes to the entire population (Smith, 2023). Survey deploys instruments like questionnaire through various modes including online survey to gather data from participants with instruments carefully drawn to check against error and bias and ensuring the reactions gathered actually reflects the views of participants (Iliyas, et al. 2017). The questionnaire, Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ), was adapted from Vandergrift et al. (2006). The questionnaire was found appropriate for the objectives of the study based on its earlier use for a published journal.

This study deplored e-questionnaire consisting of 16 items on the research focus. Accidental sampling technique (as it is circulated on line to target audience, undergraduates of the University of Abuja) was used and WhatsApp was used as medium of disseminating the designed google form instrument filled by one hundred and fifty-five 300 level undergraduates across the 14 faculties of the University of Abuja between February-April, in the 2024/2025 academic session.

Results

Data for research questions of the study are analysed with Mean and standard deviation. For a four-point Likert scale questionnaire, any mean score below 2.5 is considered as low or rejected while mean score equal or above 2.5 is considered as high or accepted.

Hypothesis 1: To what extent do undergraduate students of University of Abuja use metacognitive listening strategy during lectures?

Table 1: Undergraduate Students Usage of Metacognitive Listening Strategy during Lectures

Items	Mean	St. D	Remar
Before I start to listen, I have a plan ir	3.14	.554	High
am going to listen			
I focus hard on the text when I have trou	3.17	.614	High
the lecture			
I found that listening in English is hard th	2.64	.737	High
I use the word I understand to guess	3.03	.680	High
words I cannot understand"			
Before listening, I think of similar texts I	3.07	.618	High
to			
When I lose concentration, I quickly bri	3.21	.594	High
focuson the lecture			
When I am listening, I compare what I u	3.23	.584	High
I know of the topic.			
I do not feel nervous, nor in anxiety	3.17	.628	High
lectures through English language			
As I listen, I caudijusksty my interpretation wh	3.20	.548	High
it is not correct			
I give myself timeframe during listening	3.01	.642	High
focus of at sessions of each lecture			
I translate key words as I listen	3.11	.622	High
After listeninthgink back to how I listened,	3.07	.672	High
I might do differently next time			
I translate word by word to my L1 as I lis	2.99	.651	High
When I guess the meaning of a wor	3.25	.532	High
everything else that I have heyrd,utossen			
sense.			
As I listen, I periodically ask myself if I	3.08	.625	High
level of comprehension.			
I have a goal in mind as I listen.	3.31	.585	High
I try to take notes as I listen to lectures	3.25	.595	High
notes represent key components of each l			
Grand Mean	**3.11**	**0.60**	High

Table 1 shows the item-by-item analysis of undergraduate usage of metacognition during lectures. All items on students' use of metacognition strategy were found to be high because the mean scores obtained is above the benchmark of 2.5. Similarly, the overall grand mean (3.11) is also above this benchmark. Hence, undergraduate at the University of Abuja highly use metacognitive listening strategy during lectures.

Hypothesis 2: Have lecturers of University of Abuja encouraged undergraduate' use of the metacognitive listening strategy during lectures?

Table 2: Perceived Lecturer Encouragement of Undergraduate Students Usage of Metacognitive Listening Strategy

Items	Mean	St. D.	Remark
I draw inspiration from lecturers as I listen to how they evaluate	3.14	.676	High
Lecturers remind students to plan and monitor their listening in the classroom.	3.25	.632	High
Students are given tasks in the classroom including short quiz and inferential questions to enable evaluation of extent of listening.	3.25	.642	High
Grand Mean	3.14	.66	High

In Table 2, all the items were found to be high because the mean scores obtained were above 2.5. Likewise, the grand mean (3.14) is above the benchmark of 2.5. This means that, lecturers encourage students to use metacognitive listening strategy during lectures.

Hypotheses

Ho_1: *Significant difference does not exist in undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures on the basis of their courses of studies in the Faculties of Humanities, Management and Science and Technology.*

Table 5: ANOVA of Undergraduates Use of Metacognitive Listening Strategy during Lectures Based on Faculties

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	270.250	6	45.042			
				1.714	.122	
Within Groups	3731.052	142	26.275			
Total	4001	148				

In Table 5, there is no significant difference in undergraduates use of metacognitive listening strategy based on faculties (F 6, 148) = 1.714; $p>0.05$). This is because the p-value (1.22) is greater than the alpha value of 0.05 for which the null hypothesis was tested. As such, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus, undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy did not differ on the basis of their courses of studies across faculties.

Ho_2: *There is no significant difference in undergraduate students' use of metacognitive listening strategy to lectures in Nigerian Universities on the basis of sex as male and female.*

Table 6: Independent Sample t-test of Usage of Metacognitive Listening Strategy Among Undergraduates Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	St.D.	Mean Diff.	df	t.Val.	Sig.	Remark
Male	59	50.4237	5.50925					
				0.8508	153	0.981	0.328	**Retained**
Female	96	49.5729	5.06951					

In Table 6, there is no significant difference between male and female use of metacognitive listening strategy among undergraduate of University of Abuja ($t_{153} = 0.981$; $p<0.05$). This is because the observed p-value (0.328) is greater than the alpha value (0.05) for which the null hypothesis was tested. The observed p-value (0.328) is greater than the alpha value (0.05) for which the null hypothesis was tested. This led to the retainment of the null hypothesis. This means that, both male and female undergraduate students adopt the same usage of metacognitive listening strategy.

Discussion of Findings

A grand mean of 3.11 for general undergraduates' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures at University of Abuja is indicative of the level of awareness the students have, which undoubtedly has been having positive effect on the degree of comprehension they are achieving from verbal instructions. This finding may be traced to the creativity potential of students to always device means of achieving comprehension from such engagements like lectures that they will be called to account through examinations including even using representational terms and contextual understanding to make sense out of seeming strange words and accents. The result of that analysis is a further confirmation of the reflection and self-realisation of the undergraduates as found in studies (Iliyas, 2014; &Goh & Hu, 2014) that when students found no tangible listening comprehension can be made from listening, they deploy schema, advance organiser and other measures of retaining knowledge from valuable verbal communication like lecture.

Lecturers encouraging students to use metacognitive listening strategy attracts high mean from analysis of participating undergraduates of the University of Abuja. The finding may not be unconnected with the prevalent practice of lecturers reminding students to write down notes of essentials, and evaluate students' listening through different interactive questions asked in class. This finding agreed with that of Suzuki (2012) and Iliyas and Abdulmalik (2017) on the utility of note-taking and friendly interactions over theme of listening instruction, which are clear cognitive listening measures, on listening comprehension.

Findings of no significant difference in undergraduates' use of metacognitive listening strategy during lectures on the basis of different faculties of study and gender can probably be due to the prevalent working conditions in term of instructional aid across faculties at University of Abuja. This situation makes all instructional deliveries no respecter of neither gender nor study bias. The commonalty involved even studies in physical sciences and engineering that attest to affirmation by scholars (Rezai et al 2023; & Vandergrift, 2007) that listening takes over 60% of other language skills use in general human communication.

Vandergrift and Goh (2021) suggest task based learning and metacognitive pedagogical sequence as useful in metacognitive listening practice. The task-based listening will include ability to practice listening in speech and meaning, tying down meaning to cues, listening meeting knowledge goals, identifying sequence of listening development and determining elements of change intensive activities, authentic listening, perception activities and extensive listening projects. Iliyas and Abdulmalik (2017) find no significant difference in Secondary school teachers' knowledge and extent of teaching listening in Katsina State, Nigeria. Although Iliyas (2022) finds significant difference in sources of anxiety to listening to English of secondary school students based on different courses of study.

Conclusion

From the foregoing analysis of findings and discussions, there is no doubt the study has yielded useful information that can foreground further studies around students' listening comprehension. That undergraduates are able to device strategies to keep them afloat in the verbal instructional context of university education is a pointer to the creative capability of the students. This position is premised on the fact that listening is poorly taught in mere random along the way opening content of the general Use of English programme offered in 100 Level by fresh students as discovered in studies. This situation results from want of time, inadequate expertise about listening teaching and false impression of everyone without ear defect can listening are some of the hindrances

giving listening the desired attention (Iliyas & Akinwumi, 2025). So, undergraduates make whatever comprehension they can from lectures delivered almost entirely through verbal communication using metacognitive listening strategy.

Recommendations

The study, therefore, offers the following recommendations;

1. Undergraduates already using metacognitive listening strategies should start playing the role of peer-mentors in guiding others to adopt this listening strategy to ease comprehension and make every student derive optimally from lectures.
2. Though encouragement of undergraduates is high, lecturers could go a step further by dedicating brief moments in class to explicitly teach and practice specific metacognitive listening strategies (e.g., summarizing, questioning, predicting, evaluating understanding).
3. While the study found no significant difference across courses, students should be encouraged to recognize that metacognitive listening is a transferable skill applicable to all subjects, not just those where listening is explicitly emphasized. Instructors in various disciplines could briefly highlight the relevance of active and metacognitive listening in their specific contexts.
4. Faculties and Departments should consider how metacognitive listening can be integrated into learning outcomes and assessments across various courses. This could involve developing common language or frameworks for metacognitive listening that are reinforced throughout the curriculum.
5. Professional development of lecturers should be put in place by institutions through workshops or resources for lecturers on best practices for fostering metacognitive listening skills in their students. This could include sharing effective techniques and discussing common challenges.
6. In spite of high use of metacognitive listening strategy by undergraduates during lectures, future studies should investigate the impact of this high use on academic performance, comprehension, or critical thinking skills. Additionally, such research should explore which specific metacognitive listening strategies are most effective for different types of listening tasks or learning objectives.

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ASSESSMENT OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' METHODS AND RESOURCES USE IN ENGLISH GRAMMAR PEDAGOGY IN ILORIN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The methods and resources deplored by senior secondary school teachers in their English grammar pedagogy were assessed in this study. The research design adopted was a descriptive survey. The study's population consisted of all English teachers in Ilorin, Nigeria. Using the purposive sample technique, 258 respondents were selected. A researcher-designed instrument which contained a set of common methods and various resources employed in English grammar pedagogy with the four-point Likert scale type of Always, Often, Rarely and Never. The reliability of the instrument was determined by adopting a test-retest method using Cronbach Alpha, and a reliability index of 0.79 was recorded. Data gathered were analysed using mean rating analysis to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that various appropriate methods were employed in English grammar pedagogy, while common resources employed were inadequate. The study concluded that teachers of English employ appropriate methods and adequate resources for teaching English grammar. It was suggested, among others, that English teachers should regularly attend seminars and workshops, and read scholarly journals and other relevant research studies to expand their use of various techniques and materials when teaching language concepts.

Key words: Assessment, Methods, Resources, English Grammar, Pedagogy, Appropriateness, Adequacy

Introduction

There is a pressing need for the English language efficient use to promote social adaptability and mutual understanding because it is designated as an international language. This explains why both teachers and language learners must strive to understand English. The language has established itself as the official language of the nation's administrative interactions and it has grown stronger among the indigenous languages. The various functions of the English language have an impact on how it is taught. Furthermore, the particular context in which the language is learnt influences the appropriate pedagogical approach. Understanding how language and culture are essential components of people's lives should therefore be a part of language pedagogy. Students' engagement and learning outcomes are enhanced when languages are taught from an intercultural viewpoint, particularly when it comes to English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching.

Since all other topics are taught in English, students must therefore have a certain degree of skill in the language. According to Olajide (2020), proficient language use is aptly referred to as a social art. English language instruction is a broad and diverse profession. Because of this, Williams, Selvi, Galloway and Rose (2023) agree that as English has spread around the world, different methods of teaching the language have emerged to suit the various purposes for which it is used. They also emphasise that it is utilised as a second language, a medium of teaching, and for intra-national and international purposes in multilingual nations like Nigeria. Grammar instruction serves as the foundation for a set of fundamental language skills, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Because grammar reflects the linear and systematic ordering of language components, Abdullahi-Idiabgon (2012) concludes that grammar is the foundation of all languages and that a written language consists of a collection of sentences, while a spoken language consists of utterances. It is more crucial that the written language carefully follow the grammatical rules that govern the different components of the language since both modalities demonstrate coherence for efficient communication.

In general, there are two approaches that can be used in grammar instruction: deductive and inductive (Widodo, 2006). The idea that deductive reasoning proceeds from the general to the specific is the foundation of the deductive approach. Here, rules, ideas, concepts, or theories are introduced first, followed by a discussion of how they are applied. However, inductive reasoning is the focus of the inductive approach, which holds that a reasoning process moves from particulars such as observations, measurements or data to generalities like laws, rules, conceptions or theories. The majority of specialists agree that the inductive approach to grammar pedagogy is also known as rule-discovery learning. It implies that a grammar instructor should begin by presenting a few sentence samples. In this way, students gain an understanding of grammar principles through provided illustrations. Grammatical rules can be presented orally or in writing form (Widodo, 2006). The deductive approach, which deals with grammar instruction, is also known as rule-driven learning. This involves clearly explaining a grammar rule to learners and then having them practice using it (Widodo, 2006).

Beginning with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which left people inclined to teach the grammar of the target language by emphasising the rules explicitly, numerous approaches and methods have been proposed over the centuries for the teaching of second and foreign languages (Widodo, 2006). However, not all approaches have given grammar the same amount of attention because more recent empirical and reviewed studies, including those by Odutayo, Ishola and Adewuyi (2024), have pointed individuals in the direction of communicative

language use. "Resources" is a concept that encompasses "materials." Stated differently, materials are a subset of resources. Items, people, or locations that can help with the design, execution, and assessment of teaching and learning, as well as the input that enters the instructional system, are known as instructional resources.

According to Salami (2008), resources include people, places, objects, and materials that are utilized to instruct students. They offer fantastic chances to enhance communication between the community and the school. For Abolade (2009), learning and instructional resources are those that are utilized by both educators and students. In order to determine the most suitable and efficient methods and resources that would enhance and improve grammar instruction, this study assessed methods and resources employed by English language teachers to teach English grammar in senior secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Given the English language the respectable standing at every level of Nigeria's educational system, it is crucial to guarantee success that is commensurate with the enormous amount of time and resources devoted to teach the subject. The poor English language proficiency of senior secondary school students has been the subject of numerous studies. For instance, Ahmed (2006) maintains that majority of students struggle to write correctly because they are unable to properly punctuate simple sentences, spell common terms and compose grammatically correct sentences. Furthermore, Oguntola (2010) conducts research on the resources and techniques used to teach French in junior secondary schools in Abeokuta South Local Government Area. The study discovered that certain language teaching strategies are not given the credit they deserve.

Additionally, Bolarinwa (2013) examines the tools available and used in senior secondary schools to teach writing skills. It was discovered that while certain educational materials are available, they are insufficient. There are disagreements among English language researchers and educators regarding the teaching and learning of grammar. English language instructors have struggled over the years to determine which resources and instructional strategies are best for teaching English grammar. Since 2010, students' performance in senior secondary school examinations has been unimpressive due to the fact that they face many challenges in the teaching and learning of English, particularly in the aspect of grammar. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, few studies have been conducted on the assessment of methods and resources used by senior secondary school English language teachers in teaching grammar, especially in Ilorin, Nigeria. However, this apparent negligence has established a research gap in knowlegde, part of which the study addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to assess common methods and available resources to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar. Specifically, the study aimed at investigating:

a. common methods used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar,

b. common resources used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar,

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What are the common methods used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar?
2. What are the common available resources used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar?

Review of Literature

The multilingual nation of Nigeria is made up of several ethnic groups that have occupied a complex geographic environment due to its historical, cultural, political, economic, and educational advancements. English-language social activities are a common indicator of Nigeria's sociolinguistic condition. In summary, in addition to the three important indigenous languages, English is a language that is widely spoken and has taken center stage in the media, the workplace, and educational institutions (Danladi, 2013). In Nigeria, English is viewed as a weapon since it effectively conveys political dominance. Nigerians prefer that their children learn this language because of its official and practical uses (Danladi, 2013). Many Nigerians now believe that the greatest legacy left to the people by British colonization is English. It has been said that of all the legacies left behind by the British, none is as important as the English language (Medubi, 2007). In fact, English is so widely used in Nigerian society that some groups of individuals are now offering arguments in favour of keeping it as the country's national language.

English grammar is one of the cardinal concepts in secondary school English language curriculum. It is inevitable to assess the success or failure of the English curriculum's aims, goals, objectives, methods, and materials that focus on the mass and accumulation of the four language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) as well as the various language levels (phonetics and phonology, morphology, lexis, syntax, and semantics).

The majority of curriculum changes for English as a Second Language (ESL) over the years have attempted to achieve a significant balance between communicative and linguistic proficiency (Amuseghan, 2007).Helping students become proficient communicators in the language is the aim of teaching English across cultural boundaries. Proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the language is a prerequisite for being able to communicate in it naturally. This explains why the four linguistic skills should be included.

Parts of speech, such as adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions, as well as the use of adverbs and adverbials to express all manner of which are aspects of grammar are covered in the new English Language Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools created by the Federal Ministry of Education. One of the more challenging ideas to teach is grammar, which has a specific role in language instruction. Grammatical structure instruction is where language education approaches fundamentally differ from one another (Williams, 1999). However, the actual language use involves many different types of knowledge that no one has ever tried to fit into textbooks or grammar texts. Amuseghan (2007) emphasises that in the real sense of communicative situations, being able to understand a language and produce it in actual communication is not the same as meeting a descriptive standard, which examination-oriented English curricula emphasise.

The role of grammar in second language instruction has been debated for a long time. Nevertheless, since the communicative era, the importance of teaching explicit grammar in language training has diminished. It is maintained that students require communicative competence in order to communicate, and that traditional structural curricula that teach certain grammar form sequences do not foster communicative competence (Azad, 2013). The term “approach to language teaching” refers to a theory about the nature of language and language learning that serves as the source of practices and principles in language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2012). Methods are procedural, while approaches are axiomatic. Within one approach, there may be multiple methods. A technique is an implementation that actually occurs in a classroom, which is a specific trick, stratagem or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. A technique must be consistent with a method, and thus in harmony with an approach as well (Lawal, 2020).

The theoretical underpinnings of language instruction are typically the focus of language teaching methodology. According to Farooq (2015), it is seen as a collection of connected presumptions that address both the nature of language and the nature of teaching and learning languages.

Procedure is the final level of conceptualization and organization in a technique (Richards and Rodgers, 2012). This includes the real-time methods, behaviors, and practices that are used when teaching a language in accordance with a specific approach. It is the stage when we explain how a technique implements its design and strategy in classroom behaviour. It is evident at the design level that a method's theoretical presumptions on language acquisition will support the deployment of particular kinds of instructional activities.

In grammar teaching, explicit and implicit are predominant and recent approaches. Conscious awareness of grammatical forms and their meaning is referred to as explicit grammar knowledge. This information is utilized to track language output and aids in the intake and development of implicit language. Although explicit knowledge can be partially automated, it is often accessible gradually through regulated processing (Purpura, 2004). Conversely, implicit grammatical knowledge is defined as the knowledge of a language that is typically manifested in some form of naturally occurring language behavior such as conversation (Ellis, 2002). Accordingly, Brown (2007) asserts that implicit knowledge involves unconscious awareness and intention, which is typically unconscious and accessed quickly, and that it happens without both intentions to learn and awareness of what has been learned.

Since recent experiments and research have focused on how people can use language communicatively, that is, learning the language rather than learning about it, not all approaches have placed the same emphasis on grammar (Harmer, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2006; Ellis, 2006; Spada, 2007). The deductive approach is a method of instruction that moves from general to specialised and is based on logical reasoning. Examples follow the presentation of rules, patterns, and principles in a deductive way. This method, according to Paradowski (2009), gives students pre-made grammatical rules along with a breakdown of how the new structure is formed, including its constituent parts and the situations in which it might be applied.

Rule-driven teaching is another name for the deductive approach. For instance, the deductive method is the only one used in the conventional Grammar Translation Method (Gollin, 1998). The second language teacher must be proficient in both the learners' mother tongue and the target language in order to correctly teach the grammar of the target language. Rule-explanation, translation, worksheet completion, and self-study grammar are a few possible tasks in the deductive approach (Çakir & Kafa, 2013). According to Mountone (2004), the deductive approach is more predictable because the teacher chooses the information and the order in which it is presented, even though the deductive methods appear to function best if the teacher wants students to be able to solve problems like those that are worked out in class quickly and accurately.

However, according to Çakır and Kafa (2013), the inductive approach is a method of teaching grammar that does not explicitly state the rules to the pupils. They emphasize that lessons using an inductive approach should begin with scenarios or examples that put the language lessons into context. Students then learn the rules and deduce them from the context. Another name for it is the rule discovery method, in which students are not only given pre-made grammatical rules (Paradowski, 2009). In the teaching of English, the inductive approach is frequently associated with the Direct Method and the Natural Approach. Grammar is taught in both approaches so that students can experience it (Çakır & Kafa, 2013).

Çakır and Kafa (2013) debate the most effective approach to teaching grammar, which has been determined by a variety of techniques since it was realized that teaching grammar is essential. They list the following as important: Task-Based Learning (TBL), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Total Physical Response (TPR), Notional-Functional Method (NFM), Code-Cognitive Methods (CCM), Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), and Audio-Lingual Method (ALM). Additionally, they emphasize that teachers can include many tactics from various approaches, resulting in an eclectic approach to grammar instruction (Çakır & Kafa 2013). For instance, Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Richards and Rodgers (2011) emphasize that in the case of grammar, which is taught deductively, learners are given the rules of grammar and examples to memorize, and then they are asked to apply the rules to other examples. In the context of ESL, teaching grammar has traditionally been dominated by a grammar-translation method, where the use of mother tongue is obviously important in eliciting the meaning of target language by translating the target language into native languages.

Thus, teaching grammar should cover language structure or sentence patterns, meaning, and use (Widodo, 2006). Grammar is taught to provide the foundation for a set of language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In the end, teaching grammar should also focus on how grammatical items or sentence patterns are used correctly. The following methods are therefore used in teaching grammar based on different approaches to grammar teaching either explicit/implicit or deductive/inductive as these methods have their strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning grammar.

Grammar Translation Method: Through consistent practice translating from his home tongue, this method seeks to teach the students to write the language correctly and to instill in them a sense of the grammar of the language articulated in conventional terms (Olugbodi, 2011).

Direct Method: The idea that language is a natural process forms the basis of this approach. Learning a mother tongue occurs when people directly link language to the things they are talking about. Second language learning is to be achieved in the same process with the target language (Adeniyi, 2009). Since rules are extrapolated from practice and exposure to the target language, grammar instruction is inductive.

Audio-Lingual Method: This method emphasises aural-oral skills. Speaking and listening are the main abilities, as the name suggests. Dialogue is a key component of the method's approaches. For practice, lexical units are separated into meticulously regulated structures. The dialogue-style introduction of the learning materials serves as the foundation for structural drills (Olugbodi, 2011).

Cognitive-Code-Learning Method: This method teaches language through conscious study of the rules. The principles are derived from the view that language learning is rule-formation rather than habit formation (Adeniyi, 2009). This method's proponents contend that pronunciation practice shouldn't be overemphasized because most second and foreign language learners can't sound exactly like native speakers.

Notional-Functional Method: This method emphasises syllabus content as much as method of teaching per se. The syllabus content is developed with reference to function and notion in language (Williams, 1999). Materials for the syllabus consist of language functions and not on the traditional unit of grammar. Language activities in this method take into consideration the setting of interaction, topic of the discussion and roles in the interaction (Adeniyi, 2009).

Communicative Language Teaching Method: The foundation of this teaching approach is a theory of language as communication. According to Hymes (quoted in Richards & Rodgers 2012), the aim of language instruction is to foster "Communicative Competence." This concept was created by Hymes to contrast Chomsky's (1965) notion of competence with a communicative understanding of language. According to Chomsky, the main focus of linguistic theory is on the ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogeneous speech community who is perfectly conversant in the language and is not impacted by grammatically irrelevant factors like memory loss, distractions, changes in focus and interest, and mistakes (either random or characteristic) when using his language knowledge in real-world situations (Richards &Rodgers, 2012).

Eclectic Method: this approach attempts to include the most effective strategies from all of the well-known language teaching approaches into the classroom process, applying them where they are most suitable. A look at the language teaching methods over the years according to Olugbodi (2011) has revealed that there have been changes from one method to another. She stresses that at one time in history, the emphasis was on teaching the language and at another time, it shifted to the teaching the rules of the language, not about the language thus emphasising practice and repetition.

Hence, in order to incorporate grammar or structure into other language abilities in a way that eventually achieves the purpose of language learning, teachers especially those teaching ESL could benefit from knowing some different teaching methodologies for teaching grammar. Many studies have been conducted on how to incorporate grammar training into communicative technique.Grammar teaching is considered as abstract concept and it becomes productive when it is accompanied with relevant methods and resources.

According to Lawal (2006), "resources" is a notion that encompasses "materials." Stated differently, materials are a subset of resources. Lawal emphasises that any item, person, or location that can help with the design, execution, and assessment of teaching and learning as well as the input that is fed into the educational system is an instructional resource. Lawal (2006) views “materials” as a concept under “resources”, he stresses that “resources' has a wider coverage than “materials”. This means that “materials” is an aspect of “resources”. He further classifies resources as either human or non-human. The human resources are divided into school based and non-school based (community resources). The school based human resources are also divided as English and non-English resources; the former are teachers of English and literature in English while the latter are teachers of other subjects.

The non-school based human resources are professionals and experts who are invited to give lectures on certain topics in their field of specialisation. Conversely, the non-human resources according to Lawal (2006) are divided into plant and materials. Plant resources are sub-divided into school based and non-school based just as in the case of human resources. The school-based plant resources include programmed instruction, classroom, language laboratory, library, etc., while non-school based plant resources are media house, hospital, zoo and other monumental sites in the community. Materials are non-human resources which could be audio, visual, audio-visual and multisensory materials (Lawal, 2006).

Heinich, Molenda, Russell and Smaldino (2002) explain that instructional resources are designed to support the instruction of a subject or a course including but not limited to textbook, library, newspapers, journals, magazines, printed materials, charts, recording, videos, DVD's, mp3, mp4, pictures, exhibits, slides, transparencies, online resources, other personal resources and all technologies-based materials. Adigun (2003) posits that teaching aids are alternative supplementary instructional materials. While Abolade (2009) submits that learning and instructional materials (LIMS) are those materials which are used by both students and teachers to acquire information and knowledge.

Abolade (2009) views instructional materials into three viz: printed, non-printed materials and community resources. Printed materials to him are traditional tools for teaching and learning in any formal educational system such as textbooks, workbooks, revision notes exercises, educational journals, magazines, manuals and other periodicals, photocopy, offset reproduction, photographic prints, etc. Non-print materials according to Abolade (2009) are named as software and hardware. This type of instructional materials can further be classified into sub-groups such as visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids and educational media hardware.

From the foregoing, it could be established that resources are sometimes referred to as instructional materials, instructional medial, teaching aids, etc. This concept of resources has been seen by different scholars differently. Salami (2008) and Ajayi (2004) define resources as anything that can be used as a teaching tool, a study item, or a stimulus for students. They claim that this can comprise local goods, print materials, audiovisual materials, and specimens of mass communication materials. They could come from the environment, materials or people. Abimbade (1999) lists the following as reasons for using instructional resources. They include reinforcing verbal and visual messages, focusing attention, motivating the interest of the learners, providing sources of information and authority, saving teacher's preparation time, providing experience not otherwise available and elucidating verbal concepts.

Methodology

This study focused on the assessment of methods and resources teachers employed in teaching senior secondary school English grammar in Ilorin, Nigeria. It also sought to investigate appropriateness and adequacy of methods and resources in the teaching of English language grammar in senior secondary schools. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of all of the senior secondary school English teachers in Ilorin. Using random sampling technique, 146 teachers of English were purposively sampled from the senior secondary schools. Researcher-designed instrument on methods and resources used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar was used to elicit data from the respondents.

The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A covered variety of methods, while section B and resources commonly employed in teaching English grammar with the adoption of the four-point Likert scale type of Always, Often, Rarely and Never. Both content and face validity were carried out by experts in English Language unit of University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria.

The reliability of the instrument was determined by adopting a test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered twice in an interval of two weeks to the respondents (English Language teachers) outside the study sampled and a reliability index of 0.79 was recorded using Cronbach Apha. In analysing the data gathered, mean rating was used to answer the two research questions quantitatively to determine the appropriateness and adequacy of methods and resources respectively employed in teaching grammar.

Results Analysis and Findings

This segment offers answers to the research questions raised in this study:

Research Question 1: What are the common methods used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar?

Responses of the respondents to the items in the questionnaire that addressed methods of teaching grammar were collated and subjected to mean, standard deviation and rank order analyses and the output is reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Common Methods Used to Teach English Grammar

S/N	Methods	Mean	Std. D.	Rank Order
1.	Communicative Language Teaching	12.32	1.11	**1st**
2.	Notional Functional Method	10.68	1.01	**3rd**
3.	Code-Cognitive Method	11.53	1.09	**2nd**
4.	Audio-Lingual Method	9.44	0.97	**6th**
5.	Direct Method	9.85	1.06	**5th**
6.	Grammar Translation Method	10.55	0.99	**4th**
7.	Eclectic Method	8.17	1.02	**7th**

With a mean score of 12.32 and a standard deviation of 1.11, the Communicative Language Teaching method is the most commonly used approach for teaching grammar, according to Table 1. The Code-Cognitive Method, with a mean score of 11.53 and a standard deviation of 1.09, is ranked second. Other methods include the Notional Functional Method, which places third with a mean score of 10.68 and a standard deviation of 1.01; the Grammar Translation Method, which ranks fourth with a mean score of 10.55 and a standard deviation of 0.99; the Direct Method, which ranks fifth with a mean score of 9.85 and a standard deviation of 1.06; the Audio-Lingual Method, which ranks sixth with a mean score of 9.44 and a standard deviation of 0.97; and the Eclectic Method, which ranks seventh in rank order. This demonstrates that all of these approaches are the different ways that English language teachers in senior secondary schools teach grammar.

Research Question 2: What are the common available resources used to teach senior secondary school students in English grammar?

Responses of the respondents to the items in the questionnaire that addressed resources for teaching grammar were collated and subjected to mean and standard deviation analyses and the output is reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Common Resources Used to Teach English Grammar

S/N	Resources	Mean	Std. D.	Rank Order
1.	Human Resources	14.44	4.97	**3rd**
2.	Non-Human Resources	21.76	5.35	**2nd**
3.	Materials Resources	64.08	11.35	**1st**

Table 2 shows that the material resources are the most commonly employed among senior secondary school English language teachers in teaching grammar with the mean score (64.08) and standard deviation (11.35) and ranked first followed by the non-human resources with the mean score (21.76) and standard deviation (5.35) ranked second, while the human resources with mean score (14.44) and standard deviation (4.97) as the third in the rank order.

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings demonstrated that several approaches are used by English language instructors to teach grammar, and these approaches are suitable. This is consistent with the research of Cakir and Kafar (2013), who contended that the most effective approach to teaching grammar has been determined by experimenting with a variety of techniques since it became clear that teaching grammar was essential. Additionally, Williams (1999) points out that not all activities must be included in a single class in the allotted time. Therefore, he recommends an eclectic approach that is tailored to the students and the subject. This outcome also supports the findings of Don Snow (1992), Widodo (2006), Richards and Rodgers (2012), and Olajide and Idiagbon (2013), who all concluded in their different investigations that no one approach can provide the solution for every situation and goal in grammar instruction. However, a teacher's perception of the technique's tenets greatly influences how the method is implemented in the classroom.

The result of this study also reveals that there are various resources employed in teaching grammar but these resources are inadequate. This is consistent with the findings of Bolarinwa's (2013) study, which indicates that if all instructional materials are used effectively, they may both educate students and support teachers with certain teaching and learning tasks. This result also corresponds with the report of Olateju (2011) who studied availability and use of instructional resources for teaching and found out that some of these available resources are not adequately utilised. In particular, as Lawal (2006) notes that the

teacher is the most important instructional resource—acting as an originator, facilitator, and sustainer of learning—instructional resources typically support rather than replace the teacher in a classroom. Additionally, Salami (2008) comes to the conclusion that anything that might serve as a study object or a stimulus for students is considered an instructional resource, and Yusuf (2000) asserts that effective teaching depends on effective communication between the instructors and the students.

Conclusion

This study assessed the tools and approaches used by English language teachers in senior secondary schools to teach grammar. It has been determined, based on the findings, that senior secondary school English language instructors in Ilorin use a variety of approaches while teaching grammar. It turned out that these approaches are suitable. However, there are a number of tools available to English language teachers in senior secondary schools for teaching grammar, although they are insufficient.

Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered in light of the study's findings and conclusion:

1. To stay up to date on the latest developments in the use of various techniques and resources in teaching language concepts, English language teachers should regularly attend seminars, workshops, in-service training, and read scholarly journals, ephemerals, and other relevant research studies.
2. While textbook authors must use the appropriate techniques required for teaching grammar and structuring the textbooks' contents, school administrators should hire experienced and qualified language teachers who will use pertinent resources and appropriate teaching methods to engage language learners.

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Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

INTEGRATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING SECONDARY SCHOOL ESSAY COMPOSITION IN ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

This study surveys integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching secondary school essay composition in Abuja, Nigeria. Motivated by the increasing global adoption of AI in education and the continuous reliance on traditional instructional approaches in many Nigerian classrooms, the study aims to explore teachers' awareness, integration of AI, and its relevance in teaching essay composition. The study employs the descriptive survey design. From a population of 1,858 approved private Secondary Schools and 3,716 English language teachers, the study used all the 26 English language teachers from 10 approved private senior secondary schools known to use technological tools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire named (SIAISSEC). The instrument was validated and tested for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.82). Findings revealed that most teachers are unaware of AI's application in essay composition teaching, and that AI integration remains low across sampled schools. Despite this, the study also revealed high relevance of AI tools in enhancing various aspects of essay writing, including grammar, organization, assessment, and personalized learning. The study concludes that AI holds strong potential to transform essay composition instruction but remains underutilized. It recommends increased provision of AI tools, regular teacher training, and institutional monitoring to encourage effective implementation of AI in secondary school teaching of essay composition.
Key Words: Artificial Intelligence, Essay Composition, and Teaching

Introduction

The quest for effective teaching and learning across all subjects in secondary school by educational practitioners cannot be ignored. This is pivotal to them and the realization of Nigerian educational goals and objectives; considering the mandate provided by the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2023), which clearly states the goals for quality and impactful education and steps to achieving them. In the document (FGN,2023), one important specific goal is to promote information technology capability at all levels; actualizing it through practical teaching, activity-based, experiential teaching and supported with Information Technology (IT). To this end, the integration of Artificial Intelligence, a technological tool in the teaching and learning process becomes

Artificial Intelligence is a branch of computer science that involves the development of programmes for the completion of tasks. The term was coined by John McCarthy in 1955. He defines AI as a scientific tool/machine designed to meet human needs. It is the ability to process different ideas simultaneously and function effectively within a short period of time (Mohammed, 2019). The above definitions place it at the apex of educational revolution, especially in teaching and learning all subjects (Ishola, Olajide, Emmanuel & Abdulkareem, 2025). In the context of language education, the adoption of AI as an IT tool has gained significant attention, offering innovative methods to enhance language acquisition, improve communication skills, and prepare students for the demands of an increasingly digital use (Onyema, as cited in (Ishola et al., 2025).

The use of AI in the teaching and learning processes cannot be over-emphasised. It aids personalised learning, actively engages students in interacting with subject content and performing tasks, improves assessment and feedbacks, provides equal access to information, to mention a few (Umar, 2024). Unlike some technological tools or platforms that requires the guidance of a user or teacher, AI is developed to provide information and educational content that meet the individual or learner's needs. Thus, every learner has the opportunity to learn at his or her pace, level of proficient, IQ, educational level and subject content. For example, a learner who requires only information on writing a good introduction of an essay is provided with such information. This is different from a learner who needs information on title, body of an essay, conclusion, etc. Thus, learning is made easy and convenient based on the needs of the learner (Umar, 2024).

The system has the ability to actively engage learners in interacting with subject content and performing task. Learners' interaction and task completion can be aided through AI game-like app such as Quill.org, Quill Connect and Quill Proof-reader. The learning environment of these applications are interactive, engaging and highly stimulating, as learners are motivated to actively perform tasks leading to their learning of subject content. The use of these applications transforms the learning environment from a traditional one; dominated by the teacher to a more dynamic one; enabling learners to actively participate in given tasks and meeting lesson objectives. The AI applications for example can be used in developing learners' skills in grammar, sentence construction, and the overall writing process. It provides feedback, corrections and engages learners in real-time, making the process more interesting to them. It also has the ability to grade students based on their performance, as well as advances students who demonstrate better performance (Umar, 2024). Similarly, the machine has the capability to improve learners' assessment and

feedbacks, through automated feedback of students' performance and progress tracking within a short period of time. Unlike the traditional assessment method, the system provides instant and objective feedback on various language skills and essay composition. It also analyses students' scores and generates a comprehensive performance report in every area for improvement in future task/assessment (Boucher, 2020). It reduces teachers' tasks of grading students on a particular area or skill through its personalised benefit.

Furthermore, AI provides equal access to information to its users. Unlike some technological tools that differ in their distribution of knowledge and resources based on their respective capacities, AI distributes information and resources to a large number of users, irrespective of status, location, age, gender and even ethnic differences (Boucher, 2020). Thus, what a learner from the upper class can access from the system, can also be gotten by a learner from middle or lower class. Additionally, its ability to offer multilingual support and translation features, making it easier for students from different linguistic backgrounds to access educational content, is another gain for its use in teaching and learning (Picciano, 2017). Considering the above benefits of AI in education, its desire and use in the teaching of essay composition become an urgent need for all educational stakeholders, especially in today's world where many educational institutions are switching to the use of technology in meeting educational needs.

The teaching of essay composition over the years has undergone many changes with regards to the approaches, methods, strategies and instructional materials. For instance, the use of Grammar Translation Method encourages learners' development of vocabulary, writing of long and meaningless sentences, learning grammatical rules as well as translation of text from one language to the target language (Abdelghani, 2023). This approach integrates materials such as model essay, grammar worksheet, word bank, comparative text for L1 and L2 and grammar reference chart. These materials cause lots of challenges to learners which may further hinder effective development of the skills and competencies needed in the subject content. Model essay for example, encourages rote memorization instead of making students to think critically and be creative in writing. Grammar worksheet provides learners with long list of words which in most cases do not match real context of language use.

Essay template also hinders adaptation and authentic voice of writers thereby making the whole process ineffective. However, the use of AI in teaching essay composition tends to proffer solutions to the above challenges, especially in its ability to provide multiple model essay based on learners' needs, with clear explanation on how every area of the essay is achieved and can be made better to suite learners' needs (Abdelghani, 2023). It has the capability to provide grammar worksheet in real-time, with words aligning in appropriate context of the essay. Other gains of AI in developing effective writing skills include encouraging creativity, brainstorming and revision. Learners can also interactively practice grammar within an essay context, providing corrections and detail explanations on learners' mistakes (Abdelghani, 2023).

Additionally, a teacher of English language, who uses appropriate approach, method strategy and traditional instructional materials in the delivery of lesson content in today's second language classroom may be challenged by factors such as time, subject content coverage, assessment of students, instructional materials, large class size, individualized learning, to mention a few. While these problems permeate the English language classroom in many Nigerian schools where technological tools are lacking, the use of AI tools could be interesting to teachers, especially in reducing the amount of time spent in delivering lesson objectives for students (Umar, 2024). With the use of AI, large amount of information can be disseminated to learners of various groups, location and levels within a short period of time in an effective manner.

AI has the capacity to disseminate information to learners via video and audio, text and picture, video and text at the same time, which a teacher in a conventional classroom may find difficult to do (Abdelghani, 2023). Also, evaluation of students is another important area of teaching and learning where the use of AI can be effective. Unlike in the conventional classroom, AI has the capacity to evaluate different learners on many areas of a lesson objective within a short period of time. While the conventional classroom teacher may take lots of time in evaluating and grading a few numbers of students in the introduction of an essay, AI can use few minutes in evaluating, grading and correcting learners' complete essay task, that include title, introduction, body and conclusion. Based on the above, the researcher is therefore motivated to survey the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the teaching of essay composition at the secondary school level in the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The wave and spread of technology in recent time has drawn the attention of educational stakeholders and language scholars in particular in finding how its integration could benefit teaching and learning. While there is evidence in many studies on the integration of technology in teaching at the secondary level, the desirability, awareness, integration and relevance of AI, an aspect of technology in teaching essay composition are underexplored, especially in private secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja. Thus, this constituted a motivating factor for this study. Additionally, the continuous use of traditional materials in the teaching of essay composition in second language classrooms, despite the spread of AI tools in many areas of human life has drawn the attention of researchers such as Rahim, Mokbul, Mohamed Mohammad (2024), Bulante, Morris, Orteza, Balagan and Taloza (2024) to finding if AI improves the teaching process and students' performance.

While these studies justify the effectiveness of the integration of AI in teaching and learning generally, there is need for a study to find out its awareness, integration and relevance in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level. Finally, challenges such as rote learning, large class size, absence or inadequate quality instructional materials, limited individualize teaching and personalized learning, adequate real-time feedback and wholistic assessment within a short period of time have motivated the present study, especially in the teaching of essay composition at the secondary school level. It is on this backdrop that this study is set to survey integrating AI in teaching secondary school essay composition in Abuja, with a view to filling these gaps.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to survey integrating of Artificial Intelligence in teaching secondary school essay composition in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The specific objectives are to:

i. find out teachers' awareness of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level;
ii. investigate the extent to which AI is integrated in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level; and
iii. explore the relevance of AI in the teaching of essay composition at the secondary school level.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Are teachers aware of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?
2. To what extent is AI integrated in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?
3. What is the relevance of AI in the teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?

Literature Review

Essay composition is the process of organising ideas about a subject into coherent written form. It involves the combination of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs to produce meaningful and unified ideas in a complete text. Umar (2024) defines essay composition as a structured presentation of coordinated ideas in paragraphs under a specific topic. Ojakovo (2024) emphasises that clear organization ensures the writer's intended meaning is effectively communicated. Similarly, Aldous Huxley, as cited in Ojakovo (2024), describes essay writing as a short piece that allows the author to express personal thoughts on a given subject. Generally, there are four major types of essay composition. These include narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative. The narrative composition recounts past events in a sequential and engaging manner.

It usually employs past tense and creates believable characters, settings, and plots to sustain the reader's interest (Benjamin, 2022).

The descriptive composition focuses on creating vivid sensory impressions of people, places, or events. It relies heavily on adjectives and figurative language to evoke the reader's senses and imagination (Benjamin, 2022). Expository composition is the type that explains, defines, and provides information about a subject. It is logical, factual, and informative, often using examples, illustrations, and evidence to explain processes or relationships such as cause and effect (Benjamin, 2022). Argumentative composition presents opposing viewpoints on an issue, requiring strong reasoning and evidence to support a position. Handy (2013) notes that it demands factual accuracy, current knowledge, and credible data to persuade an audience about a given subject or contention.

Essentially essay composition is guided by some basic components. These according to Bulante, Morris, Orteza, Balagan, and Taloza (2024) are important as they help writers produce good texts. They are content, organization, expression, and mechanical accuracy. These components are independently developed through the stages of title, introduction, body, and conclusion of the text. The content is the relevance and depth of ideas related to the essay topic. It reflects the writer's understanding and ability to explore key issues and present them meaningfully (Rinji, 2008; Jasmin, 2023). It is the ideas the writers intend to develop in various paragraphs of the composition. They are usually represented in simple sentence in each paragraph. Organization is the logical arrangement of ideas and appropriate paragraphing that ensures coherence and unity (Hassan, 2016).

A well-organised essay has a clear structure with suitable openings, linked paragraphs, and a cohesive conclusion. It also deals with the arrangement of sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs in the text. Expression refers to the use of language in the composition. It focuses on the appropriate use of diction, syntax, and tone to communicate ideas effectively. It reflects the writer's command of vocabulary and ability to match language style to the essay type and audience (Jasmin, 2023). Mechanical accuracy includes correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling, all of which contribute to clarity and meaning (Achim, 2022). Rinji (2008) stresses that poor punctuation can distort meaning, while Achim (2022) highlights grammar as foundational to all aspects of writing. With the growth of digital learning, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative tool in teaching essay composition.

Studies by Rahim, Mokbul, Mohamed, and Mohammad (2024) as well as Maphoto et al. (2024) show that AI enhances learners' creativity, accuracy, and writing confidence. In narrative writing, AI tools like Story Prompt Generator, Plot Structure Assistant, and ChatGPT help students develop plots, characters, and dialogue. For descriptive writing, AI tools using visuals and Sensory Language Enhancer assist learners in employing sensory details effectively. AI also supports expository writing by generating outlines, examples, and background information, while in argumentative essays, tools such as Argument Development Support guide students in constructing logical arguments and counterarguments (Maphoto et al., 2024). Similarly, Fitria (2023) notes that applications like Grammarly, Duolingo, and Tutor Lily improve expression, spelling, and grammar, thereby enhancing mechanical accuracy and organization.

AI's impact extends to helping learners develop critical writing components. It aids content development through idea generation, enhances language expression via vocabulary support and correction, and improves organization by offering essay templates and examples. These digital interactions foster personalized and self-paced learning experiences. There are many theories that can be used in discussing this study. However, the study is anchored on Westerman Bonnet, McAfee's (2014) Digital Transformation Theory and Vygotsky, (1978) Socio-cultural Theory. The Digital Transformation Theory focuses on the integration of digital technologies like AI into education, mainly to improve the teaching and learning process through active interaction of the learners with the system (Westerman et al., 2014). The theory emphasises the relevance of learners to freely access diverse information, providing equal opportunity to them irrespective of location, status, age, educational level, etc. It also encourages the need for adequate provision of infrastructure and resources, such as reliable internet access and digital devices, to support effective implementation of technology (AI) in teaching and learning (Umar, 2024).

On the other hand, Sociocultural Theory emphasises on the role of social interaction and cultural context in language learning (Vygotsky as cited in Umar, 2024). According to him, digital platforms like AI have the capacity of facilitating social interaction as well as exposing learners to different cultural background, which by extension helps in enriching their language learning experience and improve competence in writing. These theories are relevant to this study as they help provide the lens to understanding the exposition of students to different cultural background and experiences in writing essay composition via AI tools. Thus, through AI, students interact with the available tools for the development of skills in writing a good and interesting title, introduction, body and conclusion. It also provides the background for students to interact with AI tools on the generation and development of essay content, use of language, organization f essay and mechanical accuracy (Umar, 2024).

Several empirical studies affirm the positive influence of AI in English language learning and writing. Rahim et al. (2024) found that AI fosters supportive learning environments and enhances students' writing proficiency. Similarly, Bulante et al. (2024) compared AI-assisted and non-AI-assisted writing among Grade 10 students and discovered that AI significantly improved students' sentence structure, grammar, vocabulary, and organization. Makanjuola and Solomon (2023) examined AI's role in Nigeria's education system and observed that most schools still rely on outdated teaching methods, recommending modern digital integration. Maphoto et al. (2024) reported that AI enhances distance learning and improves academic writing through innovative engagement. Likewise, Hutson, Plate, and Berry (2024) and Elstad and Eriksen (2024) found that hybrid AI pedagogies in English composition enhance writing competence and critical thinking.

Umar (2024) emphasized that AI-driven tools personalize learning, provide adaptive assessments, and create inclusive environments. Nnadozie and Andeline (2025) also found that while teachers in Anambra State were somewhat aware of AI tools, most were not yet effectively utilizing them for curriculum implementation. Nevertheless, AI was shown to enhance instructional delivery and serve as a valuable resource for students. Although, numerous studies affirm AI's potential in language education, there remains limited research on its application in essay composition teaching within Nigerian secondary schools. Moreover, little to no research has explored the integration of AI tools for essay writing in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This study therefore aims to fill that gap by examining how AI can be effectively utilised to teach essay composition and improve students' writing performance in FCT secondary schools.

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. This enabled the researcher to survey desirability of the integration of Artificial Intelligence in the teaching of essay composition in sampled approved private secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The population comprised all the one thousand, eight hundred and fifty-eight (1,858) approved private Secondary Schools and the three thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (3,716) teachers of English language (FCT Education Management Information System, Abuja, 2025). This number comprised male and female teachers in the 2024/2025 academic session in private senior secondary schools in AMAC, Abuja. From the population, ten (10) approved private senior secondary schools that used technological tools and all the teachers comprising twenty-six (26) were used for the study.

Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. It is christened: Survey of Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Secondary School Essay Composition (SIAISSEC). The instrument was piloted and the scores of the reliability test were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha, and has a reliability index of 0.82, which indicated that the instrument was reliable for the main study. The simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Additionally, the instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher. Afterwards, the filled questionnaire was collected and analysed to obtain the result.

Results

Research Question 1: Are teachers aware of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?

Table 1: Teachers' Awareness of the Integration of AI in Teaching Essay Composition

Items	VA	MA	SA	NA	Mean	Decision
Grammarly is an AI tool for teachingspelling, sentence structure, clarity in expression and editing of essay composition.	2	3	8	13	1.77	No
Quillbot is an AI tool for teaching paraphrasing and modeling essay composition.	-	-	4	22	1.5	No
ChatGPT is an AI tool for planning, outlining, brainstorming and generating as well as developing content of essay composition.	11	7	5	3	3.9	Yes
ProWritingAid is an AI tool for teaching organization and revising of essay composition.	-	2	1	23	1.55	No
Write & Improve is an AI tool for assessment and evaluation of essay composition.	-	1	5	20	1.65	No
					2.07	**No**

Table 1 above shows the analysis of data on teachers' awareness of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level. Responses on item 1, 2, 4 and 5 are negative as each has a mean response of 2.3, 1.5, 1.55 and 1.65 respectively, which is below the 2.5 mean threshold that comes from the midpoint of the 4-point Likert scale used for this study. However, their responses on item 3 are positive with 3.9, indicating their awareness of the integration of Chart GPT in essay composition. The total mean of the table is 2.07 indicating that teachers of English language are not aware of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition in private secondary school in the FCT, Abuja. Therefore, teachers of English language are not aware of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition.

Research Question 2: To what extent is AI integrated in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?

Table 2: The Extent to which AI Integrated in Teaching Essay Composition

Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Decision
AI tools are used in teaching content, languag expression, organization and mechanica accuracy of narrative essay composition.	-	-	16	10	1.62	No
AI tools are used in teaching content, language expression, organization and mechanica accuracy of descriptive essay composition.	-	2	19	5	1.88	No
AI tools are used in teaching content, languag expression, organization and mechanica accuracy of expository essay composition.	-	3	14	9	1.77	No
AI tools are used in teaching content, languag expression, organization and mechanica accuracy of argumentative essay composition.	-	-	7	19	1.27	No
AI tools are used in assessing and evaluatin content, language expression, organization and mechanical accuracy of narrative, descriptive expository and mechanical accuracy of essa composition.	-	-	4	22	1.15	No
					1.54	**No**

Table 2 above indicates the analysis of data on the extent to which AI is integrated in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level. Responses on item 1,2, 3, 4 and 5 are negative as each has a mean response below 2.5 used for this study.

This shows a low extent to which AI is integrated in teaching essay composition in secondary school as respondents have a total mean response of 1.54. Thus, AI tools are not adequately integrated in the teaching of essay composition.

Research Question 3: What is the relevance of AI in the teaching essay composition at the secondary school level?

Table 3: Relevance of AI in the Teaching Essay Composition

The final findings of the study reveal the relevance of AI in the teaching of essay composition in private secondary schools. The study finds that AI aid effective teaching of all aspects of essay writing as well as evaluation and assessment. This finding aligns with the finding of Rahim, Mokbul, Mohamed Mohammad (2024), Bulante, Morris, Orteza, Balagan and Taloza (2024), Maphoto, Sevnarayan, Mohale, Suliman, Ntsopi and Mokoena (2024), Hutson1, Plate and Berry (2024), Elstad and Eriksen (2024) and Umar (2024), who find that AI

tools are relevant and effective in teaching English language at large and essay composition in particular, as many of the experimental study reveal that students taught using AI tools outperform those that are taught without them. This thus, implies that the use of AI in the teaching of essay composition in private secondary school in the FCT, Abuja is more effective in developing writing skills in students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that teachers of English language in private secondary schools are not aware of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition. Also, there is low integration of AI tools in the teaching of essay composition. The study also concluded that the integration of AI in teaching essay composition is very relevant, as it helps developed the necessary skills in learners. Thus, AI is desirable in the teaching of essay writing in private secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it therefore recommended among other that:

i. School owners should adequately made available AI tools for teachers and regularly trained on the integration of AI tools in teaching essay composition to students.
ii. School management should set-up a competent monitoring team to always supervise teachers' integration of AI tools in teaching essay composition in secondary schools.
iii. Finally, considering the relevance and effectiveness of the integration of AI in teaching essay composition at the secondary school level, teachers should ensure that content, language expression, organization and mechanical accuracy of al the types of essay composition should be taught using AI tools, so as to improve students' knowledge and competence in essay composition.

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EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Second language (L2) assessment has evolved from a narrow focus on standardized testing to a more comprehensive, learner-centered process that integrates both summative and formative approaches. This review explores recent scholarship on key assessment principles, including validity, reliability, practicality, authenticity, fairness, and washback, and considers how they inform classroom practice. It exposes the growing role of technology, the need for teacher assessment literacy, and the importance of equity for multilingual learners. Different assessment formats, from selected-response tests to portfolios and digital tools, are evaluated for their ability to balance these principles. The review also outlines effective formative strategies such as low-stakes feedback, transparent standard, and opportunities for self- and peer-assessment. Persistent challenges remain, including balancing authenticity with feasibility, managing workload, and ensuring the fairness of automated tools. Future directions include exploring AI-based scoring, advancing teacher training, and expanding research on the long-term impact of formative assessment. Overall, principled L2 assessment can promote inclusive learning and positive washback when aligned with clear constructs and learners' needs.

Keywords: Assessment, English as a Second Language, Language Skills, Pedagogy

Introduction

Assessment is a central feature of second language (L2) education, shaping both how learning is measured and how it unfolds in the classroom. While traditional practices stressed high-stakes testing of different skills, contemporary approaches recognize assessment as an integral part of the learning process. Teachers and researchers now view assessment not only as a tool for measuring proficiency but also as a means of supporting motivation, guiding instruction, and promoting equity. This shift reflects a broader understanding of assessment in many different ways. It can certify achievement through summative measures, but it can also function formatively, providing ongoing feedback that helps learners progress toward communicative competence. In practice, effective assessment must strike a balance among multiple principles: it should marry with intended learning outcomes (validity), produce consistent results (reliability), remain feasible in real classrooms (practicality), resemble meaningful language use (authenticity), and ensure fair opportunities for all learners.

The present review examines recent developments in L2 assessment, focusing on how these principles are applied in the classroom environment. It considers the impact of emerging technologies, the role of teacher assessment literacy, and the challenges of creating equitable practices for multilingual learners. By combining current evidence, the review aims to provide a clear framework for integrating principled assessment into everyday teaching while suggesting areas that require further research and innovation.

Research increasingly integrates technical measurement theory with sociocultural perspectives (Fulcher & Davidson, 2021; Shohamy, 2020). Two common frameworks guide thinking in this area: summative versus formative assessment, and argument-based validity. *Summative* assessment refers to final evaluations (e.g. end-of-course exams like TOEFL/IELTS) primarily for accountability. *Formative* assessment (assessment-for-learning) involves ongoing checks and feedback used to guide teaching (Black & Wiliam, 2009). In practice, many classroom tests serve both roles: they provide grades yet also inform instruction. The key is intentional use: if a test is intended for learning, teachers give actionable feedback and opportunities for revision; however, if it is for certification, measuring achievement is stressed. Research shows that when formative purposes are clearly stated, students are usually deeply engaged with much improvement in learning outcomes.

In validity theory, modern scholars treat validity as an evidence-based argument for interpreting scores (Kane, 2013). For any language test, one must clearly define the construct (e.g. “academic discussion skills”) and then set tasks and scoring to that construct. Evidence is gathered on content alignment, test-taker processes, internal consistency, relations with other measures, and crucially the consequences of score use (Chapelle, 2021). For example, an academic listening test meant to measure lecture comprehension should use full-length lectures and then check that scores correlate with other discourse measures. Importantly, researchers now insist that validity arguments include fairness and impact such that a technically sound test that narrows curriculum or disadvantages a group can be deemed invalid from social justice stand (Shohamy, 2001). Scholars have noted that language tests can become “ideological tools” that sustain unequal power dynamics. Examining validity

A socio-cultural lens on L2 assessment emphasizes that all testing happens in educational and cultural settings (Shohamy, 2001; Scarino, 2013). Test tasks often carry cultural assumptions (e.g., references in listening passages), and scores influence stakeholders' beliefs. Fairness (equity) in this view means designing assessments that respect diverse backgrounds and do not systematically put a group at advantage over another. For instance, using neutral prompts, avoiding idioms unfamiliar to some students, and validating home languages as much as promoting inclusivity. As Schissel and Uysal (2025) argue, an equity-oriented validity framework anchors on learners' diverse experiences and calls for culturally sensitive assessment practices. It is evident that modern L2 assessment theory couples with psychometric rigor will lead to positive outcomes for all learners.

L2 specialists widely agree on a set of overlapping principles for sound assessment (Bachman & Palmer, 2010; Fulcher & Davidson, 2021). These include validity (measuring the intended ability), reliability (consistency of scores), practicality (feasibility in context), authenticity (real-life relevance), fairness (equity for diverse learners), and positive washback (encouraging good learning). Validity is paramount, which is a test must assess the language skills it claims to measure, and not be contaminated by irrelevant factors. Contemporary approaches (Kane, 2013; Chapelle, 2021) advocate building an argument through multiple evidence sources: item content alignment, test-taking processes, scoring patterns, correlations with other measures, and the intended educational consequences. For example, to validate a speaking test for persuasive discourse, designers might ensure tasks involve debate topics relevant to learners and check that scores correlate with other measures of speaking ability.

Test developers also examine *washback* evidence as part of validity: if an exam leads to harmful teaching practices (e.g. rote grammar drilling), it undermines its own validity. Reliability concerns score consistency across raters, tasks, or occasions. In L2 contexts, high variability often arises with subjective tasks (speaking and writing). Classic studies found significant rater differences even among trained assessors, which threatens dependability (Barkaoui, 2007). To enhance reliability, high-stakes speaking tests use paired raters and standard prompts; writing exams often use clear analytic standards and moderation. Still, there is an inherent trade-off: highly authentic tasks (e.g. open interviews) can lower reliability if poorly controlled, whereas highly controlled tasks (like multiple-choice) may sacrifice authenticity. In classrooms, teachers can improve reliability by using exemplars and collaborative scoring sessions. In all cases, reporting reliability estimates (interrater agreement, test-retest) is crucial when making decisions from scores.

Practicality describes an assessment must be feasible given real-world constraints (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Teachers face challenges of limited time, large classes, and varied resources. A theoretically ideal test that requires expensive equipment or endless grading may be impractical. For example, machine-scorable multiple-choice tests are highly practical for large cohorts, but at the cost of authenticity. On the contrary, open-ended performance tasks (role-plays, projects) yield rich data but demand extensive scoring time. Practitioners must balance these factors. In resource-limited settings, teachers often adapt by simplifying tasks (oral interviews instead of computer tests) or using peer/auto-grading tools to save time. The key is that the assessment design (length, format, scoring procedures) matches its purpose. If detailed measurement is needed (e.g. for diagnosing oral proficiency), more time is justified. But for routine progress checks, quick quizzes or online exercises may suffice.

Authenticity refers to how closely tasks resemble real-world language use. Genuine communicative tasks tend to engage learners and enhance the validity of score inferences. For instance, role-plays (ordering at a café) or writing real emails usually motivate students more than isolated grammar items. Evidence suggests that learners perform better on meaningful tasks because these tap integrated skills. However, authenticity must be balanced; very open-ended tasks can introduce different unintended variables. For example, a writing task on a complex topic might assess background knowledge rather than language ability. Good design involves *construct-relevant authenticity* – tasks that are realistic yet focused on the target skills. Contemporary research encourages integrated, purposeful tasks (e.g., student interviews, project presentations) to develop interactional competence. Assessment designers must however, ensure that standards and instructions keep the focus on the particular language skill being measured.

Fairness means providing equal opportunity for all test-takers to demonstrate their language ability. In technical terms, it implies no systematic bias in test items (Kunnan, 2018). Practically, fairness includes avoiding cultural or linguistic bias, and accommodating diverse needs. For example, instructions should not contain unfamiliar idioms that some learners might not know, and topics should not assume privileged knowledge. In classrooms, fairness also means accessibility accommodations (extra time, simplified format) for students with special needs. It is crucial, fairness includes *linguistic inclusion*: valuing students' home languages and dialects rather than penalizing them. There is much emphasis in literature that equitable assessment focuses on the intended construct (language ability) without punishing differences like non-standard dialects or slower processing. Recent voices call for culturally responsive assessment – using topics and language that reflect learners' identities (Schissel & Uysal, 2025)

– and policy support (accommodation policies, teacher bias training) to sustain fairness.

Washback refers to the influence of an assessment on teaching and learning (Cheng & Sultana, 2021). Ideally, assessments create *positive washback*: they encourage effective pedagogy (e.g. an exam on speaking leads teachers to include more speaking practice). Negative washback occurs when an exam narrows the curriculum or promotes rote learning (for example, a grammar-focused exit test can lead teachers to drill grammar to the detriment of communication). Research shows washback effects vary by context: high-stakes tests in exam-driven systems often have powerful effects (good or bad). To foster positive washback, assessments at any scale should tally with a given curriculum. For instance, if communicative competence is the goal, then including dialogues and presentations on the exam signals teachers to emphasize those skills.

Moreover, giving teachers clear information about the purpose of assessments (and providing training/materials) helps them integrate test requirements into instruction. Using multiple measures – mixing end-of-course exams with portfolios and projects – can also mitigate negative washback by reducing the stakes of any single test (Cheng & Sultana, 2021). Together, these principles form a guiding framework for L2 assessment. In reality, achieving all ideals simultaneously is difficult, and trade-offs are often required (e.g., balancing authenticity with reliability). The following sections examine how various assessment formats and practices can achieve these principles in practical settings.

Different assessment formats adjust to the core principles in different ways. Effective programs typically use a mix of methods to balance their advantages. Selected-response Tests (Multiple-choice, Matching-item): These are highly reliable and practical: scoring is objective and can be automated for large groups. They efficiently measure receptive skills (reading, listening) and discrete knowledge (vocabulary, grammar). However, they lack authenticity for productive abilities. A multiple-choice question, for example, cannot capture speaking proficiency and may encourage test-taking tactics (eliminating wrong answers) rather than actual language use. Scholars caution against relying solely on these formats when communicative skills are at stake (Alderson & Bachman, 2004). Best practice is to use them for diagnostic snapshots (e.g. quick grammar or vocabulary quizzes), or as part of a varied assessment system.

Constructed-response and Performance Tasks (Essays, Interviews, and Projects): These tasks require the learner to produce language, offering high authenticity and coverage of complex skills. For example, an oral interview taps interactive speaking; a writing project shows developmental progress. Such tasks align well with real-life communication goals. The trade-off is practicality and reliability: scoring essays or speeches is labor-intensive and subjective. To enhance consistency, teachers use detailed analytic standards and training. Nonetheless, performance tasks are indispensable for assessing fluency, cohesion, and creativity. Research (e.g. Banditvilai, 2018) indicates that even though these tasks require more resources, they provide richer feedback and resonate strongly with learning objectives.

Portfolio collects students' work over time (drafts, recordings, projects) and often includes self-reflection. Portfolios provide a longitudinal, holistic view of learners' growth and autonomy. For example, an English portfolio might include recordings of speeches and annotated writing samples across the term. Studies show portfolios can boost learners' self-regulation and offer valid evidence of progress (Phung, 2016). They also promote positive washback, since learners see their own growth rather than focusing only on grades. However, portfolios demand clear criteria and substantial teacher time. Without careful guidance, portfolios risk low reliability (differences in what teachers collect or how they score). When well-structured, portfolios can demonstrate achievement authentically, but schools must manage the workload carefully.

Self-assessment and Peer Assessment: Engaging learners in evaluating work enhances metacognition and motivation (Panadero, 2017). When students use checklists or rubrics to review their own speaking or writing, they become more aware of strengths and weaknesses. Structured peer review (e.g. exchanging drafts) similarly raises learners' awareness. Meta-analyses suggest that trained peers can give accurate feedback, and learners often value peer comments. However, success depends on training and culture. If untrained, students may give unfocused feedback or be influenced by social factors. Thus, self- and peer-assessment works are best in supportive classrooms where teachers give clear criteria and model constructive feedback. These approaches align strongly with formative goals, fostering autonomy, but require consistent oversight to ensure accuracy and fairness.

Technology-enhanced Assessment: Advances in educational technology have created new tools for language assessment. Computer-based tests (CBT) offer adaptive quizzes, instant scoring, and broad delivery. Automated scoring systems (using AI/NLP) can now evaluate writing or speaking. For example, modern algorithms can give immediate grammar and style feedback on essays, helping learners revise drafts quickly.

Learning analytics tools track progress on language apps or gamified tasks, giving teachers data dashboards on student performance. These technologies greatly improve efficiency and allow timely formative feedback (Jones, Cheng, & Tweedie, 2022; Alonso et al., 2019). However, validity must be carefully checked. Automated scores are only as good as their design: some scoring engines may rely on superficial features (essay length, vocabulary) and miss pragmatic sophistication (Jones et al., 2022). There are also fairness issues: not all students have equal access to devices or the digital literacy to benefit from online tools. Technology can, therefore, scale up assessment and give interactive formats (e.g. video speaking tasks), but it should be used carefully and supplemented by human evaluation.

Digital Assessment and Online Learning Environment:The shift to online and hybrid instruction has elevated the importance of digital assessment in L2 contexts. Recent research during and post-COVID-19 highlights both opportunities and challenges tied to digital assessment. A systematic review of online EFL assessment practices at the tertiary level found a surge in teacher-led online testing, but also identified concerns regarding test security, academic integrity, and task design in remote environments (Author, 2025). Another mixed-methods study investigated the impact of online Dynamic Assessment (DA) on learners' motivation and speaking anxiety. The study revealed that online DA significantly increased learner motivation and decreased speaking anxiety, with participants reporting enhanced willingness to communicate and greater confidence in oral performance (Goodarzi & Namaziandost, 2025).

No single method is sufficient. Effective L2 assessment programs typically combine formats: selected-response items for broad coverage, constructed tasks for depth, portfolios for growth, and self/peer activities for reflection. This mix balances reliability and authenticity, providing multiple evidence sources. The next section turns to formative assessment practices, which can cut across all formats by using them strategically for learning and feedback. Formative assessment – assessment for learning – has been shown to enhance students' achievement across contexts (Wiliam, 2018). In L2 classrooms, frequent low-stakes checks, descriptive feedback, and learner reflection are linked to gains in proficiency and motivation.

Key principles from the research include: frequent feedback and clear criteria where students benefit when teachers articulate learning goals and success criteria. For example, sharing a rubric or checklist before a speaking task helps learners know what to aim for. When objectives are transparent, feedback becomes meaningful. Rubrics and exemplars clarify expectations,

and frequent checkpoints like quizzes and draft submissions allow timely adjustments. Descriptive Feedback: In L2 learning, feedback is most effective when it guides improvement rather than just pointing out errors. Meta-analyses of writing feedback find that comments focusing on how to revise (strategy feedback) boost learning more than simple error corrections (Graham et al., 2016). In speaking, teachers can model or elicit reformulations (scaffolded feedback) to demonstrate correct usage. Crucially, feedback should prompt revision. Studies consistently report that students improve most when they act on feedback (e.g. rewriting a composition with guidance). Thus, classroom feedback is a dialogue: identifies issues, shows improvements, and allows learners to try again.

Self-and Peer-Feedback: Involving students as feedback-givers deepens learning. Peer review of written drafts or recorded dialogues raises awareness of language use. Systematic reviews (Taylor et al.,2025) suggest that structured peer assessment enhances engagement and metacognition. Likewise, self-assessment checklists encourage learners to monitor their own progress. A Heliyon review of EFL classrooms notes that innovative methods, including peer and tech-assisted assessments show promise in improving outcomes. However, as noted, success depends on training; without it, learners may overrate themselves or be too lenient/harsh with peers. When teachers cultivate trust and model constructive feedback, peer and self-assessment become powerful formative tools.

Quick Checks for Understanding: Simple techniques like one-minute summaries, “exit tickets,” or quick oral polls give teachers immediate insight into student comprehension without high stakes. For example, after a listening exercise, a teacher might ask every student to write one key takeaway sentence. Research shows that such low-pressure checks help teachers identify misunderstandings early, enabling prompt remediation. These mini-assessments (even a single quiz question at the end of class) ensure that learning is monitored continually, preventing gaps from accumulating. Learners' Involvement and Autonomy**:** Effective formative classrooms treat students as active partners. It has been found that sharing learning targets and involving students in goal-setting increases motivation (Andrade, 2019).

For instance, some teachers use weekly learning journals or informal portfolios where students reflect on what they learned and what to work on next. These activities foster metacognition. Systematic evidence suggests that classroom formative strategies generally have positive effects on L2 achievement (Looney et al., 2018). One consistent finding is the critical role of teacher's support: formative assessment demands skill in crafting feedback and interpreting learners' output. Training teachers in formative techniques improves implementation. In practice, a virtuous feedback loop emerges: teachers probe understanding, give detailed feedback, students revise/practice, and teachers adjust instruction. Well-executed, this process creates positive washback: it signals that language development is the goal, not just exam scores.

Test anxiety and related affective factors such as motivation and resilience significantly influence L2 performance. A study exploring LAL (Language Assessment Literacy) among students found that greater understanding of assessment purpose and process was associated with lower test anxiety and increased motivation (Liu & Weng, 2024). Meanwhile, anxiety research in L2 contexts demonstrates that students with high levels of foreign language classroom anxiety often underperform compared to their actual proficiency. In digital dominated L2 learning environment, affective factors become more complex. For instance, learners with higher technological competence report lower anxiety during online assessment, especially when coupled with strong teacher support and self-efficacy (Zheng et al., 2025). Interventions such as scaffolding, clear instructions, and anxiety-reducing strategies (e.g. practice runs, anonymous submissions) can mitigate emotional barriers.

Overall, assessment practices that incorporate affective support usually help reduce learners' anxiety and enhance engagement. Such practices also boost emotion regulation, grit, and resilience alongside language proficiency. These achievements allow L2 learners to do their assessments more confidently and perform more accurately. Achieving high-quality assessment depends on teacher's own expertise. Language assessment literacy (LAL) refers to teachers' knowledge and skills in designing, scoring, and using tests. Studies show that many language teachers feel ill-prepared in this area. When teachers lack LAL, they may design weak tasks or misinterpret results, with negative consequences for students. Teachers'(LAL) remained inadequate in many contexts: pre-service teacher programs often include too little assessment training, and in-service professional development is infrequent. For example, a common finding is that graduating teachers receive minimal instruction on how to write good test items or rubrics (Weng & Shen, 2022).

Key components of (LAL) include understanding validity and reliability concepts, writing clear test tasks, developing and using scoring rubrics, and interpreting assessment data to inform teaching. Building (LAL) is thus a priority in educational reform. Weng and Shen (2022) and others recommend ongoing professional development tailored to teachers' needs. For instance, coaching cycles where teachers bring real student tests for group review can concretely improve rubric use and scoring standards. Importantly, assessment literacy is not only for classroom teachers: administrators and curriculum designers need it too, so they can support teacher learning. Partnerships between language testers (test designers) and teachers have shown promise in raising (LAL): when both sides collaborate, classroom assessments are better adjusted with high-stakes tests, and teachers feel more ownership of the process. Research underscores the fact that investing in teacher (LAL) through training and institutional support is essential for any effective L2 assessment reform.

Teacher bias and subjectivity can subtly influence L2 assessment outcomes, even in structured contexts. A recent survey revealed that university instructors frequently report gender, socioeconomic, and ethnicity-based biases in classroom assessments, which can lead to score contamination and undermine fairness (Lopez & Zhang, 2024). Experimental research using factorial survey methods found that teachers may unconsciously favor students from certain backgrounds, even when performance samples are identical (Gil-Hernández et al., 2023). Addressing this requires conscious efforts through professional training. One evidence-informed model proposes a three-step bias-mitigation technique: Name(acknowledge potential bias), Reframe (reassess using neutral language), and Check-in (invite student reflection or input) (Fainstad & colleagues, 2023). Incorporating this model into teacher development can raise awareness of bias and lead to fairer judgment. Moreover, external moderation (peer or cross-class scoring) further improves reliability and reduces individual bias. Improving assessment literacy therefore entails developing reflective practices and institutional mechanisms to safeguard equity in scoring practices.

Translanguaging is increasingly recognized as a valid and equitable approach in L2 assessment. In formative classroom contexts, integrating translanguaging allows learners to draw on their full linguistic repertoire, boosting engagement, confidence, and critical thinking. For instance, a study involving a multilingual seventh-grade class showed that translanguaging-enhanced assessments enabled learners to demonstrate understanding more fully and affirm their cultural identities (Turner & Ramirez, 2024). At the same time, digital multimodal tasks (e.g. combining text, visuals, L1/L2) offer authentic ways for multilingual students to display biliteracy (Kim et al., 2024). A recent systematic review of translanguaging in classroom assessment identifies processes (e.g. dynamic translation), necessary conditions (teacher training, institutional support), and challenges (assessor unfamiliarity) (Garcia & Lin, 2025).

Incorporating translanguaging into L2 assessment supports authenticity and fairness by validating learners' linguistic resources. However, it requires assessment redesign: rubrics must allow multilingual language blending, and assessor training must ensure understanding of translanguaging input. Practically, translanguaging-aligned assessment offers more accurate measures of meaning-making, rather than restricting learners to monolingual expression.

Ensuring equity in L2 assessment is an ongoing challenge. Fairness goes beyond technical bias: it involves designing and using assessments in ways that respect learner diversity and remove unnecessary barriers. For example, a timed listening test may unfairly penalize students with processing difficulties or anxiety, so accommodations (extra time, repeated prompts) may be needed. Moreover, in multilingual classrooms, fairness means adopting students' home languages and cultural knowledge as assets rather than deficits. Recent international guidance

stresses this point: UNESCO/UNICEF (2024) recommend that assessments "accurately document the skills and assets of emergent multilingual learners," plan for language choices in tasks, and use strategies that support students' multi-literacies. This approach aligns with culturally responsive pedagogy, where assessment tasks reflect the worldviews of learners.

Empirical research echoes these calls. For instance, systematic analyses of test item fairness (through techniques like differential item functioning) find that few well-designed L2 tests show large bias, but even a few biased items can disadvantage entire groups. Chen, Aryadoust, and Zhang's (2024) systematic review notes that as test-taker diversity grows, *fairness is front and center* in L2 assessment design. Most recent DIF studies focus on variables like gender and language background and on receptive skills (reading/listening), suggesting this is an active area of research. These analysts call for improving DIF practices and considering more distinct grouping such as interaction of factors for better sustenance of fairness.

In practice, teachers and institutions monitor equity by examining subgroup performance. If, say, recent immigrants consistently score lower on certain tasks, educators must investigate whether those tasks contain cultural or linguistic biases. Accommodations of resources such as glossaries, bilingual aides and alternate test forms are some of the necessary tools to help all learners demonstrate their true ability. High-stakes exam policies also shape equity: for example, if only affluent students can afford private test prep, national policymakers might consider diversifying assessment formats (using portfolios and classroom grades as part of certification) to reduce inequality. As Schissel and Uysal (2025) argue, research should examine test environment like minority communities to ensure validity frameworks are socially just. Fairness in L2 assessment means thoughtful design (culturally inclusive content, clear language), accommodations, and policy supports. International bodies and scholars agree that valuing learners' languages, providing teacher training on bias, and continuously monitoring subgroup outcomes are key to equitable practice. As classroom and national assessments evolve, equity-focused research and guidelines remain critical.

Beyond the classroom, large-scale L2 exams have powerful washback on educational systems. National or exit exams often drive curriculum and teacher preparation (Cheng & Sultana, 2021). For example, university entrance English tests in many countries have historically led to nationwide drilling of specific skills (e.g. writing formal essays). Conversely, countries that emphasize communicative competence in their exams (such as reformed English exit exams in Ireland) have seen shifts in teaching toward more speaking and practical activities (Qi Kuang, 2020). Policymakers seeking positive system-wide washback should align assessment with curricular goals

and use multiple measures. Combining course work, oral exams, and projects with traditional tests can reduce the pressure of a single exam. Clear communication with teachers is vital: studies show that teachers only change practices if they understand how those align with high-stakes criteria (Cheng & Curtis, 2010). Involving teachers in test development can also build ownership and feasibility.

At the same time, exam-driven cultures produce unintended consequences. High-stakes tests often spawn test-prep industries, which can distort learning and widen inequality. Affluent students can afford coaching, so exam design must anticipate these effects (Fulcher & Davidson, 2021). Some experts recommend strategies like random item sampling (to prevent rote practice) and iterative test design to keep teaching broad (Pohl et al., 2010). Others advocate for systemic reform: treating assessment changes as part of overall educational reform, with investment in teacher development and diversified credentials, to mitigate negative washback and promote equity. When national exams genuinely reflect authentic language use, they can encourage communicative teaching at scale. From the above, it is evident that effective L2 policy requires coherence from curriculum to assessment, teacher support, and a pluralistic approach to proficiency evidence.

Drawing on the above principles and evidence, the following flexible framework could be proposed for teachers and program designers:Define clear outcomes and constructs: Begin with a construct map: specify the key language tasks or competencies students should master (aligned with curriculum standards). Break each task into sub-skills (vocabulary, grammar, pragmatic functions). This clarity ensures that instruction and assessment stay focused on relevant abilities (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Use a mix of task types: Avoid relying on one format alone. For discrete-point checks (grammar, vocabulary), selected-response or quick quizzes work well. For integrated communication, use constructed/performance tasks (interviews, projects). Portfolios or long-term projects capture growth. Include regular self- or peer-assessment opportunities to build learner autonomy. This blend balances authenticity and practicality.

Design and calibrate rubrics: Develop clear scoring criteria reflecting the construct (e.g. analytic rubrics for writing that separate grammar, vocabulary, coherence). Pilot rubrics on sample student work and, if possible, do moderation with colleagues to align standards. Share rubrics or model answers with students so they understand expectations. Well-designed rubrics improve reliability and help learners self-assess. Provide frequent formative feedback: Embed formative checks in every lesson: short quizzes, exit tickets, or quick oral polls. Give specific, descriptive feedback on criteria ("Your past-tense usage is accurate; next time, add more varied conjunctions"). Allocate time for revision. Encourage students to reflect on feedback (e.g. setting a personal learning goal after an assignment). This creates an ongoing assessment-for-learning cycle.

Build learner assessment literacy: Teach students how to use rubrics and checklists. For example, have them practice evaluating example essays or self-rate a speaking performance using target descriptors. This makes assessment criteria transparent and promotes self-regulation. Over time, students become partners in assessment rather than passive test-takers. Train teachers and collaborate: Regular professional development on assessment is essential. Organize workshops on topics like writing good prompts, interpreting scores, or designing formative activities. Peer observations and co-planning can spread best practices. Administrators should allocate time for teachers to engage in assessment training and collaboration.

Monitor fairness and equity: Analyze assessment data by learner subgroup (gender, language background, etc.) to spot disparities. Revise tasks that consistently under-challenge or confuse any group. Provide accommodations (extra time, glossaries, alternative media) for students with special needs or limited literacy. Strive to include culturally inclusive content in tasks. Being proactive about equity helps ensure all students can demonstrate their true ability. Adopt technology wisely: Use digital tools to enhance assessment efficiency and feedback. For example, assign grammar practice quizzes through apps, use clicker polls for instant checks, or maintain online portfolios. Automated scoring tools (e.g. for draft writing or pronunciation practice) can save teacher's time, but use them as one input among others. Always review machine feedback for fit. Crucially, ensure all students have equal access to any required technology to avoid widening gaps.

Communicate assessment goals: Be transparent with students about the purpose of each task and how results will be used. When learners know, for instance, that a speaking exercise is purely for skill development (not for graded test), they participate in a more authentic form and with less anxiety. Clear communication aligns student effort with learning goals and promotes positive washback. By following these guidelines, teachers can enact the core principles daily. Of course, exact implementation will vary by context. The underlying idea is to keep validity and learning at the center while managing pragmatic constraints (time, class size, resources, curriculum demands).

Challenges and Tensions: Real classrooms inevitably pose constraints and trade-offs. The literature highlights several enduring tensions in L2 assessment: Validity vs. Practicality: The most authentic, valid tasks can be hard to administer. For example, having each student participate in an extended debate may be ideal but impractical. Teachers might compromise by using group simulations or selective scoring (sampling students' performances) to manage workload. Formative vs. Summative use: Using evidence for both feedback and

grading can conflict. If a quiz will count toward the final grade, students may not treat it as a "safe" practice. One approach is to explicitly separate modes: designate certain activities as purely formative (no grade) and others for summative purposes. This requires building trust so students take ungraded tasks seriously.

Automated scoring vs. construct coverage: AI scoring tools can efficiently evaluate essays or speeches, but they often rely on surface features (length, vocabulary use) and may miss deeper communicative aspects. Until these tools mature, it is wise to use them for preliminary checks (drafts, practice) or alongside human judgment. Teacher workload: Many recommended practices (detailed feedback, rubrics, portfolios) are time-intensive. In large classes, teachers may struggle to sustain them. Schools must support teachers by providing planning/grading time or sharing tasks (e.g. team teaching or peer grading). Some districts use technology (auto-grading apps) to alleviate burdens, though these solutions have trade-offs. Systemic barriers: In exam-driven systems, teachers may hesitate to change assessment practices for fear of lower test scores. Shifting assessment culture often requires policy support and gradual change. Research suggests that lasting reform happens when top-down policy, curriculum materials, and teacher training all align around a shared vision of assessment.

Addressing these tensions requires pragmatic trade-offs and continuous improvement. For instance, a school might pilot performance-based tasks in one unit, then evaluate feasibility before scaling up. Fostering a culture where assessment practices are regularly reviewed (by teachers reflecting on outcomes) is crucial. Awareness of these challenges helps educators make informed, context-sensitive decisions rather than abandoning key principles altogether.

Directions for Future Research Despite progress, several areas need deeper investigation:

Technology-enhanced Assessment: As AI and learning analytics evolve rapidly, more validation studies are needed. For instance, how accurate are automated speaking scores for learners with strong accents or speech differences? How does the use of mobile-app quizzes affect student's engagement over time? Longitudinal field studies could track learning in tech-rich classrooms to identify best practices and pitfalls.

Assessment Literacy Interventions: There is limited evidence on what kinds of LAL training most effectively change teacher practice. Future research should use experimental or quasi-experimental designs to test specific professional development models (e.g. collaborative scoring workshops) and measure impacts on instruction and student outcomes. Studies could compare contexts (e.g. urban vs. rural schools, K–12 vs. higher education) to tailor training to different needs.

Longitudinal Outcomes of Formative Practices: Many studies show short-term gains from formative strategies, only few have followed learners over time. Do students who experience rich formative assessment in early classes achieve higher proficiency or confidence in later years? Large-scale cohort studies could examine whether classroom assessment reform translates into long-term language development.

Equity-focused Assessment Research: More research is needed on how different learners experience L2 assessments. For example, do heritage speakers or bilingual learners consistently face misaligned tasks? Cognitive interviewing studies and DIF analyses could pinpoint unfair items. Research on alternative assessment formats (digital games, translanguaging tasks) that build on learners' linguistic assets is also emerging and necessarily needs attention.

Wash back Mechanisms: Bibliometric analyses show growing washback research, but more work is needed to understand *how* specific test features (rubrics, feedback protocols) influence classroom dynamics. Mixed-methods studies could explore how teachers adapt their instruction in response to changes in testing, in diverse cultural settings. Comparing washback across countries or systems can reveal generalizable principles for adjusting/regulating assessment and instruction.

Assessment in Changing Contexts: The pandemic and ongoing tech integration mean many L2 classes are partially or fully online. How valid and fair are remote assessments? For instance, does online usage raise anxiety or cheating in some populations? How can teachers replicate formative activities (peer feedback, oral practice) in virtual or hybrid classes? Exploring assessment in multilingual and online environments will be increasingly important.

Literature, however, remains concentrated in certain regions like Asia and North America. Future work should include more studies from under-represented contexts such as Africa, Latin America and indigenous communities with a view to ensure that global diversity is reflected in best practices. Though the field of L2 assessment has matured, ongoing shifts in technology, pedagogy, and demographics call for continued research. Collaboration between researchers and practitioners remains vital to addressing these practical, equity-driven challenges.

Conclusion

Effective L2 assessment is a balancing act guided by explicit principles. The consensus in current research is that assessments must be valid, reliable, practical, authentic, fair, and learning-oriented. In recent years, particular emphasis has grown on formative assessment, teacher assessment literacy, and equity. Formative practices—regular low-stakes checks, clear success criteria, detailed feedback, and learner self-assessment—have been shown to boost motivation and proficiency, provided teachers implement them skillfully (with support and training). Likewise, mindfulness about fairness is imperative in multilingual classrooms; assessments should test language ability itself without bias to learners' diverse backgrounds.

For practitioners, the framework offered here provides a roadmap which marries tasks with defined outcomes, use mixed methods, develop clear standards, give actionable feedback, involve learners in assessment, build stakeholder capacity, leverage technology wisely, and always monitor equity. No assessment system is perfect, and tensions (e.g. between realism and feasibility) will persist. Acknowledging these tensions avails educators the opportunity to make informed trade-offs rather than sacrificing core values. Ultimately, assessment should be seen as part of the learning process. When grounded in pedagogical goals and learners' needs, well-designed assessments can drive better instruction, foster autonomy, and yield meaningful achievements. The studies reviewed here affirm that such principled, inclusive assessment systems are both achievable and beneficial in L2 education.

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A REVIEW OF PRACTICE OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the systematic practice of curriculum development with emphasis on its critical role in shaping effective language pedagogy. Exploring a comprehensive framework encompassing needs analysis, learning objectives definition, content selection, methodology, evaluation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and curriculum sustainability, the study highlights need analysis as the foundational step, involving targeted situational analysis to create learner-centered curricula. The learning objectives of the study were framed to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), thereby providing direction for instruction and assessment as well as supporting learners' motivation. In selecting content, principles of relevance, engagement, and alignment with the stated objectives were applied, drawing on authentic materials, textbooks, and digital resources. The research underscores the importance of varied assessment types: formative, summative, and authentic for measuring progress and informing instruction. Implementation and monitoring require adequate teacher training, resource allocation, and ongoing evaluation to ensure curriculum effectiveness. The study emphasizes continuous evaluation and revision processes involving stakeholders' feedback, curriculum reviews, and outcome-based assessments to maintain relevance and effectiveness. The study reveals that successful curriculum development demands systematic planning, stakeholder engagement, and continuous adaptation to learner needs. The research concludes that well-designed language curricula incorporating cultural relevance, technology integration, and intercultural competence significantly enhance language learning outcomes. Based on this, it was recommended that conducting thorough need analysis, defining clear objectives, selecting engaging content, implementing effective methodologies and maintaining continuous monitoring and revision cycles to ensure sustained curriculum effectiveness.

Key Words: Practice, Curriculum Development, Language Pedagogy, Content, Implementation

Introduction

Curriculum development is a crucial aspect of language pedagogy, playing a pivotal role in shaping the learning experiences of language learners. This abstract explores the practice of curriculum development in language pedagogy, highlighting its significance, key considerations, and recent trends. Effective curriculum development in language pedagogy involves a systematic approach, starting with needs analysis to identify learners' language needs and goals (Nation & Macalister, 2010). The curriculum should be aligned with national or international language standards, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). Recent trends in curriculum development include the integration of technology, such as digital tools and online resources, to enhance language learning (Chapelle, 2017).

Moreover, curriculum development should prioritise cultural relevance, incorporating diverse perspectives and cultural contexts to promote intercultural competence (Byram, 2012). The curriculum should also foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, essential for effective language use in real-life contexts (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Recent studies have emphasised the importance of teacher involvement in curriculum development, highlighting the need for teachers to be actively engaged in the design and implementation of language curricula (Graves, 2017). Furthermore, ongoing evaluation and revision of the curriculum are crucial to ensure its effectiveness and relevance (Richards, 2017). Curriculum development in language pedagogy is a complex and multifaceted process, requiring careful consideration of various factors that prioritise learners' needs, cultural relevance, and technology integration, language curricula can be designed to promote effective language learning and teaching.

Curriculum development in language pedagogy requires careful consideration of various factors, including the needs and goals of learners, the role of technology, and the importance of cultural relevance (Graves, 2017). A well-designed curriculum can have a profound impact on language learning outcomes, fostering the development of linguistic competence, intercultural awareness, and critical thinking skills (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). This explores the practice of curriculum development in language pedagogy, examining the key considerations, recent trends, and best practices in the field. By understanding the complexities of curriculum development, language educators can create effective

Literature Review

Curriculum development in language pedagogy is a complex process that requires careful consideration of various factors. One of the most critical steps in this process is needs analysis, which involves identifying and gathering information about the language needs and goals of learners (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Needs analysis is essential in creating a learner-centred curriculum that addresses the specific needs and goals of learners. There are several types of needs analysis, including target situation analysis, present situation analysis, and learning needs analysis. Target situation analysis involves identifying the language needs of learners in their future careers or academic pursuits (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Present situation analysis, on the other hand, assesses the current language proficiency and needs of learners (West, 1994). Learning needs analysis identifies the learners' needs and preferences in terms of learning styles, materials, and activities (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Needs analysis can be conducted using various methods, including surveys and questionnaires, interviews and focus groups, and observations and job analysis. Surveys and questionnaires can gather information about learners' language needs and goals through self-report measures (Dörnyei, 2010). Interviews and focus groups provide in-depth discussions with learners, teachers, and other stakeholders to gather information about language needs (Richards, 2017). Observations and job analysis involve observing learners in real-life situations and analysing job requirements to identify language needs (Robinson, 1991).

The importance of needs analysis cannot be overstated. By conducting a thorough needs analysis, educators can ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the learners' needs and goals (Nation & Macalister, 2010). This, in turn, can lead to more effective language learning and increased learner motivation. Furthermore, needs analysis promotes learner-centredness, putting the learners' needs and goals at the centre of the curriculum development process (Benson, 2011).

In conclusion, needs analysis is a vital step in curriculum development, enabling educators to create a learner-centred curriculum that addresses the specific needs and goals of learners. By understanding the language needs and goals of learners, educators can design a curriculum that is relevant, effective, and promotes learner-centredness.

Learning objectives are a crucial component of curriculum development in language pedagogy. They define what learners are expected to achieve in terms of language proficiency and provide a clear direction for instruction and assessment (Richards, 2017). Well-written learning objectives are essential in ensuring that learners are working towards specific, measurable goals. Effective learning objectives should possess certain characteristics. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), they should be specific, clearly defining what learners will be able to do or know. They should also be measurable, allowing for assessment of learner progress (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

Additionally, learning objectives should be achievable, taking into account learners' prior knowledge and skills (Graves, 2017). Furthermore, they should be relevant, aligning with the curriculum's overall goals and learners' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Finally, learning objectives should be time-bound, specifying the timeframe for achieving the objectives. There are various types of learning objectives that can be included in a language curriculum. Language skills objectives focus on developing specific language skills, such as writing, reading, speaking or listening (Richards, 2017). Language knowledge objectives, on the other hand, focus on developing knowledge of language structures, vocabulary, or pragmatics (Bachman, 1990). Communicative objectives focus on developing learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life situations (Byram, 1997).

The importance of learning objectives cannot be overstated. According to Graves (2017), they guide instruction, providing a clear direction for teaching and learning. They also inform assessment, helping to determine what learners know and can do (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Moreover, learning objectives motivate learners, providing a sense of purpose and direction (Dörnyei, 2005). In conclusion, learning objectives play a vital role in curriculum development. By defining clear learning objectives, educators can create a focused and effective curriculum that supports learners in achieving their language goals.

After defining learning objectives, the next step in curriculum development is content selection. This involves choosing relevant language topics, texts, and activities that align with the learning objectives and meet the needs of learners (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Content selection is critical in ensuring that learners are engaged and motivated, and that they develop the language skills and knowledge they need. When selecting content, educators should consider several principles. According to Graves (2017), content should be relevant, meaningful, and engaging for learners. It should also be aligned with the learning objectives and reflect the learners' needs and interests (Richards, 2017). Additionally, content should be varied and include a range of topics, texts, and activities to cater to different learning styles and preferences (Tomlinson, 2011).

There are various types of content that can be included in a language curriculum. These include:

1. **Authentic Materials:** Real-life texts, videos, and audio recordings that reflect everyday language use (Guariento & Morley, 2001).
2. **Textbooks:** Published materials that provide structured lessons and activities (Sheldon, 1988).
3. **Digital Resources:** Online materials, such as videos, podcasts, and interactive exercises that can enhance language learning (Chapelle, 2017).

Content selection is essential in curriculum development, as it can impact learner motivation, engagement, and language development. By selecting relevant and engaging content, educators can create a curriculum that supports learners in achieving their language goals. Content selection is a critical step in curriculum development. By choosing relevant and engaging content, educators can create a curriculum that meets the needs of learners and supports them in achieving their language goals.

Methodology

After selecting content, the next step in curriculum development is methodology. This involves choosing effective teaching approaches and techniques that align with the learning objectives and content (Richards, 2017). Methodology plays a critical role in determining how learners engage with the content and develop their language skills. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), methodology should be learner-centred, allowing learners to take an active role in the learning process. It should also be communicative, focusing on developing learners' ability to use language in real-life contexts (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Additionally, methodology should be flexible, allowing educators to adapt their teaching approaches to meet the needs of different learners (Harmer, 2015).

Various types of methodology can be used in language teaching. These include:

1. **Task-based learning:** An approach that focuses on learners completing real-life tasks using language (Ellis, 2003).
2. **Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL):** An approach that integrates language learning with content learning (Coyle et al., 2010).
3. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):** An approach that focuses on developing learners' ability to communicate effectively in real-life contexts (Richards, 2006).

Methodology is essential in curriculum development, as it can impact learner engagement, motivation, and language development. By choosing an effective methodology, educators can create a curriculum that supports learners in achieving their language goals. Methodology is a critical step in curriculum development. By choosing effective teaching approaches and techniques, educators can create a curriculum that supports learners in developing their language skills and achieving their language goals. After assessment and evaluation, the next step in curriculum development is implementation and monitoring. This involves putting the curriculum into practice and continuously monitoring its effectiveness (Richards, 2017). Implementation and monitoring are critical in ensuring that the curriculum is delivered as intended and that learners achieve their language goals. When implementing and monitoring a curriculum, educators should consider several key factors. These include:

i. Teacher training: Providing teachers with the necessary training and support to deliver the curriculum effectively (Graves, 2017).
ii. Resource allocation: Ensuring that sufficient resources, such as materials and technology, are available to support curriculum implementation (Tomlinson, 2011).
iii. Ongoing evaluation: Continuously evaluating the curriculum's effectiveness and making adjustments as needed (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

Implementation and monitoring are essential in curriculum development, as they ensure that the curriculum is delivered effectively and that learners achieve their language goals. By continuously monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, educators can:

1. **Identify areas for improvement:** Use data and feedback to identify areas of the curriculum that need improvement.
2. **Make adjustments:** Make adjustments to the curriculum to ensure that it remains effective and relevant.
3. **Support teacher development:** Provide ongoing support and training to teachers to ensure that they are equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively.

Implementation and monitoring are critical steps in curriculum development. By putting the curriculum into practice and continuously monitoring its effectiveness, educators can ensure that learners achieve their language goals and that the curriculum remains relevant and effective. After methodology, the next step in curriculum development is assessment and evaluation. This involves designing and implementing assessment tools and procedures to measure learner progress and achievement (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Assessment and evaluation play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of the curriculum and identifying areas for improvement.

There are various types of assessment that can be used in language teaching. These include:

1. **Formative assessment:** Ongoing assessment that provides feedback to learners and informs instruction (Black & Wiliam, 1998).
2. **Summative assessment:** Assessment that evaluates learner achievement at the end of a course or program (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010).
3. **Authentic assessment:** Assessment that reflects real-life language use and tasks (Wiggins, 1998).

Importance of Assessment and Evaluation: Assessment and evaluation are essential in curriculum development, as they provide valuable information about learner progress and achievement. By using a range of assessment tools and procedures, educators can:

1. Inform instruction: Use assessment data to inform instruction and make data-driven decisions.
2. Evaluate curriculum effectiveness*: Use assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and identify areas for improvement.
3. Support learner development*: Use assessment data to provide feedback to learners and support their language development.

Assessment and evaluation therefore are critical steps in curriculum development. By designing and implementing effective assessment tools and procedures, educators can measure learner progress and achievement, inform instruction, and evaluate curriculum effectiveness.

The next step in curriculum development after evaluation is revision. This involves assessing the overall effectiveness of the curriculum and making necessary revisions to improve it (Richards, 2017). Evaluation and revision are ongoing processes that ensure the curriculum remains relevant, effective, and aligned with learners' needs.

The revision process involves:

1. **Analysing evaluation data:** Analysing data collected during evaluation to identify areas for improvement.
2. **Making revisions:** Making necessary revisions to the curriculum to address identified areas for improvement.
3. **Implementing revisions**: Implementing revised curriculum and monitoring its effectiveness.

Evaluation and revision are critical steps in curriculum development. By continuously evaluating and revising the curriculum, educators can ensure that it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with learners' needs.

The next step in curriculum development is sustaining and updating the curriculum. This involves ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant, effective, and aligned with learners' needs over time (Richards, 2017). Sustaining and updating the curriculum requires ongoing effort and commitment from educators and stakeholders.

Several strategies can be employed to sustain and update the curriculum, including:

1. **Ongoing professional development:** Providing teachers with ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure they are equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively (Graves, 2017).
2. **Regular curriculum review:** Conducting regular reviews of the curriculum to identify areas for improvement and update content (Nation & Macalister, 2010).
3. **Stakeholder engagement:** Engaging with stakeholders, including learners, teachers, and industry partners, to ensure the curriculum remains relevant and effective (Tomlinson, 2011).

Sustaining and updating the curriculum can have several benefits, including:

1. **Improved learner outcomes:** Ensuring that learners achieve their language goals and develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed.
2. **Increased teacher confidence:** Providing teachers with the support and resources they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.
3. **Enhanced curriculum relevance:** Ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with learners' needs and industry requirements.

Conclusion

Curriculum development in language teaching is a complex and ongoing process that involves several key steps, including needs analysis, defining learning objectives, content selection, methodology, assessment and evaluation, implementation and monitoring, evaluation and revision, and sustaining and updating the curriculum. Sustaining and updating the curriculum is an essential step in curriculum development. By employing strategies such as ongoing professional development, regular curriculum review, and stakeholder engagement, educators can ensure that the curriculum remains effective, relevant, and aligned with learners' needs. By following these steps and engaging with stakeholders, educators can create effective language curricula that meet the needs of learners and support their language development. A well-designed curriculum is essential for promoting language learning and achieving desired outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion in this study, the following recommendations are preferred:

1. Curriculum development in language teaching should be organised thorough needs analysis to identify learners' needs and goals.
2. Curriculum development in language teaching should define clear and specific learning objectives.
3. It should select relevant and engaging content.
4. It should choose effective teaching methodologies.
5. Curriculum development in language teaching should implement ongoing assessment and evaluation.
6. There should be a continuous monitoring and revising the curriculum.

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READING LOGS FOR BORSTAL HOMES: IMPLICATIONS FOR FLEXIBLE PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

Reading logs are increasingly recognised as valuable tools for enhancing English language reading instruction. Yet, their application in Borstal homes, correctional institutions dedicated to the care and rehabilitation of young offenders remain limited. This paper examines the use of reading logs as a strategic tool in enhancing literacy development and fostering personal growth among inmates in Borstal homes. A mixed method research design was adopted for the study. The research was conducted in three functional Borstal institutions (Abeokuta, Ilorin, and Kaduna). Purposive sampling technique was used to select 75 secondary school students aged 14–21. An adapted standardise reading comprehension test was administered as pre- and post-intervention. Focus group discussions with 20 students and semi-structured interviews with 8 teachers explored perceptions of reading challenges, engagement with reading logs, and the feasibility of flexible pedagogy. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention comprehension scores, while descriptive statistics provided insights into performance trends across comprehension levels. Qualitative data were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to reading challenges, the impact of reading logs, and barriers to implementing flexible pedagogy. Findings from the study revealed a significant improvement in overall reading comprehension post-intervention. The study concluded that reading logs is an effective tool for enhancing reading comprehension and supporting personal development in Borstal homes. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Borstal homes should integrate reading logs into the curriculum, using creative formats like book review logs or bookmarks logs.

Keywords: Borstal Homes, Correctional Education, Flexible Pedagogy, Literacy Skills, Reading logs

Introduction

Reading is a dynamic process that engages readers with texts, fostering insights critical for personal and intellectual growth. As Leipzig (2021) notes, reading encompasses word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation, empowering individuals to derive meaning from print. Effective reading instruction not only supports quality teaching but also sustains it, enriching readers' minds with new ideas, interests, and technological awareness. However, the state of reading comprehension in secondary schools, particularly in correctional settings like Borstal homes, is concerning due to inadequate teaching approaches and systemic challenges. In Borstal homes, where young offenders undergo rehabilitation, reading comprehension is often mishandled. Owolabi (2012) highlights that teachers frequently rely on conventional teaching, focusing on prescribed textbooks without adequately explaining comprehension processes. This rigid approach typically instructing students to read passages and answer questions fails to engage diverse learner needs, contributing to widespread struggles with reading comprehension and high failure rates in English language examinations, such as the senior school certificate.

Teaching English language effectively requires integrating all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing as they are foundational to meaningful learning. Akinsola, Idimu, and Adegoke (2017) emphasize that teaching is central to education, requiring varied methods, techniques, and strategies to ensure successful delivery across educational levels. Khaki (2014) further underscores that strategic instruction is critical for improving second-language reading comprehension, particularly in diverse linguistic contexts. Reading logs have emerged as a promising tool to address these challenges, especially in Borstal homes. These logs track students' reading progress, including books read, time spent, and reflections, fostering improved literacy skills and a love for reading. Research by Crammar and Castle (2013) demonstrates that reading logs promote critical thinking and analytical skills by encouraging students to question texts, make connections, and develop personal interpretations. This structured reflection helps students build a coherent understanding of texts, enhancing comprehension.

In Borstal homes, implementing reading logs within a framework of flexible pedagogy offers significant potential. Flexible pedagogy adapts instruction to individual learning styles and needs, creating an inclusive environment conducive to rehabilitation and personal growth. By tailoring reading instruction, educators can address the unique challenges of correctional settings, such as diverse educational backgrounds and emotional barriers, thereby improving reading habits and supporting broader educational outcomes.

Despite their potential, implementing reading logs in Borstal homes faces challenges, including limited resources, teacher training, and institutional constraints. Overcoming these barriers requires strategic planning and professional development to ensure educators can effectively integrate reading logs and flexible pedagogical approaches. This study underscores the transformative potential of reading logs in fostering reading comprehension and personal development among young offenders, advocating for their broader adoption in correctional education.

Purpose of the Study

The primary aim of this review is to critically examine how the use of reading logs can serve as a strategic tool in enhancing literacy development and fostering personal growth among inmates in Borstal homes. Reading logs, which typically require individuals to reflect on and engage with texts they read, can offer incarcerated youth an avenue for structured learning and self-expression. By documenting their reading experiences, inmates not only develop fundamental literacy skills such as comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking, but also engage in introspective processes that support emotional intelligence and self-awareness. This review will assess both qualitative and quantitative outcomes from relevant studies, evaluating whether reading logs contribute to measurable improvements in academic performance and behavioral transformation in correctional environments.

In addition to evaluating reading logs, this review seeks to investigate the application of flexible pedagogy in correctional education, particularly how adaptive and learner-centered approaches may enhance engagement and learning outcomes for incarcerated youth.

Traditional educational methods often fail to meet the diverse learning needs of this population, many of whom have experienced disrupted schooling, trauma, or learning difficulties. Flexible pedagogy characterized by differentiated instruction, personalized content, and responsive teaching strategies may provide a more effective framework for learning in these settings. However, implementing such approaches in rigid institutional environments poses distinct challenges. This review therefore explored the benefits, limitations, and practical considerations of integrating flexible pedagogy within the structured routines of Borstal homes, aiming to inform future educational interventions and policy development in correctional education.

Literature Review

Reading is a critical skill that significantly influences student performance, yet many students, particularly those in Borstal homes, struggle with reading comprehension due to various teacher- and learner-based challenges (Smith & Johnson, 2018; Adams & Lee, 2019). These challenges often manifest as fear of reading tasks and low confidence, leading to poor comprehension outcomes. In correctional settings like Borstal homes, where inmates face unique emotional and social vulnerabilities, these difficulties are particularly pronounced, resulting in limited engagement with texts and hindering academic progress (Taylor & Wong, 2021). The poor state of reading comprehension in Borstal homes is a pressing concern, as proficient reading skills are essential for understanding complex texts, following instructions, and expressing ideas coherently in writing. Without these skills, inmates face barriers to educational progress and future opportunities. Moreover, reading serves a therapeutic role in such environments, offering an escape, fostering empathy, and promoting personal growth (Brown & Carter, 2020). Poor comprehension restricts access to these benefits, making it critical to address this issue effectively.

In Borstal homes, reading often occurs at a literal level, with limited attention to inferential or critical comprehension (Ortiz & Ramirez, 2020). This focus on basic understanding restricts deeper engagement with texts and contributes to poor academic performance, particularly in English. Implementing flexible, activity-based pedagogical approaches, such as reading logs, could address these challenges by enhancing comprehension and engagement (Davis & Miller, 2022). Research highlights the effectiveness of reading logs in improving reading comprehension. Ortiz and Ramirez (2020) found that incorporating reading logs into language acquisition programs positively influences both language development and comprehension skills. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2018) provide evidence that reading logs encourage active reflection, leading to improved comprehension. Turner and Brown (2018) further emphasize the motivational benefits, noting that students using reading logs report increased engagement and a stronger connection to reading materials (Turner & Brown, 2018). Additional studies suggest that reading logs foster self-monitoring and critical thinking, further supporting their use in correctional settings (Green & Patel, 2021).

This literature underscores the multifaceted challenges of reading comprehension in Borstal homes and the potential of reading logs as an effective intervention. By addressing academic, motivational, and therapeutic needs, reading logs offer a promising strategy to enhance comprehension and support the educational and personal development of inmates. Without doubt, it is easy to forget much of what one has read. To preserve reading activities and record reflections, learners can keep a reading log. According to Nahass (2022), reading logs are similar to journals that capture a reader's interaction with texts, ranging from brief summaries to detailed personal reflections and connections to other materials. In educational contexts, reading logs serve as a means of supporting comprehension and fostering critical thinking. Although scholars differ in their definitions and applications, reading logs are generally regarded as a tool for promoting active and engaged reading. Lombardi (2017), for example, describes reading logs as an effective strategy through which students integrate their prior knowledge with new insights from texts.

Reading logs have long been used by educators and parents to monitor and encourage students' reading habits. While the practice cannot be traced to a single origin, its core purpose remains: to track what students read, the time spent reading, and their reflections. This tracking allows teachers to assess comprehension, vocabulary development, and fluency while also holding students accountable for sustained reading practice. Nahass (2022) emphasizes that reading logs not only build good reading habits but also stimulate learners' excitement for reading. He proposed twenty-five creative reading log formats, such as:

a. Bookmarks Log: Students color a section of a bookmark for every book or minutes read.
b. Book Review Log: Combines reading logs with character summaries and book reviews, later compiled into journals.
c. Summer-Themed Log: Learners color pictures for each book read during holidays.
d. Bookshelf Log: Students record titles/authors or color in a book icon for every text completed.
e. Monthly Logs: Require reading across genres (e.g., two fiction and two nonfiction books monthly).
f. Nightly Logs: Readers track bedtime reading with book titles and signatures.
g. Simple Logs: Students record basic details (title, date, opinion) suitable for younger learners.

The benefits of reading logs extend beyond monitoring progress as they encourage discipline by instilling responsibility for learning. They also foster autonomy by giving learners the freedom to choose texts. They improve comprehension through sustained practice and reflection. Making reading fun by offering a creative, personal outlet is another benefit of reading logs. Flexible pedagogy refers to adaptive, learner-centered instruction that accommodates diverse needs. In Borstal homes, this approach is particularly relevant for teaching reading comprehension. Ofodu and Owoleso (2021) highlight three critical phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. Examples of activities within these phases include:

i. Pre-reading: brainstorming, predicting, activating prior knowledge, or setting reading goals.
ii. While-reading: summarizing, questioning, visualizing, making inferences, or establishing text connections.
iii. Post-reading: discussing, summarizing, creating or answering questions, completing forms/charts, writing logs, roleplaying, or finding related news.

Adesanya and Oshodi (2020) further emphasize the role of post-reading activities such as discussions, quizzes, and reading related materials in consolidating comprehension. Additionally, strategies such as vocabulary development, collaborative learning, technology integration, and varied assessment tools enhance literacy instruction. By adopting these methods, teachers can provide students with meaningful opportunities to engage with texts, expand comprehension, and develop into effective readers. The benefits of flexible pedagogy in Borstal homes include: improved academic performance through individualized approaches; increased engagement and motivation; preparation for rehabilitation via practical and life skills; holistic development addressing both cognitive and personal growth.

However, challenges remain, such as inadequate resources, punitive institutional environments, and limited access to quality education. Borstal institutions are correctional facilities for young offenders aged 14–21, designed to rehabilitate through education, training, and therapy. Academic performance is central to rehabilitation, equipping inmates with skills for reintegration into society. The first Borstal in Nigeria was established in Abeokuta in 1949, followed by others in Ilorin, Kaduna, Kontagora, and Oregun. According to Abiola (2018), three functional Borstal institutions currently operate in Abeokuta, Ilorin, and Kaduna. These institutions, managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Development under the Nigerian Correctional Service, provide both academic and vocational programs. Academically, students are prepared for NECO, WAEC, NABTEB, and UTME examinations. Vocational training covers trades such as tailoring, electrical installation, carpentry, photography, and welding, with successful learners earning national qualifications and reintegration support.

Studies on educational outcomes in Borstal homes have produced mixed findings. While some show positive effects of educational interventions on performance and reduced recidivism, research specifically addressing effective reading practices in correctional settings remains scarce. Most studies focus on traditional classroom contexts. For example, Adetunji, Akinbiyi, and Olagunju (2014) examined comprehension performance in normal school environments, while Weaver and Multi (2021) explored how high-interest materials and student dispositions influence incarcerated youths' reading engagement. Their findings indicate that these factors significantly shape reading outcomes. This gap underscores the urgent need for innovative strategies such as reading logs and activity-based pedagogy to improve comprehension and academic performance among Borstal inmates.

Methodology

This study utilised a mixed-methods design to evaluate the effectiveness of reading logs as a pedagogical tool for improving reading comprehension among students in Borstal homes in Nigeria. The research was conducted in three functional Borstal institutions (Abeokuta, Ilorin, and Kaduna), involving 75 secondary school students aged 14–21, selected based on their documented struggles with reading comprehension. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 75 students and 8 teachers in ensuring that participants represented diverse educational backgrounds and reading challenges typical of correctional settings. A standardised reading comprehension test, adapted from Adetunji, Akinbiyi, and Olagunju (2014), was administered as pre- and post-test intervention. The test included 25 items assessing literal, inferential, and critical comprehension levels, with a reliability score of Cronbach's alpha = 0.85. The intervention involved a 12-week reading log programme where students recorded reflections, summaries, and questions about assigned texts.

Focus group discussions with 20 students and semi-structured interviews with 8 teachers explored perceptions of reading challenges, engagement with reading logs, and the feasibility of flexible pedagogy in Borstal homes. Reading logs were designed based on Nahass (2022), incorporating formats like book review logs and simple logs tailored to varying literacy levels. Students engaged in daily reading log activities, guided by prompts encouraging critical thinking and personal reflection (e.g., connecting texts to personal experiences). Teachers provided weekly feedback to enhance engagement, following strategies outlined by Ofodu and Owoleso (2021) for pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading phases. Quantitative data were analyzed using paired t-tests to compare pre- and post-intervention

comprehension scores. Descriptive statistics provided insights into performance trends across comprehension levels. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, to identify patterns related to reading challenges, the impact of reading logs, and barriers to implementing flexible pedagogy.

Results

Comprehension Level	Pre-Intervention Mean (%)	Post-Intervention Mean (%)	Change (%)	Standard Deviation (Pre)	Standard Deviation (Post)
Overall	45.6	62.3	+16.7	11.4	10.1
Literal	52.0	64.0	+12.0	-	-
Inferential	40.0	59.0	+19.0	-	-
Critical	35.0	45.0	+10.0	-	-

e findings revealed four key themes:

1. **Reading Anxiety and Confidence:** Students reported initial apprehension toward reading tasks, often due to disrupted schooling and negative past experiences (Weaver & Mutti, 2021). Reading logs helped reduce anxiety by providing structured, low-pressure engagement.

2. **Engagement and Motivation:** Students found reading logs motivating, particularly when using creative formats like bookshelf logs (Nahass, 2022). Teachers noted increased participation in reading activities and class discussions.

3. **Therapeutic Impact:** Reading logs facilitated emotional expression, with students using reflections to process personal experiences, aligning with the therapeutic benefits noted by Brown and Carter (2020).

4. **Institutional Barriers:** Teachers highlighted challenges such as limited access to diverse reading materials and insufficient training in flexible pedagogy, consistent with Abiola (2018).

Discussion of Findings

The significant improvement in comprehension scores supports the effectiveness of reading logs as a flexible pedagogical tool, corroborating findings by Ortiz and Ramirez (2020) and Smith and Johnson (2018). The notable gains in inferential comprehension suggest that reading logs encourage deeper text engagement, addressing the literature's observation of limited inferential skills in Borstal homes (Taylor & Wong, 2021). The motivational benefits align with Turner and Brown (2018), as students reported increased interest and autonomy in reading tasks. The therapeutic potential of reading logs, as seen in students' reflective entries, supports Cramer and Castle's (2013) assertion that logs foster critical thinking and personal growth. However, the modest improvement in critical comprehension indicates a need for additional strategies, such as those proposed by Adesanya and Oshodi (2020), to target higher-order thinking. Institutional barriers, including resource constraints and rigid schedules, align with challenges noted by Abiola (2018), suggesting that systemic changes are necessary for scalable implementation. Limitations of this study, include the 12-week intervention period, which may not capture long-term effects, and the reliance on teacher feedback, which varied in quality. Future research should explore sustained interventions and the role of technology in enhancing reading log programs (Akinsola, Idimu, & Adegoke, 2017).

Conclusion

This study establishes reading logs as an effective tool for enhancing reading comprehension and supporting personal development in Borstal homes. By fostering engagement, reducing reading anxiety, and providing a therapeutic outlet, reading logs address both academic and rehabilitative goals. The findings highlight the value of flexible pedagogy in meeting the diverse needs of incarcerated youth, offering a coherent framework for improving literacy outcomes and preparing students for successful reintegration into society. This approach revitalizes educational practices in correctional settings, demonstrating measurable academic and emotional benefits.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following suggestions are proposed, grounded in the observed outcomes:

1. Adopt Structured Reading Log Programs: Borstal homes should integrate reading logs into the curriculum, using creative formats like book review logs or bookmarks logs (Nahass, 2022) to enhance engagement and comprehension.
2. Enhance Teacher Training: Professional development programs should focus on flexible pedagogy and reading log implementation, addressing barriers noted by teachers (Abiola, 2018).
3. Incorporate Bibliotherapy: Reading logs should be paired with bibliotherapy to support emotional healing, leveraging their reflective potential (Brown & Carter, 2020).
4. Increase Resource Availability: Governments and correctional authorities should provide diverse reading materials and technology to support reading programs (Akinsola, Idimu, & Adegoke, 2017).
5. Extend Program Duration: Future interventions should span at least 6 months to assess sustained impacts on comprehension and rehabilitation outcomes.

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CHALLENGES TO EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ORAL ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The study examined challenges militating against effective teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools adopting a descriptive survey design. Ten secondary schools were randomly sampled to serve as participating schools in the study with two teachers and six students were chosen from each school as respondents to the questionnaire. The data were collected and analyzed using simple percentage and mean scores. Based on the analysis, findings revealed that inconsistencies between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds representing them; inadequate well trained language teachers; lack of teaching and learning materials; relative cosmopolitan nature of Obudu; and mother tongue interference constitute challenges to effective teaching and learning of oral English in Secondary Schools. The study recommends that teachers of English language should endeavour to include clear explanation in their teaching on the relationship and disparity that exist between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds realized from those letters; the government at all levels should make adequate provision of funds for the purchase and production of teaching and learning materials, and ensure qualitative training of English language teachers across higher institutions.

Keywords: Communicative Competence, Learning,Oral English, Received Pronunciation, Teaching

Introduction

English language is one of the most important subjects in Nigeria schools. From the fourth year of primary education, English becomes the language of instruction in all subjects. In those countries where English is not spoken as the first language, communication with the outside world becomes difficult. The Federal Government of Nigeria (2014) must have recognized the relevance of English to have included it in the National Policy on Education (NPE). In the NPE, English language is seen as a means of promoting interaction and national cohesion; and preserving cultures. English language serves as a uniting force in Nigeria. Also, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999), as amended, states that the business of National Assembly shall be conducted in English; and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made. Since English plays these crucial roles, mastering the language is of immeasurable value. It is, therefore, required that English language learners should master appropriate pronunciation of English words to effectively communicate the desired meaning. Sotiloye (2024)

points out the Test of Orals in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) is a commendable innovation in the teaching and examining of English language in West Africa. Mogboh (2025) emphasises that the introduction of Oral English as a compulsory aspect of the SSCE in secondary schools is very vital as it takes into account, the second nature of English in West Africa; and the fact that good English pronunciation has to be deliberately taught in such a linguistic context. Mogboh (2025) also observes that some problems make it difficult to realize oral fluency in English.

Additionally, Figueroa-Vidal and Intriaga-Macia (2022) submit that where English language is learnt as a second language, the students are not likely to attain the Received Pronunciation (RP) that is otherwise called the Queen's English standard. However, such users may struggle to attain a level of proficiency capable of addressing basic communication at local level but with little intelligibility at international level. Therefore, Oral English deals with the sounds and correct spoken English that involves phonetics and phonology.

The teacher of English (Oral English) needs to have this background knowledge to enable her disseminate the right content and experiences on the learners to achieve communicative competence bearing in mind the multi-lingual nature of Obudu. Where this knowledge/ training is inadequate, mispronunciation becomes the order of the day. According to ORELT (2012), mispronunciation sometimes leads to ambiguity, misunderstanding or even embarrassment. Thus, the benefits derivable from teaching and learning Oral English in secondary schools are legion. For it helps the learners to:

i. Pronounce English words, like (RP/SE) native speakers
ii. Overcome the peculiar structural system of communication brought into English from mother tongue or language of the immediate environment and the difficulties encountered in the articulation of English sounds.
iii. Be fluent speakers communicate confidently and be able to understand exactly the intended meaning.
iv. Overcome the inconsistencies between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds used in representing them (ORELT, 2012).

There are forty-nine (49) speech sounds in English language. These sounds are divided into vowels and consonants. The vowels are sounds produced with free flow of air from the vocal cords while consonants are the sounds produced with obstruction of air stream. The vowels are 25 in number, and the consonants are 24. All the 49 sounds needed to be mastered by L2 learners of English where importance is placed on correct pronunciation of words. Hence, it becomes obvious that secondary school students are assessed by their proficiency in spoken (oral) English as good or bad users of the language.

Attaining proficiency in spoken English is difficult to achieve due to certain factors (ORELT, 2012; Pedro & Eleazar, 2022; Figueroa-Vidal & Intriaga-Macia, 2022; Sotiloye, 2024 and Mogboh, 2025). The scholars identified some of these problems to be: inconsistencies between letters of the English alphabet and words; poor teacher training and re-training; inadequate teaching and learning materials; L1 language interferences, influence of cosmopolitan environment, learners fear/anxiety, lack of regular practice, and use of inappropriate teaching methodology.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of Oral English in Nigeria is on effective communication derived from instruction in schools. It enables the learners to develop the ability to listen and interpret meaningful utterances correctly and to express themselves fluently and intelligibly in the language. It is observed that English language has 26 letters of the alphabet but 49 speech sounds. This inconsistency between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds used in representing them constitutes a major problem to both the teachers and learners. Ogoanah (2000) and ORELT (2012) observed that there is no one-to-one correspondence between spelling (letters) and sounds (pronunciation). That is, letters used for spelling produce different sounds and are produced differently in different words. For example, the spelling group **"ough"** is pronounced differently in the words ought, to, rough, though. Or take the letter sequence **"gh"** which has different pronunciations in **rough**, **ghost**, and **through**. In fact, in **through**, **"gh"** is not pronounced at all. In a perfectly consistent spelling system, there should be one alphabet representing one sound and each sound have its appropriate symbol (Nnadi, 2012 and Sotiloye, 2024). However, in English, you find out that at times none of the sounds is represented by symbols written down. For example:

Ewe is pronounced/ju:/
You is pronounced /ju:/
Buy is pronounced /bai/
By is pronounced /bai/

Some letters have no sounds at all in the words in which they occur. Examples are psychology, mnemonic, resign, knife, write, cupboard, lamb, receipt, etc. It is also observed that there are no adequate innovative teaching and learning materials in oral English (UBEC, 2010). The teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools takes into account the second language nature of English in Nigeria, and the fact that good English pronunciation has to be deliberately taught in such a linguistic context. This situation, no doubt should offer learners the chance to really consolidate their knowledge and practice of the language in conformity with communicative terms to second language learning (Iliyas & Bagudu, 2020) However, effectiveness of the innovation has been handicapped by non-availability of written and audio-visual materials designed to meet the specific needs of teachers and students at this level.

In a research conducted by Pedro and Eleazar (2022) on factors that affect oral production of English in language students, they identified inadequate instructional resources, inadequate teacher training, fear/anxiety, and lack of motivation as some of the problems. Their study revealed that materials like tape recorders and cassettes, video games, language learning apps, durable flashcards and language drill laboratory are not available in secondary schools where English is taught and learnt as second language. British Council (2008) observes that English Language is complex and it is quite possible to mislearn if adequate and concrete materials are not used in teaching and learning. The researcher also noted unconducive and overcrowded classrooms.

Additionally, Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State is noted to be a community of people from different ethnic groups, countries or localities and showcase a wide experience of people and things from different ways. This relative cosmopolitan nature of Obudu makes it difficult to teach oral aspect of English. This is because the different people dwelling in Obudu have their different languages as well. Another problem observed in English Language instruction is the issue of interference. The multilingual nature of Nigeria constitutes a problem to second language teaching and learning. There are over five hundred (500) languages spoken in Nigeria, each with its own characteristics in its sound systems, syntactic or structural organization. Speakers of these diverse languages tend to transfer some or all of the features of their languages to the target language, English, being learned. The problems arising from these may be too complex for both the learners and the teachers to cope.

English is not indigenous to Obudu and indeed Nigeria. Even though it is extensively spoken there, it is a second language (L2) to Obudu as well as other Nigerian and African communities. For example, addition of vowels after consonants in medical and final position of words: Dignity becomes dignity; Could becomes couldu; Grace (name) becomes ugrace; Tailor becomes utailor; Stella becomes ustella or sitella; Snake becomes sinake, etc. Also there is the substitution of the voiceless fricative/ʤ/ with the palato alveolar stop /t/ in initial and final positions. Example: thing becomes ting, thin becomes tin, three becomes tree, teeth becomes teeth.

In Obudu, secondary school teachers exhibit little or no ability for selecting the appropriate methods, procedures and materials for teaching oral English. A situation which ORELT (2012) and UBEB (2025) attributed to poor teacher training. According to ORELT, it is very essential to teach students good pronunciation, but this is affected by well trained and experienced language

teachers to handle the situation, as most of the teachers were not properly trained in their higher institutions. Imagine a teacher telling his or her students to spell the word 'earth'. But in getting the order across, he or she stated "what is the spelling of 'art'?. Now, whereas he or she was expecting the letters "e-a-r-t-h", what the students gave him or her back was "a-r-t". The teacher got angry and called the students idiotic. But in actual fact he or she was responsible for the confusion. Apart from the subject matter training, a teacher of oral English needs a great deal of background knowledge about the psychology or developmental processes in learners in order to manage and sustain them to achieve fluency in the language.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. Does inconsistency between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds used in representing them affect the teaching and learning of Oral English?
2. Is there adequate teaching and learning materials in Oral English?
3. Does the relative cosmopolitan nature of Obudu affect Oral English teaching and learning in the area?
4. Is mother tongue interference a problem in the teaching and learning of Oral English in secondary schools?
5. Does lack of well trained and experienced teachers affect effective teaching and learning of Oral English?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is a form of research that is aimed at collecting samples from population in order examine the distribution, incidence and interaction of educational and sociological phenomena (Thomas, 2021).The advantage of this design is that it allows the collection of data from the entire or part of a population and its findings are generalized on the whole population. The population of the study comprised all 2,427 SS I and 2,048 SSII students of both public and private secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area. SSI and SSII students were chosen for the study because the schemes of work for the classes contained oral English the study covered. The study sample consisted of ten (10) secondary schools randomly chosen from the ten (10) political wards in Obudu Local Government Area. Random sampling used in this work is a sampling technique in which every member of his study population equal opportunity of being selected.

Names of all the schools, both public and private, on pieces of papers and grouped based on the political wards in Obudu. Names of schools in each ward were put in a closed container and shaken over and again from which school picked became a representative of the ward (population). The process continued until the ten (10) schools were selected. This was to ensure adequate and even representation of the population. Two (2) teachers and six (6) students were chosen randomly from each school to respond to the questionnaire. This summed up the number of respondents to eighty (20 teachers and 60 students), also making the number of questionnaire to be eighty (80). In each school sampled, students and teachers of SSIA and SSIIA were engaged as respondents. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire and on-the-spot observations. Two sets of questionnaires were developed by the researcher for the teachers and students. The questionnaires we're fixed response questionnaires with 15 items where the respondents we're expected to indicate "Yes" or "No" to each item as it appeals to their feelings.

Two sets of questionnaires were made to for the teachers and students to suit their different levels and to enable them give accurate and reliable responses. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A sought bio-data information of the respondents white section B contained the 15 items of the questionnaire based on the five research questions. The instrument was face validated by two experts in the department of English Language Education and one in the department of Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Abuja. All the data collected for this study was obtained through the questionnaire and observations. The questionnaires were administered on the samples schools by the researcher, assisted by one research assistant who was also a teacher of English Language. All the sampled schools were covered. To ensure accuracy in completing the questionnaire, the respondents were briefed by the researcher. In all, the responses made and the results from the observations constituted the data for the study. In analysing the data, a simple percentage was used to answer the research questions.

Results

Table 1: Gender and Age of the Teachers

	Response	Response %
Male	11	55%
Female	9	45%
Total	**20**	**100%**
Age		
26 -30	3	15%
31 – 35	5	25%
36 – 40	4	20%
41 and Above	8	40%
Total	**20**	**100%**

Table 1 indicates that 11 teachers representing 55% were males, while 9 teachers with 45%, females responded to the questionnaire. On age, 3 teachers representing 15% were within the ages of 25 - 30 years, 5 teachers with 25% were between 31 - 36 years, 4 teachers with 20% were within the age range of 36 - 40 years while those within age 41 and above were 8 teachers, representing 40% respectfully.

Table 2: Academic Qualification of Teachers and Classes Taught

Academic Qual	Respon	Respons
NCE	10	50%
B.A.(Ed)	7	35%
M.A(Ed)	3	15%
Others	.....	.....
Total	**20**	**100%**
Classes Taught		
SS IA	10	50%
SS IIA	10	50%
Total	**20**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that 10 teachers with 50% were NCE holders, 7 representing 35% have B.A. (Ed) and 3 teachers with 15% possessed M. A. (Ed). On classes that the teachers teach, 10 teachers with 50% teach SSIA while 10 teachers representing 50 teach SSIIA.

Research Question One: Does inconsistency between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds used in representing them affect the teaching and learning of Oral English?

Table 3: Teachers' Responses on Inconsistencies between Letters of the English Alphabet and Sounds

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
1.	Is the number of English alphabet the same with the number of English sounds?	--	--	20	100%	20
2.	In English, does a single letter represent only a single sound?	3	15%	17	85%	20
3.	Are all letters in English words pronounced?	2	10%	18	90%	20
	Total		25%		275%	
	Mean		8.33		91.67	

Table 3 shows that 3 of the respondents representing 8.33 mean percentage agreed that the number of English alphabet is the same with English sounds, a single letter represents a single sound and all letters in English words are pronounced. While 17 respondents with 91.67 mean percentage disagreed.

Table 4: Students' Responses on Inconsistencies between Letters of the English Alphabet and Sounds

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
1.	Is the number of English alphabet the same with the number of English sounds?	20	33.3%	40	66.7%	60
2.	In English, does a single letter represent only a single sound?	27	44.9%	33	55.1%	60
3.	Do you pronounce all letters in English words?	15	24.8%	45	75.2%	60
	Total		103%		197%	
	Mean		34.3		65.7	

Table 4 reveals that 103% of the students with 34.3 mean percentage agreed that letters of English alphabet and sounds are the same in number while 197% with mean percentage of 65.7 disagreed. Evidence from the mean percentages of the tables above verified and authenticated the position that the Inconsistencies between letters of the English alphabet and the sounds used in representing them affect effective teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools.

Research Question Two: Is there adequate teaching and learning materials in Oral English in your school?

Table 5: Teachers Responses on Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials for Oral English Instruction

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
4.	Do you have a language audio laboratory in your school?	4	20%	16	80%	20
5.	Do you have flashcards, consonants/vowels charts, for sounds drills/contrast?	12	60%	8	40%	20
6.	Are there enough recommended English textbooks for teachers and students?	6	30%	14	70%	20
	Total		110%		190%	
	Mean		36.7		63.3	

Table 5 shows that 110% of teachers representing 36.7 mean percentage agreed that they have adequate teaching and learning materials to facilitate oral English pedagogy while 190% of teachers with 63.3 mean percentage disagreed.

Table 6: Students' Responses on Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials for Oral English Instruction

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
4.	Do you have a language audio laboratory in your school to listen to how sounds are produced?	2	3.3%	58	96.7%	60
5.	Do your English Language teachers use flashcards, consonants/vowels charts, for sounds drills/contras during lessons on consonants and vowels?	10	16.6%	50	83.4%	60
6.	Do you have the recommended English textbook(s for students?	4	6.7%	56	93.3%	20
	Total		26.6%		273.4%	
	Mean		8.9		91.1	

Deriving from Table 6, 26.6% of the students with 8.9 mean percentage agreed that they have adequate learning materials in their schools while 273.4% with a mean percentage of 91.1 disagreed. The results from the two tables above revealed that there are no adequate teaching and learning materials in (oral) English Language and this in turn affects effective teaching and learning.

Research Question Three: Does the cosmopolitan nature of Obudu affect Oral English teaching and learning in the area?

Table 7: Teachers' Responses on the Cosmopolitan nature of Obudu

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
7.	Do all students you teach come from one tribe?	--	--	20	100%	20
8.	Do they speak one language?	--	--	20	100%	20
9.	Is it easy for you to teach students from different tribes and languages oral English?	5	25%	15	75%	20
	Total		25%		275%	
	Mean		8.3		91.7	

From the Table 7 25% of the respondents representing 8.3 mean percentage agreed that all people in Obudu come from one tribe, speak one language and it is easy to teach students from different tribes with different languages oral English, while 275% representing a mean percentage of 91.7 disagreed.

Table 8: Students' Responses on the Cosmopolitan nature of Obudu

S/N	**Item**	**Yes**		**No**		**Total**
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
7.	Do all people residing in Obudu come from one tribe?	12	19.8%	48	80.2%	60
8.	Do all of you in the class speak one language?	7	11.6%	53	88.4%	60
9.	Is it easy for students from different tribes and languages to learn oral English in the same classroom?	21	35%	39	65%	60
	Total		66.4%		233.6%	
	Mean		22.1		77.9	

Table 8 shows that 66.4% of the respondents representing 22.1 mean percentage agreed that all people residing in Obudu come from one tribe, speak one language and it is not difficult for students from different tribes and languages to learn oral English in the same classroom. While 233.6% with 77.9 mean percentage disagreed.

Research Question Four: Is mother tongue interference a problem in the teaching and learning of Oral English in secondary schools?

Table 9: Teachers' Responses on the Problem of Interference

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
10.	Is English a native language of Obudu?	--	--	20	100%	20
11.	Do you notice that your students transfer some traits from their native languages to English when speaking?	18	90%	2	10%	20
12.	Teaching Bette, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa or French alongside English affect effective teaching and learning of oral English	16	80%	4	20%	20
	Total		170%		130%	
	Mean		56.7		43.3	

Table 9 shows that 170% of the respondents representing 56.7 mean percentage agreed that English is not a native language of Obudu, and that students transfer some traits from their native languages like Bette Igbo Yoruba Hausa or French to English when speaking, as these languages are taught alongside English.

Table 10: Students' Responses on the Problem of Interference

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
10.	Is English a native language of Obudu?	10	16.6%	50	83.4%	60
11.	Do you notice that your native language affects the way you pronounce English words?	47	78.4%	13	21.6%	60
12.	Does the teaching of Bette, Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa or French alongside English affect you in learning of English Language?	42	70.1%	18	29.9%	60
	Total		165.1%		134%	
	Mean		56.1		44.9	

Based on the Table 10, 165.1% of the respondents (students), representing 55.1 mean percentage agreed that English is not their native language, their native language influence the way they pronounce English words and the learning of other languages alongside English affect them in English Language learning. While 134.9% representing 44.9 mean percentage disagreed.

Research Question Five: Does lack of well trained and experienced teachers affect effective teaching and learning of Oral English?

Table 11: Teachers' Responses on Availability of Well-trained and Experienced Teachers

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
13.	All teachers who teach English Language in Obudu studied it at higher institutions	6	30%	14	70%	20
14.	Does your employer organize regular workshops on new/ innovative methods, strategies and activities for English Language teaching and learning?	3	15%	17	85%	20
15.	Do you find it difficult to teach some aspects/soundsof English Language and serve as model to students on good speaking habits?	13	65%	7	35%	20
	Total		110%		190%	
	Mean		36.7		63.3	

The analysis in the Table 11 shows that 110% of teachers with a mean percentage of 36.7 agreed that all teachers who teach English in Obudu studied it at higher institutions attain regular workshops on English and serve as models to students on good speaking habits. While 190% of the teachers representing 63.3 mean percentage disagreed.

Table 12: Students' Responses on Availability of Well-trained and Experienced Teachers

S/N	Item	Yes		No		Total
		No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	
13.	Do you like the way your English Language teachers teach vowels and consonants?	27	44.9%	33	55.1%	60
14.	Do you think your teachers need more training to enable them teach you better?	52	86.7%	8	13.3%	60
15.	In your school, do your English Language teachers serve as models (good examples) to students on good pronunciations/speaking habits?	16	26.7%	44	73.3%	60
	Total		158.3%		139.7%	
	Mean		52.8		47.2	

Table 12 reveals that 158.3% of the students with 52.8 mean percentage agreed that they do not like the way their English Language teachers teach vowels and consonants, that their teachers need more training to enable them teach better and serve as models to students on good pronunciations and speaking habits. Whereas 139.7% representing 47.2 mean percentage disagreed.

Conclusion

The conclusion that can be drawn from the findings of this study is that the inconsistencies between letters of English alphabet and the sounds used in repesenting them hinder effective teaching and learning of oral English in secondary schools. Inadequate teaching/learning materials, cosmopolitan environment, interference, and lack of well-trained language teachers also hinder the effective teaching and learning of oral English. This calls for a shift from a teacher-centred pedagogy to a learner-centred classroom. There should be training and re-training of language teachers on oral English pedagogy to foster oral fluency among the learners.

Recommendations

From the findings, the following recommendations are out forward:

1. English Language teachers should engage in further studies. This will enable them gain more knowledge of their teaching subject and be able to establish a relationship between letters of English alphabet and sounds.
2. Teachers should adopt Content and Language Integrated (teaching) Learning (CLIL) strategy to meet language needs of learners. This strategy, when appropriately implemented could help mitigate the problem of interference as resources of the language of the learners or environment are incorporated to teach the content of English, thereby making oral English lessons learner-centred and fun.

3. Government and stakeholders at all levels should ensure adequate provision of funds for the purchase and production of teaching and learning materials in English Language.
4. Public and private secondary schools owners should encourage their English Language teachers to go for further studies to improve on service delivery. In-service training like workshops and seminars should be regularly organized for the teachers.
5. There should be regular inspection and supervision of secondary schools to ensure appropriate utilization of resources provided to ensure quality assurance.

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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INSTRUCTIONAL PLATFORMS ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN SPOKEN ENGLISH IN IBADAN NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE

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ABSTRACT

The rise of social media has significantly altered communication among secondary school students in Ibadan North, Nigeria. While these platforms facilitate connectivity and information sharing, excessive use raises concerns regarding academic performance. Many students show signs of addiction, prioritizing social media over academic responsibilities, leading to decreased classroom engagement and lower examination scores. This study investigates the impact of social media on the spoken English performance of secondary school students, examining differences based on gender and school type. Using a comparative approach, we analyzed two groups: students exposed to platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram and those who do not utilize these tools. The study involved 9,642 secondary school students from 3,306 Ibadan schools, with the target group being senior secondary two (SS2) students. A sample of 220 students from public schools and 150 from private schools was obtained through purposive sampling. Data collection involved a self-constructed Spoken English Performance Test (SEPT), including demographic information and a set of 13 sentences for students to read and record. The SEPT's validity was confirmed through expert evaluations, while reliability was established with a split-half method, yielding a coefficient of 0.75. Data analysis utilized descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings reveal that students engaged with social media perform significantly better in spoken English, particularly in fluency and confidence. The study highlights gender disparities and suggests that private school students outperform public school students, indicating the need for innovative teaching methods and targeted support programs.

Keywords: Social Media, Spoken English, Gender, School Type, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram

Introduction

In the modern age of technology, social media has become a part of everyday life and has changed the way people interact and socialize, making it more widely known and accepted as a teaching tool, particularly in language study, because social media may present students with meaningful and interesting opportunities to practice and develop their oral English skills, which are vital for effective communication and a key factor in future employment and academic success. However, many secondary school students in the Local Government Area of Ibadan North are unable to speak English fluently and confidently. It is often the interactive and conversational practice needed to acquire these skills that is missing from traditional teaching techniques. Social media platforms offer a unique solution to this dilemma as they allow students to engage in real conversation with their teachers, fellow students and even native English speakers, in designated spaces, where they can have group discussions, practice exchanging language, share multimedia information and even give feedback on speaking performances, all of which makes social media a positive learning space because it is fun and relevant, providing a plethora of situations in which to use the language

Language is a basic means of communication between people and involves the structured system of words, symbols, gestures, grammar, lexicon, syntax and semantics (Mwakapina, 2021). The relationship between language and cognitive processes shows the importance of language instruction, especially in spoken English, to achieve academic success and personal development. English is a language of choice, not just in schools but in many academic institutions around the world, including Nigeria where it is the language of instruction for all subjects and is a requirement for communication skills for classroom discussions and internal and external examinations (Adeyemi & Aliyu, 2022). There are many challenges that impede the teaching of spoken English proficiency in Nigerian secondary schools, including the limited availability of trained teachers, limited access to resources and a lack of focus on communicative ability (Abudu, Lawal & Abiola, 2020).

Social media, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, have become extremely popular and have changed the way students communicate and use language. Despite complaints that social media encourages compulsive behavior that diverts time from academic duties, these platforms provide unique opportunities for language learning and oral English proficiency (Khodarahimi & Fathi, 2017). Yet few studies have investigated the positive impacts of using social media as teaching tools to address student's immediate needs, which is particularly important for their spoken English ability. Since students are already familiar with using social media for personal communication, its role in language instruction is particularly relevant, with the ability to encourage collaborative learning,

promote active learning and support knowledge construction through social interaction (Alzubi, 2019), while also bridging knowledge gaps through opportunities to practice and improve spoken English in authentic situations that can create engagement and motivation. It is also necessary to explore the impact of gender and school type on the students' academic performance in oral English and how social media can be combined with pedagogical strategies to maximize its potential to improve language proficiency.

After all, social media platforms provide a potentially powerful way for secondary school students to enhance their oral English skills, but the implications of their widespread non-academic use must also be taken into consideration (Brown & Lee, 2020). There is a research gap in the area of student achievement, and the aim of this study is to address this gap by exploring how social media instructional platforms might assist secondary school students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area to improve their spoken English performance.

Statement of the Problem

The development of social media has changed the way communication happens in secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria; however, the use of social media has become an addiction and affects the academic performance of students, as many students spend much time on social media and fail to do their work, and as a result, their academic performance has dropped, as indicated by their low internal and external exam results, and lack of participation in class. This study examines the possible use of social media in teaching spoken English to enhance oral proficiency, as social media is widely used but its effectiveness is unknown. There are also academic concerns regarding the amount of time spent in non-academic activities, limited exposure to complex language concepts, and continued problems with pronunciation and vocabulary. This study will investigate the use of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to improve spoken English and academic outcomes in secondary education.

Purpose of the Study

This study's primary goal is to find out how social media learning platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp affect secondary school pupils' spoken English proficiency in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Nigeria. Specifically, study intends to:

1. Identify the difference in the spoken English performance of students exposed to WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram and those not exposed;
2. Examine the difference in the spoken English performance of male and female students;
3. Investigate the difference in the spoken English performance of pupils in both private and public schools;
4. Determine the difference in the spoken English performance of male students in experimental group and their male counterparts in control group;
5. Examine the difference in the spoken English performance of female students in experimental group and their female counterpart in control group;
6. Investigate the interactive effect of gender and school type on the impact of social media instructional platforms on secondary school students' spoken English performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the difference between spoken English performance of students exposed to Social Media Instructional Platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram) and those not exposed?
2. What is the difference between spoken English performance of students in Public and Private Schools using pre-test and post-test mean score?
3. What is the difference between spoken English performance of male and female students in experimental group?

Research Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses are tested in the Study:

1. There is no significant difference in the spoken English performance of students exposed to social media instructional platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram) and those not exposed.
2. There is no significant difference in the spoken English performance of male and female students.
3. There is no significant difference in the spoken English performance of students in public and private schools.
4. There is no significant difference in the spoken English performance of male students in the experimental group and their male counterpart in the control group.
5. There is no significant difference in the spoken English performance of female students in the experimental group and their female counterpart in the control group.

Literature Review

This study is grounded in constructivism, a teaching method based on the theory of Jean Piaget, who postulated in 1972 that knowledge or concept is constructed by the learner through mental activity (Ikpe, 2015). Constructivism is a teaching theory that states that people construct knowledge by actively engaging in the learning process and that their experiences and perceptions modify reality. Therefore, the knowledge that learners have is dependent on their prior experiences, mental structures, and beliefs that they use to interpret objects and events (Ikpe, 2015). On the other hand, constructivist learning theory emphasizes that knowledge is constructed by active engagement (McLeod, 2019). Social media can be used to facilitate collaborative learning environments that allow students to negotiate meaning and improve their language skills through peer interactions (Honebein, 1996). Online discussions and group work using social media can help students practice speaking and listening skills and apply their knowledge of English in real-life situations.

Studies show that the context in which students learn English has a significant impact on their oral proficiency (Agbor & Perekeme, 2012). The current English Language Curriculum in Nigeria, for example, has moved towards more emphasis on communicative competence with the aim of achieving fluency and accuracy in oral skills (Adegbile, 1998), but this curriculum has often been challenged because of limited instructional resources and ineffective teaching methods (Adegbile, 1998). Social media can fill this gap by offering students access to authentic language content and opportunities to practice conversational skills outside of the classroom. Social media is "a group of web-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content and are built on the technological and social underpinnings of Web 2.0" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

Web use with the most rapid growth rate in the twenty-first century, social media are programs that can be categorized as social media if they allow for user engagement and the creation and sharing of user-generated content (Taprial and Kanwar, 2012). He further added that the usage of social media in education has become important in improving oral English skill of secondary school students. Social media provides a unique avenue for interaction and communication, fostering an environment conducive for language learning (Ikezam & Eremie, 2021). Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram allow students to engage in real-life conversations, share experiences, and receive feedback, which can contribute to improved oral skills. Gender differences in language learning should also not be overlooked; females often excel over males in oral tasks, and social media may offer a less-threatening environment to practice and develop their spoken English (Khan, 2019).

A supportive culture developed through social media can minimize language anxiety and encourage more active participation by students (Puentedura, 2003). Finally, the ability to personalize learning via social media aligns with the constructivist notion that learning is a personal and active process (Puentedura, 2003), and students can access content that interests them and at their level, which can better motivate and engage learners in the English language acquisition process (Brinton, 2017).

Therefore, social media platforms are an effective medium that can enhance oral English proficiency among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria, by providing active engagement, collaboration, and personalized learning experiences. A study by Jones and Smith (2023) on the impact of social media sites such as Instagram and TikTok on English vocabulary acquisition among secondary students found that exposure to informal language increased vocabulary but posed a challenge for formal usage. Garcia and Patel (2021) stressed that real-time language exchanges on platforms like WhatsApp and Discord produced substantial gains in fluency and confidence. Followers of social media influencers adopted a wide range of speech patterns (Kim and Lee, 2020), which emphasized the need for guidance on language standards. Collaborative learning on platforms such as Reddit improved spoken English skills through peer interaction (Wang & Guo, 2021).

Taken together, these studies suggest the need for a more balanced approach to social media in the classroom that includes formal language instruction. A study by Patel and Sharma (2019) found that heavy social media use by secondary school students negatively affects their spoken English as high usage correlates with less deliberate language practice and lower spoken English performance due to loss of focus and poor time management. They suggest ways for educators and parents to guide students to balance screen time with language practice. Another study by Huang and Richards (2020) showed that students who had real communication with native speakers in a virtual exchange performed far better than students who were taught in a traditional way, demonstrating higher fluency and confidence, which indicates the need for students to have real-world communication opportunities for language learning.

Methodology

The study was a quasi-experimental, pre-test and post-test, four-group design, with three experimental groups; each receiving social media instructional treatments (WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram) and one control group taught using conventional methods. The study aimed at evaluating the effect of social media platforms on spoken English performance of senior

secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Nigeria. The population consisted of 9,642 secondary school students from 3,306 schools in Ibadan, with the target population focusing on senior secondary two (SS2) students, who had sufficient instructional time and were not preparing for any external examinations. The sample included the study involved 220 students from four public secondary schools and 150 students from four private secondary schools.

The selection of schools was conducted using a purposive sampling technique based on criteria related to support for the study and student access to smartphones. Data collection was conducted through a self-constructed Spoken English Performance Test (SEPT), which included two sections: demographic information and a set of 13 sentences for students to read and record.

The validity of the SEPT was ensured through expert evaluations, while reliability was established using the split-half method, yielding a coefficient of 0.72. The research followed a three-stage experimental procedure involving pre-treatment, treatment and post-treatment stages. Teachers were trained to integrate social media into their instruction and the pre-test was administered to gauge initial proficiency levels. The treatment phase lasted six weeks and involved teaching speech work using social media platforms. The post-test was conducted one week after treatment, utilizing rearranged sentences to avoid memorization effects. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, One-Way ANOVA, and t-test analyses to evaluate the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level

Results

Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized in the study's data analysis. Mean and Standard Deviation analyzed demographic variables, while One-Way ANOVA tested hypothesis 1. The t-test was used to test hypotheses 2 to 5, with the Duncan Multiple Range Test identifying sources of significant differences among the four groups. All hypotheses were assessed at a significance level of 0.05.

Research Question1: What is the difference between spoken English performance of students exposed to Social Media Instructional Platforms and those not exposed?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difference between Spoken English Performance of Students in Experimental and Control Groups

Performance	N	Mean	SD
WhatsApp	60	23.44	10.04
Facebook	60	21.46	8.67
Instagram	44	12.31	3.90
Control	64	13.64	5.48
Total	**228**		

Table 1 indicates that students using Social Media Instructional Platforms, particularly WhatsApp, performed better in spoken English, with a mean difference of 23.44, compared to 21.46 for Facebook, 13.64 for the control group, and 12.31 for Instagram. The standard deviations were 10.04, 8.67, 5.48, and 3.90 respectively. This suggests that WhatsApp users had the highest spoken English performance among the groups studied.

Research Question2: What is the difference between spoken English performance of students in Public and Private Schools using post-test mean score?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difference between Spoken English Performance of Students in Public and Private Schools Using Post-test Mean Score

School Type	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Public	126	36.75	19.04	**6.69**
Private	112	43.44	21.09	

Table 2 indicates that students in private schools performed better in spoken English, with a mean score of 43.44 and a standard deviation of 21.09, compared to 36.75 and 19.04 for public school students. The mean difference of 6.69 suggests a significant performance gap favoring private school students.

Research Question3: What is the difference between spoken English performance of male and female students in experimental group?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Difference between Spoken English Performance of Male and Female Students in Experimental Group

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Male	78	20.04	10.26	**2.17**
Female	86	17.87	9.09	

Table 3 shows that male students have a higher mean score (20.04) in spoken English compared to female students (17.87), with respective standard deviations of 10.26 and 9.09, suggesting that male students perform better in spoken English than female students.

Test of Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in the spoken English performance of students exposed to social media instructional platforms and those not exposed.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance Showing the Significant Difference in the Spoken English Performance of Students in Experimental and Control Groups

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	7732.209	4	1933.052	9.829*	
Within Groups	22616.782	223	196.668		0.001
Total	30348.992	227			

p< 0.05 (Significant Result)

Fcal (9.829*) is significant at the 0.05 level of significance, according to Table 4. The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that students who are exposed to social media educational platforms perform significantly differently in spoken English than students who are not.

Research Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the spoken English performance of male and female students.

Table 5: t-test showing significant difference in the spoken English performance of male and female students

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Male	101	33.47	17.01	2.473*	0.000
Female	127	38.62	19.81		

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

The null hypothesis is rejected since Table 5 shows that the tcal (2.473*) is significant at the 0.05 level. This implies that male and female pupils perform significantly differently when speaking English.

Research Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference in the spoken English performance of students in public and private schools.

Table 6: t-test Showing Significant Difference in the Spoken English Performance of Students in Public and Private Schools

School Type	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Public	126	36.75	19.04	3.426*	0.001
Private	112	43.44	21.09		

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

At the 0.05 level of significance, Table 6 indicates that the tcal (3.436*) is significant. The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that pupils in public and private schools perform significantly differently while speaking English.

Research Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant difference in the spoken English performance of male students in the experimental group and their male counterpart in the control group.

Table 7: t-test Showing Significant Difference in the spoken English Performance of Male Students in Experimental and Control Group

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Male (Experimental)	72	21.44	9.28	2.614*	0.001
Male (Control)	28	11.48	6.21		

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

Table 7 indicates that the t_{cal} (2.614*) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted, this implies that there is a significant difference in the spoken English performance of male students in experimental and control groups.

Research Hypothesis 5: There will be no significant difference in the spoken English performance of female students in the experimental groups and their female counterpart in the control group.

Table 8: t-test Showing Significant Difference in the Spoken English Performance of Female Students in Experimental and Control Group

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	P
Female (Experimental)	92	22.03	10.07		
Female (Control)	36	14.59	7.31	2.501*	0.000

p<0.05 (Significant Result)

Table 8 show that the t_{cal} (2.501*) is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not accepted, this implies that there is a significant difference in the spoken English performance of female students in experimental and control groups.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 above compares the performance of students who were exposed to social media instructional platforms with those who were not. The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in spoken English performance between students exposed to social media instructional platforms and those who were not, suggesting that students who had been exposed to the social media instructional platforms received the top English Language grades. This study aligned with the work of Garcia and Patel (2021) who found that interactive conversations and peer feedback significantly improved fluency, pronunciation, and confidence. Likewise, Smith and Jones (2023) looked at the effects of Instagram and TikTok and found that exposure to informal language enhanced vocabulary but led to difficulty with appropriateness in formal contexts, highlighting the need for a balance between informal social media language exposure and formal classroom instruction to minimize the risks of non-standard language impacting students spoken English.

As shown from Table 2, there are major differences between the male and female students in public and private schools in their performance of English spoken, which is in line with the findings of Li and Chang (2023) that boys have competitive approaches while girls have harmony and consensus, which aligns with general gender socialization patterns. In the same vein, Kim and Park (2024) investigated gendered language strategies in group discussions and found that girls used collaborative language to reach consensus, while boys used a more aggressive approach to force their opinions on others.

Table 3 showed the gender of the students in the experimental group and the performance in spoken English. The findings were consistent with previous research by Jones and Patel (2019), who compared the impact of class size and individual attention on spoken English performance among students in India, and Garcia and Nguyen (2022), who showed that bilingual programs in private schools improved fluency and accuracy in spoken English. Additionally, in line with Wang (2023) who noted that boys often dominate classroom discussions, impacting girls' willingness to participate due to societal pressures and gender roles that promote politeness, leading girls to use more passive language and limiting their assertiveness in spoken English activities.

As seen in Table 4, the female students who were exposed to social media instructional platforms performed significantly worse in spoken English than those who were not. Chen and Wu (2023) found that the gendered language use of secondary school students is affected by peer interactions in mixed-gender groups, as girls tend to adopt more assertive speech patterns similar to male speech when debating with them. Table 5 also presented the significant difference the study found a significant difference in spoken English performance between experimental and control groups of female students. It supports Chen and Wu's (2023) research that mixed-gender groups led to girls becoming more assertive, mirroring male speech patterns, especially in debates and discussions.

Conclusion

According to the study, social media educational platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram improve spoken English performance among students more than those who do not use these platforms, with significant gender differences, a significant difference in spoken English performance between students in public and private schools, and students in the experimental group outperforming those in the control group, indicating that innovative teaching methods and demographic factors can play a role in improving spoken English outcomes.

Recommendations

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

1. English Language Teachers are encouraged to use WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram as instructional platforms to enhance students' performance in spoken English.
2. Curriculum planners should incorporate WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram into the English Language curriculum to promote interactive learning, boost engagement, and improve students' spoken English skills.
3. Policymakers should allocate additional resources and training for public schools to bridge the performance gap with private schools, including access to modern teaching tools and enhanced language programs.
4. Targeted support programmes are recommended to improve the spoken English proficiency of male students in the experimental group due to notable performance disparities.
5. Initiatives to encourage female students' participation in spoken English activities should include creating safe practice spaces, promoting leadership opportunities in group discussions, and highlighting female role models.

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EFFECT OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING (CLT) METHOD ON STUDENTS' ESSAY WRITING CONTENT COMPETENCE IN FCT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on students' content competence in descriptive essay writing in FCT College of Education, Abuja, Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to evaluate the effect of using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method in content competence in descriptive essay writing and to ascertain whether there was any difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught essay writing using CLT and those taught with the traditional lecture method. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study comprised one hundred and seventeen NCE 2 students in English Language in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in drawing the respondents. The instrument for data collection was the Structured Written Composition Test (SWCT) modeled after WAEC past questions. Collated data was analysed using means scores and standard deviation for the research questions, while t-test statistical tool was used to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that students taught essay writing using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method had higher achievement mean scores in content competence than their counterparts taught with the traditional lecture method. The study found that communicative language teaching has effect on teaching content competence in descriptive essay writing. It, therefore, recommended that CLT method should be adopted for effective teaching of descriptive essay writing for all students of English in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Content Competence, Descriptive Essay, Writing, Examination

Introduction

The teaching and learning of writing have always been vital among the four language skills. Despite various language teaching methods use from the Grammar Translation Method to the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), learners' writing skills have not shown significant improvement (Handy, 2013). Writing involves using symbols of letters and punctuation marks to communicate ideas clearly. Akinola (2013) and Kayode (2014) separately describe writing as a skill requiring creativity, correct grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and paragraphing. Khaniya (2015) states that writing refines ideas by organising them on paper. It remains a reliable form of communication documented through various formats like emails, memos, reports, letters, and essays (Okonkwo, 2014). Despite its benefits, poor writing can lead to misunderstanding; therefore, clarity, brevity, and logical organization are crucial (Iliyas, 2008).

Descriptive writing is a key essay type that requires writers to vividly describe a person, place, event, or object, evoking readers' senses and emotions. According to Khaniya (2014), it paints mental pictures, while Raymond (2017) adds that it employs figurative language like simile and metaphor. A clear central theme is essential to guide content and structure. Despite its importance, teaching descriptive writing has not yielded satisfactory outcomes, as reflected in students' poor essays. Many struggle with crafting good titles, introductions, bodies, and conclusions. This raises concerns about whether the teaching methods and materials are effective. Observations show that teachers often rely on traditional approaches, focusing on definitions rather than practical guidance. For instance, instead of guiding students through creating an introduction or body, teachers merely explain the concepts.

Aminu (2017) argues for a practical and communicative pattern to teaching writing by suggesting to students to write brief, engaging titles, move from general to specific in introduction, and develop main points with supporting details in the body. Conclusion should summarise key points and express opinions without deviating from the topic. Victor (2016) highlights the focus on real-life communication, fluency, and meaningful use of language rather than just grammar. Richards and Rodgers (2015) emphasise activities like pair work, authentic tasks, and minimising mechanical drills, all aimed at enhancing communicative competence. Effective use of the communicative approach is expected to improve students' writing, including content, sociolinguistic, discourse, and grammatical competence. However, studies by Okonkwo (2014) and Raymond (2017) reveal that students still struggle with applying these skills, especially in content development and grammar when writing. This raises the question of whether these competencies are properly taught.

Subsequently, this study determined how communicative language teaching method have effect on students' content competence achievement in descriptive essay writing at the College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The study was delimited to second year students of the institution with focus on content competence in descriptive essay writing. The study focused real communicative competence in the written form. Findings of the study will be of benefits to teachers, students, textbook writers, and future researchers. Teachers across levels would gain insights into effective teaching methods, techniques, and materials for teaching essay writing, leading to improved student performance through the communicative method. Students would learn the importance of focus during lessons and understand how class activities and teaching materials improve writing skills. They would also realise the value of drawing from real-life experiences to enhance their composition writing skills. Future researchers would also find this study valuable for reference and as basis for further research in related fields.

Statement of Problem

The researchers who have read a number of descriptive essays of College of Education students observed that students have difficulty in such writing. Expectedly, they have passed the stage of writing for the purpose of West African Examination Council (WAEC). They are expected to write to satisfy the communicative needs of their communities and work-place. However, their descriptive essay writing felt short of this expectation.

The problem as identified above made the researchers to assume that the students were not competent in the descriptive essay writing. So, the thought whether the students would do better in descriptive essay writing when they are taught all the components of content competence using communicative language teaching method. The teaching would include content competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and grammatical competence as components of communicative competence, with more concentration on the content competence which was observed to be lacking in their descriptive essay writing.

The researchers observed that learners found it difficult to generate good content ideas related to the title of the writing. That challenge brought worry on the approach used by teachers in teaching descriptive writing is instilling the required skills needed for good writing task. There is also the challenge at the level of sociolinguistic competence of learners when writing the body of the essay. The learners found it difficult to use appropriate vocabulary to explain and draw meaningful social contents of an idea developed. Hence, this research examined effect of communicative language teaching method on students' content competence in descriptive essay writing in FCT College of Education, Abuja, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method on students' content competence in descriptive essay writing in FCT College of Education, Abuja, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

a. Examine the mean score achievements of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT method and those taught using traditional lecture method in pre-test results.
b. Assess the mean score achievement of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT method and those taught using traditional lecture method in post-test results.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the mean score achievements of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and students taught using traditional lecture method in pre-test results?
2. What are the mean score achievement of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and those taught using traditional lecture method in post-test results?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses are tested in the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the mean score achievements of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and students taught using traditional lecture method in pre-test results.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in mean score achievement of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and those taught using traditional lecture method in post-test results.

Literature Review

Written communication involves conveying information through written words. It occurs whenever someone writes a message for others to read and interpret. Kayode (2014) defines it as interaction using written words, which is essential in the modern information-driven world, especially in education. Kayode (2014) describes written communication as the presentation of a subject matter in an organised, meaningful text. This involves combining sentences and paragraphs to form a coherent whole. Forms of written communication include letters, essays (narrative, expository, argumentative, descriptive), and other texts intended to convey meaning. Effective writing requires mastery of grammar, content development, context, and discourse organization. These skills contribute to writing competence. This raises the question of whether the methods used to teach writing are effective.

Teaching is a process designed to support learning (Niyi, 2013). Nelson (2014) defines it as addressing learners' needs through targeted interventions. Gage (2019) views teaching as influencing others to develop their potential, while Edmund (2015) emphasizes it as an interactive process between teachers and learners. Brubacher (2007) sees teaching as organizing situations that lead to learning, and Skinner refers to it as arranging reinforcement conditions. Overall, teaching enhances learners' knowledge, skills, and ability to solve problems. It involves sharing knowledge, motivation, character-building, and using appropriate strategies and materials. In this study, teaching is examined in the context of using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method to improve students' writing competence in English.

Writing is a purposeful act of communication aimed at an audience. It involves producing meaningful text within a specific context. Weigle (2016) defines writing as an act shaped by context, purpose, and audience, emphasizing that it is both a personal and social activity. Writing requires thinking processes that help develop coherent text, as noted by Brown (in Sellers, 2013), who describes writing as translating thoughts into language. Harmer (in Weigle, 2016) likens writing to a process wheel, involving continuous movement through stages until completion. Writing serves as a record of thoughts, opinions, and information. Kinneavy (2018) explains that people write to express themselves, share knowledge, persuade others, and create literature, often combining these purposes.

Akinola (2013) describes writing as organizing thoughts into structured language, requiring creativity and control over grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Kayode (2014) adds that clear writing demands understanding language mechanics and serves both personal and academic purposes. Writing enhances academic achievement by aiding tasks like assignments, assessments, and essays. Khaniya (2015) argues that writing refines ideas, promotes learning, and transmits culture. Rivers (2013) views writing as a secondary language skill that conveys messages accurately to complement listening, speaking, and reading.

At various educational levels, writing is taught using approaches like controlled, free, paragraph-patterned, grammar-syntax organization, communicative, process, and group writing (Hammed, 2014). These approaches develop essential writing skills such as spelling, punctuation, coherence, fluency, and proper use of language. Adedimeji (2017) highlights that writing is technical, demanding reasoning, organization, and creativity. Writers invest intellectually and emotionally to effectively communicate, despite the challenges. People write to inform, persuade, motivate, instruct, or express emotions (Adedimeji, 2017).

Writing involves interaction among the writer, reader, and purpose. It is a process comprising pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing—and a product, like texts or books. Adedimeji (2017) summarizes this process using the acronym power: Planning, Organising, Writing, Editing, and Revising. According to Hassan (2016), focusing on the writing process enhances creativity and quality. The stages of writing include: planning: generating ideas, defining purpose, audience, and structure. Others include: drafting: Writing initial ideas without worrying about errors, editing: Refining content based on feedback, and revising: Making final improvements to produce the polished text. Hassan (2016) describes several teaching of writing styles as follow:

Controlled-to-Free: Focuses on grammar and sentence structure before moving to freer writing. Free-Writing: Prioritizes content and fluency over grammar initially. Paragraph-Pattern: Emphasizes understanding how paragraphs are structured in the target language. Grammar-Syntax-Organization: Integrates form and meaning. Communicative approach: writing for real audiences with meaningful purposes. Process Approach: focuses on drafting, feedback, and revising over the final product. Group writing: collaborative writing for idea generation and feedback. Learner-centered process: focuses on the learner's motivation and role, emphasizing writing as an evolving process rather than a static product.

The components of good writing include: content: relevance, originality, and clear alignment with the topic and audience; organization: and logical sequencing of ideas; expression: clear articulation of thoughts using appropriate language. Other writing components include mechanical accuracy: correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and formatting. Content remains the heart of good writing that delivers value, solve problems, and meet readers' needs (Iliyas, 2008). Therefore, a good essay should have six C's which include: clarity, coherence, conciseness, consistency, consideration (simplicity), correctness (accuracy). In writing an essay, three distinct stages should be passed. The stages include: introduction, body and conclusion. However, flexibility is important. While keeping this basic essay format in mind, let the topic and specific assignment guide the writing and organization (Joy et al., 2016). Godwin (2015) notes that descriptive essay is one that allows a writer to understand the subject he or she is writing on, hence, using illustrative language.

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design involving experimental and control groups. It involves intact classes without altering the school timetable. The pre-test established the equivalence of both groups, while the post-test measured the effect of communicative language teaching method on the students' content competence achievement in descriptive essay writing. Samples for the study consisted of 117 students of Economics/English (28), History/English (26), French/English (28) and Social Studies/English (35) purposively selected from four programmes. The experimental group contain 54 students (Economics/English and History/English), while the control group had 63 students (French/English and Social Studies/English). The instrument used to gather data for the study was the Structured Written Composition Test (SWCT) adapted from WAEC past questions. Four descriptive essay topics were provided: My Best Lecturer, Abuja National Stadium, Valentine's Day and The Nigerian National Flag, from which students chose one from them. A structured marking guide assigned 25 marks each to content, expression, organisation, and mechanical accuracy, was used to grade the participants' scripts at both pre and post-tests. Both groups received five (5) lessons: the experimental group was taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using communicative language teaching method, while the control group was taught the same topic using the traditional lecture method.

Results

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to answer the research questions, while the t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

Research Question 1: What are the mean score achievements of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and students taught using traditional lecture method in pre-test results?

Table 5: Pre-test Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	SD
Control	63	22.98	9.66
Experimental	54	22.44	7.87
Mean Difference		**0.54**	

Table 1 reveals that the pre-test mean score achievement of content competence score of both control and experimental groups were 22.98, and 22.44 respectively, while the standard deviations were 9.66 and 7.87 respectively.

The mean difference of both groups is 0.54 this means that students in the control andexperimental groups have similar mean score. This is because the 0.54 signifies an ineligible difference in both groups prior to the commencement of treatment (experiment).

Research Question 2: What are the mean score achievement of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and those taught using traditional lecture method in post-test results?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Experimental and Control groups in Content Competence

Group	N	Pre-test		Post-test		
		X	SD	X	SD	Mean Gain Score
Experimental	54	5.94	2.04	17.59	3.69	11.65
Control	63	5.46	2.18	10.67	2.29	5.21
Mean Difference		**0.48**		**6.92**		**6.44**

Table 2 reveals that the pre-test mean scores of both experimental and control groups were 5.94 and 5.46 respectively, while the standard deviations were 2.04 and 2.18 respectively. The mean difference of both groups is 0.48 which is negligible. This means that the students in experimental and control groups have similar achievement mean score in content competence in descriptive essay writing prior to the commencement of treatment (experiment). The post-test result showed that the students in the experimental group had a posttest achievement mean score of 17.59 with standard deviation of 3.69, while the control group had a posttest mean score of 10.67 with standard deviation of 2.29. The result also shows that the experimental group had a mean gain of 11.65 while those in the control group had a mean gain of 5.21. The table showed that experimental group had higher and increasing mean effect of 6.44 on the students' achievement in content competence in descriptive essay writing. This showed that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group in content competence in descriptive essay writing.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no significant difference in the mean score achievements of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and students taught using traditional lecture method in pre-test results*.

Table 3: t-test Analysis on the Achievement of Content Competence in Descriptive Essay Writing

Group	N	X	SD	df	t-value	Sig.(P)	Decision
Experimental	54	22.44	7.87	115	.886	.379	**Retained**
Control	63	22.98	9.66				

Table 3 shows that there was no significant difference in mean score achievement of content competence between the experimental group and the control group in descriptive essay writing in pre-test as t = .886df = 115, P .379> 0.05. The hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in mean score achievement of content competence between the experimental group and the control group in descriptive essay writing in pre-test results.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in mean score achievement of students taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using CLT and those taught using traditional lecture method in post-test results*.

Table 4: t-test Analysis on the Achievement of Content Competence in Descriptive Essay Writing

Group	N	X	SD	df	t-value	Sig.(P)	Decision
Experimental	54	17.59	3.69	115	12.214	.000	**Rejected**
Control	63	10.67	2.29				

Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference in mean score achievement between the experimental group taught content competence and the control group taught without it in descriptive essay writing as t = 12.214, df = 115, P .000 < 0.05. The hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in mean score achievement between the experimental group taught content competence and the control group taught without it in descriptive essay writing. To establish where the significant difference lies, the mean scores of the two groups were compared and it was discovered that the experimental group had a mean score of 17.59, while the control group had the mean score of 10.67. This implies that students in the experimental group performed more than their counterparts in the control group.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion was carried out based on the findings in this study. The first finding of the study revealed that both students in the experimental and control groups had similar result in their pre-test mean scores. A further test indicated that there was no significant difference in mean score achievement of the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test results.

This result agrees with Ferdane and Berna (2016) study on the use of communicative approach that learners have similar achievement scores, attitudes, beliefs and expectations about their language learning. This finding could be due to the fact that students' subject knowledge baseline prior to the treatment (experiment) are the same, this accounts for the similarity in pre-test achievement score before the application of treatments.

Another finding of the study revealed that students in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group in content competence in descriptive essay writing after treatment. There was a significant difference in the mean score achievement between the experimental group taught content competence in descriptive essay writing using communicative language teaching method and the control group taught with traditional lecture method. This result agrees with Yosep (2013) that there is a significant difference in the writing ability between the students who were taught using writing instruction and those taught by using the conventional technique. The use of writing instruction significantly improves the students' writing ability; make a significant improvement on the students' score and content competence in descriptive essay writing.

The finding is also in line with Timayi (2015) whose study on the impact of writing instruction revealed a significant difference in the mean achievement score in favour of the students taught with writing instruction who had a higher score. This implies that the effectiveness of content competence instruction on students' achievement in content competence in descriptive essay writing over the traditional lecture method could be due to the fact that students are allowed to develop needed written skills for good writing. The instruction guides and stimulates the students into writing and presenting content about a subject matter with a coordinated format and that is contextually meaningful.

Conclusion

From the findings, it can be concluded that students learn content competence in descriptive essay writing better when taught with communicative language teaching method than the traditional lecture method. The strategy is good for teaching content, socio-linguistic, discourse, and grammatical communicative competencies of descriptive essay writing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were made.

1. Communicative language teaching method should be adopted for effective teaching of descriptive writing for all students of the English language in Colleges of Education in Nigeria.
2. Government and Colleges of Education administrators should organise training and re-training programmes through intensive seminars and workshops on the effective ways of using content competence instruction for in-service English Language lecturers.
3. Lecturers should not over rely on traditional lecture methods in their teaching; and teacher-centeredness should be drastically reduced with the use of communicative language teaching method or instruction.

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EFFECT OF COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' USE OF EMPHATIC STRESS IN FCT, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

English language proficiency is crucial for academic success and future career prospects, yet many Nigerian secondary school students struggle with communicative competence despite the official adoption of a communicative curriculum. This challenge is particularly evident in the teaching of emphatic stress, where traditional teacher-centered methods have contributed to poor student performance. This study examined the effect of Communicative Language Teaching on secondary school students' use of emphatic stress in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The study employed a quasi-experimental research design involving an experimental group taught using the Communicative Language Teaching and a control group taught using the traditional method. The population comprised 85,584 Senior Secondary School students in FCT's 88 senior government secondary schools during the 2022/2023 academic session. Through multi-stage sampling, 100 SS1 students from Government Secondary School were selected. The Emphatic Stress Knowledge Inventory (ESKI) was used to assess students' competence through pre-test and post-test administrations. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired-samples t-test.

Findings revealed that the experimental group showed significant improvement from very low performance (M=39.52) in pre-test to very high performance (M=76.26) in post-test. The experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in post-test (M=70.26 vs M=46.92, t=4.35, p<.001). The study concluded that the Communicative Language Teaching creates an enabling environment for students to use language actively in various social contexts, leading to permanent knowledge retention. It is recommended that English language teachers should adopt student-centered strategies with significant higher learner participation and consistently incorporate Communicative learning activities in the lessons to enhance meaningful interaction and competence development.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, Emphatic Stress, Oral English, Second Language Learners, performance Test

Introduction

English has always been a vital tool in education as a global language especially and most importantly to English speaking countries, where English is not just the medium but a subject in the curriculum. Teachers of English are saddled with the task to make sure that students learn the standard form of English language through effective method that enables students make good use English for communication. In teaching a second language that English language is, the issue of enhancing students' proficiency is always the goal of teaching and learning. This challenge is particularly pronounced for second language (L2) learners, who often face inherent limitations in reaching native-like proficiency. As Audu (2018) explains, this is largely because formal L2 learning typically begins after the first language (L1) system is fully internalized, thereby leading to linguistic interference experience. Consequently, for students in Nigeria, proficiency attained in English (L2) may be mostly different from that of a native English speaker (L1).

A significant obstacle, however, is the persistent teacher-centeredness in many English classrooms. Although a communicative competence curriculum has been officially adopted in Nigerian secondary schools with its implementation still challenging. As Odumuh (2020) observes, many teachers in Abuja secondary schools struggle to transition from traditional methods to CLT method. This difficulty often stems from deeply ingrained teaching orientations that prioritize knowledge transmission over fostering practical, communicative skills in students (Odumuh, 2020). Consistent use of traditional method of teaching is one of the many factors that has contributed significantly to students' poor academic performance within and out of the classroom. A poor method may be so ineffective to elate and arouse students' interest in participating actively in class.

Numerous studies have investigated strategies for enhancing the communicative competence of secondary school students in both academic and informal settings. A consistent finding across these researches is the efficacy of methods that connect language learning to real-world use. For instance, studies by Ginaya et al. (2019) and Keshmirshekan (2019) have demonstrated that utilizing authentic materials significantly boost learners' communicative competence. Ginaya et al. (2019) found that there is improvements in students' motivation and engagement with learning beyond just instructional materials. Moyi and Galadima (2020) highlights a strong reading culture and conscious effort to speak English vital to developing competence as easily enhanced by CLT use.

Further reinforcing the positive impacts of communicative language teaching method, Obenza and Mendoza (2021) submit that Communicative Language Learning Activities (CLLAS) are a highly effective for developing college students' communicative competence. They advocate for the method's use regularly, including with younger learners.

Statement of the Problem

Sounds of English is a core aspect of the English language in the Nigeria curriculum. The national curriculum for senior secondary school emphasizes competency as the goal for the teaching and learning of oral English. The researcher observes that many teachers still use the traditional method to teach the emphatic stress aspect of English sounds, which is targeted to develop students' competence in that area. However, this expectation is often not met as many students record failure in Oral English in the WAEC external examination.

Persistent worry subsists over the inability of these students to communicate intelligibly deploying required skill in emphatic stress in spoken English and poor performance in final WAEC organised external examination after spending three academic years in senior secondary school. This study examines what effect Communicative language teaching can bring to the teaching of secondary school students understanding of emphatic stress relative to their mastery of same topic with the traditional teaching strategy in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of the Communicative Language Teaching on Government Secondary School students' competence in using Emphatic Stress as determined with students' performance in pre-test and post-test scores?
2. How does the competence in using Emphatic Stress of Government Secondary School students taught with the Communicative Language Teaching compare to those of students taught with the Traditional Method?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the Emphatic Stress competence scores of Government Secondary School students before (pre-test) and after (post-test) being taught using the Communicative Language Teaching.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the Emphatic Stress competence scores between Government Secondary School students taught using the Communicative Language Teaching and those taught using the traditional method

Literature Review

Effective English language teaching is predicated on the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogical competence. The principle of Communicative Language Teaching is intrinsically linked to a teacher's own communicative competence and her ability to facilitate same mastery in students (Iliyas, 2019). A common challenge arise when learners have knowledge of linguistic rules but lack the procedural ability of integrating this knowledge into serving contextual application. As Bin-Hady (2016) suggests, without adequate development in contextual use, a student's knowledge remains inert as it cannot be effectively deployed for comprehension or interaction.

There are two fundamental categories of communicative interaction activities that constitute facilitator of understanding classroom teaching objectives. The first category consists of exercises in communicative performance that emphasizes communicating referential meaning in English language and teaching communicative competence, which extends beyond vocabulary acquisition to encompass discourse, sociolinguistic, strategic, and interactional competencies (As Bin-Hady, 2016). To learn a language effectively, students must grasp not only the mechanics of communication but also the cultural nuances embedded in the language. Students may gain far-reaching insights into how language functions in specific contexts by adopting a procedure of authentic language use that aligns with their unique communicative requirements as common in interactional demands as adults. That is what Hymes (1972) describes as Communicative Language Teaching.

A competent speaker of English can effectively manipulate the language's resources to fulfill their communicative goals. This broader and socially-informed understanding of proficiency is encapsulated in the concept of **communicative competence**, introduced by Hymes (1972) as a direct counterpoint to Noam Chomsky's narrower definition of linguistic competence. While Chomsky's theory focused primarily on the abstract, innate grammatical knowledge of an ideal speaker-listener, communicative competence encompasses both the tacit knowledge *of* the language system and the practical ability *for* its use, emphasizing the sociolinguistic rules that govern appropriateness in different cultural contexts (Iliyas, 2019).

Thus, Hymes (1972) shifted the focus from the purely grammatical to the realm of sociocultural use of language. Moving it beyond the speaker-hearer's internalized grammar to analyze real-world interactions, where communication unfolds within unpredictable and diverse sociocultural frames. For Hymes (1972), communicative competence inherently involves understanding both the referential (literal) and social (interpersonal) meanings of language, making it the most comprehensive term for a person's speaking and hearing capabilities (Erton, 2017). Students' effective communication showcase their meaningful interaction with both peers and teachers in the classroom. These dynamic perceptive highlight communicative competence, which manifest in the exchange of ideas among students discussing a topic during classroom lessons. This showcases the dynamism of communicative competence as it emphasizes the nuances interplay of meaning when students engage in discourse on a given topic in the classroom.

Communicative Competence aims to enhance language proficiency by emphasizing on authentic use of English language in real-life situations and its application in the classroom for effective communication. Anchored on Dell Hymes' (1972) Communicative competence, the theoretical model of Communicative Competence, provides a critical foundation for real-time English language use as teaching and assessment inspire target language use for communication. Hymes expanded this linguistic view by incorporating the sociolinguistic dimension, arguing that true competence involves not just grammatical knowledge but the actual use of the language to fulfil complex communicative purposes (Hymes, 1972; Celce-Murcia, 2007).

Therefore, Communicative Competence reframes the goal of language education to encompass the integrated development of the four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—enabling learners to use language effectively and appropriately across various social contexts. Ideal speaker – hearer (Chomsky 1957, 1965). Modern research advocates for a change that reflects theoretical development within both interpersonal and intercultural communication. This theory is relevant as its practical application in the classroom exposes students to use real life scenarios in the classroom by exploring the four language skills in engaging communication to reinforce students' knowledge and understanding as they learn to express themselves independent of the teacher.

Adopting CLT method in Abuja Secondary School teaching of students can enable a grasp of Emphatic stress in English language more easily and convey their thoughts effectively by ensuring mutual understanding between co-participants in the classroom. Communicative Competence focuses on both acceptable language system and appropriate use. His aim in producing a theory on Communicative Competence is that, *the theory intends to deal with the 'creative' aspect of language (*Hymes, 2001).

Emphatic stress is the emphasis placed on a specific word in a sentence to highlight its importance, correct misconceptions, or show contrast. It involves using a higher pitch, increased volume, or longer duration on a particular word (often capitalized in writing), which can alter the entire meaning of the sentence. Contrastive stress, as it is otherwise called is used to clarify, compare, or contrast information, often in response to a misunderstood statement. It can be at word and sentence level (Sadiq, 2010).

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to examine the effect of two different teaching methodologies. The design involved comparing the performance of two distinct groups: an experimental group that received instruction via the Communicative Language Teaching and a control group that was taught using the traditional method. The assessments were done at two levels; pre-test and pro-test. The study population comprised all Senior Secondary School students enrolled in the 2024/2025 academic session within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), who were studying English language. This population were all eighty-eight (88) government-owned public senior secondary schools across Abuja's six area councils. The study comprised a sample of one hundred (100) students. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to select participants. The sample was drawn from Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) randomly selected via balloting. From within AMAC, Government Secondary School, Idu-koro, was randomly selected from the thirty (30) public senior secondary schools in the Area Council. Government Day secondary school Hajj camp in Gwagwalada Area Council was chosen as the control group, where the permanent teacher of English was briefed to administer the two tests and the treatment using traditional chalkboard and talking teaching method simultaneously at the same time those stages were getting done with the experimental group.

Intact class constitute the experimental group in the school, so every willing student in the class constitute participants for the study. A researcher designed test instrument known as Emphatic Stress Knowledge Inventory (ESKI) was deplored to collate data on students' performance in emphatic stress at both tests instances. This instrument consisted of objective questions designed to assess students' understanding of emphatic stress elements. The instrument was deemed an appropriate tool for measuring student mastery of emphatic stress. Two research assistants coordinated the lessons in both experimental group and control group. The responses of the students were marked and the scores were recorded to determine their entry performance.

The experimental group class was taught Emphatic Stress using Communicative Language Teaching for a period of four weeks and the control group class was taught Emphatic Stress using Traditional method for the same period of weeks. A post-test was administered to the sampled students in the Experimental group and the Control group under the same condition to measure academic difference in the students' performance. Thus, data for the study was generated based on the test scores. The test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations.

Data Analysis and Results

Demographic data of the participants are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	49	49
Female	51	51
Total	**100**	**100**

As shown in Table 1, the sample consisted of 49 male (49%) and 51 female (51%) participants, indicating a nearly equal gender distribution with a slight majority of females.

Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the difference in Government Secondary School students' performance in using emphatic stress when compared between their pre-test and post-test scores after being taught with the Communicative Language Teaching?

Table 2: Difference between GSS Students' Performance in Emphatic Stress using CA. Pre-test and Post-test

Groups	Mean	Number	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	Qualitative Description
	Post-test				
E	76.26	50	28.78	4.07	Very High Performance
	Pre-test				
E	39.52	50	20.22	2.86	Very Low Performance

Table 2 presents a comparison of the experimental group's pre-test and post-test performance on emphatic stress elements following instruction via the Communicative Language Teaching. The group's mean score increased substantially from a very low performance level in the pre-test (M=39.52, SD=20.22) to a very high performance level in the post-test (M=76.26, SD=28.78). This marked improvement indicates that the instructional intervention successfully enhanced the students' understanding and application of emphatic stress.

Research Question Two: What will be the difference between Government Secondary School Students' Competence in the use of Emphatic Stress through Communicative Language Teaching and Traditional Method?

Table 3: Difference between GSS Students' Performance in Emphatic Stress using CA and TA

Variables /Group	Mean	Number	Std. Dev.	Std Error Mean	Qualitative Descriptio
	Pre-test				
E	41.06	50	20.22	2.86	Low Perf.
C	32.52	50	15.76	2.23	Low Perf.
	Post-test				
EX	70.26	50	28.78	4.07	High Perf.
CX	46.92	50	27.02	3.82	Low Perf.

Table 3 compares the competence in emphatic stress between students taught via the Communicative Language Teaching (CA) and the Traditional Method (TA). At the pre-test stage, both the experimental (M=41.06, SD=20.22) and control (M=32.52, SD=15.76) groups demonstrated low performance, indicating a comparable and limited initial understanding of the concept. Following the intervention, the control group's post-test results (M=46.92, SD=27.02) remained low, whereas the experimental group showed a substantial improvement to a high level of performance (M=70.26, SD=28.78). This disparity in post-test results clearly indicates that students in the CA group achieved a superior grasp of emphatic stress compared to their TA counterparts.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: *There will be no significant difference between Government Secondary School Students' Competence in Emphatic Stress through Communicative Language Teaching Pre-test and Post-test.*

Table 4: t-test on Significant Difference between GSS Students' Performance in the Use of Emphatic Stress through CA Using the Pre-test and Post-test

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	Std error Mean	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Decision
E	30.74	30.87	4.36	7.04	49	<.001	Reject

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the Communicative Language Teaching on students' competence. The results indicated a statistically significant increase in emphatic stress scores from the pre-test (M=39.52, SD=20.22) to the post-test (M=76.26, SD=28.78) within the experimental group, $t(49) = 7.04$, $p < .001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the instruction received led to a significant improvement in learning outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: *There will be no significant difference between Government Secondary School Students' Competence in Emphatic Stress through Communicative Language Teaching and Traditional Method.*

Table 5: t-test on Significant Difference between GSS Students' Performance in the Use of Emphatic Stress through CA and TA using the Pre-test and Post-test

Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	Std Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Decision
	Pre-test						
E vs C	7.00	25.30	3.58	1.96	49	.056	Accept
	Post-test						
EX vs CX	23.34	37.91	5.36	4.35	49	<.001	Reject

The test in table 5 was conducted to ascertain if the hypothesis which states that there is no notable distinction in the Government Secondary School students' Competence in utilizing Emphatic Stress Communicative Language Teaching and Traditional Method is upheld, as indicated by the performance results of the pre-test from the experimental group in relation to the control group (t-value = 1.96, sig. (2-tailed) = .056). The pre-test analysis reveals no statistically significant disparity in competency between the experimental and control groups. It can therefore be concluded that the baseline understanding of emphatic stress was uniformly low across the sample population, a finding that is quantitatively supported by the data in Table 3. Conversely, the analysis of the post-test scores led to the rejection of the second null hypothesis. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in competence between the two groups (t-value = 4.35, $p < .001$). This finding demonstrates that students taught using the Communicative Language Teaching achieved significantly higher learning outcomes in emphatic stress than those instructed via the Traditional Method.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that students in the experimental group demonstrated very high performance in the post-test compared to very low performance in the pre-test provides compelling evidence for the effectiveness of the Communicative Language Teaching in developing competence in Emphatic Stress. This significant improvement aligns with the theoretical foundation established by Hymes (1972), who argued that true competence involves not only grammatical knowledge but also the sociocultural knowledge of when, how, and to whom it is appropriate to use language (Hymes, 1972; Celce-Murcia, 2007). The dramatic shift from very low to very high performance suggests that the Communicative Language Teaching successfully addressed the gap identified by Bin-Hady (2016), where learners possess declarative knowledge of linguistic rules but lack the procedural ability to integrate this knowledge fluently with contextual and schematic cues to construct meaning. The Communicative Language Teaching enabled students to express themselves independently and develop genuine communicative competence rather than inert knowledge that cannot be effectively deployed for comprehension or interaction.

While both groups exhibited very low performance in the pre-test, indicating a lack of clear understanding of Emphatic Stress, the experimental group's progression to very high performance compared to the control group's low performance underscores the superiority of the Communicative Language Teaching over traditional approaches. This finding resonates with the concerns raised by Odumuh (2020) that many teachers in Abuja struggle to transition from traditional methods, with their teaching orientations prioritizing knowledge transmission over fostering practical, communicative skills in students.

The experimental group's higher performance validates the effect of the methods that connect language learning to real-world use, as demonstrated in several studies (Ginaya et al., 2019; Keshmirshekan, 2019; & Sadiq, 2010), which showed that utilizing authentic materials significantly boosts learners' communicative competence. The statistically significant difference in Emphatic Stress competence between students taught using the Communicative Language Teaching and their baseline performance provides robust evidence supporting the adoption of interactive methodologies in English language instruction. This finding corroborates research by Obenza and Mendoza (2021), who demonstrated that Communicative Language Learning Activities (CLLAS) are a highly effective alternative to traditional instruction for developing students' communicative competence, advocating for their widespread use at the tertiary level.

The statistically significant improvement in students' competence using Emphatic Stress when taught through the Communicative Language Teaching compared to the Traditional Method validates the urgent need for pedagogical reform in Nigerian secondary schools. This finding directly addresses the problem statement's concern that some teachers still use traditional methods to teach vital aspects of English language, resulting in students' failure in external examinations and inability to communicate intelligibly after spending three academic years in senior secondary school (Sadiq, 2010). The superior performance of the Communicative Language Teaching group supports Hymes' (1972) four key parameters of communicative competence: possibility, feasibility, appropriateness, and attestation, which emphasize that any utterance spoken in a situation should adhere to principles of grammar and appropriateness.

Conclusion

The findings of this study guide to a discovery that pedagogical strategy plays a decisive role in developing students' competence in emphatic stress. Students learn better through practice, that is, the more they use the language the more they learn. With Communicative Language Teaching very sufficiently engaging and revolving around students' need for communication stand a very useful means of making students master emphatic stress. This will not only lead to higher performance but significantly enhance students' spoken English intelligibility beyond the local context. This is the thrust that inclusion of the sounds of English really seek to achieve: facilitating international intelligibility in secondary school graduates.

Recommendations

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

1. English language teachers should adopt a student-centered learning system, where learners engage the most in classroom activities while teachers facilitate.
2. Teachers should consistently incorporate Communicative Learning Activities in their lessons to enable students to use language meaningfully for interaction, thereby creating permanent knowledge retention.
3. Secondary school English language teachers should be granted study leave to pursue postgraduate courses that will equip them with modern teaching methodologies, particularly communicative approaches.
4. Schools and educational authorities should provide adequate teaching materials and practice exercises that facilitate communicative language use and enable students to master English effectively.

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EFFECT OF PROCESS-BASED APPROACH ON STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS IN ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Language is the instrument with which humans express their thoughts. It sets humans apart from other animals. There are four basic language skills divided into two categories: productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading). The focus of this paper is writing skills. Writing is a language skill that enables humans to communicate through encoding information in symbols. This skill is fundamental in the English language. Despite its importance, language teachers complain that students continue to struggle with the basics of writing: idea development, coherence, and organization. The Process-Based Approach (PBA) writing technique emphasizes stages (brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing) in the writing process. It fosters a more structured and reflective learning experience. This study examines the effects of the use of PBA on students' writing ability in the English language Classroom in Abuja. Using a quasi-experimental design, this paper compares the writing ability of students taught composition using the PBA and that of those taught using the Traditional Approach (TA). Tests were conducted to collect data, and the data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings indicate that students who engaged in PBA demonstrated significant improvements in idea generation, text organization, and grammatical accuracy than those taught writing using the Traditional Approach. They also exhibited increased confidence and engagement in writing tasks. The study shows that PBA is effective in improving students' writing ability. The study recommends the integration of PBA in English language Classrooms to enhance students' writing proficiency.

Keywords: Process-Based Approach, Writing Ability, English language Instruction, Writing Proficiency.

Introduction

Language is the instrument with which humans express their thoughts. It sets humans apart from other animals. According to Abochol (2011), language is a means of communication. Abochol (2011) defines language as a system of conventional symbols used for communication in a whole community. This means that for communication (which is the transfer of information from one person or people to the other) to take place and be effective, there must be a means, and this means is called language. The English language is the major means of communication in Nigeria. According to Lyons in Okoro (2023) around 237 million people speak English in Africa, with the majority living in Nigeria (about 111 million people). The English language plays many roles in multilingual Nigeria. According to Okoro (2023), it is a second language in Nigeria; it is the language of education, international and diplomatic interaction, science and technology, commerce, mass communications, inter-ethnic communications, and the judiciary. Legally and practically, English is the official language of Nigeria.

Despite the importance of the English language in Nigeria, scholars (Achu, 2017; Ghazo, 2015; Odumuh, 2020; and Okoro, 2023) have posited that the performance of students in English language examinations is generally very poor. These claims, according to Okoro (2023), are strongly supported by results made available by both national and international examination bodies. For example, in an online report in 2012, it was revealed that out of the 1.5 million students who sat for the May/June 2011 WASSCE nationwide, only 472,906 candidates, equivalent to 31.5% of the candidates, could obtain a credit in English language. There are four basic language skills divided into two categories: productive skills (speaking and writing) and receptive skills (listening and reading).

The focus of this study is writing skills. Writing is considered the most complex and taxing skill to master by both learners and instructors. This difficulty, according to Richards and Renandya (2013), lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts. Writing is a productive skill that enables humans to communicate through encoding information in symbols. It is one of the foundations of academic engagement because students must write to learn, copy notes, and study. According to Otagburuagu, Obah, and Ogeyi (2010), writing is a major test of literacy and the skill on which most assessment of academic abilities is based.

Writing skills are fundamental in the English language. Despite its importance, research has established that students still struggle with the ability to generate and develop ideas, organize their thoughts in texts, and write with grammatical accuracy. As a result, it has become necessary to investigate the ways through which students' writing abilities can improve. This is to proffer feasible ways to ameliorate the continuous deterioration of students' writing engagements as observed by scholars. This paper examines the effects of the use of the Process-Based Approach (PBA) on students' writing ability in the English language Classroom in Abuja.

Statement of the Problem

Writing is a crucial component of English language learning. It is the ability to process thoughts and convey information using symbols accepted by a group of people. Despite the importance of writing, it remains one of the most challenging skills for students to develop. Research has established that a good number of language learners struggle with idea generation, coherence, organization, and grammatical accuracy in their writing. As a result, it has become necessary to investigate the ways through which students' writing abilities can be improved. This is to proffer feasible ways to ameliorate the continuous deterioration of students' writing engagements as observed by scholars. This paper examines the effects of the use of the Process-Based Approach (PBA) on students' writing ability in the English language Classroom in Abuja. Traditional approaches to teaching writing, particularly the product-based approach, focus primarily on the final output rather than the development of writing skills. In contrast, the Process-Based Approach (PBA) emphasizes writing as a recursive and interactive process. Using this approach, students engage in activities such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and peer collaboration before producing a final version of their work.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to determine the effects of the use of the Process-Based Approach (PBA) on students' writing ability in the English language Classroom in Abuja. The specific objectives are to:

1. Establish the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of idea generation using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach.
2. Examine the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of text organization using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach.
3. Ascertain the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of grammatical accuracy using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach.

Research Questions

To provide a proper guide to this study, the paper addressed the following questions:

1. What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of idea generation using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?
2. What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of text organization using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?
3. What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of grammatical accuracy using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?

Review of Literature

In the conceptual framework of this study, the relationship between the Process-Based Approach (PBA) and students' writing ability will be defined with a focus on three key writing components: Idea Generation, Text Organization, and Grammatical Accuracy. In the conceptual framework, moderating factors such as student engagement, teacher feedback, and peer collaboration, which influence the effectiveness of the approach, will be defined.

1. **Process-Based Approach (PBA):** The Process-Based Approach to teaching writing emphasizes writing as a recursive process involving stages such as prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. This is a method that encourages students to develop their ideas over time. This approach focuses on content and meaning before addressing grammatical correctness. This is the instructional strategy being examined in this study. Unlike the product approach, which focuses on imitating model texts, the PBA encourages students to develop their ideas, express themselves, and refine their writing through multiple drafts (Seow, 2002). The PBA contrasts with the Traditional Approach (TA), which emphasizes the final product with minimal revision. According to Fearn and Farman (2001), PBA is an effective writing instruction method.

According to Badger and White (2000), the PBA consists of the following key stages:

1. Pre-writing stage (Planning & Brainstorming) – At this stage, students are expected to generate ideas, create outlines, and organize thoughts before writing.

2. Drafting stage – At this stage, learners are expected to produce an initial version of their text. Their focus at this stage is on content rather than grammar or structure.
3. Revising stage – Here, students are to refine their ideas, improve coherence, and enhance organization based on peer or teacher feedback.
4. Editing stage – Attention is given to grammar, punctuation, spelling, and overall accuracy at this stage.
5. Publishing stage (Final Draft) – At this stage, which is the final stage, a polished version of the learners' writing is presented, shared, or submitted.

Each of these stages is expected to foster critical thinking, creativity, and language awareness among the students. The PBA makes the writing process more student-centered and reflective.

2. **Student Engagement:** This involves the level of student participation and interest in the writing process. This can influence how effectively they apply PBA strategies. Teacher feedback has to do with the quality and frequency of feedback provided by instructors to the students. This can enhance the revision process and overall writing quality of the students. Peer Collaboration involves the students' collaboration with among themselves. Peer review and discussions can help students refine their writing and develop a deeper understanding of text organization and grammar.

Writing ability refers to students' abilities to express their thoughts in texts using symbols. According to Fearn and Farman (2001), writing ability is measured through three main components. Idea Generation involves the ability of students to brainstorm, develop creative and relevant content, and elaborate on ideas effectively. Text Organization is the ability of students to structure paragraphs logically, use transitions, and create coherent arguments. Grammatical Accuracy involves the level of correctness of language use in writing. This includes tense, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure. This study is anchored on the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing. This theory was proposed by Flower and Hayes in 1981. This theory conceptualizes writing as a non-linear, recursive, and goal-directed cognitive process rather than a simple act of transcribing thoughts. It emphasizes that writing involves multiple mental activities that include: planning, translating ideas into text, and revising based on feedback.

Flower and Hayes (1981) identified three main cognitive processes involved in writing:

Planning: At this cognitive stage, writers are expected to generate ideas, organize them, and set goals for their writing. This aligns with the pre-writing stage in the Process-Based Approach (PBA), where students have to brainstorm, outline, and strategize their content.

Translating: At this cognitive stage, writers are to convert their planned ideas into sentences and paragraphs. In PBA, this corresponds to the drafting stage, where students focus on expressing their thoughts without immediate concern for grammar or structure.

Reviewing (Revising & Editing): the writers are to evaluate their text, revise for clarity and coherence, and edit for grammatical accuracy. This mirrors the revision and editing stages in PBA, where students refine their work based on teacher and peer feedback. According to Fearn and Farman (2001), the Cognitive Process theory is suitable to anchor any study on the Process-Based Approach of writing instruction for the following reasons.

Supports a Recursive Approach: Unlike the traditional product-based approach, which views writing as a linear process (from brainstorming to the final product), the Cognitive Process Theory aligns with PBA because it emphasizes revision and reflection at multiple stages.

Emphasizes the Role of Metacognition: The theory suggests that effective writing requires conscious thinking and self-regulation, which PBA fosters through peer reviews and multiple drafts.

Validates the Study's Focus Areas: The theory's emphasis on planning, organization, and revision directly relates to the study's variables: idea generation, text organization, and grammatical accuracy all of which showed improvement under PBA.

By anchoring this study in the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing, it becomes obvious why and how the process-based approach enhances students' writing ability compared to Traditional Approaches. Research has shown that students who engage in a process-oriented approach in the writing classroom demonstrate better idea generation and organization in their writing activities (Hyland, 2003). Since PBA encourages pre-writing activities such as brainstorming and outlining, students develop a clearer structure and logical flow in their essays. They become more adept at introducing, supporting, and concluding their ideas coherently. PBA reduces writing anxiety and enhances students' confidence (Tribble, 1996). By breaking down the writing process into manageable steps, learners feel less overwhelmed and are more willing to take risks in their writing. This gradual development builds their fluency and self-efficacy in composing texts.

Since editing is an essential stage of the process-based approach, students pay closer attention to grammar, punctuation, and syntax. Studies indicate that students who revise their work multiple times tend to produce more grammatically accurate texts compared to those who submit a single draft without reflection (Raimes, 1985).

Peer feedback further reinforces this learning, as students analyze and correct errors collaboratively. The process-based approach often involves peer review, group discussions, and collaborative writing tasks. This interaction fosters critical thinking as students analyze their own and others' work and provide constructive feedback (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014). Such an environment enhances engagement and creates a sense of shared responsibility in the learning process.

Students find writing more meaningful when they actively participate in the process. Research has indicated that PBA increases students' motivation to write because they perceive it as a learning experience rather than a test of their final product (Richards & Renandya, 2002). The iterative nature of the approach helps students see writing as a skill that can be improved rather than as a talent, they either possess or lack. Though the process-based approach is believed by many to offer numerous benefits in writing classrooms, its implementation is not without challenges. Some of the challenges of implementing PBA in English language Classrooms, according to Ferris & Hedgcock (2014), are:

Time Constraints: The multi-stage process requires more class time than traditional approaches, which can make implementation difficult in time-limited curricula.

Teacher Training and Workload: Teachers must be well-trained in facilitating writing workshops, providing constructive feedback, and managing peer reviews. This can increase their workload.

Student Resistance: Some students, especially those accustomed to product-based methods, may initially resist multiple revisions, seeing them as tedious rather than beneficial.

Assessment Difficulties: Evaluating writing based on the process rather than just the final product requires alternative assessment methods, such as portfolios, which some educators may find challenging to implement.

According to Ferris & Hedgcock (2014), the following strategies can be adopted for the effective implementation of PBA in English language Classrooms.

Integrating Technology: Digital tools such as Google Docs, collaborative writing platforms, and AI-assisted feedback systems can streamline the revision and editing process.

Balanced Instruction: Combining PBA with product-based elements (e.g., model texts) can provide students with clear writing expectations while allowing creativity.

Teacher Support and Training: Workshops and professional development programs can help educators effectively implement and manage process writing activities.

Student Awareness: Educating students on the benefits of revision and peer collaboration can foster a positive attitude toward process writing.

From the reviewed literature, it has been established that the process-based approach to teaching writing has a profound impact on students' writing ability. PBA improves idea development, enhances organization, increases grammatical accuracy, and fosters motivation. While it presents certain challenges, strategic implementation can help educators overcome these barriers. Given its effectiveness in promoting writing proficiency, PBA should be widely integrated into English language teaching to support students in becoming confident and skilled writers.

Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental design. This design involved a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The pre-test was used to determine the respondents' levels of ability in written composition. It was also used to select homogeneous respondents. After the pre-test, the respondents were divided into two homogeneous groups (control and experimental) based on their scores. The experimental group was 30 in number, and they were given treatment, that is, they were taught writing using the PBA. On the other hand, the control group was also 30 in number, and they were taught using the TA. The treatment lasted for 4 weeks. After the treatment, both groups were given a post-test. The post-test results helped the researchers to establish whether there was any difference in the writing abilities of the respondents after the experiment.

The respondents for this study were 60 SS2 students selected from 'Government Secondary School, Gwagwalada, Abuja'. The researcher administered a writing test to the entire class of 109 students in 'SS2 E' as a pre-test. Based on their scores, the researchers selected 60 respondents with scores below average. The intention was for the students' writing ability to be homogeneous. Data was collected using written tests as instruments. The Data for this study was analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis tools, which included frequency, mean, and standard deviation.

Results

After 4 weeks of administering the PBA programme to the experimental group while the control group studied using the TA, a writing test was given to the respondents in the control and experimental groups by the researcher as a post-test. After the post-test, raw scores were collected from the selected participants and statistically analysed using SPSS. The results are presented in the following Tables.

Research Question One: What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of idea generation using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?

Table 1: Difference in the performance between Post-test Mean score of Students Taught Writing at the Level of Idea Generation Using Process-Based Approach and those Taught Using the Traditional Approach

Group	N	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	14.7400	2.28402	.32308
Control	30	10.9000	1.09256	.15425

Results in Table 1 showed that in the post-test statistical analysis of the students' ability in writing at the level of idea generation, the experimental group with a mean score of 14.7400 outperformed the control group, which had a mean score of 10.9000. Their mean difference was 3.84. This showed that the Process-Based Approach significantly improved students' writing ability at the level of idea generation.

Research Question Two: What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of text organization using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?

Table 2: Difference in the Performance between Post-test Mean Score of Students Taught Writing at the Level of Text Organization Using the Process-Based Approach and those Taught Using the Traditional Approach

Group	N	mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	32.4400	3.55803	.50301
Control	30	21.9400	2.66810	.37732

Results in Table 2 showed that in the post-test statistical analysis of the students'ability in writing at the level of text organization, the experimental group with a mean score of 32.4400 outperformed the control group, which had a mean score of 21.9400. Their mean difference was 10.50. This showed that the Process- Based Approach significantly improved students' writing ability at the level of text organization.

Research Question Three: What is the difference in performance between the post-test mean score of students taught writing at the level of grammatical accuracy using the Process-Based Approach and those taught using the Traditional Approach?

Table 3: Difference in the Performance between Post-test Mean Score of Students Taught Writing at the Level of Grammatical Accuracy Using the Process-Based Approach and those Taught Using the Traditional Approach

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	30	14.7400	2.28402	.32301
Control	30	10.9000	1.09265	.15452

Results in Table 3 showed that in the post-test statistical analysis of the students' ability in writing at the level of grammatical accuracy, the experimental group with a mean score of 32.4400 outperformed the control group, which had a mean score of 21.9400. Their mean difference was 4.9200. This showed that the Process-Based Approach significantly improved students' writing ability at the level of grammatical accuracy.

Discussion of Findings

From the data presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, it can be concluded that, based on the findings in the tables, the Process-Based Approach significantly improved students' writing skills at the levels of idea generation, text organization, and grammatical accuracy, respectively. On the other hand, the Traditional Approach to teaching writing did not significantly improve students' writing skills at the levels of idea generation, text organization, and grammatical accuracy, respectively. The mean difference between the PBA and the TA is significant. These findings agree with those of Hyland (2003), who posit that PBA encourages pre-writing activities such as brainstorming and outlining; as such, students develop a clearer structure and logical flow in their essays.

They become more adept at introducing, supporting, and concluding their ideas coherently. This study also corroborates Raimes' (1985) assertion that since editing is an essential stage of the Process-Based Approach, students pay closer attention to grammar, punctuation, and syntax. Other studies indicate that students who revise their work multiple times tend to produce more grammatically accurate texts compared to those who submit a single draft without reflection. Peer feedback further reinforces this learning, as students analyze and correct errors collaboratively.

Conclusion

This study on the effects of the process-based approach on students' writing ability in English language classrooms in Abuja, Nigeria, conclusively demonstrates that the Process-Based Approach (PBA) is significantly more effective than the Traditional Approach (TA) in enhancing students' writing competencies across all critical dimensions of writing. The substantial improvements observed in text organization (mean difference = 10.50), grammatical accuracy (mean difference = 4.92), and idea generation (mean difference = 3.84) provide empirical evidence that instructional strategies emphasizing brainstorming, drafting, revising, and peer feedback produce superior writing outcomes compared to traditional methods that prioritize correctness over process. These findings underscore the pedagogical value of adopting process-oriented writing instruction that engages students in the iterative and reflective aspects of composition, thereby equipping them with essential skills for effective written communication.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and recommendations, the following were recommended for this study:

Recommendations

1. English language teachers in secondary schools should adopt the Process-Based Approach as the primary instructional method for writing, with particular emphasis on structured activities that enhance text organization.
2. Teacher training institutions and professional development programs should design comprehensive workshops and certification courses that equip English language teachers with practical skills in implementing process-based writing strategies, including brainstorming techniques, drafting procedures, revision protocols, and peer feedback mechanisms.
3. Educational policymakers and curriculum developers should revise the English language curriculum to formally incorporate the Process-Based Approach, ensuring that assessment frameworks evaluate students' writing ability based on the iterative writing process rather than focusing solely on the correctness of final products.

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EFFECT OF LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENT IN OBUDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The language of instruction remains a key determinant of the academic success of students and, when ignored, other efforts at improving the academic standards would be futile. The study unraveled the effect of different languages of instruction on primary school learners' learning success in Obudu Local Government Area, Cross River State. The study employed the quasi-experimental research design and the population comprised of all the pupils in public primary schools in the locale of the study. Five pupils each from 15 primary schools were selected through a multilayer sampling technique. The study involved a pre-test, seven weeks of treatment and post-test. Multiple choice test items on some selected topics were administered using the language of instruction. The test questions were validated to ensure simplicity of language and appropriateness of items. The reliability index of 0.78 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Mean was used to answer the research questions while ANOVA was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed pupils taught in the mother tongue performed better than those taught in English medium, and pupils taught in integrated English and mother tongues medium of instruction performed better than those taught in English medium only. It is recommended amongst others that schools in Nigeria should encourage additive bilingualism in English and mother tongue/language of the immediate environment so that at the end of primary education pupils can perform learning tasks effectively in English and mother tongue/language of the immediate environment and avoid the abrupt transition to English language after primary three.

Key Words: Achievement, Language, Mastery, Medium of instruction, Pedagogy

Introduction

Language of instruction holds a very high premium on the academic outcomes of students. Over time, the English language has continued to be used as the language of teaching/learning in schools in Nigeria right from the kindergarten level irrespective of the language provisions in the National Policy on Education. The Federal Government stipulates the use of mother tongue-based instruction or language of the immediate environment in schools (FGN, 2013). There seems to be a non-total implementation of the mother tongue education policy, which may be as a result of too much emphasis on certification in school and the multilingual constellation of Nigeria. This undue emphasis on international languages cannot de-emphasise the relevance of language compatibility to the academic achievement of learners as pupils can only participate in a class in which they have the linguistic wherewithal to participate in learning tasks. Ouane (2003) states that language is an entity that puts limits on human thought as it is the form and content of thought; a strong medium for presenting a person's worldview; and a reflection of the collective memory of the speakers and of their ability. Ouane's assertion underscores the place of language in cognitive processes such as teaching and learning.

Araromi (2005) avers that language is the vehicle of communication par excellence and without it (language) Homo sapiens will find it problematic to exist. Awofala, Awofala, Nneji,and Fatade (2012) aver that language is a critical resource in all human activities, especially in the educative process as this supports the view that language is a resource that human beings use to organize and configure their experiences as well as in building information, attitudes, ideas or points of view. Klein (1994) observes that the use of a language that is entirely new to a child for instruction results in cognitive and pedagogical challenges. The choice of language of instruction remains critical to the academic achievement of students at all levels of education. Thus, concerted efforts must be made by government, educationists and teachers to choose a language that is intelligible to children for instruction. Pupils' academic failure cannot be dissociated from their language problems as the use of a language that pupils have limited knowledge of leaves the pupils to grapple with the language of instruction and contents.

The multilingual constellation of Nigeria is an issue in the choice of an indigenous language instruction. Bamgbose (1991) asserts that there are about 400 languages spoken in Nigeria, possibly as mother tongues. UNICEF (2009) and Lewis (2009) posit that there are about 510 spoken languages in Nigeria. The fluidity of the boundaries of these languages has also compounded the problem as more than one language may be domiciled in a particular community.

Some scholars also assert that most Nigerian languages do not have developed orthographies, teachers' manuals, primers, textbooks and instructional materials (Olagboju, 2014; Ibrahim & Gwandu, 2016). These problems threaten the existence of such languages and give room for the choice of a language of instruction other than the Nigerian languages. Ikiddeh (1986) asserts that it is obvious that if a language has no orthography, it has not started the evolutionary process of analysis, assertion and documented mobility, which together can guarantee its staying alive in the world.

The question what appropriate language of instruction should be used across the various levels of education remains pertinent. Okwudishu (2003) states that the practice in the basic education focuses on children use of language of the environment as the medium of instruction facilitate socialisation. The scholar submits that such practice extends the bond between the home and school. Onochie (2002) corroborates the above assertion in respect to mother tongue-based instruction in Nigerian primary school when he asserted that at school age, that is, at six, a child possesses an extensive knowledge of his first language as it were in his head. Thus, such learners need to be taught in a language they understand very well. Onochie (2002) believes that when a child is taught in a language he understands, the benefits are immense. This position is in tandem with other scholars' position that a child must be taught reading in the language it speaks. When a child is taught in a familiar language, the subjects would not only be easily understood, the child would equally be able to take active part in the teaching learning process and his performance would also be enhanced.

The child does not only become automatically literate but also communicates effectively using the language thereby achieving the main objectives of primary education which are the inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy; and ability to communicate effectively (FGN, 2004). Ofulue (2011) also acknowledges the indispensable place of language of instruction when she held that language is central to achieving literacy whether through formal or non-formal education. She asserted further that it is often the case in multilingual societies that many individuals do not have access to education because they are not literate in the language of instruction. Olagoke (1979) in Adepoju (2017) states that the proper development of the child is closely bound with the continuous use of the language he has spoken from birth, the language of his parents, brothers and sisters, friends and the people he is used to. Kolawole (1985) observes that students in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State did

Iliyas and Olanipekun (2020) stress the importance of language in education that most students fail in most certificate examinations because they have problem of proficiency in English language such that unless a child attain mastery of the second language, which is the medium of instruction, reasoning gets limited and learning become challenged. Fayehun (1991) states that theknowledge of English language particularly as the medium of instruction in school automatically affects the students' mastery ability as regard other subjects. This emphasizes that students' proficiency in the language of instruction has a massive impact on learning generally. Iliyas and Olanipekun (2017) submit that medium of instruction being the key vehicle of expression is crucial for transmission of knowledge, values, mastery and socialization process in the school system, which influence learning outcomes across the curriculum. Wolff (2003) captures the situation in Niger as thus:

As a former French colony, Niger shares with a number of other African countries one particular blessing or burden – depending on how one looks at this double-edged sword – the use of French as the official language, i.e., la francophonie. It may be a blessing in terms of international relations, but it is a heavy burden in terms of internal communication. For basic education it is a disaster (p.199).

From Wolff's (2003) view, the intention may be to attain international integration through international languages but they are actually leading to disintegration in the case of local communities whose languages are affected by exclusion and a challenge to academic development.David (2006) opines that language is undoubtedly, one of the most important areas of the curriculum. It is both a means to an end and an end in itself. Oginni and Awolabi (2013) emphasize the relevance of language of instruction to learning outcomes. They state that when Mathematics is taught in a child's mother tongue, it has lots of advantages which include overcoming limited knowledge of foreign mathematical vocabulary. Teaching in mother tongue also brings closer to the children mathematical examples and concepts.

Language and literacy are inextricably linked. Literacy is about communication as literacy is fundamentally a language-based activity. There can be no discussion of literacy without asking, “In which language will literacy be acquired and practiced?” Decisions on language use in school must balance political and ethnic sensitivity, pedagogical effectiveness, costs and learner preferences. So, in a linguistically diverse country like Nigeria with large rural population or visible linguistic dichotomy, it is sensible to treat language of instruction as an important factor in task towards improving education access and promoting effective teaching and learning.

Statement of the Problem

The hues and cries of the falling standard of education seems to becoming a general phenomenon that possibly can be related to the medium of instructional delivery. The situation is so disturbing in Cross River State, where many local languages compete for mastery in pupils' cognitive development with English language as the medium of communication. The local languages are derogatorily called vernacular even though that is what the pupils use naturally. Save the Children International (2009) avers that the world's most linguistically diverse countries, which use a single national or international language for schooling have less proportion of out of school children in the world. It is revealed further that 54 million out of school children live in countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Cameroun, Namibia, and others which are classified as “highly linguistically fractionalized”. The most linguistically fractionalized countries have 72% of out of school children worldwide (Save the Children International, 2009). These statistics implies that language of instruction would need to be a strongly focused campaign to achieve Education For All initiative and improve pupils' learning achievement. This study, therefore sought to unravel the place of medium of instruction in the overall school success of students at the basic education level.

Purpose of the Study

This research is focused on effect of languages of instruction (English and mother tongues: Ubang, Bette and Alege) on learning outcomes of pupils in primary school in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The work is set out to ascertain:

a. the existence of any significant difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using English as the medium of instruction and those taught using mother tongues (either Ubang, Bette or Alege);
b. if significant difference exist in learning outcomes between pupils taught using English only as the medium of instruction and those taught using both English and mother tongues (either Ubang, Bette or Alege);
c. If there is any significant difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using mother tongue only (either Ubang, Bette or Alege) as the medium of instruction and those taught using English language and mother tongue (either Ubang, Bette or Alege); and
d. if pupils taught and tested in their mother tongue (either Ubang, Bette or Alege) perform better than their counterparts taught exclusively in their mother tongue (either Ubang, Bette or Alege) but tested in English language.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Is there any difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using English language as a medium of instruction and those taught using mother tongue as the medium of expression?
2. What is the extent of difference in the learning outcomes of pupils taught using English only as a medium of instruction and those taught using both English and mother tongue?
3. Could there be any difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using mother tongue only as the medium of instruction and those taught using both English and mother tongue?
4. Is there any difference in performance between pupils taught and tested in their mother tongue and those taught in their mother tongue but tested in English language?

Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this research, the following null hypotheses were tested.

1. There is no significant difference in the learning outcomes of pupils taught using English language as a medium of instruction and those taught using mother tongue as the medium of instruction.
2. There is no significant difference in the learning outcomes of pupils taught using English only as a medium of instruction and those taught using both English and mother tongue.
3. There is no significant difference in the learning outcomes of pupils taught using mother tongue only as the medium of instruction and those taught using both English and mother tongue.
4. There is no significant difference in the learning outcomes of pupils taught and tested in mother tongue and those taught in their mother tongue but tested in English language.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the quasi-experimental research design. The quasi-experimental research design was selected because the researcher was interested in drawing causal effect of the independent variables (mother tongue, English language and the integrated approach) can instigate any change in the dependent variable (learning outcomes). The population comprised of the 15742 pupils of all the 67 public primary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River categorized into urban, semi-urban and rural. The sample

consisted of 75 pupils in primary 5 from 15 public primary schools across the local government selected through a multi-layer sampling technique comprising purposive and random sampling techniques. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 5 schools each from the rural, the semi-urban and the urban part of the Local Government Area, while the random sampling technique was used to select each school within the categories (urban, semi-urban, and rural). Thereafter, the simple random sampling technique without replacement was used to select 5 pupils from primary five in the sampled schools.

The instrument for data collection was a test of 5 questions with two marks each making a total of 10 marks administered as pretest and posttest using the language of instruction except otherwise specified. The test was administered orally after 35 minutes of each lesson because the mother tongues or language(s) of the immediate environment of the pupils had no orthography. The test questions were validated in terms of face and content validity to ensure that the language of the test was simple, appropriate, and that the test questions addressed the topics taught by the researcher. The reliability of the test instrument was ascertained through test-retest measure of reliability with a correlation coefficient of 0.78 computed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Data gathered were analysed using arithmetic mean and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. ANOVA was used in the testing of the hypotheses the study was to ascertain the difference in performance of the pupils as a result of the use of different media of instruction.

Results

Ho_1: *There is no significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught using English language and those taught using mother tongue as a medium of instruction.*

Table 1: Analysis of Variance of Learning Outcomes of Pupils Taught Using English and Those Taught Using Mother Tongue in Obudu

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Variance	F Computed	Mean Difference	
Between Group	SSB=302.46	1	302.46	302.46 / 4.0700899 =74.312855	Mother Tongue 7.39 Difference = 2.84	English 4.55
Within Group	SSW=602.3733	148	4.0700899			
Total	904.8333	149				

F (1, 148) 0.05 =3.84; p>.05 significant

The critical value of F (3.84) is less than the calculated F value of 74.312855 at .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a significant difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using English Language and those taught using mother tongue in the whole Obudu Local Government Area. The mean difference of 2.84 in favour of the mother tongue-based instruction shows the academic viability of mother tongue.

Ho_2: *There is no significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught using English Language only as a medium of teaching/learning and those taught using both English and mother tongue (integrative approach).*

Table 2: Overall Analysis of Variance of Learning Outcomes of Pupils Taught Using English Language only and Those Taught Using both English and Mother Tongue (Integrated Approach) in Schools in Obudu

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Variance	F Computed	Mean Difference	
Between Group	SSB=190.4066	1	190.4066	190.4066	English	Integrated
				4.2336939	4.55	6.8
				=44.974106	Difference = 2.25	
Within Group	SSW=626.5867	148	4.2336939			
Total	816.9933	149				

F (1, 148) 0.05 =3.84; p>.05 significant

The critical value of F (3.84) is less than the calculated F value 44.974106 at .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a very significant difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using English Language only and those taught using both English Language and mother tongue in schools in Obudu Local Government. The mean difference of 2.25 in favour of the integrated approach (English language and mother tongue) also corroborates the hypothesis test result.

Ho_3: *There is no significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught using mother tongue only and those taught using both English and mother tongue (integrative approach).*

Table 3: Overall Analysis of Variance of Learning Outcomes of Pupils Taught Using Mother Tongue and Those Taught Using both English Language and Mother Tongue in Schools in Obudu

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Variance	F Computed	Mean Difference	
Between	SSB=12.9066	1	12.9066	12.9066	Mother Tongue	Integrated Approach
				3.106669	7.39	6.8
				=4.154485	Difference = 0.59	
Within	SSW=459.7867	148	3.106667			
Total	472.6933	149				

F (1, 148) 0.05 =3.84; p>.05 significant

The critical value of F (3.84) is less than the calculated F value 4.154485 at .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught using mother tongue only and those taught using both English Language and mother tongue in schools in Obudu Local Government. The mean difference of 0.59 in favour of mother tongue indicates that there is a difference but the level of significance is quite minimal.

Ho_4: There is no significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught and tested in mother tongue and those taught in mother tongue but tested in English language.

Table 4: Overall Analysis of Variance of Learning Outcomes of Pupils Taught and Tested in Mother Tongue and Those Taught in Mother Tongue but Tested in English in Schools in Obudu

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of freedom	Variance	F Computed	Mean Difference	
Between group	SSB=546.567	1	546.567	546.567	Mother Tongue	English Medium
				3.958	7.39	3.99
				=138.09	Difference =3.4	
Within group	SSW=585.773	148	3.958			
Total	1132.340	149				

F (1, 148) 0.05 =3.84; p>.05 significant

The critical value of F (3.84) is less than the calculated F value 138.09 at .05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a very significant difference in learning outcomes between pupils taught and tested in mother tongue and those taught in the mother tongue but tested in English Language in schools in Obudu Local Government. The mean difference of 3.4 in favour of mother tongue instruction corroborates the result of the hypothesis test.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding ascertained that if there was any significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught using English Language and those taught using mother tongue (Ubang, Alege or Bette). The results of the analysis is in consonance with Piper et al. (2016) whose study showed the potency of mother tongues in teaching and learning as captured. More so, Hungi and Thuku (2010) further suggested that mastery of the mother tongue helps in students' performance in a second language while the struggle of students in second language instruction (English language) is overtly displayed in the performance of students as corroborated (Wolff, 2003). Due to the abysmal performance of students in English language instruction, parents still support instruction English language (Trudell, 2018; Trudell & Piper, 2014; Khejeri, 2014; Anyadiegewu, 2016).

The second finding of this study revealed that pupils taught using English language only and those taught using both English language and mother tongue. This finding corroborates the outcome of Ofolue (2011) whose study revealed that pupils who did well in additive bilingual education than the second language instruction (English). Some scholars (Hungi & Thuku, 2010) submit that pupils who start learning in their mother tongue perform better academically upon transitioning to another language which shows mother tongues are viable instrument for learning. Despite the viability of mother tongue in education, most policies that involve mother tongue-based education always witness hesitant implementation (Trudell, 2018).

The third finding also revealed that pupils taught using mother tongue only had similar result and those taught using both English language and mother tongue (integrative approach). The results of analyses is similar to Carter et al. (2020) that there was no significant difference in learning outcomes of pupils taught using mother tongue only and those taught using the integrative approach as both linguistic approaches have been favoured by scholars as contributing positively to students' learning outcomes. Despite the benefits of bilingualism, some scholars (Rivera, 2019) argue that such mutual benefit is realizable only when the languages used for instruction are similar. Several studies show that mother tongue education and bilingual education (mother tongue and the target language) enhance learning outcomes.

The finding on the effect of test language on pupils' performance showed the abysmal performance of pupils in the English medium examination underscores the effect of the use of English language (second language) in assessing students who are less proficient in the language. This situation captures the views of Awofala, Awofala, Nneji and Fatade (2012) and Mustapha,

(2012) who variously submit that the impact of the use of English languages in teaching and learning when children have not developed cognitive linguistic competence in the languages. The finding also supports UNESCO (2000) on the persistent of early school dropout and low academic achievement among minority learners stem in part from these language-in-education policies. This is a situation where children futilely try to express themselves in the language of instruction as such they are blanketly seen as academically unfit.

Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that the use of a language that children barely understand as a medium of instruction in a multi-ethnic and multilingual nation with over 400 indigenous languages is academically retrogressive. The findings revealed that mother tongue based learning and additive bilingualism for a considerable period of time are the best options and adequate for the mastery of English language over a period of time. Teachers and pupils were always aspire to use the standard variety of English that has prominence in the academic domain. The study also concludes that pupils introduced to English language instruction only after the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction performed better than those taught with only English.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion, it is recommended that:

1. Schools in Nigeria should encourage additive bilingualism in English language and mother tongue or language of the immediate environment so that pupils can perform learning tasks effectively in English language.
2. Government should consider the linguistic backgrounds of teachers before posting them to primary school to enhance the successful implementation of the mother tongue policy or additive bilingualism.
3. The importance of language as a vehicle of learning and its critical role in education should be emphasized in teachers' training institutions.
4. Government and other school proprietors should fund continuous training of teachers on indigenous languages in the various communities and their use for pedagogy.

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EFFECTS OF RECIPROCAL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY ON THE READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated effect of reciprocal instructional strategy on reading comprehension performance of public secondary school students in Abuja, Nigeria. The research set out to determine if differences exist in the mean score performance of public secondary school students in reading comprehension taught using reciprocal and the conventional instructional strategies. It also unveil the differences that exist in the mean score performance at the literal, inferential and critical levels of the reading comprehension in public secondary school students exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies. A pre-test, post-test, control group and non-randomised quasi-experimental design was adopted for the study. Four research questions were raised. Through purposive sampling technique, a sample of 66 SSS 2 students were drawn from two co-educational public senior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Data were collected through test items adopted from the reading comprehension sections of the West African Examinations Council. Mean statistics was used to answer the research questions. The results indicated that a significant difference exists in the reading comprehension performance of public secondary school students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy. The study revealed difference exist in the mean gain scores of students taught using the two instructional strategies with students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy found to have performed better than students exposed to the conventional instructional strategy. Findings of the study showed improved performance with the use of reciprocal teaching strategy and it was recommended that teachers of English should get familiar with the principles of the strategy and deploy it in their classroom for improved reading comprehension in secondary school students.

Keywords: Effect**,** Public Secondary School, Reciprocal Instruction, Reading Comprehension, Strategy, Students

Introduction

Reading is one of the basic language skills to be mastered as part of teaching and learning English, a core subject in the school curriculum in Nigeria. Since reading plays such an important role in literacy, researching reading comprehension improvement is, therefore, a requisite for sustained effective use of English. Reading comprehension strategies may then be viewed as a complex process involving interactions between the reader and the text, using multiple skills. Consequently, reading instructional strategies can be defined as a cognitive and interactive act that is permitted under particular circumstances with the goal of improving comprehension (Oczkus, 2018).

The persistent poor performance of secondary school students in externally conducted certificate examinations by both the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO), especially in the Federal Capital Territory (Dzever, 2015), leaves one in doubt about the effectiveness of the teaching strategies used by the English language teachers for teaching the subject (Banditvilai, 2020). Factors like environmental influence, socio-economic and cultural background of the learners, parenting attitude, age and gender factor, exposure to the target language, learning materials, lack of requisite teaching experience, inadequate qualified English Language teachers, overcrowded classes, poor instructional and infrastructural facilities and the use of in-appropriate teaching methods employed by the English language teachers have been identified by many researchers (Dzever, 2015; Oluwakemi and Olukayode, 2015; Mwanambuku, 2016).

For successful use of instructional strategies, teachers need to develop a structure for their students according to their needs, abilities and the type of print they work with (McNamara & Kendeou, 2022). Babbitt (2002) cited in Yadav (2023) suggests eight reading instructional strategies, which are comprehension monitoring (involves pre-reading, reading, and post-reading activities), cooperative learning (students work in small groups), graphic organizers (involves comparison/contrast, hierarchy diagram, and matrix diagram), story structure (predicting), question generating, question answering (clarifying), summarization and multiple strategy.

Reciprocal teaching is an instructional strategy used to teach learners the mental techniques that helps on improvisation of skills regarding comprehension while reading (Oo et al., 2021). The Reciprocal instructional strategy was originally developed by Palinscar and Brown (1984). It focuses on explicit instruction in four comprehension-fostering activities: predicting the content of a text, formulating questions, clarifying unfamiliar words and summarizing the main idea of a text (Oczkus, 2018). These activities are embedded in dialogic teaching and small group discussions, in which the responsibility for using reading strategies are gradually handed over from the

teacher to the students (Lee & Tsai, 2017). The reciprocal strategy is a plan that assists the students. Reciprocal teaching is an interactive strategy designed to improve students' comprehension skill and to foster metacognitive habits, which are defined as thinking about thinking, recognizing what one knows and what one does not, as well as organizational strategies for managing the process (Peng & Wang, 2015).

Reciprocal instructional strategy in teaching consists of a social setting where a member of a group of students is involved in reading the text aloud while other team members follow the passage. Reciprocation occurs as each team-member successively assumes the responsibility of the teacher for the team (Lee & Tsai, 2017). The role of the teacher is to lead out and ensure that the four stages of reciprocal instructional strategy are appropriately implemented (Oczkus, 2018).

Alemu (2020) posits that reciprocal teaching encourages students to take a more active role in leading a group dialogue, and helps to bring more meaning to the text at a personal and cognitive level. Alemu (2020) further asserted that reciprocal teaching is based on the supposed understanding that creative interactions among students and between students and teachers with clear role reversal begets genuine meaning scooping in reading. Boadman et al (2015) further opines that reciprocal strategy is based on active socialization, wherein the knowledge constructed from the text is negotiated within discourse communities through both teacher and student and student-student interactions. In facilitating learning using reciprocal teaching activities, students are taught cognitive strategies through appropriate support and feedback (Oczkus, 2018). Students learn these strategies through discussion, support, and feedback to enhance reading comprehension, develop self-regulatory and monitoring skills, and achieve an overall improvement in motivation (Oczkus, 2018).

Students, in secondary schools, in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria have easily noticeable problem of inadequate mastery of the skills for effective reading, which has become a major hindrance to their academic performance. Challenges that affect students' abilities as manifested in inadequate reading comprehension include reluctance to read, inability to attain sufficient comprehension from literature to deplore when required; and by implications, have been banes to not just reading comprehension but on attaining proficiency generally in English language. These inadequacies have denied students comprehending reading discourses in English language. It has also crippled them from grasping text contents across other subjects as corroborated by scholars (Pretorius & Klapwijik, 2016; Nurie 2017). Accordingly, recognizing the potentials of instructional strategies to address the various challenges, coupled with the need to identify instructional strategies that will effectively enhance students' performance in reading comprehension, necessitated this study.

Research Questions

1. What is the mean score difference in the reading comprehension of public Secondary School Students in Abuja, taught using the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?
2. What is the difference in the mean score, at literal level of the reading comprehension performance of public Secondary School Students in Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?
3. What is the difference in the mean score, at inferential level of the reading comprehension performance of public Secondary School Students in Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?
4. What is the difference in the mean score, at critical level of the reading comprehension performance of public Secondary School Students in Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?

Methodology

This study utilized a pre-test, post-test, quasi-experimental format to determine effect of reciprocal instructional strategy on the reading comprehension performance of public senior secondary school students. The design utilized intact classes for both the experimental and control groups. The study consisted of two instructional groups: Reciprocal Instructional Strategy (experimental group) and Conventional Instructional Strategy (control group). The pre-test was administered to establish the equivalence of the two groups, while the post-test was used to determine the effect of the reciprocal instructional strategy on students' reading comprehension performance. The reading comprehension performance was examined at literal, inferential, and critical levels. The study involved 66 SSS2 students from two co-educational public secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The sample size was determined by the number of students in the intact classes chosen randomly from the two schools. The two schools selected for this study shared comparable features. The study used purposive intact class sampling, where the intact classes in the two selected public secondary schools were used for the experimental and control groups. The instrument used for this study was a reading comprehension test tailored to the contents of the English language course taken by all students in the senior secondary school class. The reading comprehension sections of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) for the years 2023 and 2022 were adopted to measure participants' reading comprehension test performance in the pre-test and post-test. Analysis of collated data was done using mean of students' scores in the pre-test and post-test assessments to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the difference generally in the mean scores of the reading comprehension performance of Public Secondary School Students, Abuja taught using the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?

Table 1: Means of Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Abuja Taught with Reciprocal and Conventional Instructional Strategies

Group	Test	%Mean Score	Mean Gain	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Remark
Reciprocal	Pre -test	31.06	14.53	1.00	68.00	Significant
	Post -test	45.59		3.00	84.00	
Conventional	Pre -test	15.38	12.18	1.00	32.00	Significant
	Post -test	27.56		3.00	54.00	

Table 1 shows the difference in the mean and mean gain scores of publicsecondary school students in Abuja taught using reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies. The pre-test mean score of students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy is 31.06, while the post-test mean score is 45.59. The reciprocal instructional strategy mean gain score is 14.53. With respect to the conventional instructional strategy, the pre-test mean score is 15.38, while the post-test is 27.56. The mean gain score is 12.18. Looking at the comparative differences of the mean gain score of the students exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies, there is a significant difference in the mean gain test score of students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy compared to conventional instructional strategy.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in the mean score at literal level of the reading comprehension performance of Public Secondary School Students, Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?

Table 2: Means of Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Abuja at Literal Level Introduced to Reciprocal and Conventional Instructional Strategies

Group	Test	%Mean Score	Mean Gain	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Remark
Reciprocal	Pre-test	35.29	17.65	8.00	60.00	Significant
	Posttest	52.94		10.00	84.00	
Conventional	Pre-test	21.88	28.12	2.00	32.00	Significant
	Posttest	50.00		3.00	75.00	

Table 2 reveals that there is a distinct difference between the public secondary school students in Abuja performances in pre-test and post-test after exposure to the literal comprehension skill (Table 2). The mean performance of the students was lower in pre-test (35.29, 21.88) for the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies and higher (52.94, 50.00) in post-test for both instructional strategies respectively. Generally, the students' performance at literal level of reading comprehension at the public senior secondary schools in Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies were significantly high.

Research Question 3: What is the difference in the mean score at inferential level of the reading comprehension performance of Public Secondary School Students, Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?

Table 3: Means of Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Abuja at Inferential Level Introduced to Reciprocal and Conventional Instructional Strategies

Group	Test	%Mean Score	Mean Gain	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Remark
Reciprocal	Pre-test	20.59	11.76	1.00	32.00	Significant
	Post-test	32.35		3.00	50.00	
Conventional	Pre-test	6.25	15.63	1.00	9.00	Significant
	Post-test	21.88		3.00	25.00	

Table 3 shows the pre-test and post-test performance of students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy and conventional instructional strategy at the inferential level of reading comprehension. At inferential level of reading comprehension, the mean performance of the public secondary school students in Abuja in pre-test for the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies (20.59, 6.25) are lower compared to that of the post-test (32.35, 21.88) respectively, which is higher. The result show a significant mean gain at the inferential level for the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies.

Research Question 4: What is the difference in the mean score at critical level of the reading comprehension performance of Public Secondary School Students, Abuja exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies?

Table 4: Means of Performance of Public Secondary School Students in Abuja at Critical Level Introduced to Reciprocal and Conventional Instructional Strategies

Group	Test	%Mean Score	Mean Gain	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Remark
Reciprocal	Pre-test	8.82	0.00	2.00	23.00	Not
	Post-test	8.82		3.00	24.00	Significant
Conventional						
	Pre-test	3.13	9.37	1.00	10.00	
	Post-test	12.5		1.00	25.00	Significant

Table 4 shows the pre-test and post-test performance of students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy and conventional instructional strategy at the critical level of reading comprehension. The pre-test mean score for the reciprocal instructional strategy is 8.82, while the post-test is 8.82 respectively. The mean gain score is 0.00. With respect to the conventional instructional strategy, the pre-test mean score is 3.13, while the post-test is 12.5. The mean gain score is 9.37. Looking at the comparative differences of the mean gain score of the students exposed to reciprocal (0.00) and conventional instruction (9.37), the result shows that there is a significant difference in the mean gain test score of students exposed to reciprocal instructional strategy, which is not significant, compared to those exposed to conventional instructional strategy, which is significant. Generally, the performance at the critical level of reading comprehension of public secondary school students exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies is poor.

Discussion of Findings

Finding of the study in research question one indicated that there was a significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of public secondary school students exposed to reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies. The performance of the students in the post-test mean was higher than the pre-test mean. The research findings tend to be in agreement with the position of Yapp, Graaff and Van Den Berg (2021). They found that instructional interventions have positive effect in students' reading comprehension. Of note, public secondary school students taught using reciprocal Instructional strategy (14.53%) performed better compared to students espoused to the conventional instructional strategy (12.18%).

The reciprocal classroom involved a paradigm shift in the teacher's role from that of an imposing figure to that of a facilitator and guide. These results are in line with the studies conducted by Okkinga et al. (2018). Thus, the result is congruent with earlier research finding that reciprocal reading strategy instruction are effective in improving learners' reading comprehension.

The study also revealed a significant insight into the effectiveness of the reciprocal instructional strategy in the development of literal comprehension among the public secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. With a significant high mean performance when compared to the students' performance at the inferential and critical reading comprehension. The research found a significant performance, which is in agreement with Gordillo and Flórez (2009) that at the literal level, it is more of direct recognition of the surface information but less mental reflection is deplored to attain meaning in such reading context.

Beyond the literal comprehension, the current study also examines the higher-order cognitive skill of making accurate inferences. The mean performance of the public secondary school students at this level in the pre-test for the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies (20.59, 6.25) are lower compared to that of the post-test (32.35, 21.88) respectively, which is higher. This finding is in tandem with Vega et al. (2012) affirmation that the construction of inferential meaning takes place through three cognitive processes of drawing inference, summary making and explanation of seeming strange construct in a network of co-learners through which learning experience, knowledge of the world and other cues come to play.

The pre-test mean score performance of the public secondary school students at the critical level for the reciprocal instructional strategy is 8.82, while the post-test is 8.82 respectively. The mean gain score is 0.00. With respect to the conventional instructional strategy, the pre-test mean score is 3.13, while the post-test is 12.5. The mean gain score is 9.37. The research findings may be a pointer to the reason behind students' persistent failure in external examinations, among secondary school students, particularly in English language, as alluded to by Okika (2021) when he asserted that there have been a downward trend in students' external examination performance; particularly, because those examinations demand a high level of cognition and value judgment. The position of Kadir, Subki, Jamal and Ismail (2014) had earlier affirmed this assertion that critical (evaluative) level of reading comprehension is the highest level due to its need for reflective mindset for value rating in the reading comprehension. Research findings showed that most of the public secondary school students exposed to the reciprocal and conventional instructional strategies find it difficult making this value rating out of the text read thereby putting them in a difficult position to critically evaluate their reading, hence the poor performance recorded.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the effect of reciprocal instructional strategy on students' reading comprehension performance. Findings of the study reveal that reciprocal instructional intervention has huge potential of enhancing effective reading comprehension across levels. A careful and enriched use of the strategy has made students at the secondary school level of education better readers and can transmute their knowledge from reading across the curriculum to advance the goals of classroom interactions, foster result-oriented school system and engender learner-centered learning,. However, much more efforts is required to facilitate critical reading comprehension in public secondary school students in the FCT, Abuja.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following are, therefore, suggested as recommendations.

1. Teachers of English should use of reciprocal instructional strategy to foster enhanced reading comprehension and offer students very active roles in practicing comprehension from reading instruction, where the teacher serves as mere observer/guide.
2. With significant improvement in students' ability to comprehend or process literal information, it is recommended that educators integrate the reciprocal instructional strategy into their teaching methodologies. This will enhance students' literal comprehension skills.
3. In order to enhance the inferential comprehension skill, it is recommended that educators design and incorporate activities specifically focused on fostering inferential thinking. This may involve incorporating more complex texts or introducing structured discussions during reading comprehension classes, thereby encouraging students to analyze and make accurate inferences and interpret the contents of the reading texts.
4. To enhance the development of critical or evaluative thinking amongst students, educators design instructional activities that explicitly target critical thinking and evaluative skills.

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EFFECT OF DIGITAL LEARNING RESOURCES ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN FICTION WRITING IN KWARA STATE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated effect of digital learning resources on pre-service teachers' performance in fiction writing in Kwara State colleges of education, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to: determine the effect of emojis on pre-service teachers' fiction writing; and examined the effect of story maps on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges. These were with a view to improving pre-service teachers' performance in fiction writing. The study adopted non-equivalent quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest control group research design. The population for the study comprised all pre-service teachers in Kwara State colleges of education. Two hundred and seventy pre-service teachers studying English language were randomly selected. Three Colleges whose students study English language as a course were purposively selected. An instrument, designed by the researcher, namely: Fiction Writing Test (FWT) was used to elicit information on pre-service teachers' fiction writing. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics. The result showed that emojis ($F = 870.72$; $p<0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.833$) and story maps ($F= 519.210$, $p<0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.748$) had significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected Colleges. The study concluded that digital learning resources such as emojis and story maps had significant effect on pre-service teachers' performance in fiction writing in Kwara State colleges of education.

Key Words: Emoji, Class size, Digital Learning Resources, Fiction Writing, Story Map

Introduction

Writing, a medium through which one's thoughts can be expressed, is one of the traditional four fundamental language skills (the others are listening, speaking and reading). It is basic and essential to an educational system and the learning of any language regardless of whether it is a first, second or foreign language. This makes it an essential part of the training of language teachers,

including those of English. Well-trained teachers are required to produce learners who are proficient in language use as can be observed in their competent deployment of language skills required of all learners of English as a second language. Writing, fiction and non-fiction, are distinct genres within the broader realm of creative writing and prose. While creative writing is the art of using language to express imagination and creativity, prose is a form of written language characterized by its natural flow and lack of metrical structure. Writing like the other three language skills, is an integral aspect of the English language and Literature in-English instruction in schools in Nigeria as they enable learners to express their creativity, examine various viewpoints, and develop understanding. It is also part of the bases for standard examinations in Nigeria such as West African Senior School Examination (WASSCE) and Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE).

However, as interesting as writing is, it is disheartening to note that writing is perceived as boring and difficult by learners while teachers appear to find it difficult to get learners involved in the skill. According to Aedy (2013), writing is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching and is generally dreaded by students. Also, students' apathy towards writing as well as their lack of interest and poor performance in it develop from the secondary school and increase as they find themselves in higher educational institutions (HEIs), particularly in colleges of education. The WASSCE Chief Examiners' reports have consistently revealed that candidates who sit for the examinations perform poorly in their written tasks. For example, the report of 2019 on English Language Paper 2,

Question 5: 'Write a story that ends with the statement: I wish I had listened to my parents', stated that the organization of the story was poor as most of the candidates' narrations were bland while some of the candidates only wrote irrelevantly and tagged the story at the end.

The concern over the failure of students in standard examinations such as WASSCE and SSCE is a fundamental one. Students who do not have adequate knowledge of the basic skills of language right from secondary schools find it difficult to cope in higher institutions; hence, they perform below expectations (Sa'ad & Usman, 2014). The researcher gathered from the heads and lecturers in the departments of English in colleges of education in Kwara State that pre-service teachers in the State find it difficult to generate ideas for writing stories and to express themselves adequately in English Language; this, according to them, may be a lack of good foundation at primary and secondary school levels. In addition, previous results of these pre-service teachers as revealed by the institutions showed that, over the years, their performance especially in writing tasks was poor.

According to Muodumogu and Unwaha (2013), the performance of teachers in this category, in writing, has been found to be unsatisfactory.

Having taught creative writing for years where she works, the researcher also observed that many students find writing to be one of the most difficult undertakings in school, particularly regarding application of rules of writing and grammar, punctuation, structure, and mechanics. In addition, they find it difficult to generate ideas for writing exercises. In addition, the researcher observed that students find it hard to express their thoughts and feelings in writing and consequently demonstrate a lack of interest in specific subject areas. All these, no doubt, affect the academic performance of students in colleges of education in Kwara State. The use of media, and information technology in today's world is a recurrent feature of daily interactions. As interesting and informative as the use of technology seems to be (particularly to the young ones), its use appears to be limited to outside the classrooms in colleges of education in Kwara State. Technology has changed the way people live, communicate, interact, learn, and generate new knowledge (Wilson, Ritzhaupt & Cheng, 2020).

With technology, many authentic materials, such as digital learning resources (DLRs), can be provided to learners to motivate them in language learning; thereby, achieving the desired learning outcomes. DLRs refer to materials conceived and created digitally or analogue materials converted to digital formats. They are designed to make learning more accessible, engaging, interesting, and contextualized. Despite this, use of digital learning resources either by teachers or students has not been encouraging. DLRs include simulations, models, graphics, animations, emojis, videos, audios, puzzles, games, e-books, and e-notes, among others. Emojis (due to the strong effect they seem to have on learners in everyday interactions) as evidenced in available literature (Al-Qunayeer & Rahmtallah, 2019; Chalarut & Debacker, 2004; Ellis & Howard, 2005); and story maps (due to their precise way of presenting facts in a structured and organised manner) will be focused in this study.

Emojis are graphical images that reflect certain facial expressions. They are animated unicode illustrations that can be included in text messages as objects to show different feelings and emotions. In the classroom context, the use of emojis may stimulate the minds of learners to create fictional stories, as some of these emojis require learners to think of what they mean, give them various interpretations before arriving at the actual thought or emotion conveyed by the sender (Santamaría-Bonfil & López, 2019). The increasing use of emojis and their capacity to be combined to form coherent and meaningful sentences prompts inquiry into the potential use of employing them as pedagogical tools

for language instruction within educational settings. Based on the researcher's current understanding and awareness, there is a lack of research on the use of emojis among students within a formal educational setting, specifically at colleges of education in Kwara State, it is instructive to find out whether using emojis in writing classes will improve students' fiction writing skills at this educational level.

In the study conducted by Antonnaci and O'Callaghan (2012), it was found that story mapping strategy offers a visual representation of story elements that will help readers retain ideas, comprehend, write stories and describe stories they have read or heard. It was also discovered the story maps provide students with visual aids to guide them as they progress through a story, starting at the beginning and ending at the finish of the text. In line with this finding Millah (2018) studied the effects of using the story mapping strategy to help students find the main idea in a text. The study found that the story mapping strategy helped students find the main idea in a text by helping them identify the text's main idea, the main idea in each paragraph, and the supporting details for each paragraph. Furthermore, it was revealed that the average student score increased from cycle to cycle; pre-test mean was 62.33, post-test mean was 68.33, post-test mean was 72.78, and post-test mean was 77.89.

Story maps are graphic organizers that show the essential components of a story and help students in making the structure of the story cohesive (Buehl, 2017). While the use of story maps has been identified as a strategy that employs graphics to assist learners to comprehend and learn the contents of a story, story maps help learners to identify elements of a story such as plot, characters, setting, conflict, and resolution. In fiction writing, story maps can evoke ideas, guide a writer's idea from the beginning to the end, and inspire addition of embellishments to the writer's idea. According to Ibnian (2010), story maps can aid students' construction of clear and well-organised stories as well as improve their writing abilities. Despite the significance of story maps in the teaching of English Language, only a few studies have been conducted on how they affect writing ability. It is, therefore, necessary to find out the effect of story maps on writing skills, particularly fiction writing.

In the study conducted by Kelly and Watts (2015), it was found that emojis serve valuable relational functions in conversations. These functions are not limited to expressing discrete emotions, but also include controlling the flow of conversation and promoting playful behaviour. Additionally, Alibali and Kita (2017) revealed that pre-service teachers who used emojis in their writing were more likely to use figurative language and to write more vivid and engaging stories. Likewise, Wagner (2018) found that pre-service teachers who used emojis in

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their writing were more likely to use correct grammar and punctuation. In addition, Wagner (2018) showed that emojis can help pre-service teachers to write more clearly and concisely. Inclusively, the finding revealed that emojis are valuable tool for pre-service teachers as they develop their fiction writing skills.

Several variables that could impact the performance of students in fiction writing have been identified in extant literature. They include motivation, home support, learning environment, previous linguistic experiences, age, gender, class size and student's personality, among others. Class size are considered to be of particular relevance due to the influence they could have on both fiction writing and the use of DLRs as suggested in research. These factor therefore need to be accounted for in determining students' learning outcome in this study. Class size, which refers to the average number of students per class, per teacher in a school, is thought to be one aspect that affects teaching and learning in schools, especially in public learning institutions (Mustapha, Kachallah & Abulfathi, 2021). Its impact on students' academic performance has been deliberated upon and examined for many years with inconclusive results characterising such efforts. The present researcher is of the view that with the type of involvement which the use of DLRs entails, class size may be a variable of interest.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching, which basically focuses on content delivery and the ability to recall facts already stated in a text, neither motivates students to learn nor enhances their performance. Researchers such as Alabere (2017) have observed poor performance of students of colleges of education as well as their negative attitude towards writing (Opara & Ekeh, 2017). Others such as Olanipekun and Aina (2015) have submitted that poor performance in writing is due to the little attention accorded it as a foundational subject in schools, coupled with the use of not so effective teaching approaches and materials. The researcher has also noticed that students are only taught to appreciate works of others, and not how to write fiction. Quite worrisome is the fact that despite advances in technology, new communication media and an increase in the everyday use of DLRs globally, resources used to accompany these suggested methods have hardly changed with respect to language teaching in colleges of education in Kwara State.

Yet, the advantages of the use of these DLRs are being explored in teaching and learning in developed countries - a development that has proved to be beneficial to learners (Mills, 2010). In the same vein, according to Schleicher (2016), the all-round presence of digital devices and applications is expected to motivate educators to develop and use technology. However, not much is known

about attempts to project this expectation into the educational practice or research efforts regarding the teaching of fiction writing in Kwara State. Rather, many studies have focused on issues relating to availability of e-learning facilities (Eze, Chinedu-Eze & Bello, 2018) as well as the difficulties and prospects associated with their use mostly in public schools (Nwabufo, Umoru & Olukotun, 2013). The gap in research as regards the use of DLRs in Kwara State colleges of education is what this study intends to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims at investigating the effects of digital learning resources on pre-service teachers' performance in fiction writing in Kwara State colleges of education, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

a. determine the effects of emojis on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges of education in Kwara State; and
b. examine the effects of story maps on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges of education in Kwara State

Hypotheses

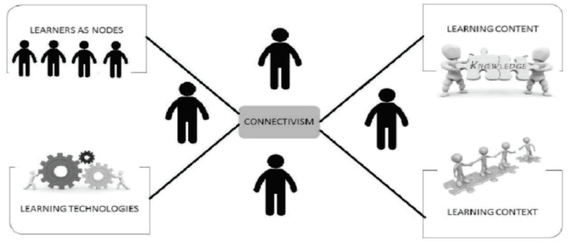
Based on the above-listed objectives, the following hypotheses were generated:

Ho_1: Emojis have no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State.

Ho_2: Story maps have no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State.

Literature Review

Theory of Connectivism is a learning theory promulgated by George Siemens (2004), labelled "the learning theorist for the digital age." Connectivism acknowledges that learning comes from making connections while also pushing the idea that it is no longer just an internal process. Instead, it comes from collaboration and presentation of ideas to others.



learners' collaborative writing actions improve their approach to text formulation and, in turn, make students author longer texts than they usually do.

The study makes use of emojis from social media platforms and story maps which are inherentlytechnologicalbecauseconnectivitytheoryislargelytechnology-based.Ithelpsvisualizeinformationinnewways, connect, and communicate with many more and different people without having to say words – an experience which would not have been possible without technology. Through technology, we have new types of experiences, through interfaces such as audio, video, virtual, online games, and other multimedia.

Methodology

The study adopted the non-equivalent quasi-experimental pretest and posttest control group research design. The population for the study comprised all pre-service teachers in the four public Colleges of Education in Kwara State. Three of the four CoEs were selected using purposive sampling technique. The three colleges of education, whose students offer English Language as a course were purposively selected for the study. The sample consisted of 270 Part II English Language pre-service teachers selected from the three CoEs, using simple random sampling technique. There were two class sizes (small and large) in each of the CoEs making a total of six groups. The six groups comprised four experimental and two control groups. One of the two small experimental groups (Experimental Group A) were taught using emojis while the other (Experimental Group C) were taught using story maps.

Likewise, one large experimental group (Experimental Group B) were taught using emojis while the other (Experimental Group D) were taught using story maps. The small class control group (Control Group E) and the large class control group (Control Group F) were both taught using the conventional method. Thirty pre-service teachers will be assigned to each small class while sixty pre-service teachers will be assigned to each large class, making a total of 90 students from each of the three colleges. One instrument, designed by the researcher, namely: Fiction Writing Test (FWT) was used to gather information for the study. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics.

Results

Hypothesis 1: *Emojis has no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State.*

To test the hypothesis formulated on emojis has no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State, inferential statistics of ANCOVA was used. Thereafter, the result obtained is as presented in Table 1.

Table 1:Analysis of Covariance of the Effect Of Emojis on Pre-Service Teachers' Fiction Writing in the Selected Colleges of Education in Kwara State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared
Corrected Model	17329.972[a]	4	4332.493	269.187	.000	.860
Intercept	12965.897	1	12965.897	805.599	.000	.822
Pre-test	95.155	1	95.155	5.912	.264	.033
Treatment	14013.935	1	14013.935	870.716	.000	.833
Class Size	2208.819	1	2208.819	137.239	.000	.440
Treatment * ClassSize	214.227	1	214.227	13.310	.000	.071
Error	2816.578	175	16.095			
Total	150881.000	180				
Corrected Total	20146.550	179				

a. R Squared = .860 (Adjusted R Squared = .857)

Table 1 presents the results of ANCOVA carried out to analyse the effect of emojis on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State. The result showed that emojis had significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected Colleges of Education in Kwara State ($F_{(1,179)}$ = 870.72; p<0.05, η^2 = 0.833). Additionally, class size has significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing (($F_{(1,179)}$= 13.310; p<0.05). Also the finding of the study showed R Squared value of .857 which indicated the effect of emojis used, accounts for 85.7% variation in the pre-service teachers' fiction writing. Therefore, since the calculated level of significance (.000) is less than the critical level of significance (0.05), the hypothesis which state that emojis has no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State was rejected.

Hypothesis 2: *Story maps had no significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State.*

To test the hypothesis formulated on the effect of story maps on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State, inferential statistics of ANCOVA was used. Thereafter, the result obtained is as presented in Table 3.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance of the Effect of Story Maps on Pre-Service Teachers' Fiction Writing in Colleges of Education In Kwara State

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared
Corrected Model	14869.41[a]	4	3717.354	201.811	.000	.822
Intercept	10472.281	1	10472.281	568.528	.000	.765
Pre-test	18.803	1	18.803	1.021	.314	.006
Treatment	9563.837	1	9563.837	519.210	.000	.748
Class Size	2102.086	1	2102.086	114.120	.000	.395
Treatment * Class Size	275.469	1	275.469	14.955	.000	.079
Error	3223.497	175	18.420			
Total	148558.000	180				
Corrected Total	18092.911	179				

a. R Squared = .822 (Adjusted R Squared = .818)

significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges of education in Kwara State ($F_{(1,179)}$= 519.210, p<0.05, η^2 = 0.748). Additionally, class size has significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing ($F_{(1,179)}$= 14.955, p<0.05). Also the finding revealed R Squared value of .818 which indicated the effect of story maps used account for 81.8% variation in the pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the institutions. Therefore, since the calculated level of significance (.000) is less than the critical level of significance (0.05), the hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of story maps on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in selected colleges of education in Kwara State was also rejected.

Discussion

The result showed that emojis had significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected Colleges of Education in Kwara State. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Kelly and Watts (2015), which found that emojis can serve valuable relational functions in conversations. These functions are not limited to expressing discrete emotions, but also include controlling the flow of conversation and promoting playful behaviour. The result is also in tandem with Alibali and Kita (2017) who revealed that pre-service teachers who used emojis in their writing were more likely to use figurative language and to write more vivid and engaging stories. This is also similar to the finding of Wagner (2018), who found that pre-service teachers who used emojis in their writing were more likely to use correct grammar and punctuation. In addition, Emojis can help pre-service teachers to write more clearly and concisely. Inclusively, the findings revealed that emojis are valuable tool for pre-service teachers as they develop their fiction writing skills.

The result indicated that story maps had significant effect on pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges of education in Kwara State. The finding is consistent with the finding of Antonnaci and O'Callaghan (2012), who found that story mapping strategy offers a visual representation of story elements that will help readers retain ideas, comprehend, write stories and describe stories they have read or heard. It was also discovered the story maps provide students with visual aids to guide them as they progress through a story, starting at the beginning and ending at the finish of the text. The results align with the findings of Millah (2018), who studied the effects of using the story mapping strategy to help students find the main idea in a text. The study found that the story mapping strategy helped students find the main idea in a text by helping them identify the text's main idea, the main idea in each paragraph, and the supporting details for each paragraph. Furthermore, the average student score increased from cycle to cycle; pre-test mean was 62.33, post-test mean was 68.33, post-test mean was 72.78, and post-test mean was 77.89.

Conclusion

The study concluded that digital learning resources (emojis and story maps) were effective in improving pre-service teachers' fiction writing, in Kwara State colleges of education. Furthermore, the study also concluded class size had significant effect on pre-service teachers' performance in fiction writing when exposed to emojis and story maps.

Recommendations

Recommendations were made in accordance with the results and conclusion:

1. The importance of emojis and story maps should be affirmed during teachers training programme to enhance pre-service teachers' fiction writing in the selected colleges of education in Kwara State. In other words, pre-service teachers should be trained on the best practices for incorporating digital learning resources such as emojis and story maps in teaching fiction writing.
2. Emojis and story maps should be adopted in Kwara State colleges of education as instructional strategies and resources to improve the teaching fiction writing to pre-service teachers and retention of concepts.
3. Since the study discovered that the use of emojis and story maps by pre-service teachers in colleges had significant intervening effect on their fiction writing, it is therefore essential for educators in the colleges to use these educational resources appropriately in small classes in order to improve the pre-service teachers' ability to write fiction, retain concepts, and enhance positive attitude to fiction in Kwara State colleges of education.

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND STUDENTS' DIGITAL READING HABITS: IMPLICATIONS ON COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Reading is, undoubtedly, a crucial skill for academic success. However, it is worrisome that many secondary school students struggle with this skill. In this digital age where reading habits are rapidly changing, learners must be properly guided in their online activities so as to maximize the gains of online reading and minimize distractions. This study investigated the influence of parental involvement and students' digital reading habits on reading comprehension performance of secondary school students in Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State. A descriptive survey design was employed and data were collected from 200 students and 100 parents using structured questionnaire. Findings of the study reveal that parental support, including the provision of digital devices and monitoring of online reading activities significantly influenced students' digital reading habits ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, students with stronger digital reading habits demonstrated higher levels of reading comprehension (mean score = 68.4%) compared to those with weaker habits (mean score = 52.7%). These findings highlight the evolving role of parental support in enhancing students' literacy in the digital era. The study concluded that active parental involvement positively shaped students' digital reading behaviour and improved their reading comprehension outcomes. Thus, the study recommends that parents should provide digital reading resources and monitor their children's online reading activities. Also, schools should organize workshops to build students', teachers', and parents' digital literacy skills.

Keywords: Comprehension Achievement, Digital Reading, Habits, Parental Involvement,

Introduction

Reading remains a vital skill for all round academic success. In this digital age, the way students interact with reading materials has changed significantly. Traditional paper-based reading is now complemented and sometimes replaced by digital reading formats such as e-books, online articles, and educational applications. As digital materials become more accessible, there is an increasing need to understand how students' reading habits are shaped, particularly through the involvement of parents. Parental support has long been identified as a significant factor influencing students' educational outcomes (Epstein, 2018). However, little attention has been given to how parental involvement specifically affects students' digital reading habits and their subsequent reading comprehension performance, especially within the Nigerian context.

In Nigeria, and particularly in semi-urban and rural areas like Akure South Local Government Area (LGA), Ondo State, the transition to digital literacy is gradually taking root. Although access to digital devices is growing, effective and judicious use of these technologies for academic purposes still depends greatly on parental guidance. Parents, whether intentionally or not, can influence their children's attitudes towards print (offline)/online reading. Their attitudes towards the use of digital devices—whether they encourage educational use or are indifferent—could, to a great extent, impact students' reading practices. For instance, the study of Puglisi *et al*. (2017) confirms that students whose parents are actively engaged in their reading activities tend to develop stronger literacy skills, and this involvement remains important even when the reading material shifts from print (offline) to digital formats.

Digital reading brings new opportunities and challenges to students' learning experiences. Talking about the upsides, digital texts often offer interactive features like hyperlinks, videos, and built-in dictionaries all of which are educative and can enhance learners' understanding (Jeong and Gweon, 2021). However, there are quite some downsides—digital environments can be quite distracting. Digital distractions can easily shift learners' focus from their original purpose of surfing the internet. Thus, online games, social media platforms, social networking platforms/sites and other non-educational sites could be distracting and without proper parental guidance, students may spend tangible there rather than engaging in meaningful reading activities. Therefore, parental involvement becomes crucial not only in encouraging reading but also in monitoring and directing how digital tools are used.

Parental involvement can take different forms. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2005) describe parental involvement as activities such as reading with/to children, providing access to reading materials, discussing/sharing reading experiences, and setting expectations for academic achievement. In the digital context, it may also include providing devices for academic use, recommending educational websites or apps, monitoring online activities, and guiding children

on how to critically engage with digital texts. In homes where parents demonstrate positive digital reading behaviours—reading e-books or discussing online articles, learners are more likely to develop constructive digital reading habits that promote better comprehension (Clarke and Picton, 2020).

Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process that involves not just decoding words but also understanding and interpreting meaning, making inferences, and critically evaluating contents (Cain and Oakhill, 2014 and Tunde-Awe, 2014)). As Tunde-Awe (2013) notes, apart from the complexity in understanding the nature of reading, there are further complexities for second language learners, who as a matter of necessity are required to demonstrate cognitive ability to comprehend varied texts. In all, there is the tendency that student's ability to comprehend text impacts performance not just in English language but also across all other subjects in the school curriculum, including even Mathematics which though may essentially be full of figures and involve comprehension of written instructions. In a community where educational resources are often limited, strengthening students' reading comprehension becomes even more essential for academic success and broader lifelong learning.

Despite the growing awareness of digital literacy, there is still a lack of research focusing on the intersection of parental involvement, digital reading habits and reading comprehension in secondary schools in Nigeria. Most studies on parental involvement have centered on traditional print reading or general academic support (Okpala.,*et al*., 2020). Moreover, many studies on digital reading have often focused on university students or urban populations with easier access to technology (Egunjobi and Ilori, 2022). There seems to be scanty literature on how parents are adapting to the age of digital technology and how their involvement influences students' digital reading practices and comprehension abilities.

Furthermore, cultural factors may influence the nature and degree of parental involvement. In some families, parents may see the provision of school fees and basic materials as the full extent of their educational responsibility, while activities like monitoring reading habits may be viewed as the school's

This cultural perception, combined with limited technological literacy among some parents could affect how much support students receive at home for developing effective digital reading habits. This study's findings filled the research gap by exploring the relationship between parental involvement, students' digital reading habits and their reading comprehension outcomes in Akure South LGA, Ondo State.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What forms of parental involvement influence the digital reading habits of secondary school students in Akure South LGA, Ondo State?
2. What impact do students' digital reading habits have on their reading comprehension levels in Akure South LGA, Ondo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

Ho_1: There is a significant relationship between parental involvement and the digital reading habits of secondary school students in Akure South LGA, Ondo State.

Ho_2: Students with stronger digital reading habits will demonstrate higher levels of reading comprehension in Akure South LGA, Ondo State.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised all Senior Secondary School students and their parents in the study locale–Akure South, LGA, Ondo State. A totalsample of 300 students and their parents were selected through a multistage sampling technique, involving random selection of five schools and random selection of students and parents within each school. Two structured questionnaires, namely the Students' Digital Reading Habits Questionnaire (DRHQ), Reading Achievement Test (RAT) and the Parental Involvement in Students' Digital Reading Questionnaire (PISDRQ), were used for data collection. Both instruments were validated by experts and their reliability was confirmed through a pilot study, yielding Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.82 and 0.79, respectively. Data collection involved direct administration of the questionnaire to students during school hours and to their parents through their children,with proper consent obtained. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was employed to test the two hypotheses at 0.05 significance level, using SPSS version 25.0 for analysis.

Research Question 1: What forms of parental involvement influence the digital reading habits of students in secondary schools in Akure South LGA, Ondo State?

Table 1: Forms of Parental Involvement Influencing Students' Digital Reading Habits

S/N	Form of Parental Involvement	Mean (x)	Standard Deviation
1	Provision of digital reading devices (e.g., tablets, smartphones)	3.48	0.62
2	Monitoring students' online reading activities	3.22	0.75
3	Encouraging discussions about digital reading materials	3.15	0.80
4	Setting time limits for device usage	2.94	0.88
5	Assisting in selecting online reading materials	2.71	0.91
6	Engaging in joint digital reading activities	2.43	0.97

Table 2: Impact of Students' Digital Reading Habits on Reading Comprehension

Frequency of Digital Reading	N	Mean Reading Comprehension Score (%)	Standard Deviation
Daily Readers	110	74.6	8.2
. . . . .	90	70.2	9.5
Once a Week	60	67.1	10.1
Occasionally (Less than once a week)	40	63.4	11.0

Table 2 reveals that students who engaged in daily digital reading had the highest comprehension scores (Mean = 74.6%), while those who read only occasionally had the lowest (Mean = 63.4%). This shows that frequent digital reading positively impacts comprehension.

Hypothesis 1: *There is a significant relationship between parental involvement and the digital reading habits of students in secondary schools in Akure South LGA, Ondo State.*

Table 3:Pearson Correlation Analysis between Parental Involvement and Students' Digital Reading Habits

Variables	N	R	p-value	Decision
Parental Involvement and Digital Reading Habits	300	0.573	0.000	Significant

Table 3 indicates a strong, positive, and significant relationship between parental involvement and students' digital reading habits ($r = 0.573$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, higher parental involvement leads to better digital reading habits.

Hypothesis 2: *Students with stronger digital reading habits will demonstrate higher levels of reading comprehension.*

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis between Digital Reading Habits and Reading Comprehension

Variables	N	R	p-value	Decision
Digital Reading Habits and Reading Comprehension	300	0.612	0.000	Significant (Reject H_0)

Table 4 shows a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.05$) between digital reading habits and reading comprehension. Students who actively engage in digital reading are likely to achieve better comprehension scores.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study have provided valuable insights into how parental involvement shapes the digital reading habits of secondary school students and the influence these habits have on their reading comprehension. In response to the first research question, the results revealed that forms of parental involvement such as provision of digital reading devices, monitoring of online reading activities, and encouraging discussions about reading materials had the most significant influence on students' digital reading habits. This finding aligns with the observations of Oladele (2018), who emphasised parental support in providing learning resources and monitoring educational activities that promote students' engagement with academic tasks. Similarly, Okoye and Eze (2020) stressed that in the digital age, parents who provide technological support and maintain supervisory roles contribute significantly to shaping students' reading behaviours.

The positive role of parental monitoring corroborates the work of Livingstone and Byrne (2018), who found that parental regulation of digital engagement helps young people to develop responsible digital literacy practices. Also, Tunde-Awe (2013) maintains that excessive televiewing and habit could displace the reading time of secondary school students especially when parental supervision of the contents being consumed and the regulation of the viewing

time is slack. However, the lesser emphasis placed by parents on joint digital reading activities observed in this study may reflect broader cultural patterns where independent study is more encouraged at the secondary school level, as suggested by Yusuf (2019). Regarding the second research question, the study found that students who engaged in frequent digital reading activities exhibited higher levels of reading comprehension. Students who read daily or multiple times a week achieved better comprehension scores compared tothose who read occasionally. This supports the findings of Odewumi and Akinbode (2019) who asserted that frequent exposure to diverse reading materials enhances students' cognitive engagement and comprehension abilities. It also aligns with the study by Chen*et al.* (2021), which highlighted that digital reading, when used meaningfully, can improve comprehension through interactive features that promote active engagement with texts.

The results of the first hypothesis testing revealed a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and students' digital reading habits. This finding is consistent with the work of Akanbi and Ogunleye (2017), who found that parental support in students' academic activities, including reading, fosters stronger educational outcomes. International studies, such as those by Fan and Chen (2020), have also confirmed that parental involvement remains a strong predictor of students' academic behavior, including digital literacy practices. The significant correlation observed indicates that when parents show active interest and provide support, students are more likely to develop stronger reading habits even in digital spaces.

Similarly, the testing of the second hypothesis showed a significant positive relationship between digital reading habits and reading comprehension. This finding echoes the report of Adebayo and Adesina (2021) who concluded that students who are more engaged with reading tasks, whether traditional or digital, develop better comprehension strategies over time. Likewise, Huang and Hew (2018) found that the use of digital reading platforms can enhance students' comprehension skills through features such as instant access to definitions, annotations, and multimedia explanations, which aid understanding.

Overall, the findings of this study underscore the crucial role that parents play in facilitating effective digital reading habits among students. They also demonstrate that frequent, meaningful engagement with digital reading materials significantly boosts students' comprehension abilities.

These results are consistent with the broader literature on parental involvement and digital literacy, and they highlight the need for parents, educators, and policymakers to work collaboratively to support students' reading development in the digital era. Encouraging responsible digital reading practices and creating supportive reading environments at home could have far-reaching implications for improving students' literacy outcomes in Akure South LGA, and beyond.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of parental involvement and digital reading habits on the reading comprehension of secondary school students in Akure South, LGA, Ondo State. The findings revealed that active parental support, such as the provision of digital devices, monitoring of students' online reading activities, and encouragement of digital discussions, significantly shaped students' digital reading behaviours. Students who engaged more frequently in digital reading activities demonstrated better reading comprehension levels compared to those who read occasionally. The results further confirmed that parental involvement is positively related to students' digital reading habits, and that these habits, in turn, have a meaningful impact on reading comprehension performance. This highlights the evolving role of parents in the digital age, where supporting traditional literacy alone is no longer sufficient. Parents are now required to be digitally literate themselves and to guide their children toward responsible and productive use of digital reading resources.

In essence, the study underscores the importance of a supportive home environment that encourages both traditional and digital reading habits. It also stresses that students' reading outcomes can be enhanced when parents are actively involved in nurturing their (students') digital reading practices. As technology continues to shape education, collaboration among parents, teachers, and policymakers becomes crucial to ensuring that digital reading complements and strengthens students' literacy skills rather than detracts from them.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made:

i. Parents are to provide appropriate digital reading devices such as tablets, smartphones, and e-readers for their children. Also, they should guide their children in selecting quality and educative digital reading materials that enhance reading comprehension and over all literacy development.

ii. Parents should not only provide access to digital resources but also monitor and supervise how their children engage with these materials. Setting reasonable screen time limits and ensuring that learners spend time on educative contents/meaningful reading tasks can drastically improve reading comprehension.
iii. Secondary schools in Akure South LGA and beyond should collaborate with experts to organise training sessions that equip parents with the knowledge and skills required to support their children's digital reading habits effectively.
iv. Teachers and parents should promote regular digital reading habits among students by exposing them to educational apps, e-books, and online reading platforms that are age-appropriate and engaging.
v. Educational authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations, and other stakeholders in education should invest in creating and distributing affordable and high-quality digital reading resources, particularly for secondary schools in rural and semi-urban areas like Akure South LGA.

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SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ICT-BASED ASSESSMENT'S INFLUENCE ON ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ILORIN EAST, KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of ICT-based assessment on senior secondary school students' achievement in English language in Ilorin East, Kwara State by adopting a quantitative survey design. The population of the study consisted of all students in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area, Kwara State. Random sampling technique was used to select 400 senior secondary school students with a structured researchers' designed questionnaire used as instrument for data collection. A reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest and Cronbach Alpha coefficient with the value of 0.82 obtained. Frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions. Findings of the study revealed that utilisation of ICT-based assessment tools in the English language among senior secondary school students is high, while the major challenges hindering the effective implementation of ICT-based assessments in English language instruction are irregular power supply, unstable network, and lack of adequate training, among others. The study concludes that ICT-based assessment holds transformative potential for improving English language learning outcomes in senior secondary schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government and school authorities should provide adequate computers, internet access, and stable electricity to enhance ICT-based assessments.

Keywords: Assessment,ICT-based, Students' Achievement, Utilisation,

Introduction

The centrality of English language proficiency to academic success and civic engagement in Nigeria cannot be overstated. English remains language of education across school system with a credit pass in English as a basic requirement for entry into higher education and formal employment. Yet, for many senior secondary learners, mastery of the language remains a challenge and a problem probably frequently attributed to pedagogical and assessment practices that fail to capture or promote modernity in learning. In recent years, the rapid diffusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into Nigerian classrooms has generated renewed interest in whether technology-

mediated assessment can offer a practical route to improved learning outcomes in English. This study investigates that possibility by examining the influence of ICT-based assessment on students' achievement in English language in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State.

Assessment is a shaping force in education: what is assessed is assumed to be determined by what teachers teach. Traditional, paper-and-pencil examinations is still dominant across many Nigerian secondary schools, which often emphasise recall and discrete knowledge at the expense of communicative competence, application and higher-order thinking (Olatunji, 2022). By contrast, ICT-based assessment systems can enable a wider variety of item types (interactive tasks, audio-recorded speaking tests, automated cloze and comprehension tasks), rapid and diagnostic feedback, adaptive sequencing of items, and richer data that teachers can use formatively to target instruction. These possibilities suggest that well-designed ICT assessments could shift classroom practice towards more communicative and student-centred learning in English, and thereby raise achievement. However, the mere presence of ICT resources does not guarantee pedagogical transformation; meaningful influence depends on accessibility, teacher competence, infrastructure and alignment between assessment design and curriculum goals.

Kwara State, and Ilorin in particular, provides a compelling context in which to examine the focus of this study. Recent studies document growing use of ICT in teaching and learning across the state's secondary schools but they also highlight uneven access, gaps in teacher competence, and connectivity constraints that can blunt ICT's potential (Oluwalola, 2021; Danzaria, 2020). Researches within the State have further explored ICT-based literacy evaluation and digital learning behaviours among students. These studies show both enthusiasms among digital-native learners and practical challenges for scaling technology-driven assessment across diverse school settings (Hameed & Raji, 2023; Danzaria, 2020). These mixed findings underline the need for a location-specific, empirical study that links ICT-assessment practices directly to measurable student achievement in English.

The rationale for focusing on assessment rather than only on instructional technologies is twofold. First, assessment exerts a powerful backwash effect as it shapes teachers' classroom decisions and students' study strategies. If national and school-level assessments reward superficial recall, teachers will understandably prioritise drilling for test items rather than communicative competence. ICT-based assessment has the capacity to broaden what is examinable and thus to incentivize richer teaching practices (Salami, 2024).

Findings on use of ICT-based assessment so far are mixed. The study was inspired by the need to study disparities in ICT-based assessments including contextual factors such as infrastructure, teacher competence, student readiness, and determine effectiveness of ICT-based assessment at the local level. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate influence of ICT-based assessment on students' achievement in English language in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State. The findings will provide data-driven guidance for policymakers, school leaders, and teachers striving to enhance the quality of English language education through technology-supported assessment

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of ICT-based assessment on senior secondary school students' achievement in English language in Ilorin East, Kwara State. Specifically, the study aims to:

a. determine the extent to which ICT-based assessment tools are utilised in the teaching of English language in senior secondary schools.
b. assess the influence of ICT-based assessment on students' academic achievement in English language in senior secondary schools.
c. identify major challenges facing the effective implementation of ICT-based assessment in English language instruction.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. To what extent are ICT-based assessment tools utilised in the teaching English language in senior secondary schools?
2. What is the influence of ICT-based assessment on students' academic achievement in English language in senior secondary schools?
3. What are the major challenges facing the effective implementation of ICT-based assessment in English language instruction?

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey research design to examine the influence of ICT-based assessment on students' achievement in English language among senior secondary school students in Ilorin East Local Government Area. The survey design was considered appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of numerical data from a relatively large group of respondents thereby providing factual basis for describing patterns, attitudes, and relationships among variables. The population of the study consisted of all students in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State. A representative sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure cut across public and private schools, as well as different class levels (SS1, SS2 and SS3). Two hundred (200) students were each selected from both public and private schools making a total of 400 respondents.

To determine the sample size, the researcher applied Cochran's (1963) formula for large populations, which produced an estimated sample of 384 students. To cater for possible non-responses, the figure was rounded up to 400 respondents. The selected students formed the core participants from whom primary data were obtained.

A structured researchers-designed questionnaire was used as the sole instrument for data collection. It was divided into four sections seeking from respondents' demographic information; the extent of exposure to ICT-based assessment tools, including online tests, digital quizzes and computer-based. Others include, students' perceptions of how ICT-based assessment influences their achievement and engagement in English language learning; and items on challenges students encounter when participating in ICT-based assessments. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in English language education and Educational Measurement and Evaluation from universities within Kwara State. For reliability, a pilot study was carried out using 30 students from schools outside the study sample but with similar characteristics. Data from the pilot were analysed using Cronbach Alpha, and a coefficient value of 0.82 was obtained.

Ethical standards were observed throughout the process. Students were informed of the purpose of the study and assured that their participation was voluntary and their responses confidential. The entire process took place during normal school hours, without disrupting the regular academic schedule. Collected data were subjected to quantitative analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions raised.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent are ICT-based assessment tools utilised in the teaching English language in senior secondary schools?

Table 1: Utilisation of ICT-based Assessment Tools in Teaching English Language

S/N	Research Question One	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	I often take English Language tests or quizzes using computers or mobile devices.	165	145	44	15	3.25	High
2	Teachers regularly use online or computer - based assessments in English Language.	97	188	70	12	3.01	High
3	I participate in digital or computer -based assessment in English Language several times.	123	162	74	07	3.10	High
4	My school uses ICT tools such as Google Forms, Moodle, or CBT software for English Language tests.	135	138	86	08	3.09	High
5	I have taken English Language assessments through online platforms and in school portal.	128	135	88	16	3.02	High
6	My teachers use online applications or websites to conduct English Language tests for us.	97	144	120	09	2.89	High
7	My English Language teacher encourages us to use ICT tools for learning and assessment.	123	155	84	08	3.06	High
8	I feel comfortable when taking ICT -based English Language assessments.	94	154	114	10	2.89	High
9	I enjoy participating in ICT -based English Language tests because they are interesting.	103	151	110	06	2.95	High
10	There are enough functional computers and other digital devices for English Language ICT-based assessments in my school.	96	133	114	03	2.93	High
11	Internet access in my school supports the smooth running of ICT -based English Language tests.	125	187	52	07	3.16	High
12	Power supply in my school is relatively stable to allow uninterrupted ICT -based assessments.	88	205	70	07	3.01	High
	Average Mean					**3.03**	

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Analysis presented in Table 1 reveal that the utilisation of ICT-based assessment tools in English language among senior secondary school students in Ilorin East, Kwara State, is at high with an average mean score of 3.03 on a four-point scale. This outcome demonstrates that ICT tools have become a notable component of English Language pedagogy and assessment within the study area. The highest-rated items show that students frequently take English Language tests using computers or mobile devices (Mean = 3.25), participate in computer-based quizzes (Mean = 3.10), and use established online platforms such as Google Forms and Moodle (Mean = 3.09). These results suggest that digital literacy among students has improved and that schools are integrating ICT tools for learning and evaluation purposes. The consistent means above 3.00 across most items also indicate that ICT-based testing is not an isolated practice but a growing institutional culture within the surveyed schools.

However, some items such as the use of educational applications by teachers (Mean = 2.89), student confidence during ICT-based tests (Mean = 2.89), and the availability of functional computers (Mean = 2.93) recorded comparatively lower means. These variations imply that although ICT use is widespread, its depth of integration and consistency remain uneven. While students are increasingly exposed to ICT tools, the infrastructure and teacher preparedness to sustain digital assessment may still be developing. Furthermore, the relatively high mean score for internet connectivity (Mean = 3.16) suggests that many schools in Ilorin East are benefitting from improved digital infrastructure, possibly supported by the proliferation of broadband access and the use of mobile hotspots for online learning.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of ICT-based assessment on students' academic achievement in English language in senior secondary schools?

Table 2: Influence of ICT-based Assessment Tool on Students' Achievement in English Language

S/N	Research Question 2	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	My performance in English Language has improved since I started taking ICT -based assessments.	141	154	67	09	3.15	High
2	I usually obtain higher scores in ICT -based English tests than in paper -based tests.	131	154	74	07	3.12	High
3	ICT-based assessments have helped me understand English Language concepts better.	118	161	84	03	3.08	High
4	ICT-based English Language tests make me more interested in learning the subject.	146	122	73	31	3.03	High
5	I feel motivated to study English Language because of the use of computer -based assessments.	84	163	96	28	2.82	High
6	I pay more attention in English classes when I know assessments will be done through ICT.	122	176	56	14	3.10	High
7	I complete ICT -based English Language tests more quickly and accurately than the traditional tests.	127	160	60	23	3.08	High
8	ICT-based assessments help me concentrate and manage my time better during examinations.	132	158	49	19	3.13	High
9	Using ICT tools for English assessments helps me remember what I have learnt more easily.	126	172	54	19	3.09	High
10	I receive prompt feedback on my performance when I take ICT -based English Language assessments.	102	167	76	25	2.94	High
11	The feedback from ICT -based tests helps me know areas why my English Language needs improvement.	116	161	65	27	2.99	High
12	ICT-based assessments make it easy for me to monitor my learning progress in English Language.	117	174	61	19	3.05	High
	Average Mean					**3.04**	

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

The results presented in Table 2 reveal that ICT-based assessment exerts a high influence on students' achievement in English Language, with an overall mean score of 3.04 on a four-point Likert scale. This indicates that the integration of ICT tools into assessment practices positively influences learners' academic outcomes, motivation, and overall engagement with English Language learning in senior secondary schools across Ilorin East, Kwara State. The highest-rated statement shows that students perceive a marked improvement in their performance since the introduction of ICT-based assessments (Mean = 3.15). This suggests that digital modes of testing not only enhance performance but also foster better comprehension of subject content. Closely related items reveal that students tend to achieve higher scores in ICT-based tests than in traditional paper-based ones (Mean = 3.12) and that they find ICT-assisted assessments helpful for understanding English topics more effectively (Mean = 3.08). These findings reflect the growing adaptability and efficiency of students when learning and being evaluated through digital platforms.

Moreover, the findings highlight that ICT-based assessments significantly improve motivation and learning interest. Many respondents agreed that such assessments make English Language more engaging (Mean = 3.03) and that they pay greater attention in class when aware that assessments will be ICT-based (Mean = 3.10). The results also underscore that ICT-based assessments promote learning efficiency and time management. Students reported completing ICT tests more quickly and accurately (Mean = 3.08) and managing their time better during digital examinations (Mean = 3.13). Feedback and reinforcement mechanisms also emerged as important outcomes. Respondents agreed that ICT-based tests allow them to receive faster feedback (Mean = 2.94) and easily track their progress in English Language learning (Mean = 3.05). The relatively high mean scores across all items confirm that ICT assessment systems contribute positively to learning achievement and engagement in English Language. However, the slightly lower means in items related to motivation (Mean = 2.82) and feedback timeliness

Research Question 3: What are the major challenges facing the effective implementation of ICT-based assessment in English language instruction?

Table 3: Major challenges Facing Effective Implementation of ICT-based Assessment in English Language Instruction

S/N	Research Question 3	Yes	No	Mean	Ranking
1	Unstable network	291	78	3.79	7th
2	Irregular power supply	297	74	3.80	6th
3	[illegible]	297	71	3.81	5th
4	Unavailability of computers	338	35	3.91	2nd
5	Shortage of ICT facilities	333	38	3.90	3rd
6	Poor attitude towards ICT utilization	317	54	3.85	4th
7	Inadequate funds from the government	342	27	3.93	1st
8	Inadequate ICT skilled personnel	286	85	3.77	8th

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

Based on the data presented in Table 3, the findings reveal critical challenges hindering effective ICT utilization in the educational context under study. The most significant barrier identified was inadequate government funding, which ranked first with a mean score of 3.93, with 342 respondents answering "Yes" and only 27 responding "No." This was closely followed by the unavailability of computers (mean = 3.91, ranked 2nd) and shortage of ICT facilities (mean = 3.90, ranked 3rd), indicating that resource constraints represent the most pressing obstacles to ICT integration. Poor attitude towards ICT utilization emerged as the fourth-ranked challenge with a mean of 3.85, suggesting that beyond physical resources, attitudinal factors also play a considerable role in impeding technology adoption in educational settings.

The infrastructure-related challenges of irregular power supply and unstable network connectivity were ranked 6th and 7th respectively, with mean scores of 3.80 and 3.79, demonstrating that while these are recognized impediments, they are perceived as less critical than funding and equipment availability. Teachers' inadequate training ranked 5th with a mean of 3.81, highlighting a moderate concern about professional development needs. Notably, the inadequacy of ICT skilled personnel ranked lowest (8th) with a mean of 3.77, suggesting that while all identified factors present obstacles to ICT utilization, the shortage of technically skilled staff is viewed as comparatively less problematic than financial constraints, equipment availability, and even teacher training. Overall, the data underscores that the primary barriers to ICT utilization are fundamentally economic and resource-based, rather than human capital or technical expertise deficiencies.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the utilisation and influence of ICT-based assessments on students' achievement in English Language, as well as the challenges affecting their effective implementation in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State. The discussion that follows is based on the three research questions and draws upon relevant empirical and theoretical literature to provide context to the findings. The findings of this study revealed that ICT-based assessment tools are highly utilised in the teaching and evaluation of English Language in senior secondary schools in Ilorin East. The overall mean score of 3.03 indicated a high level of engagement among both teachers and students in the use of ICT platforms such as Google Forms, Moodle, and Computer-Based Test (CBT) software. Most students affirmed that they frequently participate in online or computer-based English Language tests and quizzes. Similarly, teachers were reported to make regular use of ICT tools to administer assignments and evaluations.

This outcome reflects a growing trend towards digital assessment in Nigerian secondary schools, in line with the increasing integration of technology into classroom practices. According to Adewale and Akinyemi (2021), ICT-based assessment has become a vital instructional approach in Nigeria as it enhances both teaching and evaluation efficiency. Likewise, Ogunlade and Yusuf (2022) observed that the adoption of ICT for assessment has significantly improved teachers' ability to manage large classes and provide immediate feedback to students. These findings suggest that the integration of digital technologies in assessment is not merely a supplementary activity but an emerging core component of educational practice in Kwara State. Furthermore, students' confidence and enthusiasm toward ICT-based assessments, as reflected in their responses, demonstrate the motivational value of digital learning environments. This supports the position of Eze and Ajayi (2021), who argued that when learners are exposed to ICT tools early and consistently, they develop technological competence and learning autonomy. Hence, the result underscores that ICT-based assessment has become an accepted and effective mechanism for evaluating English Language learning outcomes in Ilorin East.

The analysis of the second research question indicated that ICT-based assessment positively influences students' academic achievement in English Language. With an overall mean of 3.04, the study established that students perceive ICT-based testing as more engaging, motivating, and result-oriented compared to traditional paper-based examinations. Many respondents affirmed that the use of digital platforms has improved their understanding of English

Language concepts, increased their interest in the subject, and enhanced their capacity to complete tests accurately and efficiently. This finding corroborates earlier studies that have reported the transformative influence of ICT-based assessment on student performance. For instance, Bello and Mohammed (2022) discovered that students assessed using ICT tools in language subjects showed higher academic performance and retention rates than those assessed through conventional methods. Similarly, Okoro and Akpan (2020) noted that ICT-based testing fosters active learning and provides learners with instant feedback, which helps them to identify weak areas and improve upon them. The present study reinforces these findings, showing that digital assessment not only enhances motivation but also supports deeper learning and reflection.

The positive influence of ICT-based assessment can also be attributed to its interactive and student-centred nature. As noted by Ogunniyi (2021), ICT tools create opportunities for continuous assessment, formative evaluation, and self-paced learning, which are critical in enhancing language proficiency. The study's result, therefore, confirms that ICT-based assessments have contributed to improving students' learning outcomes in English Language by fostering engagement, efficiency, and prompt feedback. This demonstrates the relevance of technology as a catalyst for educational improvement, particularly in language instruction where practice, repetition, and feedback are essential. Despite the high utilisation and positive influence of ICT-based assessments, the study identified several challenges that hinder their full implementation. The most prominent challenges, as shown in Table 3, were inadequate funds from the government (Mean = 3.93), unavailability of computers (Mean = 3.91), and shortage of ICT facilities (Mean = 3.90). Other notable constraints included poor attitude towards ICT utilisation (Mean = 3.85), teachers' inadequate training (Mean = 3.81), Irregular power supply (Mean = 3.80), and a lack of ICT-skilled personnel (Mean = 3.77).

These findings reflect the persistent in the challenges identified in this study align with contextual barriers documented in recent Nigerian scholarship on ICT integration in education. The dominance of resource-based constraints is the inadequate government funding, unavailability of computers, and shortage of ICT facilities. These echoes findings from Oluwalola (2021) and Salami (2024), who emphasized that uneven access and infrastructure deficits materially affect the capacity of ICT to influence learning outcomes across Kwara State's secondary schools. These findings are particularly significant given that Danzaria (2020) and Hameed and Raji (2023) observed connectivity constraints and infrastructure challenges that diminished ICT's potential even in

The prominence of funding inadequacy as the top-ranked barrier underscores a systemic issue, while national policy increasingly emphasizes digital inclusion and 21st-century skills, the translation of these aspirations into practicable school-level strategies remains hindered by insufficient resource allocation, a concern heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic's exposure of technological readiness inequalities between urban and semi-urban institutions (Olatunji, 2022).

The study's identification of human capital challenges such as teachers' inadequate training, poor attitudes towards ICT utilization, and lack of skilled personnel reflects the observations put forward by Oluwalola (2021) that gaps in teacher competence represent critical bottlenecks to meaningful ICT integration. Olatunji (2022) similarly noted that teachers often receive minimal training in developing or interpreting digital assessments, affecting the reliability and validity of results, while Akabua (2024) found that superficial implementation, where schools simply convert paper tests to computer formats without redesigning tasks to exploit multimedia or interactivity, stems partly from insufficient professional development. The relatively lower ranking of ICT-skilled personnel compared to infrastructure and funding constraints suggests that while technical expertise matters, the primary impediments remain economic and resource-based. These findings reinforce Salami's (2024) assertion that contextual variables such as teacher competence, infrastructure reliability, and institutional support determine whether ICT-based assessment can fulfill its theoretical promise of promoting higher-order thinking and providing diagnostic feedback to improve English language achievement.

Conclusion

The findings of this study on the Influence of ICT-Based Assessment on Students' Achievement in English Language in Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin East, Kwara State reveal a significant integration of technology into instructional and evaluative practices, albeit with notable challenges. Evidence from the analysis indicates that ICT-based assessment tools are increasingly utilised in English language teaching and evaluation, as reflected in students' high engagement and familiarity with digital testing platforms. The study also established that the adoption of ICT-based assessment has positively influenced students' academic performance and motivation towards English language learning. Participants reported higher levels of interest, improved concentration, and better retention of learned concepts when assessments were conducted through digital platforms.

The rapid feedback mechanisms embedded in computer-based testing further promote self-assessment and academic improvement, reinforcing the constructivist perspective that learners benefit from immediate, interactive, and participatory learning environments. However, the study equally highlights critical barriers that impede the full-scale implementation of ICT-based assessment. Among the most pressing challenges identified were inadequate funds from the government, unavailability of computers, shortage of ICT facilities and ICT personnel. Overall, this study concludes that while ICT-based assessment holds transformative potential for improving English language learning outcomes in senior secondary schools, its successful implementation depends on addressing the foundational infrastructural, technical and attitudinal challenges within the educational system.

Recommendations

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

1. Government and school authorities should provide adequate computers, internet access, and stable electricity to enhance ICT-based assessments.
2. Regular workshops should be organised to build teachers' digital competence and confidence in administering ICT-based evaluations.
3. Education stakeholders should allocate sufficient funds for the purchase, maintenance, and upgrading of ICT tools.

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INFLUENCE OF TRANSLANGUAGE ON READING COMPREHENSION LESSONS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of translanguage on reading comprehension lessons of students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. Using descriptive survey research design, the population of the study included all the ninety (90) public senior secondary schools and 294 teachers of English language. Using the simple random sampling technique, the study sampled 12 public senior secondary schools from the six Area Councils of the FCT, Abuja. Thus, two schools were randomly sampled from each of the 6 Area Councils. For the teachers, the study involved all English language teachers in the 12 sampled schools. The instrument used for the study was structured questionnaire tagged Influence of Translanguage on Reading Comprehension (ITRC) with a reliability index of 0.75 using Cronbach's Alpha. The statistical tools for data analysis were percentage and mean. The study found that the current level of translanguage implementation in reading comprehension lessons is low (mean score = 2.03 < 2.50), attributed to factors such as limited mother-tongue proficiency, teacher training gaps and lack of institutional support. However, results showed that translanguage significantly benefits students by enhancing comprehension of texts, clarifying complex language structures, promoting critical thinking, boosting vocabulary development, and encouraging culturally relevant learning experiences. The study concluded that adopting translanguage as a pedagogical strategy could enhance comprehension and foster more inclusive and effective reading instruction in multilingual Nigerian classrooms. Based on this finding, the study recommends that teachers should be trained on the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension and school management should adequately implement the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Comprehension, Translanguage, Teaching

Introduction

Reading is one of the four basic language skills for processing, identifying **a**nd making sense or meaning of sounds, letters, words, phrases, sentences, paragraph and complete text. Yenus (2017) describes it as a complex cognitive process of recognizing words, pictures, figures and making meaning from them. Reading is central to learning. The ultimate goal of teaching reading is comprehension; the understanding of a text at various levels including a critical proficiency that gives the learner a deep and holistic view about the content of a text. It is one of the productive skills and one needs to internalise basic units of language to effectively read and make sense of a text, as well as write. Thus, a good written text is evidence of a good reading. This makes reading a central skill to all the skills in language learning (Williams, 1990). It is a receptive skill through which information and knowledge is received. Extending the meaning of reading, Martins (2020) describes it as a skill that requires the skill of speaking, so that the reader can pronounce the words that they read. In this sense, reading is also a productive skill, in that the reader receives information and transmits it either in speaking or writing. Jaenal (2021) views reading as the construction of meaning from a printed or written message or pictures. The construction of meaning involves the reader connecting information from the written message and picture with previous knowledge to arrive at meaning and understanding. Thus, the activation of background knowledge is important in making meaning in a given text.

Another definition of reading is that put forth by Odumuh (2020), who defines reading as a highly complex activity that involves recognition of symbols quickly and accurately, apprehending clearly and discriminating the meaning implied by the author, reacting to and using the idea obtained through reading in harmony with the readers purpose and integrating them into desired thought and actions pattern. This definition requires the reader to speedily and meticulously move her eyes across letters and text, with the aim of making meaning from the text. It also extends to the reader using his/her five senses to make meaning from what is written in a text.

Literature Review

Odumuh (2020) supports the idea of Harris and defines reading as a language processing activity that involves the learner's understanding, interpreting and getting meaning from printed materials. She further adds that readers or learners' ability to understand main ideas in paragraphs, the knowledge of words in context, making inferences, exercising critical thinking, skills and making evaluative judgement about what is read is key to effective reading and for comprehension. This definition implies learners or readers' ability to identify and understand letters, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and overall text as well as making meaning from it. Thus, when readers read, they are expected to pay close attention to the literal, inferential and critical information or meanings produced from the whole structure of the text.

Considering reading as an activity or process leading to comprehension of a given text, it is important that the meaning of comprehension is examined. Williams (2021) sees reading comprehension as a complex process that involves reading and understanding a text, through the application of background knowledge to the text. This definition implies that the understanding and interpretation of a given text depend on the ability of the reader to apply his or her background knowledge to the subject matter.

For example, a text about "shopping" is better understood and interpreted when the reader has experience or background knowledge of shopping. However, the application of background knowledge or learners' experience in a reading text makes more sense if the essential reading comprehension skills are developed in them. Thus, to effectively read and comprehend a text, there are lots of skills that students are expected to develop for proper application. These are: the skill of phonological and phonemic awareness, correct pronunciation of words, meaning of words both in isolation and context, the knowledge of syntax, literal, inferential and critical meanings, to mention, a few. Developing these skills helps readers to easily understand the context of a text, from the smallest or lowest level to the highest level of comprehension (Odumuh, 2020).

Phonological awareness is the ability of readers or learners to identify or recognize, understand, and manipulate words and sentences in a given text. This skill enables readers and learners to identify words that rhyme, recognize alliteration in given words, segmenting a sentence into phrases or words, identifying the syllables in a word, and blending. Similar to the above, phonemic awareness is an elementary reading comprehension skill that helps readers to recognize, think, and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in written words of a text. Meaning of words both in isolation and in context is an important reason for reading. While the word 'cup' means a container used for drinking water, it could also mean a problem, suffering or burden. The development of this skill in approaching reading comprehension is essential as it helps readers or learners to separate the meaning of words based on the environment they are used, whether in isolation or in context (Hairrs, as cited in Aliyu, 2024).

Syntax, which deals with the arrangement of words to form correct structure in sentence is a key reading comprehension skill important for approaching and comprehending text. It is basically about what word comes before and after another. Correct use of this skill enables readers to understand an author's thoughts and progression of a text. It also helps readers to understand literal information of a given text, especially that which is sequentially presented. Thus, a good knowledge of syntax aids readers understanding of

The skills of literal, inferential and critical skills are other components of examining reading comprehension. Studies from Julie (2014) and Coiro (2014) in reading comprehension have shown that written text is better understood and interpreted when the reader is able to identify names of persons, places, things, ideas, events and other information in the text. This skill requires readers to identify what is said or mentioned or clearly written in the text. Understanding literal level of a text gives a reader a better understanding of a text. Additionally, inferential level of reading comprehension is a skill that helps readers or learners to understand a text based on the information of the text. Here, meaning is inferred based on the environment of the text. Information is usually not explicitly stated in text, but implied.

This skill is necessary as it helps readers' understanding of hidden information in the text. Critical level is the highest level of comprehension of a text. This level enables a reader to interact with the author/text, hence, gives a critical judgment, evaluation or assessment of a text. Other important factors to be considered in the development of reading comprehension skills in learners are the approaches, methods, materials and channels of teaching and learning it. Studies on these aspects have revealed the shortcomings especially in the method used in teaching reading (Okebukola 2018; & Odumuh, 2020).

The above has shown the relevance and the need for effective teaching of reading comprehension in secondary schools, especially at this time when learners have low interest in reading generally. While the teaching of reading comprehension over the years has attracted various approaches, methods and strategies, scholars in language education has attributed the changes in these approaches, methods and strategies to inability for each to aid effective teaching of this skill. For example, John Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Pestalozzi, Friedrich Fröbel, Horace Mann, Maria Montessori, Lev Vygotsky all rejected the approaches, methods and strategies used in the teaching of language (reading). According to them, the teaching of reading through the Grammar Translation Method is rote learning, thereby making reading boring. They also rejected the 'forced' classical instruction being used by language teachers of the time; as reading materials are abstract, translating from L1 to L2, memorization of long and meaningless sentences, and the decontextualized form of learning (Anthony, as cited in Odumuh, 2020).

Again, while there are evidences in studies noting the use of more recent and learner-centered approaches in some schools in the FCT, some teachers still adopt these old approaches, and strategies in teaching reading comprehension. Additionally, studies from Perfetti Landi, and Oakhill (2005) and Mahapatra and Sabat (2016) identified word meaning in isolation and in context as challenges affecting students' comprehension of text. In these studies, they find that students

find it difficult in interpreting the use of words in text. Again, my classroom experience as a language teachers for over one decade has shown that students find it challenging understanding reading comprehension at literal, inferential and critical levels owing to factors such as poor knowledge of words, phrases, sentences and even subject of the text.

Considering these challenges, the researcher is thus, interested in finding out the benefit/influence of translanguge strategy on the reading comprehension of public senior secondary school students in the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. By definition, translanguage is the process of deriving knowledge, meaning and understanding from a text through the use of two languages (Baker, 2011). It is an act of shaping one's knowledge and experience of a text by meaning, shaping experiences, gaining shuttling gbetween languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system. Wei (2011) describes the term as the movement of a reader between different linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, signing, listening, reading, and remembering).

Thus, translanguage encompasses the full range of linguistic performance of multilingual users (Wei, 2011). Garcia and Wei (2014) put it as the act of languaging between systems that have been described as separate. Thus, it is a language teaching strategy whereby lessons are facilitated by using the learners' complete language repertoire for better understanding; in this case, comprehension of text. García (2009) sees it as a strategy teachers use in activating bilingual use in maximizing understanding of a text. Translanguage disrupts the notion that a “normal” or “ideal” reader is monolingual, rather, positioning multilinguals and their reading activities as normative. While the term involves the use of a reader's idiolect, that include one's linguistic repertoire, without regard for socially and politically defined language names and labels (Li, 2018), where the social dimensions of translanguage are of utmost importance, in that there is an audience and communicative objectives.

Anya (2017) frames it as a joint, performative, improvisational social accomplishment in which readers work with one another's linguistic contribution to make meaning in text. In addition, Celic (2012) notes that translanguage is used to facilitate inference-making by using learners' mother-tongue and English in the same classroom lesson. It is the reinforcement of learners' bilingualism in understanding the content of a text. Thus, a learner in translanguage simultaneously uses two languages towards dealing with difficulty in reading and gaining an in-depth understanding of a text (Desmond & Makalela, 2013). As a teaching strategy, translanguage could be relevant in reading comprehension. Students may use multiple languages to build their understanding of text.

According to Celic (2012), students who read in multiple languages find it easy in sharing their knowledge about the text or reading material in any of the languages. For example, a student may be tasked to read a given passage in English and share the meaning or content of the passage in his or her mother-tongue or any other language that he or she feels comfortable. This makes the use of the strategy student-centered and independent; as it allows students to freely read and write with the purpose of gaining information. This strategy is closely connected to code-switching, code-mixing and translation of a text from one language to another. It is important to state here that translanguage does not encourage or entertain the above method of language use (Park, 2012).

However, in translanguage, a language user (reader) uses a language repertoire as a whole, where there is no code-switching, code-mixing or even translation as practiced in ancient language teaching. The language user (reader) reads a text in English, and answers a given question or interprets the text in his or her mother-tongue or the indigenous language known to him or her, without any interference language or inserted words from other languages. This strategy, thus, enables him or her to use language flexibly. Furthermore, using this strategy makes learners to move between languages not as separate systems, rather as one unified way of making meaning from a text and expressing themselves even in speaking and writing the ideas (Ayeomoni, 2006).

Additionally, learners' vocabulary is developed using translanguage in enhancing reading comprehension. When learners read words in English and brainstorm it in their mother-tongue, the meaning becomes clearer, providing other synonyms for better performance for better comprehension. Thus, increasing the vocabulary of the reader and enhancing better performance in reading comprehension. Other benefits of translanguage in enhancing reading comprehension include increase in students' approach to text as well as active participation in reading activities, brainstorming and critical thinking, as well as promoting learners' culture in English language learning (Celic, 2012).

This paper is anchored on Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) and Ofelia García and Li Wei (2014) Translanguage Theory. Social cultural theory is a learning theory propounded by Lev Vygostsky (1978) that holds learning is a socially mediated process deeply rooted in cultural and linguistic contexts. Thus, the role of interaction is central to knowledge development.It further emphasizes how learning depends heavily on social processes and that human cognitive, essentially, functions based on learner's interactions with those around her. Considering language as a powerful tool for learning, translanguage, thus, allows learners or readers to use their complete linguistic repertoire in engaging

with text/passages in order to understand the content and share their understanding of it. Thus, learners or readers approach a text in English and brainstorm or share knowledge and content of the text in their various L1, for better understanding. Sociocultural theory promotes learning by context: the use of learners or readers' culture in understanding a given text aid effective learning. Through translanguage, learners' cultural and linguistic identities are validated, thus, making reading activities more meaningful and engaging (Vygotsky as cited in Ayeomoni, 2006)

The second theory for this study is Translanguage Theory by Ofelia García and Li Wei (2014). This theory is premised on the principle of the use of two languages (bilingualism), which is not taken as separate entity but as one, which is integrated for better comprehension of reading text. Thus, the use of two languages in making clearer meaning in reading text is fluid and dynamic. As a theoretical framework that challenges rigid language boundaries, the theory allows learners to use their full linguistic repertoire to engage with texts, understand content, and express comprehension.

Just like the sociocultural theory, a learner reads a text in English and uses his or her linguistic repertoire in explaining and discussing the content of the text for comprehension. The theory is relevant to reading comprehension in many ways. As it promotes text comprehension, aid meaningful discussion in class between and among learners, especially in groups and it reduces the hindrance of language complexity. The use of this theory has been found useful in studies with regards translaguage use in language skills (Muyaya, & Tembue, 2024;Jegede, 2024; Umeano, 202; Akinpelumi, 2020: & Rafi'ah, Zulwahyuni, Syawal and Nasrullah, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, the outcry on students' performance in English language and reading comprehension in particular has drawn the attention of many language scholars and educational stakeholders to finding ways to step up performance. Recent examinations in both West African Examination Council and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board outcome are not encouraging. However, considering findings of Muyaya, and Tembue (2024) and Jegede (2024), attributing poor reading comprehension performance of students to text read and discussed in English language, the researcher is, therefore, motivated to undertake this study with the aim of determining influence of translaguage on students' reading comprehension in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja,

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated influence of translanguage on reading comprehension of senior secondary school students in the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Specific objectives were to:

i. find out the level of implementation of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja;
ii. examine the benefits/influence of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja; and
iii. explore the linguistic repertoire teachers use in teaching secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the level of implementation of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja?
2. What are the benefits/influence of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja?
3. What is the linguistic repertoire teachers' use in teaching secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja?

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. This type of research took the researcher to the field directly in order to collect data. The population comprised all the ninety (90) public senior secondary schools and two hundred and ninety-four (294) teachers of English language in the FCT, Abuja. Using a simple random sampling technique, the study sampled twelve (12) senior secondary schools from the entire six Area Council of the FCT. Thus, two schools were randomly sampled from each of the six Area Councils, giving a total of 12 schools. This is done by the researcher writing the names of all the schools in each area council on a piece of paper, folded it, put them in a basket and shuffled repeatedly, and she picks two from each area council. For the teachers, all the teachers of English language comprising of thirty-six (36) were involved as sampled respondents for the study. For the instrument, the study adopted a structured questionnaire titled: Benefits/Influence of Translanguage on Reading Comprehension (BITRC). The instrumented was tested validity and reliability and it recorded

a reliability index of 0.75 using Cronbach's Alpha to test internal consistency. Thus, this indicated that it was reliable for the main study. The study used simple percentage and mean to analyse data collated.

Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of implementation of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja?

Table 1: Level of Implementation of Translanguage in Reading Comprehension

S/N	Item	VHL	HL	LL	VLL	Mean	Decision
1.	Teachers use students' indigenous language to explain and interact with students on the content of a text during reading comprehension lesson.	0	0	2	34	1.9	Rejected
2.	Students read text in English and discuss as well as brainstorm in their mother-tongue during reading comprehension lesson.	0	0	1	35	1.85	Rejected
3.	The school management support the use of translanguage in students' reading comprehension.	0	0	3	33	1.95	Rejected
4.	Students are grouped and allowed to use their mother-tongue to discuss the content of a text.	0	3	5	28	2.35	Rejected
5.	Teachers' guides students to use their mother-tongue to activate background knowledge of a text before reading in English.	0	1	4	31	2.1	Rejected
	Grand Mean					**2.03**	Rejected

Table 1 presents data on the level of implementation of translanguage in reading comprehension of senior secondary school students in the FCT, Abuja, which shows all the respondents rejected all the items in the Table as each has a mean score lower than 2.50 which is the acceptable mean score. The analysis also indicates the total mean score of respondents, 2.03, which is less than 2.50. Thus, this means that the level of implementation of translanguage in reading comprehension is low. This could be attributed to poor knowledge of the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension by teachers of English language as well as lack of support by school management.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja?

Table 2: Benefits of Translanguage in Reading Comprehension

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Translanguage enhance understanding of text/passages.	19	11	6	0	3.36	Accepted
2.	Translanguage increases active participatio of students in reading comprehension tasks.	22	13	1	0	3.58	Accepted
3.	Complex words, phrases, sentences and ent text are clearer and understood using veriti of linguistic repertoire in reading comprehension.	29	3	4	0	3.69	Accepted
4.	It promotes the inclusion of learners' culture in reading activities.	32	4	0	0	4	Accepted
5.	Anxiety of students are minimized using translanguage during reading comprehensic	18	14	4	0	3.38	Accepted
	Grand Mean					**3.60**	**Accepted**

Table 2 shows data on the benefits/influence of translanguage on students' reading comprehension in senior secondary schools, Abuja, Nigeria. From the table, majority of the respondents agreed strongly with all the items, as each of item 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 has a mean score of 3.36, 3.58, 3.69, 4 and 3.38 respectively. The table also presents the total mean score of 3.60 which is greater than 2.50 acceptable benchmark. Thus, this implies that tranlanguage use in senior secondary school is beneficiary and influential on students' reading comprehension.

Research Question 3: What is the linguistic repertoire teachers' use in teaching secondary school students' reading comprehension in the FCT, Abuja? (N=36)

Table 3: Linguistic Repertoire in Students' Reading Comprehension

S/N	Item	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Decision
1.	Teachers use students' mother tongue i translanguaging in students; comprehension.	0	0	28	8	1.7	Rejected
2.	Teachers use language of the in environment in translanguaging to enhance reading comprehension.	0	0	31	5	1.86	Rejected
3.	Teachers use the dominant in language in translanguaging in reading comprehension.	0	2	31	2	1.94	Rejected
4.	Teachers use both majority and language in translanguaging in student reading comprehension.	0	0	1	35	1.02	Rejected
5.	Teachers group students of indigenous languages to brainsto discuss the content of comprehension.	0	0	2	34	1.05	Rejected
	Grand Mean					**1.51**	**Rejected**

Table 3 presents data on the linguistic repertoire teachers' use on students' reading comprehension in senior secondary schools. From the table, all the respondents rejected all the items on the linguistic repertoire teachers' use in teaching reading comprehension, as all the mean scores are less than 2.50, the acceptable benchmark. The table also shows the mean total of students' respondents, 1.51, which is also less than 2.50. Thus, this implies that teachers of English language do not use learners' linguistic repertoire in teaching reading comprehension.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data for this study, it is revealed that the level of implementation of translanguage in secondary school students' reading comprehension in Abuja is very low. This finding agrees with the finding of Jegede (2024), whose study among others found that although translanguage is effective on st'udents' academic performance, but teacher training, rigid curricula, and resistance to change by teachers are problems revealed in the study. The study also finding tha that translanguage is beneficial/influential to students' reading comprehension as it enhances understanding of text/passages, increases active participation of students in reading comprehension tasks is in consonance with the findings of Akinpelumi (2020), Rafi'ah, Zulwahyuni, Syawal and Nasrullah (2020), Abdullahi and Umeano (2021), Muyaya, and Tembue (2024) and Jegede (2024), whose findings revealed that translanguaging aids effective teaching of reading comprehension, increases students' active participation and enhances better general academic performance. The present study also found thatEnglish language does not use learners' linguistic repertoire in teaching reading comprehension, which aligns with the finding of Jegede (2024), who identifies poor teacher training, rigid curriculum and teachers' resistance to change as factors responsible for ineffectiveness of tranlanguaging on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

This study concludes that translanguage as a teaching strategy is not adequately implemented in the teaching of reading comprehension in secondary school in the FCT, Abuja. However, while there are lots of benefits and influence of translanguage on students' reading comprehension, teachers do not use

Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings, the following are recommended for the study:

a. Teachers should be trained and retrained on the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension. Also, they should be adequately supervised on the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension.
b. School management should adequately implement the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension. They should also ensure that adequate resources and motivations are made available for both teachers and students for the use of translanguage in teaching reading comprehension.
c. Teachers should adequately consider learners' linguistics repertoire in teaching reading comprehension.

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ASSESSMENT OF AVAILABILITY AND UTILISATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR *ALMAJIRI* EDUCATION PROGRAMMEME IN NORTH-WEST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Education continues to be a tool for national development and transformation. Almajiri education has been a topic of debate among academics and a major national concern. Therefore, the availability and use of the English curriculum for the Almajiri Education programme in North West Nigeria were examined in this study. To direct the investigation, two research questions were posed. The survey design used was descriptive. All of the Almajiri Schools in Nigeria's northwest geopolitical zone made up the target demographic. Out of the eighteen operational Almajiri schools, three states and nine schools were chosen for the study using the purposeful sampling technique. 41 English language teachers responded to the instrument designed by the researcher. The study's data analysis was done using percentages. The study found that English language curriculum for *Almajiri* Education programmeme is made available for *Almajiri* Schools, and English teachers in *Almajiri* schools make use of the curriculum in teaching the learners.The study recommends that there should be effective and recurrent monitoring, supervision and assessment of the *Almajiri* teaching programmeme so that teachers can make effective and efficient utilization of the English language curriculum for *Almajiri* Education Programmeme in the North-west geo-political zone.

Key Words: Assessment, Utilisation, English Language Curriculum, *Almajiri* Education Programme

Introduction

Education continues to be a tool for national development and transformation. It serves as a medium for both cultural transmission and economic change (Danmole, 2008). It is a social process that serves as a means of acquiring the necessary attitudes, abilities, and information to survive in a world that is changing. Education continues to be one of the most effective tools for human development and social change in all human cultures, but especially in contemporary ones. Education continues to be a tool for national development and transformation. It serves as a medium for both cultural transmission and economic change (Danmole, 2008). It is a social process that serves as a means of acquiring the necessary attitudes, abilities, and information to survive in a world that is changing. Education continues to be one of the most effective tools for human development and social change in all human cultures, but especially in contemporary ones (Labo-Popoola, Bello & Atanda, 2009).

Contributing to the importance of education, it is both a societal and private good, according to Jaiyeoba (2009) and Raji (2004). It is an investment with potential benefits and some externalities. The primary tools at the government's and the community's disposal to help people become more employable and ready for a world of work that is changing quickly and becoming more demanding are education and training. According to Okugbeni (2013), education improves a person's potential. Those who are denied the opportunity to receive an education may have fewer opportunities in the future because it is a method for promoting engaged citizenship.

Uwaifo and Uddin (2009) believed that throughout history, societies have used either indigenous or western schooling. This is due to the fact that education is just as vital to humanity as life itself. Education differs from location to location and from period to time. In actuality, it is a crucial tool for any country's development. According to Uwaifo and Uddin (2009), the term "education" can be defined as the process through which members of a society acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests, abilities, competencies, and cultural norms in order to pass on life to future generations and support the society's ongoing development. Jaiyeoba (2009) submitted that every well-meaning society prioritises education.

The Federal Government in the National Policy on Education (2004) echoed Nigeria's commitment to Education For All (EFA), particularly basic education. The National Policy on Education (2004) contains a list known as the fundamental focus of education in Nigeria, which include:

1. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
2. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitude for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
3. the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around and;
4. the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Language acquisition and usage constitute basic asset in human learning (Onuoha, 2014). The multi-ethnic structure of the Nigerian society has placed English language at the centre of education, classroom instruction and national development. It has, inevitably, become an indispensable vehicle for instructional transaction and curriculum development. It becomes evident that the status and role of English language serve meaningfully the multi-ethnic nature of the Nigerian society. English language, therefore, serves as a tool of integration, association and communal harmony (Adeniyi 2012).

English language is being studied at all levels of education in Nigeria. The utility, both in and outside of the school curriculum typically determines the goals of such language education (Olaoye, 2002). English language plays a lot of roles in Nigeria from colonial era upto date; It is the language of government and administration, judicial proceedings, legislative processes, the language of education and several others (Olaoye, 2002).

Almost every aspect of education can actually undergo assessment. Assessment can centre on an individual student, an institution or a learning community, even an entire educational system (Oke, 2005). One of the purposes of educational assessment often hinges on the hypothetical template of the research and the suppositions on individuals that make up a community. It can be based on the process of learning (Egbule, 2000). The simplest way to describe assessment in education is as a process to ascertain the significance, magnitude, or worth of any educational process.

The curriculum is an indispensible tool for meaningful educational system. The concept of curriculum is as dear to education as blood is to the human body. By implication, the success of any educational outcome is somewhat dependent on how the curriculum is organised, executed and subsequently appraised.

Therefore, curriculum is an invaluable document detailing different aspects of an educational system (Onuoha 2014). Olorundare (2014) asserted that curriculum is a learning plan that includes the foundation for what should be learned and how. It also comprises the methods and resources intended to facilitate and guide the teaching/learning process. Maduewesi (1999) viewed curriculum as the means by which the school works to accomplish its educational goals or purposes. Onuoha (2014b) stated that curriculum is focused on what students will learn as a result of their actions rather than what they will do in the classroom. Oyeleye and Akinyeye (2013) affirmed that curriculum is dynamic.

Reading and comprehension, speech, vocabulary development, handwriting, phonics teaching, composition and creative writing, summary writing, lexis and structure, spoken English or pronunciation and several others are all included in the English language curriculum at both the basic and secondary educational levels. Each of these fields has its own goals and objectives. According to Amuseghan (2007), one would anticipate English as a Second Language (ESL) while discussing the aims and objectives of English language curricula. The ultimate goal of the prescribed English language curriculum at the secondary school level is for learners to attain proficiency across language skills. This will include critical thinking and literacy.

The situation at the basic and secondary school, as put by Obanya (2002) and Amusaghan (2007) is such that learners' motivation is to master and pass the English language. The teaching and learning of English language engenders other competence in learners since the practice of using a language in the society actually instill a variety of knowledge that may not be captured into any textbook (Amusaghan, 2007).

The Arabic term "Almuhajirun," which means "an emigrant," is whence the word Almajiri originates. In the pursuit of Islamic knowledge, it typically refers to a person who leaves the comforts of his home and relocates, or to a well-known instructor. It is based on the widely accepted Islamic idea of migration, particularly in clear adherence of the foundational ethos of searching for knowledge (Dialog NG, 2012). According to Kabiru (2012), who cited Sheik Abba Aji, a well-known Islamic scholar from Maiduguri, the word "Almajiri" is derived from the Arabic phrase “Al-Muhajir,” which means, “a seeker of Islamic knowledge.” The name was derived from the title by which those who migrated with Prophet Mohammed (Sallallhu 'Alayhi Wasallam) from Mecca to Medina were known. "Al-Muhajirrun," which translates to "emigrants". In confirmation, Shinaba (2012) affirmed that the Arabic term "almajiri" refers to a person who travels away from home in pursuit of Islamic knowledge.

Muhammad (2010) identified around 10 million Almajiri in Northern Nigeria. Bukar (2011) observed that many parents have neglected their responsibility to raise and educate their children. The sheer number of kids observed roaming around performing menial tasks and pleading for charity is indicative of this. "Almajiris" is the name given to these kids, who beg perpetually for a living.Almajiri education has been discussed by academics and it is an interesting theme in inclusive education for national development.

Statement of the Problem

Several researches (Abdulqadir, 2003; Khalid, 2006; UNICEF, 2008; Hamza, 2009; Adeniyi, 2013 & Oladosu, 2013) on arrays of concerns about Almajiri education. While their interests generated various useful insights into understanding, organizing and sustaining Almajiri education, it has continuously thrown up issues of currency, or the need for update on what constitute items of learning availability and utilization of the instrumental English language in the curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education programmeme in the North-West Region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study provided answers the following questions:

1. Is the curriculum containing English language made available to *Almajiri* Schools?
2. Do *Almajiri* teachers make use of the English language curriculum?

Review of Related Literature

Assessment can be used to measure individual behaviour (Egbule, 2000). It refers to the process of examining a programmeme of study/person or group's status with regard to anticipated results (Olaoye, 2002). Its chief function is to guide and improve the subject of assessment. Sometimes, assessment and evaluation are used interchangeably in determining learning outcome. Woodley and Ferguson (2003) defined assessment as a methodical procedure for compiling data from multiple sources that precisely depicts how effectively a programmeme/student is meeting the curriculum learning requirements in a course or subject at a specific point in time.

Stiggins (2005) observed that categorisation of assessment in educational context is done for ease of suitability. He outlined the following types of assessment:

1. initial, formative and summative assessment;
2. objective and subjective assessment
3. referencing (Criterion-referenced, norm-reference and causative);
4. informal and formal assessment;
5. performance-based assessment; and
6. internal and external assessment.

In the context of education, assessments are frequently referred to as assessments of learning (Woodley and Ferguson, 2003).

Adeniyi (2013) however maintained that the education of street children like that of *Almajiri* requires special materials that would help them to get properly integrated into the western education enjoyed by their other colleagues. She believed that the normal textbooks used in the regular schools (conventional schools) may be too difficult for them considering their background. English textbooks are broken in units. Each unit is comprised of:

1. Spoken English or Listening and Speaking (Oral English);
2. Reading Comprehension and Summary;
3. Vocabulary development and Register;
4. Composition and Continuous writing;
5. Grammatical Structures and Lexis;
6. Literary studies for lower basic, upper basic and post basic classes (primary and junior secondary).

The vocabulary and methodology used in the lower Basic English Studies curriculum change slightly. In Upper Basic and Post Basic levels, phonological awareness and phonemic awareness (phonics teaching) are introduced. These skills are directly linked to speaking and listening (aural discrimination between consonant and vowel sounds).

Olatoye (2012) emphasized that the post-basic English language curriculum's goals are as follows:

1. to address the language deficits brought in from the lower basic;
2. to improve language skills for post-basic and upper education;
3. to acquire the language skills necessary for succeeding in other academic topics;
4. to increase students' self-assurance when using the English language to communicate with people in the wider community.

Examination bodies break down or filter the English language education into syllabuses and work schedules, unit plan (by departments of the school), lesson plan (by the teacher). Resources to be used were also listed in the curriculum.

Integrated *Almajiri* Education Programmeme

The majority of Nigeria's out-of-school youth are Almajirai, or traveling children claiming to be receiving education in the Qur'an (USA Embassy, 2012). In Nigeria, traditional Islamic education has a long history. Long before western education was introduced, it began in the country's northern regions. It functioned through the Qur'anic schools, whose primary goal was to acquaint students with the principles of the Qur'an and likely turn them into Islamic experts. Since its founding, this educational system's fundamental curriculum has been the Qur'an because it is essential to a Muslim's spiritual, political, social, economic, and other aspects of life (Ifijeh &Iwu, 2013). It is customary for parents to enroll their kids in a particular Makarantar Allo (Qur'anic school), which may be found in any Muslim community, regardless of size. Iliyas and Olanipekun (2017) categorize the present day Almajiri into three as: Kolo (infants), Tiribiri (Adolescents) and Garidi (Adults) with varying degree of traditional Islamic education for the different levels.

By the time a student graduates from one of these institutions, society expects him to be able to read, write, and recite the Qur'an using Arabic characters (Khalid, 2006). The inclusion of Qur'anic schools in the UBE programme is essential given the significance of creating a comprehensive educational system that would serve all Nigerian children of school age (UBEC, 2011). More significantly, the Act specifically identifies the Almajiri as a crucial group of school-age children whose participation in UBE delivery is necessary to achieve the MDGs and EFA goals.

The Qur'anic integration programme was implemented by the states in 2005. Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigiwa, Kadunna, Kano, Katsina, Kwara, Kebbi, Niger, Nassarawa, Sokoto, Yobe, and Zamfara were among the states (UBEC, 2011).

Specifically, the programmeme's mission is to mainstream and promote a dynamic Almajiri Education Model that would ensure and encourage the Almajiri's progressive incorporation into the UBE curriculum. The programme's vision is to offer a specialized education curriculum that aims to give Almajiri the information and skills they need to operate and positively contribute to the nation's and societies socio-economic growth (UBEC 2011).

Methodology

The study is of a descriptive survey design. Hassan (2004) described descriptive survey as an attempt at describing systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or an area of interest in a factual and accurate manner. This research type is considered suitable for this work because the study is aimed at obtaining data from teachers about the availability and utilization of English Language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education programmeme. Almajiri schools in Nigerian North-west geopolitical zone made up the study's population. There are 18 functioning *Almajiri* schools in the zone. Nine (9) *Almajiri* schools were randomly selected and sampled for this study. Two (2) schools from Kastina State (*Almajiri* Integrated School Jibiya which has 4 English teachers and *Almajiri* Integrated School Funtua with 3 English teachers); three (3) schools from Zamfara (Sinami *Almajiri* School Gusua has 7 English teachers, Abarme *Almajiri* School Gusua has 5 English teachers and Ma'Ahad Sheik Ibrahim Kaya *Almajiri* School Kaura Namoda has 4 English teachers) and four (4) schools from Sokoto State (*Almajiri* Integrated Model School Tambuwal has 6 teachers, *Almajiri* Integrated Model School Gagi has 5 teachers, *Almajiri* Integrated Model School Tureta has 4 teachers and *Almajiri* Integrated Model School Denge-Shuni has 3 teachers). Purposive sample of forty-one teachers was used.

A researcher-designed instrument was used for collection of valuable data from *Almajiri* teachers. The items in the questionnaire were structured to measure the availability and utilization of English Language Curriculum for the *Almajiri* education programmeme. The response modes to measure availability were "available" and "not available", while that of utilization were "utilized" and "not utilized". The respondents ticked the right mode that appealed to their perceptions. The instrument was validated by giving the draft of the questionnaire to Curriculum and English language specialists, for correction and constructive inputs. This was donein order to guarantee both face and content legitimacy. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the collected data. Consequently, the percentage was used to address the research issues.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1: Is the curriculum made available to Almajiri Schools?

Table 1: Availability of English Language *Almajiri* Curriculum to *Almajiri* Schools

Schools	Frequency	Percentage %
Available	29	70.7
Not Available	12	29.3
Total	**41**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the availability of *Almajiri* curriculum to *Almajiri* schools. It is indicated that the curriculum is made available to 29 (70.7%) of the respondents while the curriculum is not made available to 12 (29.3%) of the respondent. It also pointed out that the curriculum is made available to *Almajiri* schools for teaching their students.

Research Question 2: Do *Almajiri* teachers make use of the English language curriculum?

Table 2: *Almajiri* Teachers' Use of the English Language Curriculum

Curriculum	Frequency	Percentage %
Not Used	8	19.5
Used	33	80.5
Total	**41**	**100.0**

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by the use of the *Almajiri* curriculum. It indicated that 33 (80.5%) of the respondents make use of the curriculum while 8 (19.5%) of the respondent do not use thecurriculum**.** It also pointed out that English teachers in *Almajiri* schools are teaching their students with the curriculum.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there is availability of English Language *Almajiri* Curriculum for *Almajiri* schools, 29 (70.7%) respondents agreed on the availability and 12 (29.3%) respondents disagreed on the availability. The findings also revealed that 8 (19.5%) respondents do not use the English language curriculum in teaching *Almajiri* pupils while 33

(80.5%) respondents use the English language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education Programmeme to teach *Almajiri* pupils. This finding is in agreement with the study of Ahmed (2023) which found that English Language is one of the available and utilized subjects in Basic Education curriculum for the implementation of integrated *Almajiri* education programmeme for qualitative basic education delivery in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study accessed the availability and utilization of English language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education programmeme in North-west, Nigeria. From the findings of this study, it is concluded that English language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education Programmeme is made available to *Almajiri* schools in the North-west Nigeria, and agreater number of teachers of English language in the *Almajiri* schools make use of the English language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education Programmeme in their teaching of English language.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. Federal Ministry of Education and Universal Basic Education commission should endeavour to ensure that the English language curriculum for the *Almajiri* Education Programmeme is made available to all the *Almajiri* schools under the programmeme in the North-west Nigeria;
2. More training and retraining of English teachers in line with the aims and objectives of the *Almajiri* Education Programmeme especially in the effective utilization of instructional materials shouldbe prioritized in order to achieve these lofty objectives;
3. There should be effective and frequent monitoring, supervision and evaluation of the *Almajiri*Education Programmeme in order to ensure that teachers make effective and efficient utilization of the English Language curriculum for AEP in the North-west region.

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TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR ALMAJIRI EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NORTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the assessment of English Curriculum for the Almajiri Education programme in North-west, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research was adopted with the population comprised all Almajiri Schools in the North-west, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select three States and nine schools out of 18 functioning Almajiri schools. Researcher-designed instrument on the Assessment of English Language Curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme was administered on 41 teachers of English language. The hypotheses were tested using t-test and One-Way ANOVA. Findings of the study showed that significant difference existed in the teachers' assessment of the English curriculum for the Almajiri education and the conventional programmes. No significant difference existed in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri education programme by English Language teachers; and there was no significant difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri education programme as perceived by teachers. It was recommended among others that the Federal Government and Universal Basic Education Commission should recruit more teachers of English language in order to break the seeming male domination and more qualified and experienced teachers of English especially teachers with NCE should be employed in the Almajiri schools since most of Almajiri students are still largely within primary school age.

Keywords: Assessment, Almajiri Education, Curriculum, Teachers' Qualification,

Introduction

Education is viewed as the cornerstone of development since it is the foundation for literacy, skill development, technical growth and the capacity to utilize the environment's natural resources (Akudo & Onu, 2006). All around the world, learning is recognized as a crucial thing that opens the way to progress. The foundation of a country's social cohesiveness and economic growth is knowledge. Education, which is defined as a lasting change in behavior brought about by learning, encompasses all of a society's efforts, whether deliberate or unintentional, to achieve predetermined goals that deem desirable in forms of both human and societal necessity.

Olorundare (2014) added that education is a human activity that involves providing members of the society with relevant knowledge, skills and competencies as well as behaviours and lifestyle that are socially acceptable. To him, acquiring the necessary knowledge, abilities, and morals to lead a fulfilling life and contribute positively to society is the main goal of education. Factors that have influenced education and its policies over the years include: historical factors, economic factor s, sociological factors, political factors and international influences (Education Sector Analysis, 2007). According to the constitutional provision, the federal government's primary duties in education are in the areas of policy creation, coordination and supervision/ monitoring.

Assessment is a component of evaluation. The simplest way to describe assessment in education is as a process to ascertain the significance, magnitude, or worth of any educational phenomenon. The continuous assessment is utilised at every level of education. Curriculum remains an indispensable document, process, system or activity as far as education and its attainment is concerned (Onuoha 2014). According to Amuseghan (2007), one would anticipate English as a Second Language (ESL) while discussing the aims and objectives of English language curricula. After nine or twelve years of learning English and using it for instruction at the primary and secondary levels, Nigerian students are expected to become academically, linguistically, and communicatively competent in social contexts outside of the school system.

Nigerian society is multi-ethnic, therefore, the English language has become the most required for national integration (Adeniyi, 2012). The English language is taught across all educational levels. The Arabic term "Almuhajirun," which means "an emigrant," is whence the word Almajiri originates. In the pursuit of Islamic knowledge, it typically indicates individuals who leave the comforts of his home and relocates, or to a well-known instructor (Iliyas & Olanipekun, 2020).It is based on the widely accepted Islamic idea of migration, particularly when learning at home is either difficult or inadequate (Dialog, 2012). According to Kabiru (2010), who cited Sheik Abba Aji, a well-known Islamic scholar from Maiduguri, the word "almajiri" is derived from the Arabic phrase "Al-Muhajir," which means "a seeker of Islamic knowledge".

The system of education began with Prophet Mohammed's migration (Sallallhu 'alayhi wasallam) from Mecca to Medina. Those who migrated with the Prophet to Medina were called 'Al-Muhajirrun', meaning emigrants (Kabiru, 2010). Okugbeni (2013) observed that a greater percentage of almajiri teacher are males. Kuka (2014) perceived this gender domination as a huge threat since male gender is prone to crime than female gender. Against this background, this study assessed English Language curriculum for Almajiri Education Programme based on teachers' qualification, gender and experience in North West, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been done on matters concerning the Almajiri children. A study on the Almajiri System of Education in Nigeria was carried out by Khalid (2006) who surveyed the State of Almajiri System of Education in Nigeria. UNICEF (2008) presented a report of survey that documented innovative interventions on Almajiri child in Nigeria on the challenges and solutions to Almajiri system in Nigeria. Adeniyi (2013) conducted a study on effective 'Almajiri' and Nomadic Education for Sustainable Development in Nigeria, while Oladosu (2013) carried out a study on the Arabic and Islamic Education in Nigeria focusing on the Almajiri Schools. It was observed that English language is not the language of instruction in the Almajiri school system and there is need to examine the English language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme in the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria school. The previous research showed different studies carried out in this area. Most studies carried out on Almajiri Education Programme but not specifically on the assessment of English language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme in the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the aim of this study was to:

a. establish whether there is any difference in teachers' assessment of the curriculum for English for the almajiri education and the conventional programmes;
b. find out if there is any difference in the assessment of the curriculum for English for the Almajiri Education programme based on qualification;
c. determine if there is any difference in the assessment of the curriculum for English for the Almajiri Education programme based on gender;
d. find out if there is any difference in the assessment of the curriculum for English for the Almajiri Education programme based on experience.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested in the study:

Ho_1: Significant difference did not exist in teachers' assessment of the English Language curriculum for the almajiri education and the conventional programmes.

Ho_2: Significant difference did not exist in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualified and unqualified English teachers.

Ho_3: Male and female English teachers do not significantly differ in how they assess the English language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme.

Ho_4: There is no discernible variation in the assessment of the English curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by more experience, experienced and less experienced English teachers.

Review of Related Literature

Observing a sample of students' behavior is the process of assessment and stretching correlations about their abilities and knowledge (Stiggins, 2005). Generally speaking, the phrase "assessment" refers to all of the methods teachers employ to support students' learning and monitor their advancement. In the teaching and promoting and facilitating meaningful learning is the teacher's primary responsibility during the learning process, and this task is not completed until they have determined the performance of their students (Danmole 2004). Ochuba (2009) affirmed that assessment is a systematic recording of the students' progressive performance in all aspects of their development (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour) during a given period of their course of study and it involves decision and judgement built on observation and data. At some levels, assessment can be complex because of its rigorous and time-consuming process.

Assessment has many purposes and it is integral to the teaching and learning cycle. Assessment can also be used to measure human behaviour (Egbule, 2000). It refers to the process of examining a person's or a group's status, typically with regard to anticipated outcome (Olaoye, 2002). Its chief function is to guide and improve. Sometimes, assessment and evaluation are used interchangeably in determining learning outcome. This may probably be as a result of their inter-connectedness because assessment is a component of evaluation. In affirming the inter-relativity of evaluation and assessment, Abiri (2007) in defining evaluation, stated that evaluation, therefore is the act, procedure, or result of evaluating and appraising something and making a judgment on its value, quantity, or quality.

Woodley and Ferguson (2003) in their glossary defined assessment as a methodical procedure for compiling data from multiple sources that precisely depicts how effectively a student is meeting the curriculum learning requirements in a course or subject at a specific point in time. Olatoye (2012) emphasised that the post-basic English language curriculum's goals are as follows:

1. Addressing the language deficits brought in from the lower basic;
2. Improving language skills for post-basic and upper education; and
3. Increasing students' confidence in their ability to communicate with others in the wider society through the use of the English language; to develop the language competency required for success in other academic disciplines.

All basic lessons follow a nine-year English curriculum. This is in line with the nine-year Basic Education Curriculum, which is broken down into the following sections:

1. Primary 1–3 Lower Basic Education Curriculum;
2. Primary 4–6 Middle Basic Education Curriculum; and
3. 3. Junior Secondary 1–3 Upper Basic Education Curriculum.

This nine-year basic curriculum in education was created by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) in response to ongoing national and international social and economic transformation. It is anticipated that the nine-year Basic Education Curriculum will help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Education for All (EFA), and the fundamental components of the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). Although the implementation started in 2008 from the Upper basic, its full implementation started on September, 2014 in all the Basic levels. Every student who completed the nine years of basic education is anticipated to have developed the necessary levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communication, and life skills as well as the civic, moral, and ethical principles necessary for a strong foundation for lifelong learning (Olatoye, 2012).

A learner in basic 6 instantly moves to Junior Secondary School (JSS) under this new arrangement eliminating the need for them to take the common entrance examination. From primary 1 through primary 6, the child's performance is recorded in their continuous assessment report, which is used to evaluate and promote them to JSS (Olatoye, 2012). Oribador (2014) opined that a closer examination of the new English language curriculum is necessary to ensure that the suggested topics are ones for which teachers can readily obtain teaching resources. This will promote efficient learning.

Khalid (2006) observed that most almajiri teachers are individuals who have graduated from a well-known Malam after many years of Qu'ranic instruction without adequate knowledge or experience of English language. Hence, teaching of English language becomes an enterprise dented with challenges; generally at the acquisition stage and noticeably, at the pronunciation stage. Onuoha (2014[C]) observed that pronouncing English words correctly is one of the most difficult tasks faced by English language learners, particularly when learning a second language.The degree of performance and competency are evaluated in part at this point. However, the most difficult part of learning a language is writing well.

The majority of Nigeria's out-of-school youth are almajirai, or traveling children receiving education in the Qur'an (USA Embassy, 2012). In Nigeria, traditional Islamic education has a long history. Long before the introduction of western education; it began in the country's northern regions. The Qur'anic schools were its conduit. The UBE commission established a Technical Committee on the Our'anic Integration into the UBE programme in 2002 in an effort to reach out to the Almajirai and prevent the waste of human capital. The states that started the Qur'anic Integration Programme in 2005 were Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigiwa, Kadunna, Kano, Katsina, Kwara, Kebbi, Niger, Nassarawa, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara (UBEC, 2011).

Additionally, a Ministerial Committee was appointed by the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Education to create a framework for dealing with Almajiri's problems in Nigeria with an implementation committee for the Almajiri Education Programme to mainstream and promote a vigorous Almajiri Education model that would ensure and encourage the Almajiri's progressive incorporation into the UBE curriculum. The programme's vision is to offer a specialized education curriculum that aims to give Almajiri the information and skills they need to operate and positively contribute to the nations and societies socio-economic growth (UBEC, 2011).

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprised all the almajiri schools in the North-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. There are 18 functioning almajiri schools in the zone. Nine (9) almajiri schools were randomly selected and sampled for this study. A total of 41 teachers were purposively sampled for the study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used. The instrument was validated by giving the draft of the questionnaire to curriculum and English language specialists for correction and constructive inputs. This was done in order to ensure both face and content validity. Inferential statistics was utilised in testing the hypotheses. The t-test was used to test Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, while the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to test Hypothesis 4.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Variable	A	Total	Percentage	B	Total	Percentage	Grand Total
Gender	Male	35	85.4%	Female	6	14.6%	41
Qualification	Qualified	36	87.8%	Less qualified	5	12.2%	41

The distribution of respondents by qualification and gender is displayed in Table 1. Out of the respondents, 35 (85.4%) were males and 6 (14.6%) were females. It also pointed out that teaching qualification showed that 36 (87.8%) of the respondents were qualified while 5 (12.2%) were less qualified.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Years of Experience

Variables	Years	Frequency	Percentage
Less Experienced	0-5	27	65.6%
Experienced	6-10	11	25.8%
More Experienced	11+	3	8.5%
Total		**41**	**100**

Table 2 shows that by experience, out of the 41 teachers sampled, 27 (65.6%) of them were less experienced (i.e. have less than five years of teaching experience), 11 (25.8.2%) were experienced (i.e. had taught for a period less than ten years), while the remaining 3 (8.5%) were more experienced (i.e. had taught for at least eleven years).

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in teachers' assessment of the English Language curriculum for the almajiri education and the conventional programmes.*

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t.	Sig	Remarks
Conv. Curriculum	15	85.0	10.81				
				39	7.28	.034	Rejected
Almajiri Curriculum	26	54.5	15.92				

Table 3 indicates that teachers' assessment of the English language curriculum for the Almajiri Education and the traditional programme differs significantly. The outcome shows that df(39) t=7.28, p<0.05, it means the hypothesis is therefore disproved. This suggests that teachers' assessments differ significantly of the English language curriculum for the Almajiri Education and the conventional programme at 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualified and less qualified English teachers.*

Table 4: t-test Assessment of the English Language Curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualification

Variable	N	X	SD	df	T	Sig	Remarks
Qualified	5	90.00	9.13				
				39	0.76	0.25	Accepted
Less qualified	36	83.77	17.92				

Table 4 shows that there is no discernible change in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualified and less qualified English teachers. The outcome shows that df (39) t=0.76, p>0.05. This means that the hypothesis is therefore approved. This suggests that there is no discernible difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualified and less qualified English teachers at 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 3: *There is no significant difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by male and female English teachers.*

Table 5: t-test Assessment of the English Language Curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by Gender

Variable	N	X	SD	df	T	Sig	Remarks
Male	35	77.83	16.40				
				39	1.04	0.31	Accepted
Female	6	85.68	21.38				

Table 5 indicates that there is no discernible change in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by male and female English teachers. The outcome shows that df (39) t=1.04, p>0.05, which means that the hypothesis is retained. This suggests no discernible difference exists in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by male and female English teachers at 0.05 alpha level.

Hypothesis 4: *The assessment of the Almajiri Education Programme's English language curriculum by more, less, and more experienced English teachers does not significantly change.*

Table 6: ANOVA Assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by More Experienced, Experienced and Less Experienced English Teachers

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	858.395	2	429.198	1.498	23.6
Within Groups	10887.800	38	286.521		
Total	11746.195	40			

Table 6 reveals F (2, 38) = 1.49, p>0.05, for the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by more experienced, experienced and less experienced English teachers. This indicates no significant, it means that there is no significant difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by more experience, experienced and less experienced English teachers.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that teachers' assessments differed significantly between the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme and the conventional programme

Table 3: t-test Assessment of the English Language Curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme and Conventional Curriculum and Almajiri Curriculum can be attributed to several factors inherent in the structure and implementation of the Almajiri education system. Khalid (2006) observed that most Almajiri teachers are individuals who have graduated from well-known Malam after many years of Qur'anic instruction without adequate knowledge of English language, which fundamentally differentiates them from teachers in conventional schools who typically follow standardised teacher education pathways.

The finding that there was no discernible difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by qualified and less qualified English teachers is somewhat surprising given the emphasis in educational literature on teacher qualification as a critical factor in educational quality. However, this finding may reflect the unique context of Almajiri education where the distinction between qualified and less qualified teachers becomes blurred due to the non-conventional nature of teacher preparation in this system. Ango, Ohiri-Aniche and Busari (2003) observed differences in qualifications of teachers generally in Northern Nigeria.

On difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme by male and female English teachers, the finding suggests that gender does not influence how teachers evaluate the curriculum in this educational context. This finding is particularly noteworthy given the gender composition of Almajiri teaching staff. Okugbeni (2013) observed that a greater percentage of Almajiri teachers are males, indicating significant gender imbalance in the teaching workforce of these schools. Despite this male dominance in the profession, the study found that when female teachers are present in Almajiri schools, their assessment of the English language curriculum does not differ significantly from their male counterparts, implying that professional judgement regarding curriculum quality transcends gender differences.

The study's finding of no significant difference in the assessment of the English Language curriculum for the Almajiri Education Programme among more experienced, experienced and less experienced English teachers contrasts with conventional educational research that often associates teaching experience with deeper pedagogical insights and more nuanced curriculum understanding. However, in the Almajiri education context, this finding may reflect the relatively recent introduction of formalised English language instruction into traditionally Qur'anic-focused schools.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is obvious teachers' assessment of the English language curriculum for Almajiri Education and traditional programmes differed significantly. Therefore, balancing is required in terms of gender representation in the teaching force and institutionalising English language as a programme study all over in Almajiri schools are crucial to making the institutions result oriented in the urge towards empowering the pupils and broadening the Almajiri school curriculum. A virile programmes packed curriculum for these unique students would, undoubtedly, mainstream graduate of the system into potential for conventional tertiary institutions like those of regular primary schools.

Recommendations

Given the results of this research, it is recommended that:

1. FME and UBE should recruit more female teachers of English language in order to break the seeming male domination.
2. National Youth Service Corps members from other parts of the country, who are trained and qualified should be posted to the Almajiri schools in the North-west Nigeria so as to broaden the reach and learning exposure of the pupils to teachers of different backgrounds
3. More qualified and experienced teachers of English especially teachers with NCE should be employed in the Almajiri schools since most of Almajiri students are still largely within primary school level.
4. Training and retraining of Almajiri teachers is imperative for better performance of pupils as well trained teachers would influence students' performance.

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BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE QUR'ANIC MEMORIZAION: A REVIEW OF NATIONAL BOARD FOR ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES (NBAIS) CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN FCT ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the challenges faced in implementing the National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) curriculum for Qur'anic memorization in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria. The paper identifies key obstacles hindering effective curriculum implementation, including inadequate infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, limited technological integration and socio-cultural barriers. The article employs a systematic review methodology to analyze existing research on Islamic education curriculum implementation challenges in Nigeria. The paper reveals that while NBAIS has made significant strides in promoting Arabic and Islamic studies through the Senior Arabic and Islamic Secondary School Certificate Examination (SAISSCE), substantial challenges remain in achieving optimal Qur'anic memorization outcomes. The paper recommends some measures to address these challenges. This paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge on Islamic education curriculum implementation in Nigeria and provides practical recommendations for educational policymakers and practitioners.

Keywords: NBAIS, Curriculum Implementation, Qur'anic Memorization, Islamic Education, FCT Abuja, Nigeria

Introduction

This paper focuses on the challenges encountered in implementing NBAIS curriculum for Qur'anic memorization in FCT Abuja, drawing from empirical research conducted recently. The research is particularly significant given the recent transformations in Nigeria's educational sector and the increasing emphasis on improving Islamic education quality and accessibility. The National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) serves as a pivotal institution in Nigeria's educational landscape, responsible for planning and implementing Arabic and Islamic studies curricula across the country.

Established in 1960 as an independent body, NBAIS later became a department in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria with activities mainly in the northern part of Nigeria before being mandated in 2011 to cover the entire country. The organization now functions as a national examination body, conducting the Senior Arabic and Islamic Secondary School Certificate Examination (SAISSCE) and overseeing Tahfeez (Qur'anic memorization) programs (NBAIS, 2020).

In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, NBAIS plays a crucial role in promoting Islamic education and Arabic language learning. The importance of Qur'anic memorization in Islamic education cannot be overstated, as it forms the foundation of Islamic scholarship and spiritual development. However, the implementation of NBAIS curriculum for Qur'anic memorization faces numerous challenges that require systematic investigation and analysis. Despite the institutional mandate of NBAIS to standardize and regulate Arabic and Islamic education across Nigeria, significant challenges persist in the effective implementation of its curriculum, particularly in Qur'anic memorization programs. These challenges are manifested in inconsistencies in teaching methodologies, variations in assessment standards, inadequate infrastructure, and limited teacher training programs. The Federal Capital Territory, with its unique demographic composition and urban characteristics faces distinct implementation challenges that require empirical investigation.

Review of Related Literature

The establishment of standardized curricula for Arabic and Islamic studies, particularly those emphasizing Qur'anic memorization (Hifz) represents a critical intersection between educational policy, religious instruction and cultural preservation. As nations worldwide seek to formalize and regulate Islamic education within their broader educational frameworks, the implementation of national board curricula for Arabic and Islamic studies has emerged as both an opportunity and a complex challenge which is explained below.

The Implementation and Evaluation of NBAIS Curriculum

Islam came to the place now known as Nigeria several centuries ago and before English language, Arabic language and Islamic education have been established. This historical foundation provides the context for understanding the current challenges and opportunities in implementing NBAIS curriculum. The evolution of Islamic education in Nigeria reflects a continuous adaptation to changing educational needs while maintaining core religious principles. The National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies has undergone significant structural changes since its inception (NBAIS, 2022).

According to recent documentation, the board has been "recently restructured to comply with the requirements of the National Policy on Education" with the creation of new units including the Department of Quality Assurance, which "undertakes issues of supervision and recognition of Arabic and Islamic schools throughout the country" (NBAIS, 2021). The restructuring represents a critical development in the board's evolution, reflecting the government's commitment to standardizing Islamic education. However, this transformation has also introduced implementation challenges, particularly in ensuring uniformity across different regions and educational contexts.

The NBAIS curriculum was designed to address the gap between theoretical accounting education and practical industry requirements in Nigeria. Okafor and Egbunike (2021) emphasized that the curriculum framework integrates information technology with traditional accounting principles to prepare students for the digital economy. The curriculum's structure incorporates modules on accounting software applications, data analytics, and enterprise resource planning systems, which are increasingly relevant in contemporary business environments (Akinadewo & Olutayo, 2022). Nwosu, Obiora, and Eze (2023) noted that the NBAIS curriculum aligns with international accounting education standards while maintaining contextual relevance to Nigeria's socio-economic environment. This dual focus ensures that graduates possess globally competitive skills while understanding local business practices and regulatory frameworks. Implementation Challenges Infrastructure and Resource Constraints A recurring theme in the literature is the challenge of inadequate infrastructure for effective NBAIS curriculum implementation. Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2020) identified that many Nigerian institutions lack modern computer laboratories, reliable internet connectivity, and current accounting software packages necessary for practical training.

Similarly, Uche, Nnadi, and Okoro (2022) found that budgetary constraints significantly limit institutions' capacity to acquire and maintain the technological infrastructure required for NBAIS curriculum delivery. Faculty Competence and Training: The literature highlights faculty preparedness as a critical implementation factor. Okeke and Nnamdi (2021) reported that many accounting lecturers lack adequate training in information systems and emerging technologies, creating a competence gap in curriculum delivery. Ibrahim, Mohammed, and Abdullahi (2023) recommended comprehensive faculty development programs to enhance educators' capacity to effectively teach NBAIS curriculum components, particularly those involving specialized accounting software and data analytics tools.

Oyewole and Adebayo (2024) further argued that continuous professional development is essential, as accounting information systems evolve rapidly. Their study revealed that institutions with structured faculty training programs demonstrated better curriculum implementation outcomes compared to those without such initiatives. Stakeholder Engagement and Support Industry Collaboration Effective NBAIS curriculum implementation requires strong partnerships between educational institutions and industry.

Curriculum Implementation in Contemporary Nigerian Context

Research on Qur'anic education in Nigeria has highlighted the tension between traditional and modern approaches to Islamic learning. The establishment of specialized Tahfeez programs, such as the one at the Muslim Community Centre Abuja in 2010, demonstrates the growing demand for "an academic approach to the teaching of the recitation and memorization of the Glorious Qur'an" and aims to "make up for the shortcomings observed in respect of the regular Islamiyyah Schools, which often could not accommodate the rigours of the Tahfeez in their already over-stretched syllabi" (MCC, 2021). This development underscores a critical challenge in NBAIS curriculum implementation: the need to balance comprehensive Islamic education with specialized Qur'anic memorization requirements while maintaining academic rigor and standardization.

Curriculum implementation in Nigeria has faced significant challenges in recent years, with scholars examining various factors affecting educational delivery across different levels of the education system. This review synthesizes recent literature, highlighting key themes and findings. Major Challenges in Implementation Infrastructure and Resource Constraints Recent studies have consistently identified inadequate infrastructure as a primary barrier to effective curriculum implementation in Nigerian schools. The lack of instructional materials, laboratory equipment, and technological resources continues to hamper teachers' ability to deliver curriculum content effectively (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2021).

Many schools, particularly in rural areas, lack basic facilities such as classrooms, libraries, and science laboratories necessary for proper curriculum delivery (Ogunleye, 2022). Teacher Competency and Training Teacher preparedness remains a critical concern in curriculum implementation. Research indicates that many Nigerian teachers lack adequate training in modern pedagogical approaches and subject matter expertise required for effective curriculum delivery (Nwankwo & Ossai, 2020). The challenge is compounded by insufficient continuous professional development opportunities,

leaving teachers ill-equipped to implement curriculum reforms. Professional development programs, where they exist, often fail to address the specific needs of teachers implementing new curricula (Nwankwo & Ossai, 2020).

Quranic Memorization Challenges in FCT Context

The Federal Capital Territory presents unique challenges for educational implementation due to its diverse population, urban characteristics, and role as the nation's political center. Research has shown that educational challenges in FCT often stem from rapid population growth, diverse cultural backgrounds, and varying educational expectations among residents (Imam, 2023). Recent empirical studies have highlighted various challenges facing Islamic education systems globally and specifically in Nigeria. Research examining the challenges facing Islamic education system in Nigeria has identified systemic issues that affect curriculum implementation effectiveness.

These challenges are not unique to Nigeria but reflect broader patterns observed in Islamic educational institutions worldwide. Studies on curriculum implementation challenges in private education in Nigeria have revealed that with Nigeria's population over 180 million, the country faces significant educational implementation challenges across various sectors, including Islamic and Arabic education (Imam, 2023). The implementation of Islamic education curricula, particularly those focusing on Qur'anic memorization, operates within a complex theoretical framework that encompasses both traditional Islamic pedagogical principles and modern educational theories. The concept of "Tahfeez" (memorization) in Islamic education is rooted in centuries-old traditions that emphasize the preservation and transmission of the Holy Qur'an through oral tradition and systematic memorization practices (Sani, 2015).

Regulatory Framework and Quality Assurance

The call by NBAIS leadership for government regulation of Almajiri schools and curriculum review reflects ongoing challenges in the Islamic education sector. In July 2021, NBAIS officials emphasized the need for government intervention to "regulate Almajiri schools and review its existing curriculum," highlighting systemic issues in Islamic education delivery and standardization (NBAIS, 2025). The National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) serves as Nigeria's primary regulatory body for Arabic and Islamic education, mandated to oversee curriculum planning and implementation across the country since 2011 (National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies, 2025). The Almajiri education system, representing a traditional form of Islamic learning, has undergone significant regulatory transformation under NBAIS oversight, particularly following recent administrative changes.

The National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) operates within a complex regulatory environment that governs Islamic education institutions across various jurisdictions. This literature review examines the regulatory frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms that shape Arabic and Islamic studies programs, drawing on recent scholarship. The regulatory framework for Arabic and Islamic studies encompasses governmental policies, institutional governance structures, and accreditation standards. Recent research highlights the evolving nature of these regulatory mechanisms in response to contemporary educational challenges.

Governmental Oversight and Policy Development Islamic education boards operate under diverse regulatory models depending on national contexts. Research indicates that effective governance requires balancing religious authenticity with educational quality standards (Ahmed & Rahman, 2023). The regulatory framework typically includes curriculum approval processes, teacher certification requirements, and institutional licensing procedures (Hassan, 2022). Contemporary regulatory approaches emphasize the integration of traditional Islamic pedagogical methods with modern educational standards (Ibrahim & Yusuf, 2021).

Institutional Autonomy and Accountability The tension between institutional autonomy and regulatory oversight represents a critical aspect of governance in Islamic educational institutions. Studies demonstrate that successful regulatory frameworks provide institutions with sufficient autonomy to maintain their religious character while ensuring accountability to educational quality standards (Khan, 2024). The balance between centralized regulation and institutional flexibility remains contested, with some scholars advocating for more decentralized approaches that respect local contexts (Mahmood, 2023).

Quality Assurance Mechanisms Quality assurance in Arabic and Islamic studies has gained increased attention as institutions seek to demonstrate educational effectiveness and maintain credibility. Accreditation and Standards Accreditation processes serve as primary quality assurance mechanisms for Islamic educational institutions. Recent developments include the establishment of specialized accreditation bodies for Islamic studies programs that assess both religious scholarship and pedagogical effectiveness (Ali & Abdullah, 2022). These accreditation frameworks typically evaluate curriculum design, faculty qualifications, learning resources, and student outcomes (Siddiqui, 2023). The integration of international quality assurance standards with Islamic educational values presents ongoing challenges for accreditation bodies (Farooq & Malik, 2021).

Teacher Training and Qualification Issues

One of the most significant challenges identified in empirical literature relates to teacher training and qualification (Imam, 2023). The complexity of Qur'anic memorization pedagogy requires specialized skills that combine traditional Islamic scholarship with modern educational methodologies. Research indicates that many institutions struggle to find qualified instructors who can effectively implement NBAIS curriculum standards while maintaining the spiritual and cultural dimensions of Qur'anic education (Imam, 2023). The NBAIS Registrar has emphasized that teacher's professional training is very critical for national development, highlighting the importance of addressing teacher training gaps in Islamic education. Professional development programs are essential for effective curriculum implementation. Teacher training and qualification gaps are also obstacle to NBAIS curriculum implementation because there exists a significant shortage of adequately trained teachers who possess both traditional Islamic knowledge and modern pedagogical skills necessary for effective curriculum implementation.

Infrastructure and Resource Limitations

Empirical evidence suggests that inadequate infrastructure and limited resources significantly impact curriculum implementation effectiveness. Many NBAIS Islamic schools in FCT Abuja face challenges related to inadequate classroom facilities, limited learning materials, and insufficient technological resources necessary for modern educational delivery. Studies have identified inadequate infrastructure, lack of proper teacher training schemes, traditional teaching practices, and limited access to technology as major obstacles in educational implementation(Shukri, 2020). These findings align with challenges observed in NBAIS curriculum implementation. Infrastructure deficits is part of the challenges because many institutions implementing NBAIS curriculum lack adequate physical infrastructure, including properly equipped classrooms, libraries with relevant Arabic and Islamic texts, and conducive learning environments necessary for effective Qur'anic memorization NBAIS, (2020).

Assessment and Standardization Challenges

The implementation of standardized assessment procedures for NBAIS Qur'anic memorization presents unique challenges. Unlike conventional subjects, Qur'anic memorization requires specialized assessment methodologies that evaluate not only retention but also proper recitation, Tajweed (pronunciation rules), and spiritual understanding (Baba 2014). The author explained further that assessment and evaluation concerns are parts of the challenges because the current assessment methods may not adequately measure the depth of Qur'anic memorization and understanding, leading to potential gaps in learning evaluation.

Socio-Cultural and Economic Barriers

Other challenges include the socio-cultural and economic barriers because various socio-economic factors, including poverty, cultural attitudes toward formal Islamic education, and competing educational priorities, affect student participation and success in NBAIS programs. These challenges collectively undermine the effectiveness of NBAIS curriculum implementation and limit the achievement of the organization's educational objectives in FCT Abuja (Oyadiran, 2020).

Technological Integration in Islamic Education

Another challenge is technological integration challenges because the slow adoption of educational technology and digital learning tools in Qur'anic memorization programs limits the potential for enhanced learning experiences and improved student outcomes. Contemporary challenges include the dynamics of globalization, socio-cultural changes, technological advancements, and the need to balance religious values with 21st-century competencies Sani, (2015). This presents both opportunities and challenges for NBAIS curriculum implementation.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that of NBAIS curriculum implementation challenges for Qur'anic memorization in FCT Abuja reveals a complex web of interconnected obstacles that require comprehensive, multi-faceted solutions. While NBAIS has established a solid institutional framework for Arabic and Islamic studies education in Nigeria, significant challenges persist in achieving optimal implementation outcomes. The primary challenges identified include infrastructure deficits, teacher training gaps, limited technological integration, inadequate assessment methods, and socio-economic barriers. These challenges are not insurmountable but require coordinated efforts from various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, communities, and international partners.

The conclusion aligns with broader research on curriculum implementation challenges in developing countries, particularly in the context of religious education. However, the unique cultural and religious significance of Qur'anic memorization in Islamic education requires specialized approaches that balance traditional methodologies with modern pedagogical innovations. The recent leadership changes within NBAIS and ongoing reform efforts provide opportunities for addressing these challenges through strategic planning, resource mobilization, and stakeholder engagement. The success of these efforts will depend on sustained commitment to quality improvement and adequate resource allocation.

Way forward

Based on the above review, several recommendations emerge for improving national board for Arabic and Islamic studies (NBAIS) curriculum implementation:

a. NBAIS should enhance its regulatory enforcement mechanisms in FCT Abuja by establishing dedicated oversight offices and implementing regular institutional audits to ensure compliance with curriculum standards.
b. Curriculum planners should develop Context-Specific Guidelines: Create implementation guidelines specifically tailored to the FCT Abuja context, considering the territory's unique demographic and urban characteristics.
c. Government should establish formal coordination mechanisms between NBAIS, FCT Administration and local educational institutions to improve policy implementation and resource allocation.
d. The ministry of education should develop detailed implementation guides and standardized teaching materials to ensure consistency across different institutions in FCT Abuja.
e. Government should incorporate modern educational technologies into Qur'anic memorization programs to enhance learning effectiveness and accommodate diverse learning styles.
f. Educational stakeholders should implement comprehensive teacher training programs that combine traditional Islamic scholarship with modern pedagogical methodologies.
g. Educational stakeholders should collaborate with FCT Administration to develop adequate educational infrastructure for Islamic institutions implementing NBAIS curriculum.
h. Government should create regional resource centers in FCT Abuja to provide teaching materials, technological resources, and professional support to implementing institutions.
i. Ministry of education should develop comprehensive quality monitoring systems that provide regular feedback on curriculum implementation effectiveness.

Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

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INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of English language on the implementation of CRS curriculum in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State with specific reference to public and private schools. The study is a descriptive survey research design with the population of the study comprising of all CRS teachers in Kwara State. One hundred and twenty (120) CRS teachers in upper basic schools in Kwara State were purposively sampled for this study. A researcher-designed questionnaire was employed to collect data from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using test-retest method in an interval of two weeks on respondents outside the sample study and, a reliability index of 0.84 was recorded using the Cronbach Alpha. Data gathered were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and the t-test statistics at 0.05 alpha level. Findings of the study revealed there was a positive influence of English language in the implementation of CRS curriculum and CRS teachers adequately implemented CRS curriculum using the English language as a medium of instruction. However, there was a significant difference in the public and private upper basic school teachers' implementation of CRS curriculum using English language, with private school CRS teacher implementing the curriculum more than the public upper basic school teachers. Based on the findings, it was concluded that English language proficiency enhances effective CRS curriculum implementation in upper basic schools. Hence, it was recommended among others that school administrators should establish comprehensive English language support programmes including vocabulary building sessions, reading comprehension workshops and specialized English for Religious Studies courses to enhance students' proficiency in religious terminology and concepts.

Keywords: Curriculum, CRS, Implementation, English Language, Upper Basic School

Introduction

The educational landscape in Nigeria reflects its complex multi-cultural and multi-lingual society, with over 500 indigenous languages coexisting alongside English, the official language of instruction (Ogunyemi & Ajayi, 2022). This linguistic diversity presents unique challenges and opportunities in curriculum implementation across various subjects, particularly in value-laden disciplines like Christian Religious Studies (CRS). The upper basic education level (Junior Secondary School 1-3), which takes care of learners aged approximately 12-15 years, represents a critical phase in the Nigerian educational structure as outlined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023). During this formative year, students engage with increasingly abstract religious concepts while simultaneously developing their proficiency in English as the medium of instruction (Olaniyan & Ajibade, 2021). Implementation of the CRS curriculum at this level faces multiple challenges, chiefly among which is the language barrier encountered by students and teachers navigating complex theological concepts in a language that may not be their mother tongue (Adegbite, 2020). The revised 9-year Basic Education Curriculum, stemming from the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, emphasizes the role of CRS in fostering moral values, ethical conduct, and religious tolerance (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council [NERDC], 2020). However, the extent to which these objectives are realized is significantly influenced by language proficiency factors.

Historical trajectory of religious education in Nigeria is deeply intertwined with the country's colonial past and evolving language policies. Christian Religious Studies was introduced as part of formal education by European missionaries in the 19th century, with instruction initially conducted in local languages before transitioning to English as colonial influence expanded (Ishola, 2022). Post-independence education reforms, particularly the National Policy on Education first published in 1977 and subsequently revised, established English as the official medium of instruction from upper primary school onwards while advocating for mother tongue education in early years (Bamigbola, 2021).

The implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in 1999 and subsequent curriculum revisions have maintained this language policy framework while expanding the scope and objectives of CRS education (Ajibade, 2019). The 2012 curriculum revision, further refined in 2020, positioned CRS as an essential component of value education aimed at addressing moral decadence and promoting ethical citizenship (FRN, 2020). Throughout these reforms, the question of language of instruction has remained contentious, particularly for subjects like CRS that involve abstract concepts and value systems that may be difficult to translate across linguistic boundaries (Olaniyan, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of CRS curriculum in Nigerian upper basic schools faces significant challenges due to English language proficiency barriers, particularly in Kwara State. Olaniyan and Oladotun (2019) reveal that approximately 68% of students struggle with comprehending religious concepts when taught exclusively in English, as many students from rural communities possess limited English proficiency despite being the official medium of instruction. This language barrier creates disconnect between curriculum objectives and classroom reality limiting students' ability to engage with theological concepts and undermining the cultural-spiritual objectives of religious education.

Further compounding this challenge, Ademola (2021) affirms that upper basic schools in Kwara State demonstrated that CRS teachers sometimes resort to code-switching between English and native languages but majorly adhere to English-only instruction. This significantly hampers students' comprehension and participation. The study also found that assessment practices predominantly in English resulted in students memorizing religious content rather than developing genuine understanding. These observations highlight the urgent need to examine language policy in religious education implementation, particularly how the English language requirement impacts the efficacy of the CRS curriculum in meeting its educational objectives in a multi-cultural context. The language-curriculum misalignment presents a significant obstacle to achieving the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council's (NERDC) stated objectives for religious education, which emphasize ethical development, cultural awareness and spiritual growth. Ibrahim et al. (2022) confirm the disconnect in their evaluation of curriculum implementation and findings show that schools with greater linguistic flexibility demonstrated higher achievement of curriculum objectives compared to strictly English-only classrooms. Thus, this problem requires urgent attention as it fundamentally affects how students engage with religious education, potentially undermining both academic outcomes and the broader character developmental goals of the CRS curriculum.

This study examined the specific ways in which English language proficiency affects the implementation of the CRS curriculum in upper basic schools across Nigeria. By investigating this relationship, the research aims to contribute to more effective pedagogical approaches that acknowledge linguistic realities while ensuring the achievement of curriculum objectives. As Nigeria continues to grapple with religious tensions, moral education challenges, and the need for value-based instruction, understanding the language dimension of religious education becomes increasingly important (Obiekezie & Nwadike, 2023).

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine the influence of English Language in the Implementation of CRS Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State. Specifically, the study intended to:

a. Examine the influence of English language on the implementation of upper basic curriculum in CRS;
b. Find out how teachers implement CRS curriculum using the English language as a medium of instruction; and
c. Assess the difference in the influence of English language on CRS curriculum based on private and public schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the influence of English language in the implementation of CRS Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State?
2. How teachers implement CRS curriculum using the English language as a medium of instruction?

Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the private and public teachers' implementation of CRS curriculum using English language.

Literature Review

Studies by Nwosu and Ogbonnaya (2020) document the historical tensions between policy aspirations and classroom realities regarding language use in religious education. The study reveals persistent code-switching practices by teachers attempting to foster understanding of religious concepts in English using indigenous languages. This historical context underscores the enduring nature of language challenges in CRS curriculum implementation, thereby suggesting that contemporary religious teaching practice should acknowledge the deep-rooted language dilemma. The current CRS curriculum for upper basic education in Nigeria developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council is structured around five broad themes: The creation and God's relationship with human beings;, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ; the early church and missionary activities; Christian values and moral lessons; and contemporary Christian issues (FRN, 2022).

The aforementioned themes are designed to progressively build students' understanding of Christian principles while fostering critical thinking and moral reasoning skills. The curriculum explicitly stipulates English as the medium of instruction, with learning outcomes and assessment criteria formulated in English (FRN, 2023).

This policy aligns with broader educational objectives of preparing students for higher education and global citizenship. However, it presents implementation challenges in contexts where English proficiency varies significantly (Adeyemi, 2021). The curriculum framework also makes provisions for teachers to utilize local languages for explanation where necessary, but formal teaching materials, textbooks and assessments remain predominantly English-based (FRN, 2022). A comprehensive analysis of the CRS curriculum documents by Alabi (2023) identifies significant linguistic demands inherent in the learning objectives. The researchers note that more than 70% of the specified learning outcomes require advanced language skills including mastery of analysis, evaluation and synthesis of abstract theological concepts. These demands may exceed the English language proficiency of many upper basic students, particularly in rural areas and public schools with limited resources for language development.

Okonkwo (2021) studied upper basic schools in South-eastern Nigeria and found a statistically significant correlation between students' English language proficiency and their performance in CRS assessments. The study revealed that this correlation was stronger for questions requiring conceptual understanding and application than for those testing factual recall, suggesting that language barriers particularly affect higher-order learning in religious education. Another study by Adegbite (2020) on classroom observations and teacher interviews in 15 junior secondary schools in South-west Nigeria found widespread code-switching practices in CRS instruction. The research noted that teachers spent approximately 40% of instructional time translating or explaining English terminology in local languages (Yoruba), despite official policy mandating English-only instruction.

A nationwide survey by Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) with data from 420 CRS teachers across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones revealed significant regional variations in perceived language barriers. With English as the medium of instruction, Northern States reported more severe challenges compared to Southern States; and more teachers in the North-east identifying language as a major or severe impediment to effective CRS teaching compared to those in the South-west. The study attributes these regional disparities to variations in historical exposure to Western education, socio-economic factors and the relative cultural distance between indigenous world views and Christian concepts across different ethno-religious contexts.

Focusing specifically on student perspectives, Chukwu and Obaseki (2023) employed focus group discussions with upper basic students from diverse linguistic backgrounds in Rivers State. Their thematic analysis revealed that students experienced particular difficulty with biblical interpretation tasks,

and expressing personal reflections on moral predicaments in English. Many students reported understanding CRS concepts when explained in their mother tongue but struggling to articulate this understanding in English-language assessments, leading to grades that diminished their actual comprehension of the subject matter.

The impact of teachers' preparation on addressing language challenges in CRS implementation was examined by Olaniyan and Ajibade (2021). Their survey of 250 CRS teachers from 80 schools across Nigeria found that only 34% had received specific training on teaching religious concepts across language barriers. Teachers who had received such training reported greater confidence in implementing the curriculum and employed more diverse pedagogical strategies to overcome language obstacles. The researchers concluded that teacher education programmes inadequately prepare CRS educators for the linguistic realities of Nigerian classrooms, recommending curriculum reforms in teacher training institutions (Olaniyan & Ajibade, 2021).

The relationship between English language proficiency and academic achievement in CRS has been extensively documented in recent Nigerian research. A longitudinal study by Ezugwu et al. (2024) tracked 350 students across three years of upper basic education in Enugu State. The findings showed that initial English language proficiency was a stronger predictor of final CRS performance than previous religious knowledge, socio-economic status or school resources. The researchers also noted that students whose English improved significantly during the study period showed corresponding improvements in CRS achievement, suggesting that language interventions could positively impact religious education outcomes (Ezugwu et al., 2024).

More so, Aremu and Babajide (2021) examined examination results from 1,200 Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) candidates across four States in Nigeria. Their findings revealed approximately 65% of failures in CRS which could be attributed to language-related factors including misinterpretation of questions, inability to express concepts clearly, and limited vocabulary. The researchers conducted follow-up interviews with a subset of low-performing students, confirming that many possessed religious knowledge they could demonstrate in oral assessments using their mother tongue but struggled to express in written English examinations.

These findings align with Bakare's (2022) experimental study in 12 upper basic schools in Lagos State, which implemented a bilingual approach to CRS teaching in treatment groups while control groups maintained the standard English-only approach. The findings showed that students in the treatment groups demonstrated significantly higher achievement in CRS assessments

despite using the same English-language examination format as the control group. The study concluded that allowing conceptual understanding to develop through mother tongue explanation while gradually building English terminology enhanced overall subject mastery.

Study on pedagogical approaches has identified several promising strategies for addressing language challenges in CRS implementation. Okorie and Nwosu (2020) documented innovative practices in 18 high-performing schools across Nigeria. The findings showed that successful CRS teachers employed multilingual glossaries, visual aids, dramatization, and narrative approaches that reduced linguistic demands while enhancing conceptual understanding. These teachers systematically built students' religious vocabulary through explicit instruction and concept mapping, creating connections between English terminology and students' existing linguistic and conceptual frameworks.

The effectiveness of technology-enhanced approaches was investigated by David-West (2023) in a quasi-experimental study in Rivers State. The researcher found that multi-media resources incorporating visual illustrations, local language audio explanations, and interactive vocabulary exercises significantly improved both CRS content understanding and related English language acquisition compared to traditional textbook-based instruction. Collaborative learning strategies were examined by Nzekwe (2021), who implemented and evaluated peer-assisted learning approaches in upper basic schools in Anambra State. The study found that allowing students to discuss CRS concepts in small groups, with flexibility to use both English and local languages before producing final work in English, significantly enhanced conceptual understanding and reduced language anxiety. These collaborative approaches were particularly beneficial for students with lower English proficiency.

Despite policy provisions and pedagogical innovations, significant implementation gaps persist in addressing language challenges in CRS education. Adeyemi's (2021) on policy analysis identified disconnections between national curriculum expectations and classroom realities, particularly regarding language of instruction policies. Through document analysis and interviews with education officials, the study found that while policy documents acknowledged linguistic diversity, assessment systems and instructional materials failed to adequately accommodate this reality, creating tension between policy ideals and implementation possibilities.

Infrastructural and resource constraints further compound language-related challenges. Umar and Dauda (2020) found out that upper basic schools across Northern Nigeria are lacking libraries, language laboratories, and audio-visual resources which reported greater difficulties in implementing language-sensitive approaches to CRS teaching. The researchers found a significant association between school resource levels and teachers' ability to implement multi-lingual support strategies, highlighting socio-economic dimensions of the language challenge in religious education. Teacher competence in both English and local languages represent another critical factor influencing CRS implementation. Obiekezie and Nwadike (2023) surveyed 180 CRS teachers across six states, finding that only 48% rated themselves as highly proficient in the technical vocabulary of Christian theology in English, while 73% reported high confidence in explaining these concepts in their local language. The study concluded that teacher language proficiency represented a significant constraint on curriculum implementation, recommending targeted professional development programmes addressing both English for specific purposes and pedagogical strategies for multi-lingual religious education.

The implementation of the CRS curriculum occurs within complex socio-cultural contexts that further influence language dynamics. Ishola (2022) conducted an ethnographic study in six communities across Nigeria, examining how language choice in religious education intersected with issues of cultural identity, religious authenticity, and post-colonial consciousness. The research found that some communities perceived English-based religious instruction as alienating students from indigenous spiritual vocabulary and concepts, potentially contributing to religious syncretism or superficial understanding. Conversely, other communities valued English instruction in CRS as providing access to global Christian discourse and enhancing students' educational mobility. Parental perspectives on language in religious education were investigated by Ogunyemi and Ajayi (2022) through surveys and focus groups involving 320 parents. The study revealed complex and sometimes contradictory attitudes with some parents expressing concern about their children's ability to understand religious concepts taught in English, while many preferred English as the medium of instruction due to its perceived benefits for future educational and economic opportunities. These findings highlight the tensions between immediate comprehension and long-term language acquisition goals in parental attitudes toward CRS instruction (Ogunyemi & Ajayi, 2022).

Teacher preparation reforms were advocated by Olaniyan (2023) based on a nationwide assessment of CRS teacher education programmes. The researcher proposed curriculum revisions for teacher training institutions that would incorporate specific modules on teaching religious concepts across language barriers, cultural translation of theological ideas, and assessment approaches that distinguish between language proficiency and religious understanding. Such reforms could better equip teachers to navigate the complex linguistic terrain of CRS instruction in Nigerian classrooms. The empirical evidence reviewed in this present study consistently demonstrates the significant influence of English language factors in the implementation of the CRS curriculum in Nigerian upper basic schools. Language emerges not merely as a medium of instruction but as a fundamental variable affecting concept formation, teacher-student interaction, assessment validity, and overall curriculum effectiveness, whereas, regional variations, socio-economic factors, teacher preparation, and available resources are all moderate on the relationship between language proficiency and CRS implementation.

This study has established the need for research in examining specific mechanisms through which language influences religious education processes and outcomes, with particular attention to identifying effective strategies for navigating linguistic challenges while maintaining curriculum integrity. Such research has significant implications for teacher education, instructional design, assessment practices, and education policy in Nigerian multi-lingual context. As Nigeria continues to emphasize values education through subjects like CRS, addressing the language dimension becomes essential for ensuring equitable access to quality religious education that achieves its intended moral, spiritual and academic objectives.

Methodology

The study was limited to teachers' assessment of the implementation of the CRS curriculum using the English language as a medium of instruction and on the differences in the assessment of English language on the implementation of CRS curriculum on the basis of school proprietorship. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all CRS teachers in Kwara State. One hundred and twenty (186) CRS teachers in upper basic schools in Kwara State were purposively sampled for this study. A researcher-designed instrument in form of questionnaire was employed to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was on a 4-point Likert scale rating of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents; section B contained 10 items which has to do with the influence of English language in CRS curriculum implementation. For the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to two experts in CRS and Language Education, University of Ilorin for face and content validity while the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability index of 0.84 was established. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics of mean, standard deviation and t-test. The data was analysed using mean and standard deviation. On the basis of the scale, the mean score of 2.5 and above were assessed to be high while mean scores less than 2.5 were assessed to be low. The t-test statistics was used to test the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents**GenderFrequencyPercentage %**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	74	39.8
Female	112	60.2
Total	**186**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of respondents sampled for this study. Out of 186 respondents sampled, 74 (39.8%) were male CRS teachers, while the rest 112 (60.2%) were females. This implies that female senior secondary school CRS teachers were more than their male counterparts in the sampled schools.

Table 2: School Type Distribution of Respondents

School Type	Frequency	Percentage %
Private	130	69.9%
Public	56	30.1%
Total	186	100%

Table 2 reveals the percentage distribution of respondents sampled for this study. Out of 186 respondents sampled, 130 (69.9%) were from private schools, while 56 (30.1%) were from public schools. This indicates that private schools engage CRS teachers than those in public schools. This is due to most private Upper Basic Schools are religious based schools.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of English Language in the Implementation of CRS Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State?

Table 3: Mean Analysis on the Influence of English Language in the Implementation of CRS Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools

S/N	Influence of English Language in the Implementation of CRS Curriculum	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	English language proficiency has no significant	16	81	62	27	2.56	0.84
2	Students struggle to express their understanding of CRS content when assessed in English.	7	94	75	10	2.62	0.63
3	Code-switching between English and local languages improves students' comprehension of CRS lessons.	23	120	15	28	2.84	0.83
4	The English language requirement creates barriers to achieving the cultural objectives of the CRS curriculum.	38	72	40	36	2.61	1.00
5	CRS teachers find it challenging to explain complex religious concepts using only English.	37	86	36	27	2.74	0.89

Table 3 shows the responses of respondents to research question one which states the influence of English Language in the Implementation of CRS Curriculum in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State. From the Table, the mean scores of all items are more than 2.5 benchmark. This means that there is a positive influence of English Language in the implementation of CRS curriculum in Upper Basic Schools.

Research Question 2: How teachers implement CRS curriculum using the English Language as a medium of instruction?

Table4: Mean Analysis on Teachers Implement CRS Curriculum Using the English Language as a Medium of Instruction

S/N	Teachers Implement CRS Curriculum Using the English Language as a Medium of Instruction	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
6	CRS teachers regularly translate key concepts into local languages to enhance student understanding.	46	84	31	25	2.83	0.91
7	Teachers modify the prescribed English-based CRS curriculum materials to suit their students' language needs.	34	77	56	19	2.68	0.88
8	The use of English-only instruction limits students' participation in CRS classroom discussions.	48	88	21	29	2.89	0.91
9	CRS assessment scores improve when students are allowed to demonstrate understanding in their preferred language.	47	74	48	17	2.79	0.91
10	CRS teachers require additional training on effective English language teaching strategies for religious education.	42	63	51	30	2.64	0.96

Table 4 reveals the responses of respondents on how teachers implement CRS curriculum using the English Language as a medium of instruction in Upper Basic Schools in Kwara State. It can be seen from the table that the mean scores of all items are more than 2.5 benchmark. This means that CRS teachers adequately implement CRS curriculum using the English Language as a medium of instruction in Upper Basic Schools.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the private and public teachers' implementation of CRS curriculum using English Language.*

Table 5: t-test Analysis on Significant Difference in the Private and Public Teachers' Implementation of CRS Curriculum Using English Language

School Type	N	Mean	Std. D	df	t-value	Sig.	Decision
Public	56	62. 81	1.24				
				184	1.32	.002	Rejected
Private	130	72.23	1.89				

Significance@0.05

Table 5 reveals that there is a significant difference in the public and private Upper Basic School teachers' implementation of CRS curriculum using English Language. Since the df (184) t= 1.32, p > 0.05 and the calculated sig. (0.002) is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is hereby rejected. Thus, this implies that there is a significant difference in the public and private Upper Basic School teachers' implementation of CRS curriculum using English Language. To ascertain where the significant difference lies, the mean scores of the two groups were compared. It further shows from Table 5 that public schools had the mean score 62.81, while that of private schools had the mean score 72.23. Thus, this implies that private Upper Basic School teachers implement CRS curriculum more than those in public school. This is far-fetched due to that fact that there is serious monitoring in private schools compare to the public schools in terms of implementation.

Discussion

The first finding which revealed a positive influence of English Language in the implementation of CRS curriculum in Upper Basic Schools has a contradictory view on the previous empirical research which has consistently demonstrated negative impacts of English language on CRS curriculum implementation, and not positive influence. However, the empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that English language proficiency creates significant barriers to effective CRS curriculum implementation in Nigerian upper basic schools (Olaniyan & Oladotun, 2019). This finding is supported by Okonkwo (2021) who found a statistically significant correlation between students' English language proficiency and their performance in CRS assessments, with the correlation being stronger for questions requiring conceptual understanding and application than for those testing factual recall. Furthermore, Aremu and Babajide (2021) findings revealed that approximately 65% of failures in CRS could be attributed to language-related factors including misinterpretation of questions, inability to express concepts clearly, and limited vocabulary.

Another finding from this study revealed that CRS teachers struggle to adequately implement the curriculum using English as the sole medium of instruction, often resorting to unofficial practices to bridge comprehension gaps. This outcome agrees with Adegbite (2020) who found out that CRS teachers spent reasonable part of their time translating or explaining English terminology in local languages (Yoruba), despite official policy mandating English-only instruction. Additionally, Olaniyan and Ajibade (2021) found that about less than 50% of CRS teachers had received specific training on teaching religious concepts across language barriers, indicating inadequate preparation for addressing linguistic challenges in curriculum implementation.

The last finding of this study revealed the regional and socio-economic variations in implementation challenges of CRS curriculum implementation. This finding corroborates the outcome of Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) whose study revealed significant variations in language-related implementation challenges across different contexts. Furthermore, Umar and Dauda (2020) found that public upper basic schools across Northern Nigeria lack libraries, language laboratories, and audio-visual resources in implementing language-sensitive approaches to CRS teaching, with a significant association between school resource levels and teachers' ability to implement multi-lingual support strategies.

Conclusion

Based on the actual research findings, it can be concluded that English language proficiency enhances effective CRS curriculum implementation in upper basic schools as CRS teachers were able to explain concepts in the Bible directly in English language. However, teachers in public schools find it difficult in the implementation of CRS curriculum due to lack of instructional resources and monitory activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were offered:

1. School administrators should establish comprehensive English language support programmes including vocabulary building sessions, reading comprehension workshops, and specialized English for Religious Studies courses to enhance students' proficiency in religious terminology and concepts.
2. There should be continued investment in professional development programmes that further strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills in English-medium religious instruction, including training in effective questioning techniques, assessment strategies, and use of multimedia resources to maximize learning outcomes.
3. Education authorities should investigate and replicate best practices from private schools, including improved teacher training programmes, better resource allocation, enhanced infrastructure, and performance monitoring systems to ensure equitable curriculum implementation across all school types.

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ARABIC STUDENT-TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON TEACHING PRACTICE EXERCISE: FOCUS ON SECONDARY SCHOOLS, OWO, ONDO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined 'Arabic Student-Teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State. The population comprised all Arabic Student-Teachers in Secondary Schools, Ondo State, while the target population consisted of all Arabic Student-Teachers who participated in teaching practice in Owo, Ondo State between 2021 and 2022. The study sample was made up of one hundred (100) student- teachers purposively selected which included seventy-one (71) male and twenty-nine (29) female Arabic student-teachers in Owo Ondo State. Data collection was a 15-item researcher-designed questionnaire. Section A requested for demographic data of the respondents, while Section B contained 15-item researcher-designed questionnaire. All copies of the completed questionnaire were collected back immediately. The collected data were analysed using the percentage to describe the demographic data of the respondents. Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 were answered using the mean scores. The study findings revealedthat only 1-item has a mean score below 2.50 for question 1 while no item has a mean score below 2.50 for question 2 which implies that teaching practice is an interesting exercise; it is an important aspect of teachers' education, among others and poor equipped Arabic language laboratory and others challenges are contributing to the low performance of Arabic student-teachers. Lastly, it was recommended that the government give Arabic students' teachers stipends while they are practicing teaching, require practicing schools to house the students' teachers during that time, and provide language labs and other resources so that the students can perform well in the class.

Keywords: *Arabic, Students-Teachers, Perception, Teaching Practice and Secondary Schools*

Introduction

Every profession has its own set of practical guidelines. Lawyers, physicians, technicians and other renowned vocations are sufficiently prepared for real work, which is a fundamental component of their overall professional development. For this reason, a vital aspect of teacher education is the teaching practice. A successful career as a teacher requires a strong foundation in professional preparation. Teaching practice is a paramount process that helps to prepare teachers for the teaching profession (Mononen et al., 2023). It is regarded as a fundamental component of teacher education that aids the change from theoretical learning to real teaching circumstance (Idowu et al, 2024). Thus, the aim of the exercise is to guarantee that prospective educators are suitably trained for their career as educators.

The goal of teaching practice is to show them how the actual school environment has changed, including how lessons are delivered, how students interact, and how classroom administration has changed (Altıntaş & Görgen, 2017). It is a crucial part of the curriculum for teacher education at Nigerian universities' schools of education and teacher training facilities. It provides student-teachers an opportunity to experience the realities of teaching and other professional activities in the education sector (Onyebukwa-Nwanoro, 2017). According to Alphonsus and Faith (2024), one benefit that guides the whole practice of teaching exercise is that student instructors are filled with a sense of achievement. They develop self-confidence, learn to assume responsibility, and sharpen their classroom management abilities.

Students enrolled in Nigerian University's Bachelor of Education program must finish the teaching practice exercise at both the penultimate and final levels. Both supervisors, who are academic personnels from the Faculty of Education and student teachers take part in the six-week curriculum. The exercise is similar to industrial training in the scientific fields, the field of engineering, and other fields, Industrial training is similar to the teaching practice activity. During the period, students' instructors are prepared for teaching through hands-on instruction. Thus, according to Altıntaş and Görgen (2017), the purpose of teaching practice is to guarantee that pre-service teachers are adequately equipped for the profession of teaching. A student's supervision and evaluation during a teaching practice exercise are conducted by the staff of the school where he is lecturing as well as several other instructors who work under his direction collectively.

For final-year students at education colleges, teaching practice exercises are also required. It would give the students teachers real-world expertise in an authentic classroom and educational atmosphere. The six-week teaching practice exercise is a collaborative effort between the supervisors and their student teachers. Additionally, teaching practice is concerned not only with the educational development of the learners but also with the student-teachers' development as professionals. The goal of the monitoring process during practice of teaching is to encourage prospective educators to employ effective classroom practices. It aims to raise the standard of instruction and encourages introspection and ongoing enhancement of pre-service teachers' pedagogical skill development (Shukiman & Sukardi, 2021).

Additionally, it enables students to receive assistance from seasoned practitioners and specialists. Those hired for supervisory roles typically possess the necessary training and expertise in teaching methods. To stay up to date with the latest curricular trends and module needs, supervisors receive ongoing training (Alabi, 2017). Furthermore, a student is monitored and assessed during teaching practice by a team of lecturers who oversee him or her as well as by the staff of the school where the student is teaching, according to Shukiman and Sukardi (2021). During each activity, the supervision is often conducted at least twice. The mean score of the assessors' grades is used to calculate the results achieved by the students.

According to Mahfuzah et al. (2023), an external examiner also moderates the grades of internal assessors and randomly evaluates students' teaching practices. Following their evaluation of the student-teachers using various techniques, the supervisors provide trainee teachers with feedback that the students can utilise to improve their instruction. The primary goal of supervisors' comments is to assist student teachers in becoming competent educators, according to Jaiswal et al. (2024), even though these comments were a sign of the trainee teachers' progress. Determining the average points of the examiners' marks yields information about the pupils' performance, it is clear that the student teachers perception of the exercise are significant because their knowledge, as indicated by their scores on the teaching practice assessment, plays a significant role in their certification and influences the type of graduate teachers that are formed.

According to McLeod (Cary et al., 2024) perception is one of the most important processes in knowledge acquisition. Without it, nothing will be laid down in memory. Furthermore, since student-teacher pre-service training aids in the development of meaningful teaching skills, it is imperative that educators concentrate on it. These experiences could aid student-teachers in realising their

own potential, preparing them to carry out their future teaching responsibilities with great accuracy. Lesson planning, classroom management, critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities are among these potentials.

It is important to take into account how Arabic student teachers view their teaching methods if the primary goals of Arabic teacher education are to be met. Ruth (2022) proposed that throughout their teaching practice, student-teachers may encounter a variety of difficulties, such as classroom management, the supervisor's attitude towards them, curriculum creation, instruction, and environmental issues. According to Ruth (2022), the physical classroom amenities, the classroom environment, and the teacher-student dynamic are all components of the learning environment. The classroom's physical environment includes all of the furnishings, supplies, equipment, and learning areas. The student-teachers will be inspired to complete the work given to them so that they would achieve the goal of the teaching practice exercise after they have access to all of these resources.

According to Omodan and Bunmi (2022), supervisors' level of supervision with regard to supervisory exercises may be impacted by insufficient funding for the teaching practice program in terms of their allowances. According to (Rosmansya et al., 2021), student-teachers who are under a lot of strain during their practicum do not participate well in the teaching process. Apart from practicum stress, other practicum fault difficulties include administrative workload and supervision. The nonchalant attitude with which students' of secondary schools approach the exercise generally hamper the development of the aptitude, confidence and cognition imperative for the student-teachers to handle the learning environment, according to (Arowojolu & Adekunle, 2000). They also noted that one of the obstacles to the exercise was the absence of funding for student-teachers to assist them in obtaining materials or in moving them to their different stations. He saw that some student-teachers can respond badly to their supervisors' presence and make mistakes due to nervousness.

Statement of the Problem

A concern among stakeholders is the realisation of the teaching practice's goals. This is because most student teachers still lack the skills they were required to have after completing their teaching practice exercises or even after graduating from college. Teaching practice exercises face a number of difficulties, including inadequate funding for the program, a shortage of facilities and instructional materials, funding for student teachers, etc. Many studies have been carried out on the teaching practice exercise by different researchers. For instance, Abdullahi et al, (2017) centred their research on the experience of final-

year student teachers at the University of Ilorin in a practice teaching activity. Their findings indicated that during teaching practice exercise, in addition to developing their abilities to apply a range of teaching strategies and instructional materials, student-teachers also improved their test-taking, rating, and documentation knowledge, as well as their optimism and presenting skills in addition to.

Nonetheless, student-teachers encountered some challenges during lesson presentation during teaching practice. Also, (Balogun, Oladele, & Jamiu, 2018) studied how students perceived the assessment of teaching practices and how this affected the performance of the Nigerian teaching profession. According to their findings, student teachers benefited from supervisor assessments and teaching practice exercises. Their opinions on how teaching practices affect students varied by department, but not based on gender. The numerous researches discussed above focus primarily on how student instructors perceive, evaluate, experience, and deal with the difficulties and effects of teaching practice exercises. However, none of these studies focus on Arabic student-teachers' perception. Based on the foregoing, further investigation was carried out on 'Arabic Student-Teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine 'Arabic Student-Teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State'. The study also examined:

a. The perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools, Owo, Ondo State
b. The perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State.
c. The perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State.

Research Questions

The research questions below would guide the study:

1. What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State?
2. What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State?
3. What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State?

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Research Methodology

A descriptive survey design of the cross-sectional type was adopted for the study, which has to do with direct contact with the sampled population that has the characteristics which are relevant to what the study intends to investigate. This study therefore describes the Arabic Student-Teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State. The population for the study comprised all Arabic student-teachers in secondary schools across Ondo State, whereas the intended population included all Arabic student-teachers in secondary schools who undertook teaching practice in Owo, Ondo State between 2021 and 2022. The study sample was 100 Arabic Education student-teachers in the final year purposively chosen, who had their teaching practiced exercise in private and public school during 2021-2022 session. Data were gathered using a 15-item researcher designed questionnaire titled: "*Questionnaire for Arabic Student-Teachers' Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State.*The instrument comprised two sections: Section A obtained the demographic data of the respondents; such as student-teachers gender. Section B contained 15 researcher-designed questionnaire addressing Arabic Students-teacher perception of teaching practice.

The instrument's face and content validity were reviewed by two experts in the Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Their feedbacks informed the final draft of the instrument and their corrections were reworked before the last construction of the instrument was administered to the respondents. Reliability was established through test-retest method within three weeks intervals. The Person's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to subject the two tests. The value of the Correlation Coefficient was reported at the 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire items in section B were structured employing the Four Likert scale; (SA) Strongly Agree, (A) Agree, (DA) Disagree and (SD) Strongly Disagree with their respective values: 4, 3, 2 and 1. This scale provides four substantive response options. Respondents were asked to tick (√) any of the options that represent their perception on teaching practice exercise. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were described using simple percentage and frequency and the research questions 1, 2 and 3 were answered using mean score.

Results and Findings

Table 1: Demographic Data of Arabic Student-Teachers Variables

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Male	71	71.0
Female	29	29.0
Total	100	100.0

The Table 1 shows the demographic data of Arabic student-teachers. The table indicates that 100 Arabic student-teachers participated in the study, out of which 71 (71%) were males and 29 (29%) were females. This implies that more male Arabic student-teachers participated in the study compared with their female counterparts.

Answering the Research Questions

Three (3) research questions were raised. Mean scores is used to answer research questions 1 - 3. The outcomes of the analyses are reported in Tables 2 — 3.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State?

Answer to the Research Question 1, Arabic student-teacher's responses to their perception on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools are summed and subjected to mean scores.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Arabic Student-Teachers Responses on their Perception to Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1.	Teaching practice is an interesting exercise.	3.80	1st
2.	. . . . .	3.18	2nd
3.	Teaching practice exercise endangers teaching professionalism	2.16	3rd
4.	Teaching practice is an application of professional knowledge and understanding of the learners, curriculum, teaching and learning environment	2.84	4th

Table 2 presents the mean responses of the Arabic students-teacher's responses to their perception on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools. The table shows that only 1-item has a mean score below 2.50 with mean score of 2.16. As shown in table 2, the Arabic student-teacher's responses were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. Since the Student-teachers' responses to the 1st, 2nd and 4th items were between the mean scores of 2.50 - 5.00, this implies that teaching practice exercise is an interesting exercise; it is an important aspect of teachers' education, among others. However, the 3rd item that was below the mean score of 2.50 indicates that teaching practice exercise does not endanger teaching professionalism.

Research Question 2: *What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers' perception on teaching practice exercise in Secondary Schools, Owo, Ondo State?*

Answer to the Research Question 2, Arabic student-teachers' responses to their perception on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools are summed and subjected to mean scores. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Arabic Student-Teachers Responses to their Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Poor equipped Arabic language laboratory for Arab student-teachers during teaching practice is a great challenge.	3.94	1st
2.	Cooperating teacher's failure to assist the studen teachers is a challenge associated with teaching practic	3.18	2nd
3	Lack of stipends to student-teachers is a challenge associated with teaching practice	3.14	3rd
4	Provision of instructional materials on the part of th students is a challenge to teaching practice exercise.	2.87	4th
5	Supervisor's high level of pressure towards Student-teachers is a challenge associated with teachin practice exercise	2.32	5th
6	Student-teachers' workload during teaching practice exercise is a challenge.	2.16	6th

Table 3 shows the mean scores of Arabic students-teachers' responses to their perception on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools. As shown in table 3, ranked first, second, third and fourth are items whose mean scores are above 2.50. Since the mean responses of the first, second, up to the fourth item were within the benchmark of 2.50 – 5.00, this implies that poor equipped Arabic language laboratory for Arabic student-teachers during teaching practice is a great challenge; cooperating teacher's failure to assist the student-teachers, is a challenge associated with teaching practice, among other items. However, supervisor's high level of pressure towards student-teachers and student-teachers' workload during teaching practice exercise is not a challenge associated with teaching practice.

Research Question 3: *What is the perception of Arabic student-teachers on teaching practice exercise in Secondary* Schools, Owo, Ondo State?

Answer to the Research Question 3, Arabic student-teachers' responses to their perception on teaching practice exercise in secondary schools are summed and subjected to mean scores. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Arabic Student-Teachers Responses to their Perception on Teaching Practice Exercise in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Remark
1.	Teaching practice exercise assists the student teachers to develop confidence in them and in their supervisors.	4.14	1st
2.	The exercise enables Arabic student -teachers to acquire competencies those are required in the teaching professional development.	3.35	2nd
3	Teaching practice exercise helps Arabic student -teachers on how to prepare teaching resources	3.10	3rd
4	Teaching practice exercise helps Arabic student -teachers to identify and apply an appropriate teaching method for a class.	2.87	4th
5	The exercise improves Arabic student - teachers' skills in test construction, scoring and recording	2.65	5th

Table 4 shows the mean scores of Arabic student teachers' responses to their perception on the prospects of teaching practice exercise in secondary schools. As demonstrated in Table 3, that the mean score for every item is 2.50 or above. Given that Arabic student teachers' mean responses fell between 2.50 and 5.00, it can be concluded that teaching practice exercises help them gain confidence in both themselves and their supervisors. As well as other skills, they help them acquire competencies that are necessary for teaching professional development.

Discussions

The first finding of this study shows the demographic data of Arabic student-teachers in Owo, Ondo State. The finding on the first research question revealed that teaching practice exercise is an interesting exercise; it is an important aspect of teachers' education programme. This result confirms Almansoori's (2017) findings that the teaching exercise is a necessary constituent of teacher education programmes and is advantageous since they give aspiring teachers a chance to teach and develop their abilities as professionals. The finding on the second research question indicates that poor equipped Arabic language laboratory for Arabic student-teachers during teaching practice is a great challenge; cooperating teacher's failure to assist the student-teachers is a challenge associated with teaching practice, among other items. The results are consistent with those of Onyebuka (2017), who discovered that certain cooperating instructors fail to offer student-teachers sufficient support.

In addition, the finding on the third research question revealed that teaching practice exercise assists the student-teachers to cultivate courage in their abilities and also in their supervisors; it exercises enables Arabic student-teachers to annex expertise that are needed in the professional development of teaching and other skills. This study supports the findings of Jekayinfa et al. (2012), who found that students' improved classroom instruction was a result of the abilities they learnt from practice teaching.

Recommendations

Therefore, it is recommended that:

1. The government should give Arabic students' teachers stipends while they are practicing teaching, require practicing schools to house the students' teachers during that time.
2. School should provide language laboratories and other resources so that students can perform well in the class.

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CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU'S INAUGURAL SPEECH IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of the inaugural speech delivered by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Nigeria's 17th President, to uncover the discursive strategies and ideological constructs embedded within the text. Drawing on postcolonial theory—particularly Frantz Fanon's critique of colonial power structures - and Fairclough's socio-cultural and socio-economic approaches to CDA, the research explores how language is employed to reproduce power relations and shape public perception. The analysis is guided by three core objectives: identifying the discursive strategies and structural processes within the speech, examining how the speech reflects and sustains existing power structures in Nigeria's postcolonial context, and investigating the lexical choices that signal reformist, optimistic, and economic ideologies. Through a multi-dimensional framework encompassing textual, interpretive, and social analysis, the study reveals how President Tinubu's rhetoric constructs national identity, legitimizes authority, and promotes specific ideological narratives. The findings demonstrate that political discourse, particularly inaugural speeches, serves as a strategic tool for reinforcing hegemonic practices and influencing democratic engagement. This research contributes to the broader understanding of language as a vehicle for power and ideology in postcolonial governance, offering insights into the implications of political rhetoric for social justice and democratic development in Nigeria. Critically examining the intersection of language, politics, and identity, the study underscores the importance of discourse analysis in evaluating the communicative practices of political elites.

Keywords: Discursive Strategies, Ideologies, Postcolonial Theory, Power Relations and Dynamics, Social Justice

Introduction

The critical analysis of political discourse within post-colonial contexts is imperative for understanding the intricate dynamics of power, identity and representation in societies struggling with the legacies of colonialism. Despite the growing body of literature on post-colonial theory and discourse analysis, there remains a notable gap in the scholarly exploration of political rhetoric in specific contexts, particularly within the Nigerian landscape (Folarin, 2018). Equally, inaugural speeches, as symbolic articulations of political vision and authority, offer valuable insights into the negotiation of power and the construction of national identity in post-colonial settings (Girard, 2016). However, existing studies often overlook the significance of individual speeches and their discursive strategies, thus, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the role of language in shaping political dynamics (Smith, 2014).

Discourse, Discourse Analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis are three-in-one field that is frequently employed interchangeably, particularly by non-linguists. Discourse analysis is not the same as discourse. Discourse Analysis, on the other hand, is a method of analysing communication, whereas Discourse is communication. When a discourse's analysis is aimed at revealing the hidden ideology entrenched in that discourse, it is considered to be in the area of Critical Discourse Analysis. To put it simply, Discourse Analysis becomes Critical Discourse Analysis when the hearer or reader employs all linguistic elements accessible in the said to produce meaning for the unsaid in a way that reveals power and abuse of authority, domination, inequality, and embedded ideologies. In general, all discourse is shaped by domination, and dominant frameworks are legitimised by strong groups' ideas (Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2017) investigates President Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speeches through critical discourse analysis. The research argues that President Muhammadu Buhari used personal pronouns to present different identities and project different ideologies in both his maiden speech as a Military Head of State in 1984 and his inaugural speech as a President with executive powers in 2015, and that the backgrounds from which the President spoke influenced his pronominal choices. The research revealed how President Muhammadu Buhari's ideological beliefs influenced his language choices. President Buhari's inaugural speech was subjected to a Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis adopted by Leonard Koussouhon (2015). The focus of the study was on mood, epistemic, and deontic modality choices, as well as, recoverable allusions through personal pronouns employed in the political speech.

The study has shown how political leaders' discourses uncover a kind of coherence with ideologies that match and correspond to internal, sub-regional and worldwide reality. This present study is different from the two studies earlier reviewed as this study aims at exploring how President Bola Tinubu manipulates the cognition of his citizens through discourse, and how power are deployed through social resource in his inaugural speech. Furthermore, the current study aims to examine and uncover the inter-connection in the context, discourse structures and ideological construction through the inaugural speech of the leader of black most populous nation. Against this backdrop, the analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech becomes even more pertinent, as it allows for a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics of power and language within the Nigerian postcolonial context (Omolade, 2020). Through an examination of the discursive strategies employed by President Tinubu within the specific socio-political context of Nigeria, the research seeks to shed more light on the complexities of postcolonial governance and the enduring legacies of colonialism on political discursive practice (Girard, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the study aims at carrying out a critical discourse analysis of President Tinubu's inaugural speech in an attempt to unveiling power dynamics within the Nigerian post colonial context. In specific terms, the study attempts to:

1. Examine the discursive strategies in the speech and the structural processes that signal them,
2. Examine how President Tinubu's inaugural speech reflects and perpetuates existing power structures within the Nigerian post-colonial context,
3. Investigate the lexical structures (reformist, optimist and economi ideological structures) in the speech, and its relationship to social-cultural domains;

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the discursive strategies in the speech and the structural processes that signal them?
2. How does President Tinubu's inaugural speech reflect and perpetuate existing power structures within the Nigerian post-colonial context?
3. What lexical structures does the speech employ to portray specific reformist, optimist, and economic ideologies and its relationship to the socio-cultural domain in Nigeria?

Literature Review

The critical analysis of political discourse within postcolonial contexts has emerged as a significant area of scholarly inquiry in recent decades. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of relevant scholarship on postcolonial discourse analysis and its application to the analysis of inaugural speeches, with a specific focus on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, born on March 29, 1952, in Lagos, Nigeria, is a prominent Nigerian politician and one of the most influential political figures in the country. He served as the Governor of Lagos State from 1999 to 2007 and played a significant role in the growth and development of the state during his tenure. Tinubu is also known for his role as a key figure in the All Progressives Congress (APC), one of Nigeria's major political parties. His political influence extends beyond Lagos to the national level, making him a central figure in Nigerian politics.

However, his arrogant campaign and the cooperation of former President Buhari, who was imposed in 2015 (without former President Jonathan's legal challenge) due to Tinubu's kingmaker role - viewed the 2023 election as a payback deal - foreshadowed his unpredictable ascent to power. A major speech given by someone taking on a new role, or oath of office is referred to as an inaugural speech. It is usually given as an introduction, a statement of intent or a blueprint for the future. These speeches are frequently delivered during formal gathering where the speaker assumes a new position or duty, like presidential inaugurations. Inauguration speeches have a vital role for political leaders as they provide the foundation for their tenure and clarify their objectives, vision and policy trajectories. They might contain an assessment of the situation as it is, a list of the most important objectives and an appeal for cooperation or group efforts.

The president must address the nation after winning an election in a way that succinctly summarises their objectives, aspirations and ideals as well as their plans and programmes for the position after they take office (Velez, 2022). The fact that the inaugural speech is regarded as a preserved fragment of the historical record, it shows that every president is aware that the words they choose will resonate as a reflection of themselves for the duration of their tenure and beyond (Owolabi & Sikiru 2024). Politicians' inaugural speeches after elections serve as evidence for the principles of political discourse. Unlike campaign speeches, which aim to convince or coerce the audience into doing something they do not want to do, inaugural speeches attempt to encourage the audience to have faith in the new government. An inaugural speech's worth of empty promises in the shape of policy recommendations that stem solely from the major problems facing society is abundant (Badmus, O., Badmus, O, & Kilani Sakiru, 2024).

Political discourse involves the promotion of representations and pervasive features of representation. It is necessary for political speakers to imbue their utterances with evidence, authority and truth. This process is referred to in broad terms, in the context of political discourse,
as “legitimisation”. Human minds possess an innate “cheater detection” ability and the task of political speakers is that they have to guard against the operation of their audience's “cheater detectors” and provide guarantees for the truth of their sayings (Chilton, 2004). Nigeria's post-colonial trajectory has been marked by a complex interplay of political, social and economic forces, shaped in part by its colonial history under the British rule (Osaghae, 1998).Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced periods of military rule, democratic transitions and ethno-political tensions, all of which have left enduring imprints on its political discourse (Momoh, 2005). Within this context, inaugural speeches serve as symbolic expressions of political authority and vision, encapsulating the aspirations, promises, and priorities of newly elected leaders (Ukaegbu, 2018).

Inaugural speeches have long been recognised as sites of ideological struggle and representation, where political leaders articulate their vision for governance and national development (Harris, 1995). Within the post-colonial context, these speeches often reflect broader debates about sovereignty, identity, and the legacy of colonialism (Girard, 2016). In the same vein, power dynamics play a central role in shaping political discourse, influencing the construction of meaning and the distribution of resources and opportunities within society (Foucault, 1980). More so, within postcolonial contexts, these power dynamics are often mediated through language, with dominant groups employing discursive strategies to maintain their hegemony and marginalise dissenting voices (Spivak, 1988).

Language plays a crucial role in the construction of national identity and belonging within postcolonial societies (Kachru, 1986). In Nigeria, where over 500 languages are spoken, language choice in political discourse can reflect and perpetuate existing power structures and social hierarchies (Bamgbose, 2000). President Tinubu's inaugural speech offers an opportunity to explore how language is used to construct and reinforce national identity within the Nigerian postcolonial context, shedding light on issues of unity, diversity and social cohesion (Ukaegbu, 2018). This study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its foundational theoretical framework. Beyond simply analysing communication, CDA delves deeper to unveil the hidden ideologies and power structures woven within discourse. It meticulously examines how language choices, structures and representations are strategically employed to construct and maintain power dynamics, often exposing underlying inequalities and dominant narratives (Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 2001).

The study specifically draws upon Postcolonial Frantz Fanon (1961), and Fairclough's socio-cultural and socio-economic discourse approaches to CDA (Fairclough, 2010; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The theories offer valuable frameworks for examining the discursive strategies and ideological constructs that are present in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech. These models provide a framework for conducting a comprehensive analysis, encompassing three distinct yet interconnected levels: description (text), interpretation (processing), and explanation (social practice) (Fairclough, 2003). By applying these models, the study will meticulously examine how President Tinubu effectively utilises the English language to communicate his messages to the public during his inaugural speech to Nigerians. However, the study aims not only to understand the president's message but also unveil the deeper societal and ideological constructs embedded within his discourse.

Post-colonial theory, rooted in the critique of colonial power structures and Eurocentric narratives, provides a critical framework for analysing the ways in which language, culture and identity are shaped by colonial legacies (Ashcroft et al., 2000). Within this theoretical paradigm, discourse analysis serves as a methodological tool for interrogating the construction of meaning, power relations, and ideologies within texts (Fairclough, 1995). By examining language use, rhetorical strategies and discursive practices, scholars seek to uncover hidden power dynamics and contest dominant narratives in postcolonial societies (Spivak, 1988).Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory emphasises the examination of language as a social practice that reflects power relations, social structures and ideological formations.This theory is highly relevant to this present study of President Tinubu's speech, as it enables a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic choices and discourse strategies deployed to shape public perception.

Van Dijk argues that language is not neutral but carries ideological implications, and through CDA, researchers can uncover the hidden ideologies and power dynamics embedded within the speech (Van Dijk, 2009). By applying the principles of CDA, researchers can contribute to a deeper understanding of the broader socio-political landscape of Nigeria and the implications of President Tinubu's leadership agenda.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative research methodology, specifically a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach to examine President Tinubu's inaugural speech, through the lens of Post-colonial Frantz Fanon, Teun van Dijk's, and **Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Discourse theories**. CDA is particularly well-suited for this study as it allows for an in-depth exploration of language use, power relations, and discursive strategies within a specific socio-political context. Drawing on insights from Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, the analysis focused on the textual, discursive and social dimensions of the speech to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideological positioning (Fairclough, 2013). The primary data source for this study includes President Bola Ahmed Tinubu inaugural speech delivered on May 29th, 2023 which was subjected to detailed linguistic and rhetorical analysis.

Textual analysis involved examining the linguistic features (lexical choices and metaphorical expressions), discursive devices, and narrative structures employed in the speech to construct and reinforce specific ideologies and power relations. Hence, discursive analysis delved into the broader discursive strategies and patterns evident in the speech, considering how language is used to shape meaning and influence perceptions of political authority and legitimacy. Finally, social analysis attempts to situate the speech within its socio-political context, considering factors such as historical background, audience reception, and broader power dynamics within Nigerian society (van Dijk, 1998).Overall, this research methodology provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the ways in which language, power, and politics intersect in President Tinubu's Inaugural speech and its implications for post-colonial governance in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data from President Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural speech followed comprehensive approaches integrating qualitative method of analysis in the examination of the 3592 words in the speech. Post-colonial, Van Dijk's and Fairclough's three-dimensional model - comprising description, interpretation, and explanation, provided a structured framework for the analysis. The analysis method focuses both the structure and content of the speech. This framework facilitates a deeper understanding of the speech's context and implications within broader societal norms. By integrating these various theoretical frameworks and analytical tools,

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the study aimed at providing insightful analysis of the speech, shedding light on both its linguistic aspects and socio-cultural implications.

Discursive Strategies and Structural Processes

Upon examining the First Inaugural speech by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, several specific words and phrases are identified as they shape meaning, social relation, and power dynamics. In analysing the language used, it is essential to identify loaded or biased language, euphemisms, and politically charged terms. Let's explore some items related to lexical choices and metaphorical expressions as used in the speech:

Excerpt 1: "I stand before you honoured to assume the sacred mandate
you have given me."

Sacred mandate: conveys a sense of divine endorsement and elevates the President's election to a higher level of significance. By framing the mandate as "*sacred"*, it not only emphasizes the President's legitimacy but also establishes a moral authority that can influence social relations and power dynamics within the country. It positions the President as a chosen leader, instilling a sense of trust and faith in his ability to govern the nation Nigeria.

Excerpt 2: "As a nation, we have long ago decided to march beyond the dimness of night into the open day of renewed national hope".

Dimness of night: The phrase *"dimness of night"* stands out as a metaphorical expression used to describe the challenges and difficulties faced by the nation. By employing this visual imagery, the President creates a sense of struggle and adversity, suggesting that the country has endured hardships and setbacks. This language serves to evoke empathy and solidarity among the citizens, positioning the President as a leader who can guide the nation towards a brighter future. It reinforces the power dynamics by presenting the President as a beacon of hope and progress, capable of leading the country out of the metaphorical darkness.

Excerpt 3: "For many years, Nigeria's critics have trafficked the rumour that our nation will break apart, even perish."

Trafficked the rumour: The phrase *"trafficked the rumour"* in the Address by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu refers to the intentional spread of false information or baseless claims by Nigeria's critics, believed to have conveyed negative connotations, suggesting that, these critics have engaged in manipulative tactics to undermine the nation Nigeria. The term *"trafficked"* implies a deliberate and harmful act, drawing a parallel with the illegal trade of goods associated with illicit activities. By using this term, the President portrays

the critics as engaging in deceptive practices and potentially having ulterior motives. The phrase implies that the rumours spread by these critics have gained significant infractions, leading to a climate of doubt or negative perception about Nigeria.

The expression positions the critics as adversaries who are actively working to tarnish the nation's reputation domestically and internationally. The use of the word *"rumour"* suggests that the information being spread lacks credibility or factual basis, indicating that, the critics have disseminated unfounded claims or exaggerated accounts about Nigeria. This language casts a doubt on the veracity of the information and underscores the need for critical evaluation and evidence-based analysis. Therefore, the President presents himself as someone who is aware of these rumours and is determined to counteract their effects, emphasising the importance of addressing and correcting false narratives.

Excerpt 4: "As citizens, we declare as one unified people devoted to one unified national cause, that as long as this world exists, NIGERIA SHALL EXIST."

The phrase *"NIGERIA SHALL EXIST"* carries significant linguistic and discursive implications, shaping meaning, social relations and power dynamics within the Nigerian context. This statement serves as a powerful assertion of national unity and resilience, reinforcing the collective identity of Nigerians and their shared commitment to the survival and progress of their nation. Linguistically, the use of Capital Letters in *"NIGERIA SHALL EXIST"* emphasises the importance and prominence of the nation. The phrase employs strong and assertive language, projecting a sense of determination and certainty. The verb *"shall"* conveys a sense of obligation and inevitability, suggesting that the existence of Nigeria is not merely a possibility but an imperative that cannot be questioned.

Discursively, *"NIGERIA SHALL EXIST"* creates a sense of national solidarity and cohesion. It asserts that regardless of the challenges, Nigeria will endure and thrive. By invoking the prayers, sacrifices and resilience of the Nigerian people, the phrase bolsters a collective narrative of overcoming adversity and offers a unifying vision for the future. It fosters a shared sense of belonging and national pride, transcending differences in creed, ethnicity or place of birth. Moreover, the phrase *"NIGERIA SHALL EXIST"* has implications for power dynamics within the Nigerian society. It positions the speaker, President Tinubu, as a custodian and guardian of the nation's destiny. By invoking the torch of human progress and pledging to govern on behalf of the people, the statement implies a commitment to serve and lead with humility, compassion and inclusivity. It establishes a social contract between the government and the citizens, emphasising the accountability of those in power.

Excerpt 5: "Reach out to all but never put down a single person for holding views contrary to our own."

This statement emphasises the importance of tolerance, inclusivity and open dialogue in a democratic society. The phrase *"holding views contrary to our own"* highlights the existence of diverse opinions and perspectives within the Nigerian population. The use of the word *"contrary"* suggests a divergence or opposition of ideas, indicating that not every Nigerian shares the same views or beliefs. This recognition of divergent viewpoints is crucial for fostering a pluralistic society where individuals are encouraged to express their opinions freely. Discursively, *"holding views contrary to our own"* contributes to creating a culture of tolerance and respect for differing opinions.

Acknowledging the legitimacy of opposing views, the statement promotes open dialogue and exchange of ideas. It implies that the government, under President Tinubu's leadership, will not suppress or dismiss dissenting voices, but instead engage with them constructively. This approach fosters a more inclusive and democratic system, where it implicates power dynamics within Nigerian society. It therefore suggests willingness on the part of government to listen and engage with its citizens, even when their views challenge the prevailing ideology. This commitment to open dialogue can help to bridge divides and build trust between the government and the people. It also signals a shift towards a more participatory and inclusive governance model, where decision-making is informed by a range of perspectives.

Excerpt 6: "The question we now ask ourselves is whether to remain faithful to the work inherent in building a better society or retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential."

The phrase "retreat into the shadows of our unmet potential" is a metaphorical representation of a choice faced by the nation, suggesting that, there is a risk of stagnation and missed opportunities if the country does not continue its journey towards progress and development. The metaphor of "shadows" conveys a sense of obscurity, uncertainty and underachievement. By using this metaphor, President Tinubu evokes a powerful image of the nation's potential being obscured and unfulfilled, emphasizing the need to avoid complacency and strive for growth. It suggests that the nation has the capacity to achieve greatness but must actively pursue it, rather than remain stagnant or complacent.

In terms of social relations and power dynamics, the metaphor highlights the role of collective responsibility and agency. It also stresses that the decision to embrace the nation's potential or retreat from it lays in the hands of the citizens as a collective entity, thereby calls for unity and shared commitment in actualizing the nation's aspirations, notwithstanding the forces or factors that hinder the nation's progress. These are represented by shadows and could include social, economic or political challenges. By acknowledging these obstacles, President Tinubu conveys a sense of determination and resilience in overcoming them, suggesting that the nation can transcend its limitations and achieve its finest destiny.

Ideologies and Discourse Properties

Ideologies are systems of belief and ideas of a group. They form the foundation of the social analysis on the representations, identities and practices of group members. They are signaled through discourse properties which relate to group ideals, value and relations; all of which are extremely connected to group's sets of opinions and practices. The focus is on the specific identification and categorisation of expressions or the discourses that signal or suggest the perspectives, opinions, interests, positions or other markers of groups in the sampled speech. Therefore, these categorisations are in segments. Three ideologies are observed in the study namely: *Reformist, optimist and economist ideologies.* They are signaled by discursive strategies that are in turn connected by lexical processes.

Reformist Ideology

In the excerpt below, the African leader imbued by Reformist ideology post-colonial and Faircloughi an perspectives, encourage his hearers to the course of positive development in the coming years. The signaled ideology relating to the possibility of improvement in human conditions through concerted efforts is inherent in the discourse, specifically in the expressions:

Reclaiming National Identity:

Excerpt 7: "Our burdens may make us bend at times, but they shall never break us. Instead, we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation and as the best hope and strongest champion of the Black Race."

President Tinubu's statement on national identity *"we stand forth as Africa's most populous nation* "employs powerful language to construct a specific image of Nigeria's greatness and the need to fulfill its destiny as a unified and prosperous nation. President Tinubu challenges the notion of Nigeria's potential demise propagated by critics, positioning Nigeria as a resilient and influential *"strongest champion of the Black Race"* African nation. His statement utilises metaphors of strength and resilience *"bend at times, but never break*" to counter negative narratives about Nigeria's future. It emphasises size *"Africa's most populous nation"* and leadership *"best hope" and "strongest champion"* to position Nigeria as a dominant force. However, this framing risks overlooking internal challenges and potentially reinforces an "us vs. them" mentality.

President Tinubu's statement reveals an ideology centered on national pride and a sense of pan-Africanism. The emphasis on overcoming burdens and emerging as Africa's leading nation suggests a strong belief in Nigerian exceptionalism. This ideology positions Nigeria as a powerful force with a responsibility to uplift the continent. It aligns with ideas of national rejuvenation, often associated with nationalist movements. The focus on the *Black Race* hints at a Pan-Africanist ideology. It seeks to unite Nigerians under a shared racial identity, potentially fostering solidarity with other African nations. However, this framing risks overlooking Nigeria's internal ethnic diversity and potentially fueling tensions within the country.

Decolonizing Political Traditions:

Excerpt 8: "The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition. This handover symbolizes our trust in God, our enduring faith in representative governance and our belief in our ability to reshape this nation into the society it was always meant to be."

President Tinubu highlights the peaceful transition *"The peaceful transition from one government to another is now our political tradition* "of power as a political tradition, symbolising Nigeria's trust in God(transcends a mere event and becomes a symbolic act),faith in representative governance and the nation's ability to reshape itself. This emphasis on democratic principles challenges the colonial legacy of authoritarian rule on colonized territories. "*This peaceful transition* "emphasizes self-determination and empowers Nigerians to shape their own political destiny. And, the focus on "*God and faith"* in representative governance highlights a potential bridge between tradition and modernity. The expression acknowledges the importance of pre-colonial values, while embracing democratic principles. The belief in "*reshaping the*

nation" suggests a rejection of the colonial mold. It implies a vision for a future built on Nigerian aspirations, not imposed structures.

Socioeconomic Development:

Excerpt 9: "We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development through job creation, food security, and an end of extreme poverty."

President Tinubu's vision for socioeconomic development encapsulates a comprehensive strategy aimed at uplifting the nation through targeted initiatives that prioritise economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation, and enhanced social services. By articulating a clear agenda that encompasses key areas of concern *"through job creation, food security, and an end of extreme poverty",* Tinubu demonstrates a commitment to foster a more equitable, prosperous, and inclusive nation. Central to Tinubu's economic agenda is the objective of remodelling the economy to catalyse growth and development. This ambition underscores a transformative approach that seeks to overhaul existing systems and structures to create a more dynamic and resilient economic environment. By focusing on key drivers of economic progress such as job creation, food security, and poverty reduction, Tinubu aims to address fundamental challenges while laying the groundwork for sustainable prosperity.

Optimist Ideology

Analysing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's inaugural speech through a Post-colonial and Faircloughian lens reveals the presence of an optimist ideology. The speech emphasises the potential and resilience of Nigeria as a nation, while also addressing the challenges and aspirations of its diverse population. Here are some relevant lexical examples from the speech:

Excerpt 10: "We have endured hardships that would have made other societies crumble."

Nigerians have passed through *"endured hardships"* some unjustifiable tests of hardship ranging from inflation, insecurity, economic devastation, political upheaval, religious turmoil, corruption, unmerited policies, poverty and joblessness among others along Nigeria's democratic years of governance which spans several administrations. The highlighted expression above suggests that, the speaker present himself as a member of the same group as his hearers. The expression above equally acknowledges the challenges Nigeria has faced in the past, but emphasises the nation's ability to overcome them *would have made other societies crumble*, reflecting an optimistic outlook.

Excerpt 11: "We shall remodel our economy to bring about growth and development."

This phrase above highlights the intention to transform and improve *"bring about growth and development"* the Nigerian economy, demonstrating an optimistic belief in the country's capacity for economic progress. Having kept these problems at the back of his mind, the incoming president uses his diction to convince his audience of what plans he has for Nigerians

Economist Ideology

The following provides insights into the economist ideology reflected in President Tinubu's speech:

Economic Policies: *GDP Growth and Unemployment Reduction*:

Excerpt 12: "On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment."

President Tinubu underscores the goal *"we target a higher GDP growth"* of achieving higher GDP growth and significantly reducing unemployment rates in Nigeria. This reflects an economist ideology that prioritises economic development and job creation. In terms of the use of plural personal pronouns, the statement "On the economy, we target a higher GDP growth and to significantly reduce unemployment" effectively utilizes the pronoun "we." The plural personal pronoun "we" signifies a collective or group effort, indicating that the speaker, along with others, is involved in the endeavor to achieve a higher GDP growth and reduce unemployment. This pronoun creates a sense of inclusivity and shared responsibility, suggesting a collaborative approach towards addressing economic challenges. By using "we," the statement implies that multiple individuals or entities are working together towards the common goal of economic improvement. The use of the plural pronoun also enhances the persuasive power of the statement, as it implies a broader consensus and support for the proposed targets. Moreover, the inclusion of "we" fosters a sense of unity and collective accountability, encouraging a shared commitment to the economic objectives outlined. Overall, the use of the plural personal pronoun "we" effectively conveys a collaborative and cooperative stance, emphasizing the joint efforts of the speaker and others in targeting higher GDP growth and reducing unemployment.

Budgetary Reform and Industrial Policy:

Excerpt 13: "First, budgetary reform stimulating the economy without engendering inflation will be instituted. Second, industrial policy will utilize the full range of fiscal measures to promote domestic manufacturing and lessen import dependency."

The speech highlights the implementation of "*budgetary reforms"* to stimulate economic growth without causing inflation. Additionally, *an industrial policy* will be adopted to promote domestic manufacturing and reduce import dependency. This reflects an economist ideology that emphasises fiscal measures and self-sufficiency.

Reviewing Monetary Policy:

Excerpt 14: "Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning. The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate" and "Interest rates need to be reduced to increase investment and consumer purchasing."

President Tinubu stresses the need for thorough *"Monetary policy needs thorough housecleaning"* housecleaning of monetary policy, including working towards *"The Central Bank must work towards a unified exchange rate" a* unified exchange rate, reducing interest rates, and reviewing currency swap policies. This reflects an economist ideology that prioritizes monetary stability, investment, and economic growth.

Conclusion

The critical discourse analysis of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Inaugural speech provides valuable insights into the power dynamics, language, and democratic processes within the Nigerian post-colonial context. The study employed post-colonial, socio-cultural and socio-economic discourse approaches to uncover hidden ideologies, hegemonic practices, and the reproduction of power relations within the discourse. Through the analysis of discursive strategies, structural processes, and lexical structures, the research reveals how President Tinubu's speech reflects and perpetuates existing power structures in Nigeria. The findings shed light on the role of language in shaping public opinion, maintaining dominance, and highlighting the potential implications for democratic processes and social justice.

Equally, the study highlights the importance of analysing political discourse within post-colonial contexts to understand the intricate dynamics of power, identity, and representation. It emphasises the significance of the speech and its discursive strategies in comprehending the role of language in shaping political dynamics. By focusing on President Tinubu's Inaugural speech, the research fills a notable gap in the scholarly exploration of political rhetoric in specific Nigerian contexts as it contributes to the broader understanding of post-colonial governance and the enduring legacies of colonialism on political discursive practice.

Recommendations

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

1. There is a need for further research on the discursive strategies employed by political leaders in Nigeria, particularly during significant events such as Inaugural speeches. This will no doubt provide a more comprehensive understanding of how language is used to shape public opinion and perpetuate power structures.
2. Future studies should explore the impact of these discursive strategies on democratic processes and social justice within the Nigerian post-colonial context.
3. Policymakers and political leaders should be aware of the power of language and discourse in shaping public perception and maintaining dominance. They should strive for transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in their communication with the public. It is crucial to foster a culture of open dialogue and critical engagement with political speeches to ensure a more informed and participatory democratic process.
4. Media organizations and civil society should play an active role in examining and scrutinising political discourse, providing a platform for diverse perspectives and promoting transparency and accountability.
5. Lastly, the study highlights the importance of incorporating critical discourse analysis into educational curricula, particularly in the fields of political science, communication, and linguistics. By equipping students with the tools to analyse and deconstruct political rhetoric, so they can develop a critical understanding of power dynamics and contribute to the promotion of democratic ideals and social justice.

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ROLES OF LANGUAGE IN RESHAPING CULTURAL IDENTITY IN AWKA AS A BILINGUAL COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The study tries to explore the role of language in shaping cultural identity in Awka, which is a bilingual community. The study was necessitated by the constant erosion of indigenous language among supposed native bilingual speakers. It used the cross-sectional design. The study's target population were senior secondary school students, parents, civil servants, business people, undergraduates and community leaders in Awka, Anambra State. A convenience sample of 100 respondents were drawn comprising the diverse groups. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire with demographic and 15 study-related items on a 4-point Likert scale. Validity was ensured through expert review at Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. A pilot study with 30 participants was done to establish the reliability which yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89. Data were personally collected and analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means and a decision benchmark set at a mean score of 2.50. Results reveal that language is an important part of cultural identity; societal expectations and context or setting are paramount factors that affect language preferences among bilingual native speakers and that bilingualism affects cultural identity through erosion of cultural values and hybridization and code-switching. Based on the findings it was recommended thatMinistries, agencies and Departments of Education should integrate indigenous language instruction into school curricula at all levels to preserve and promote cultural identity among young learners and that community leaders and cultural organizations should promote inclusive language policies in public and social events that encourage the use of native languages alongside official languages to reflect contextual appropriateness and societal balance.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Cultural Identity, Community,Cultural Values, Language

Introduction

Language is not merely a tool for communication; it is a fundamental vehicle for expressing and preserving culture and identity. In bilingual communities such as Awka, Anambra state, where two or more languages are used within the same social setting, language becomes a critical medium through which cultural values, histories and identities are negotiated and maintained. In the Nigerian context, where multilingualism is a defining characteristic, the role of language in shaping cultural identity is particularly pronounced. Nigeria is home to over 500 languages and a wide range of ethnic groups, making it one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. Within this multilingual setting, bilingualism is common, especially in urban and semi-urban areas where indigenous languages coexist with English, Nigeria's official language. According to Adegbite and Alabi (2021), this linguistic duality influences how individuals perceive themselves and their communities, as well as how they interact socially and culturally. Language choice in these communities often reflects deeper cultural affiliations and serves as a marker of ethnic or regional identity.

The interplay between language and cultural identity in bilingual Nigerian communities is complex. Indigenous languages are often seen as carriers of cultural heritage, oral traditions, and communal values. As Salawu and Adeyemi (2020) observe, the continued use of native languages reinforces a sense of belonging and pride among speakers, even in the face of growing pressure to conform to the dominant global language, English. However, the dominance of English in education, media, and official domains often threatens the survival of local languages and, by extension, the cultural identities tied to them. This is seen by the fact that many young children can hardly speak their native language fluently. Even when they try to speak, they normally mix it up with English language. Moreover, language choice in bilingual communities is influenced by social factors such as class, education, religion, and exposure to global culture.

The society attributes ability to speak in foreign language as a sign of belonging to high social class (Mbah, 2025). These factors sometimes lead to code-switching or language shift, where younger generations gradually abandon their indigenous languages in favor of English or other dominant tongues. Musa and Oyeleke (2019) argue that this shift can lead to cultural dislocation, where individuals become estranged from their traditional roots and lose fluency in the cultural expressions that once defined their group identity. Given these dynamics, understanding the role of language in shaping cultural identity is critical for addressing issues related to cultural preservation, national integration, and linguistic diversity. It is based on the backdrop that the researcher is poised to examine the role of language in shaping cultural identity:

Nigeria is rich in linguistic diversity, yet the cultural identities embedded in indigenous lanes are increasingly under threat in bilingual communities such as, Awka town in Anambra state; where English dominates official, educational, business and media spaces. This dominance has led to a gradual erosion of indigenous (Igbo) language use, especially among the younger population. Many young children hardly speak their native languages (Igbo) any more. In cases where they try to speak, it is fraught with code switching, resulting in a weakening of cultural ties and traditional values. In many urban and semi-urban settings in Nigeria including Awka, code-switching, language shift, and the preference for English have become common, often at the expense of native languages that once served as vital symbols of communal identity and heritage (Musa & Oyeleke, 2019).

Scholars such as, Salawu and Adeyemi (2020) have highlighted the link between language and cultural identity, still there remains a gap in understanding how bilingualism specifically influences identity formation and cultural retention in Nigerian communities. The tendency of individuals in bilingual settings such as Awka in Anambra state to either maintain, blend, or abandon their indigenous linguistic heritage raises important sociolinguistic and cultural questions. These questions include: How does language use affect one's sense of belonging? What factors influence language preference among bilingual individuals? And to what extent does bilingualism contribute to cultural continuity or dislocation? The lack of targeted research into these dynamics within Awka in Anambra state hampers efforts to design effective language and cultural preservation strategies. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate how language practices in Awka shape or reshape cultural identity, with a focus on the implications for cultural sustainability and national integration. Sequel to the foregoing, the problem of the study is therefore to examine the role of language in shaping cultural identity: a case study of Awka as a bilingual community in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study:

The study is designed to:

1. examine how bilingual individuals in Awka perceive the relationship between language and cultural identity.
2. identify the factors influencing language preference and usage among bilingual speakers in Awka town.
3. assess the impact of bilingualismon the retention or erosion of indigenous cultural values in Awka town.

Research Questions

1. How do individuals in Awka town perceive the role of language in shaping their cultural identity?
2. What factors influence the language choices and preferences of bilingual speakers in Awka own?
3. In what ways does bilingualism affect the preservation or loss of indigenous cultural values among Nigerian speakers?

Literature Review

Cultural identity is understood as a dynamic and evolving sense of self that individuals derive from their participation in particular cultural groups, encompassing shared language, customs, values, and historical experiences that shape their worldview and social behavior (Zhang & Ng, 2021). Similarly, Lopez and González (2022) defined cultural identity as collective attributes and symbols that individuals use to express membership within a cultural community, reflecting an ongoing negotiation between heritage and contemporary influences in forming personal and group identities. Cultural identity is simply the sense of belonging to a particular cultural group, encompassing shared traditions, values, language, and social norms that define a community or individual within a broader society.

It is a dynamic and multifaceted construct shaped by historical, social, and linguistic factors. In the Nigerian context, cultural identity is especially complex due to the country's vast ethnic diversity and multilingual composition. According to Adegbite and Alabi (2021), cultural identity is not static but continuously negotiated and redefined through everyday interactions and the use of language. They argue that language serves as one of the primary vehicles through which cultural identity is expressed and sustained, enabling individuals to connect with their heritage and community. This perspective highlights the role of language as both a symbol and tool of cultural identity, linking the individual to collective memory and social practices.

In Nigerian bilingual communities, language is widely recognized as a critical component in the construction and expression of cultural identity. Bilingual individuals often perceive their use of both indigenous and dominant languages as an intricate balance that enables them to maintain ties to their cultural roots while engaging with broader social and economic environments. Eze and Olaedo (2022) emphasize that for

many Nigerians, indigenous languages serve as custodians of cultural heritage, oral histories, and traditional values that are essential for fostering a collective identity among community members. Additionally, Adeyemi and Abiodun (2021) highlight that bilingual speakers are conscious of the symbolic power of language in signaling group membership and ethnic pride. While English is often employed as a lingua franca in formal settings such as education and governance, indigenous languages retain a unique emotional and cultural significance. This dual linguistic competence is thus viewed as a resource for navigating multiple cultural worlds simultaneously, reflecting a layered and dynamic identity.

Moreover, Yusuf (2020) observes that bilinguals frequently engage in code-switching to assert different aspects of their identity depending on social context. This linguistic flexibility allows speakers to negotiate their cultural affiliations and adapt their identity expressions to diverse audiences. However, they also note that the pressure to prioritize English, especially in urban areas, has led to concerns about the gradual erosion of indigenous language proficiency, which in turn threatens cultural continuity. Furthermore, Balogun and Salami (2019) report that many bilingual Nigerians experience a sense of cultural dissonance when they perceive their indigenous language and cultural practices as being undervalued in favor of global languages and cultures. This has implications for identity formation, where some individuals may feel alienated from their cultural heritage, resulting in ambivalence toward language maintenance and cultural participation.

Language choice and preference among bilingual speakers in Nigerian communities are influenced by a complex interplay of social, economic, cultural, and political factors. These determinants shape how individuals navigate their multilingual environments, determining when and why they use indigenous languages or dominant languages such as English. One of the primary factors influencing language choice is thecontext or settingin which communication occurs. Adeyemi and Abiodun (2021) observe that bilingual Nigerians often switch languages depending on the formality of the situation. Indigenous languages tend to be preferred in informal, familial, or community settings where cultural intimacy and shared heritage are emphasized. In contrast, English is commonly used in formal domains such as education, government, and business, where it functions as a lingua franca that transcends ethnic boundaries. Social identity and group membership also significantly influence language preference.

According to Yusuf (2020), bilinguals use language strategically to express their ethnic identity and solidarity with their cultural group. Speaking an indigenous language can reinforce in-group bonds and assert cultural pride, while the use of English may signal modernity, education, or social mobility.

This dual motivation often results in code-switching or mixing languages to suit both cultural and practical needs. Economic factors play a pivotal role as well. Balogun and Salami (2019) note that proficiency in English is frequently associated with better educational and employment opportunities in Nigeria. Consequently, many bilingual speakers prioritize English to enhance their socioeconomic prospects, sometimes at the expense of their mother tongues. This economic incentive influences language preference especially among younger generations seeking upward mobility.

Moreover, educational policies and media exposure influence language choice. Eze and Olaedo (2022) highlight that the dominance of English in Nigerian schools and mass media encourages its widespread use, often marginalizing indigenous languages. This institutional preference shapes language attitudes and choices, particularly among youth who may regard English as more prestigious or useful for national and global communication. In the same vein, religious affiliation and practices also affect language preferences. Some communities use indigenous languages in religious rituals and ceremonies to maintain cultural continuity, while others adopt English or other languages for religious education and outreach, as documented by Adeyemi and Abiodun (2021). This dual role of language in religious life underscores its importance in cultural identity and social interaction.

Bilingualism in Nigerian communities plays a significant role in both the retention and erosion of indigenous cultural values. While bilingual individuals navigate multiple languages, this linguistic duality can have complex effects on how cultural traditions, norms, and identities are preserved or transformed. On one hand, bilingualism can facilitate the retention of cultural values by allowing speakers to maintain their indigenous language alongside English or other dominant languages. Adeyemo and Olufemi (2020) argue that bilingualism provides individuals with the tools to engage deeply with their cultural heritage through native languages while also accessing broader socio-economic opportunities via dominant languages. This dual competence can strengthen cultural continuity by preserving traditional stories, customs, and worldviews embedded in indigenous languages.

However, the influence of dominant languages, especially English, can also lead to erosion of indigenous cultural values. According to Nwachukwu (2019), the increasing preference for English among younger generations often results in reduced fluency and daily use of indigenous languages, which threatens

the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices tied to these languages. This language shift may cause a gradual disconnect from ancestral traditions and weaken cultural identity. Eze (2021) highlight that bilingualism sometimes leads to cultural hybridization, where elements of indigenous culture are blended with modern or global cultural influences. While this hybridization can enrich cultural expressions, it may also dilute certain traditional values, raising concerns about cultural authenticity and preservation. The tension between maintaining cultural purity and adapting to contemporary realities is a critical challenge faced by bilingual communities.

Moreover, bilingual individuals often engage in code-switching, which serves as a strategy to express layered identities but may also reflect ambivalence towards indigenous languages. According to Oladipo and Afolabi (2022), code-switching can either reinforce cultural ties by integrating traditional language in modern contexts or accelerate erosion if indigenous language use becomes superficial or symbolic rather than substantive. García and Wei (2014) conducted a qualitative study on how bilingual immigrant families in the U.S. use language to shape cultural identity. They focused on 30 Spanish-English speaking families in diverse urban areas, using a case study design with data collected through semi-structured interviews and participant observation over six months. Thematic analysis revealed that bilingual individuals strategically used Spanish at home to preserve cultural traditions and English in schools and workplaces for integration. This alternating use allowed them to maintain a hybrid cultural identity, balancing heritage and host cultures. The researchers recommended that educational programs view bilingualism as a valuable cultural asset rather than a deficit. They also suggested community spaces where both languages could be practiced and celebrated to strengthen cultural ties. García and Wei concluded that bilingualism goes beyond language skills, serving as a crucial cultural practice that enables individuals in multicultural societies to negotiate and sustain multiple cultural identities.

Nwachukwu (2020) conducted a mixed-methods study in Lagos, Nigeria, to explore the role of language in shaping cultural identity among Yoruba-English bilinguals. The study involved 150 Yoruba-speaking residents selected through stratified random sampling, representing diverse ages, education levels, and occupations. Data were collected using structured questionnaires to assess language proficiency and cultural identity, alongside focus group discussions for deeper insights. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. The study found that proficiency and frequent use of Yoruba strongly correlated with ethnic pride and cultural attachment, whereas English

proficiency was linked to better socioeconomic opportunities and wider cultural participation. This dual-language use highlighted a complex identity where individuals balance indigenous heritage with modern demands. Nwachukwu recommended promoting indigenous language education alongside English to preserve cultural heritage while enabling broader opportunities. Additionally, media and cultural programs should create content in indigenous languages to foster pride among youth. The study concluded that bilingualism in Lagos acts as a cultural bridge, helping individuals maintain their roots while engaging with the global environment.

Methodology

The study is a quantitative study using a structured questionnaire to collect data. The cross sectional survey design was chosen for its effectiveness in gathering standardized information from a large number of respondents. The target population comprised of senior secondary school students, parents, civil servants, business men and women, undergraduates and community leaders in Awka Anambra state. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using convenience sampling method comprising of 20 senior secondary school students, 15 undergraduates 5 community leaders, 10 parents, 20 business men, 20 business women and 10 civil servants from the study area, Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire divided into two sections. Section A captured demographic information, while Section B contained items related to the study variables, measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." To establish validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by two experts from Odimegwu Ojukwu University in Anambra state. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents from a similar population, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The instrument recorded a reliability coefficient of 0.89, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Personal delivery was used in data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies and mean via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The bench mark mean for decision was 2.50.

Results

Research Question 1: How do individuals in Awka town perceive the role of language in shaping their cultural identity?

Table 1: Perception of Individuals in Awka Regarding Role of Language in Cultural Identity

Statement of Items	SA	A	D	S.D	FX	Mean	S.D.	Remark
Speaking both Igbo and English help me feel connected to multiple cultures.	55	30	10	05	335	3.35	0.68	Agreed
I feel more culturally rooted when I communicate in my native language (Igbo)	40	35	15	10	305	3.05	0.76	Agreed
Using English frequently makes me feel distanced from my cultural heritage.	28	34	25	13	277	2.77	0.81	Agreed
I believe language is an important part of my cultural identity.	42	38	15	05	317	3.17	0.79	Agreed
Losing fluency in Igbo would affect how I see myself culturally.	20	30	30	20	250	2.50	0.72	Agreed

Data in Table 1 show the responses of respondents regarding the perceptions about role of language in cultural identity. From the Table 1, the widest held perception is that speaking both Igbo and English help people feel connected to multiple cultures with a mean of 3.35 and that the belief that language is an important part of cultural identity (3.17). Looking at data in Table 1, it is evident that all the items have mean responses that are either above or equal to 2.50 which implies that all the items are valid and are accepted.

Research Question 2: What factors influence the language choices and preferences of bilingual speakers in Awka?

Table 2: Factors Influencing Language Choices of Bilingual Speakers in Awka

Statement of Items	SA	A	D	SD	FX	Mean	SD	Remark
Context or settingin which communication occurs can affect the choice of language	35	40	15	10	300	3.00	0.83	**Agreed**
Social identity and group membership are factors too	30	45	19	06	290	2.90	0.75	**Agreed**
Educational policies and media exposure influence language choice.	25	30	30	15	265	2.65	0.95	**Agreed**
Religious affiliation and practices also affect language preferences.	38	36	30	06	306	3.06	0.79	**Agreed**
Societal expectations can influence language choice	45	35	15	05	320	3.20	0.70	**Agreed**

Table 2 shows the factors that influence language choices among bilingual speakers in Awka. Notable among the factors are societal expectations with a mean of 3.20 and religious affiliation with a mean of 3.06. All other items in Table 2 are equally valid as each has a mean value above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 3: In what ways does bilingualism affect the preservation or loss of indigenous cultural values among Nigerian native speakers?

Table 3: Influence of Bilingualism on Preservations or Loss of Cultural Values

Statement of Items in the Questionnaire	SA	A	D	SD	FX	Mean	SD	Remark
Bilingualism can facilitate t retention of cultural values	48	37	10	05	338	3.38	0.66	**Agreed**
It can also lead to erosion indigenous cultural values.	25	30	35	10	265	2.65	0.91	**Agreed**
It may lead to cultural hybridizati which may dilute traditional values,	50	40	07	03	355	3.55	0.59	**Agreed**
Bilingualism may cause code- switching,	42	38	15	05	317	3.17	0.76	**Agreed**
It might lead to loss of cultu identity by the young ones	55	33	08	04	346	3.46	0.68	**Agreed**

Table 3 shows the summary of the opinions of respondents regarding influence of bilingualism on preservations or loss of cultural heritage. It is evident from Table 3 that bilingualism can lead to loss of cultural identity by the young ones which has a mean of 3.46. this is followed by cultural hybridization which might dilute traditional values with a mean of 3.55. all other items in Table 3 are valid as each has a mean score above the criterion mean of 2.50.

Discussion of Findings

The paper discussed the role of language in shaping cultural identity: a case study of Awka town as a bilingual community. The purpose was to examine how language choice can promote or erode cultural identity. Three basic objectives guided the study. The analysis of research question one which was on the perceptions about role of language in cultural identity found that language is an important part of cultural identity. This finding agrees with the assertion of Eze and Olaedo (2022) who emphasized that indigenous languages serve as custodians of cultural heritage, oral histories, and traditional values that are essential for fostering a collective identity among community members.

This finding also corroborates Adeyemi and Abiodun (2021) who highlighted that bilingual speakers are conscious of the symbolic power of language in signaling group membership and ethnic pride. It then means that respondents perceive language to play a great role in their cultural identity. In the same vein, research question two examined the factors that influence language choice among bilingual native speakers. It was gathered that societal expectations and context or setting are paramount factors.

Many people in the society believe that ability to speak in foreign languages is associated with high social status and affluence. This notion has degenerated to the point that many young people hardly speak their native languages fluently anymore. The finding supports the assertion of Balogun and Salami (2019) who was of the opinion that proficiency in English is frequently associated with better educational and employment opportunities in Nigeria. This may be the reason why many native speakers crave to be proficient in foreign languages while neglecting their indigenous language. It was equally gathered from the study that bilingualism has influence on the preservation or loss of indigenous languages. Some of the influence of bilingualism include that it might lead to code-switching and erosion of cultural values. These findings are in tandem with the submission of Eze (2021) who noted that bilingualism sometimes leads to cultural hybridization, where elements of indigenous culture are blended with modern or global cultural influences. However, he lamented that while this hybridization can enrich cultural expressions, it may also dilute certain traditional values which also raises concern about the overall influence of bilingualism on indigenous cultural identities.

Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the role of language in shaping cultural identity: a case study of Awka as a bilingual community. From the findings that ensued, it was seen that people perceive language as a decisive factor in cultural identity. Language can help to preserve cultural values through retention or erode same depending on the usage. In the same vein, some factors that influence choice of language or preferences among bilingual native speakers were found to include context or setting, societal preferences and others. Similarly, the study found that bilingualism can either promote or erode cultural identity through hybridization and code switching. Based on the findings the study concludes therefore that language plays a critical role in shaping cultural identity among bilingual communities in Awka, Anamabra state.

Recommendations

Sequel to the findings from the study the following are recommended:

1. The study found that language is an important part of cultural identity therefore, the Ministries of Education should integrate indigenous language instruction into school curricula at all levels to preserve and promote cultural identity among young learners.
2. Societal expectations and context or setting were among the paramount factors that affect language preferences among bilingual native speakers, consequently community leaders and cultural organizations should promote inclusive language policies in public and social events that encourage the use of native languages alongside official languages to reflect contextual appropriateness and societal balance.

It was gathered from the study that bilingualism affects cultural identity through erosion of cultural values and hybridization and code-switching, hence parents and guardians should consciously reinforce traditional cultural practices and values at home, using native languages to counterbalance the cultural dilution associated with bilingualism and code-switching.

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BILINGUALISM AND MOTHER TONGUE INTERFERENCE: A CASE OF FRENCH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a multilingual nation with over 350 indigenous languages. English serves as the official language, and French as a foreign but strategic language due to its geographical and diplomatic importance. This study examines the phenomenon of bilingualism and the challenges of mother tongue interference in the learning and use of the French language in Nigeria. The study adopts a position paper technique to explore how Nigerian learners of French experience interference from their mother tongues, particularly in phonology, syntax and semantics. The study is anchored on the theory contrastive analysis and interlanguage theories, which explain how structural differences and learners' attempts to bridge linguistic gaps influence errors in second language acquisition. The study employs a qualitative approach using classroom observations, interviews with French language teachers, and analysis of learners' spoken and written productions. Finding of the study reveal recurrent errors such as mispronunciation influenced by local phonetics, incorrect verb conjugations patterned after indigenous languages, and code-switching as a coping strategy. The study highlights that socio-cultural environment, inadequate exposure to authentic French contexts and limited teaching resources exacerbate interference. Recommendations of the study include adoption of communicative teaching methods, promoting immersion programmes, training teachers in error analysis, and integrating technology to provide learners with access to authentic French input.

Keywords: bilingualism, mother tongue, interference, French, second language acquisition

Introduction

Nigeria, a multilingual nation with over 350 indigenous languages, provides a fertile ground for the study of bilingualism and language contact phenomena. English serves as the official language and a lingua franca, while French occupies an important place as a foreign language, given Nigeria's geopolitical position surrounded by Francophone countries. Despite its significance, French remains a difficult subject for many Nigerian learners. One major barrier in language learning has been mother tongue interference, a phenomenon where features of the learner's first language (L1) affect the acquisition and use of a second or foreign language (L2).

This study investigates how bilingualism in Nigeria fosters both opportunities and challenges for French language acquisition, with a focus on the role of mother tongue interference. The study is significant for the understanding of how learners negotiate meaning, manage linguistic resources, and develop proficiency in a multilingual environment where English and indigenous languages dominate everyday communication. The paper also aims to provide insights into the theoretical, pedagogical, and sociolinguistic implications of bilingualism and interference. It will also recommend strategies to reduce interference and enhance French language learning outcomes in Nigeria.

Bilingualism is studied extensively in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics. Bloomfield (1933) defines bilingualism as native-like control of two languages, while Haugen (1953) considers a speaker bilingual if they can produce meaningful utterances in another language. Grosjean (2010) offers a broader view, emphasising that bilinguals use languages in different domains of life rather than equally in all contexts. In Nigeria, bilingualism is often linked to multilingualism. Speakers switch among indigenous languages, English, and foreign languages like French depending on context. Crystal (2003) highlights that such linguistic diversity creates complex patterns of language contact. These patterns can lead to interference phenomena, where structures from one language influence the other.

Mother tongue interference is not new in second language acquisition research. Weinreich (1953) describes it as a natural outcome of languages in contact. According to Odlin (1989), transfer can be positive or negative: while similarities between L1 and L2 may facilitate learning, differences often cause errors. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Lado, 1957) predicts learners would struggle most where L1 and L2 differ. Selinker's (1972) Interlanguage Theory later argued that learner errors are developmental, reflecting an intermediate system rather than mere transfer.

Several studies in African contexts confirm the persistence of interference. For instance, Adegbite (2003) finds that Nigerian students learning English often rely on indigenous structures, while Akinjobi (2006) reports similar findings for French learners. Research shows interference occurs at phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic levels. However, sociolinguistic factors such as limited exposure to target language input, dominance of English, and societal attitudes play significant roles.

The study is anchored on Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Interlanguage theory. Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, advanced by Lado (1957) assumes that a systematic comparison of L1 and L2 will predict areas of difficulty. Learners transfer patterns from L1, and where differences occur, errors are likely. Although criticized for being overly deterministic, it remains useful in identifying potential interference points.

Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972) provides a complementary perspective. It suggests that learners develop a unique linguistic system, influenced by their L1, exposure to L2, and internal strategies. Errors are not merely negative transfer but evidence of learning in progress. This framework allows us to see Nigerian learners of French as active constructors of knowledge, whose errors reveal both challenges and developmental trajectories.

Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative strategy to capture rich, descriptive data on interference phenomena. A case study design was employed, focusing on Nigerian secondary and university students learning French. Participants were selected purposively to include learners at different proficiency levels as well as French teachers. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of learners' oral and written productions. Observations focused on common phonological, syntactic, and lexical errors. Interviews with teachers explored their perceptions of mother tongue interference and coping strategies. Oral presentations and written scripts were analysed for recurrent interference patterns. Data analysis followed error analysis procedures. Errors were identified, classified, and interpreted within the frameworks of contrastive analysis and interlanguage theory. The qualitative data ensured validity, while thematic coding highlighted broader patterns across data sources.

Discussion of Findings

The study identified several recurrent interference patterns among Nigerian learners of French. Phonological interference was the most salient, with learners struggling with sounds absent in their L1. For example, the French uvular /ʁ/ was often replaced with the alveolar /r/ common in Nigerian languages. Nasal vowels such as /ã/ and /õ/ were also difficult, leading to hyper correction or substitution with oral vowels. Lexical interference manifested in direct translations from English and indigenous languages. Learners often used English cognates with French morphology (e.g., *assisté* for 'helped') or literal translations from Yoruba or Igbo structures. Syntactic interference included incorrect word order, such as placing adjectives before nouns (e.g., *grand maison* instead of *grande maison*). Verb conjugation errors were frequent, reflecting indigenous language patterns that lack tense marking.

Teachers noted sociolinguistic influences. English dominance reduced learners' motivation for French, while indigenous languages shaped attitudes and classroom interactions. Code-switching was common, with students mixing French, English, and local languages as a communicative strategy. Teachers described this as both a hindrance and a resource. The findings confirm that mother tongue interference is a persistent feature of French language learning in Nigeria. Phonological errors align with predictions of contrastive analysis, highlighting difficulties where L1 and L2 structures diverge. Syntactic and lexical errors reveal how learners rely on transfer as a strategy, consistent with interlanguage theory.

However, the study also shows that interference cannot be explained solely by structural differences. Sociolinguistic factors, such as exposure, teacher competence, and language attitudes, shape the extent and persistence of errors. Code-switching illustrates learners' agency: while it indicates gaps, it also demonstrates creative use of resources to achieve communication.

Implications for Language Teaching in Nigeria

Pedagogically, teachers need to recognize interference not merely as errors but as windows into learners' developing inter language. Contrastive analysis can inform teaching by highlighting likely problem areas, while communicative methods can help learners practice authentic usage. Error analysis should be integrated into teacher training to equip educators with strategies for addressing interference systematically.

Policy makers should promote immersion programmes and cross-border exchanges with Francophone countries. Curricula should incorporate more exposure to authentic French materials, including media, literature, and digital resources. Technology offers opportunities for learners to engage with native speakers, practice pronunciation, and develop listening comprehension.

Conclusion

Bilingualism in Nigeria presents both opportunities and challenges for French language acquisition. Mother tongue interference remains a significant obstacle, shaped by phonological, lexical, syntactic, and sociolinguistic factors. This study contributes to understanding these dynamics by situating them within Nigeria's multilingual context. Addressing interference requires holistic strategies that combine linguistic insight, pedagogical innovation, and supportive policies. Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to trace learners' interlanguage development over time, or comparative studies across Nigerian regions to capture the impact of specific indigenous languages on French acquisition. Such research would deepen our understanding of bilingualism and guide more effective language teaching in multilingual societies.

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APPLICATION OF BERNSTEIN'S ELABORATED AND RESTRICTED CODES TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS ACROSS CONTEXTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated application of Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes theory to the teaching of English as an L_2 in Nigerian secondary schools across diverse communicative contexts. The study examined code manifestation across socio-economic backgrounds, identified pedagogical challenges teachers face in addressing code differences, investigated the prevalent teaching methodologies' effectiveness in facilitating code transition, assessed curriculum practices of sociolinguistic diversity, and proposed evidence-based instructional strategies for developing elaborated code proficiency. The study adopted a qualitative methodology employing document analysis of curriculum materials, lesson plans, textbooks, and SSCE examination papers, alongside discourse analysis of student writing samples to identify linguistic features that are characteristic of elaborated versus restricted codes. Findings revealed that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds predominantly demonstrated restricted code features including coordinate sentence structures and implicit logical relationships, while middle-class urban students exhibited elaborated code competencies with complex subordination and explicit logical connections. Teachers testified difficulty diagnosing code differences, lacked socio-linguistic training, and faced challenges managing heterogeneous classrooms with inadequate instructional time. Prevalent methodologies emphasised decontextualised grammar instruction and superficial communicative activities that failed to develop elaborated code competencies, while curriculum and assessment practices showed minimal acknowledgment of socio-linguistic diversity. The study concluded that Bernstein's theory provides crucial insights into educational inequities, with students requiring systematic elaborated code instruction for academic success. Based on the findings and conclusion, it recommends that teacher preparation programmes and in-service professional development initiatives should incorporate comprehensive training in sociolinguistic theory of Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes framework, and practical strategies for diagnosing code differences.

Keywords: Bernstein's Theory, Elaborated Codes, English Language Teaching Restricted Codes, Vocabulary,

Introduction

Language is a tool for the actualisisation of contents in the secondary school curriculum. It is sometimes difficult to separate learning the concepts and aspects of school contents from learning the use of English language. English language is central to education being the medium of instruction. The teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in secondary schools operates within a complex sociolinguistic landscape characterised by multilingualism, diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and varying degrees of exposure to Standard English. At the centre of English language teaching is the need to keep learners appropriately prepared for both contexts of formal and informal language use. Within these contexts, Basil Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory of elaborated and restricted codes provides analytical framework for understanding the disparities in English language proficiency and academic achievement among second language learners (Chiang & Thurston, 2022). Bernstein's theory on elaborated and restricted codes originally developed in 1971 reviewed over time by the scholar posits that social class differences manifest in distinctive linguistic codes that fundamentally shape individuals' capacity to participate effectively in educational discourse and broader social contexts.

Specifically, the elaborated code, characterised by explicit, context-independent language that makes meaning accessible to diverse audiences, contrasts sharply with the restricted code. This relies heavily on shared contextual knowledge, implicit meaning, and particularistic rather than universalistic communication patterns (Jones, 2013). Understanding how these codes operate within Nigerian secondary schools where English functions as the official medium of instruction while students navigate multiple indigenous languages has philosophical implications for pedagogical practice and educational equity. The Nigerian educational context presents unique challenges that make Bernstein's theoretical framework particularly relevant and deserving. Ugwu and Ogunremi (2019) stress that Nigeria, being an heterogeneous nation of about 500 indigenous languages with major ones, including Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba serving as mother tongues for significant populations, while English occupies the position of official language and the medium of instruction from upper primary through tertiary education is a complex linguistic entity. This socio-linguistic reality creates complex code-switching dynamics where students constantly negotiate between home languages, Nigerian Pidgin English, informal registers of Nigerian English (Jegede, 2024), and the elaborated code of Standard English required for academic success.

Bernstein (1971) created the idea of elaborated and restricted codes by which people from various socio-economic backgrounds are exposed to and proficient in complex communication codes at divergent degrees. The language employed in formal settings is referred to as elaborate code. This type of language is used by teachers, in textbooks, and test papers. It is distinguished by its extensive vocabulary, intricate sentence construction, and exact grammatical rules. Higher socio-economic class people who have had access to formal education and are conversant with academic or professional communication norms are frequently linked to elaborate code (Berstein, 1971). Restricted code on the other hand refers to the language used in informal situations and close-knit communities. It is characterised by its use of simple vocabulary, short sentence structures, and less specific grammatical conventions. Restricted code is often associated with individuals from lower social class, who may not have had access to formal education or exposed to more complex forms of communication. Bernstein's theory argues that these two codes reflect the different practices and cultural values of different social classes and that the use of a specific code can affect learners' opportunities and social mobility.

Adedokun and Adedokun (2024) demonstrates the relationship between grammar knowledge and communicative competence which represents a complex interplay that evolves from traditional to more integrated theoretical frameworks. This recognises the interdependence in effective language use. Whereas, communicative competence as originally conceptualised by Hymes (1972) and later expanded by Canale and Swain (1982), encompasses not only grammatical competence but also sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competencies. This suggests that while grammar provides the structural foundation for language production and comprehension, it must be complemented with pragmatic awareness and contextual sensitivity to achieve meaningful communication. Communicative competence framework aligns with Bernstein's theory as the transition from restricted to elaborated codes requires not merely grammatical accuracy but the capacity to make meaning explicit, and adopt universalistic rather than particularistic orientations. It also captures effective communication across diverse contexts where shared background knowledge cannot be assumed. The Nigerian secondary school students who have been primarily socialised in restricted code environments often possess functional communicative competence within their immediate communities (Jegede, 2024).

However, the students struggle with the elaborated code demands of academic use, formal presentations, and standardised examinations that require context-independent expression.

The implications of Bernstein's theory on Nigerian secondary school English teaching become particularly salient when examining the persistent performance gaps between students from different socio-economic backgrounds (Michael, 2015). Olsen (2022) reiterates that students from educated, urban, middle-class families typically experience greater exposure to elaborated code patterns through home literacy practices, parental language modeling, and access to print-rich environments that reinforce academic language registers. Conversely, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, rural areas, or families with limited formal education often enter secondary school with primarily restricted code competencies, placing them at significant disadvantage in educational contexts that implicitly assume elaborated code proficiency (Okunlola & Hendricks, 2022). Bernstein's restricted codes can be illustrated using the following examples. Adding filler words/ mannerisms and phrases into a conversation such as “you know”, “right?”; using less formal or more colloquial linguistic forms like “how ya doing?”, “what you up to?”; using more idiomatic language such as “He let the cat out of the bag.”, “piece of cake”, “hang out”; referring to shared knowledge: “can you pass me the thing”; among many other expressions that can be situated in informal situations but equally feature in formal settings.

Examples of elaborated codes can be seen in the use of full and more detailed sentences, to the point where they can be understood on their own. For instance, “Today, I am going to do some grocery shopping because the fridge is empty.”; using more uncommon vocabulary words and synonyms such as “The old man was being particularly cantankerous.”, or “The sunset is quite ineffable tonight; I've never seen such a beautiful colour!”; among many others. Idioms are avoided as far as possible since this code is associated with formal situations; hence its directness.It is noteworthy that elaborated and restricted codes are not always used exclusively by one social class. While the term 'code-switching' is usually used to describe when bilingual people alternate between two languages in conversation, it can also be applied to switching between elaborated and restricted code based on context, participants and situation.

This comprehensive analysis reveals that successful grammar instruction cannot treat parts of speech as isolated categories but must explore their interconnected roles in constructing meaning, with particular attention to the frequency effects,

collocational patterns, and register variations that characterise authentic language use in diverse communicative situations. Bernstein's framework suggests that teaching these grammatical concepts requires more than rule explanation. It demands explicit attention to how elaborated code users employ these structures to create universalistic, context-independent meanings that restricted code users may not naturally produce despite possessing the underlying grammatical knowledge. Language learners may encounter systematic challenges with word classification due to the multi-functional nature of many English words and the abstract concepts underlying grammatical categories (Yin & Vine, 2022), with primary difficulties stemming from words that function across multiple parts of speech depending on context. These challenges intensify for students operating primarily within restricted codes who may lack exposure to the diverse contexts and registers where such grammatical flexibility becomes apparent and necessary.

The relationship between Bernstein's codes and sentence construction pedagogy proves particularly informative for Nigerian ESL instruction. Simple, compound, and complex sentence patterns represent the three fundamental structural levels through which language users express ideas with varying degrees of sophistication and relationship complexity. The mastery of these patterns is essential in language teaching because they enable students to progress from basic communication to scholarly expression, varying sentence structure for stylistic effect, emphasising relationships between ideas, and demonstrating advanced grammatical competence required for academic writing and formal discourse (Zhao, 2023). Effective pedagogical approaches to teaching sentence construction integrate explicit instruction with meaningful practice, progressing systematically from foundational to advanced structures while addressing learners' developmental needs and linguistic backgrounds (Sahnan & Daulay, 2025). However, restricted code environments typically emphasise simple, coordinate sentence structures with implicit logical relationships, while elaborated codes demand complex sentences with explicit subordination, logical connectors, and hierarchical information structuring.

This progression requires not merely grammatical instruction but meta-cognitive awareness of how sentence complexity enables context-independent meaning-making essential for academic success and professional communication. The curriculum of Nigerian secondary school emphasises examination preparation, particularly for the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). This creates additional pressures that intersect with Bernstein's theory.

Examination formats typically honour elaborated code competencies including essay writing, comprehension of context-independent texts, and formal register control. Yet, pedagogical approaches often focus on rote memorisation and formula-based responses rather than developing genuine elaborated code proficiency. This holistic approach to teaching aligns with Bernstein's insight that language codes represent not merely different vocabularies or grammatical patterns but fundamental different orientations towards meaning-making and social relationships. Addressing the implications of elaborated and restricted codes for ESL teaching in Nigerian secondary schools requires pedagogical transformation that goes beyond method or technique to engage with the socio-linguistic realities shaping students' linguistic resources and educational opportunities.

The integration of form, meaning, and use in grammar lessons is essential for fostering comprehensive understanding of language, with effective grammar instruction involving connecting these three elements and allowing students to see how grammatical structures function in real-life contexts, ultimately leading to greater fluency and communicative competence. Contemporary grammar pedagogy has shifted toward more integrated and contextual approaches that balance form and function, with current consensus affirming that pedagogic intervention in grammar instruction remains necessary, though modern methodologies emphasize meaningful application over rote memorization (Pawlak, 2021). However, applying Bernstein's framework suggests that Nigerian English teachers must go beyond conventional grammar instruction to explicitly teach the metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness that characterises elaborated code usage. Twenty-first century grammar instruction now prioritises contextualised, meaningful grammar instruction that links to authentic reading and writing rather than isolated rule presentation (Chatterjee & Halder, 2023), yet this approach must be supplemented with explicit attention to how language choices create context-independence and universalistic meaning accessible to diverse audiences.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching aim of this study is to investigate the application of Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes theory on the teaching of English as a Second Language in Nigerian secondary schools, with particular focus on developing students' capacity for effective communication across diverse contexts. The specific objectives of this study are to:

a. examine the manifestation of elaborated and restricted codes in the English language usage of Nigerian secondary school students across different socio-economic backgrounds;

b. identify the pedagogical challenges English language teachers face when addressing code differences among students in the classrooms;
c. investigate current English language teaching methodologies in secondary schools and their effectiveness in facilitating students' transition from restricted to elaborated code competencies;
d. assess the extent to which existing English language curriculum and assessment practices in secondary schools account for socio-linguistic diversity and code variation among learners; and
d. propose evidence-based instructional strategies that can systematically develop students' elaborated code proficiency while building students' elaborated code competencies for enhanced communication.

Bernstein's Theory of Elaborated and Restricted Codes and Its Relation to English Language Teaching

Basil Bernstein's theory of elaborated and restricted codes, developed in the 1970s and refined throughout his scholarly career, posits that social class differences manifest in distinctive linguistic codes that fundamentally shape individuals' capacity to participate effectively in educational discourse and broader communicative contexts. The restricted code typically associated with working-class and close-knit community environments. This is characterised by context-dependent communication, implicit meanings, particularistic orientations, and reliance on shared background knowledge among interlocutors in a formal academic discourse. Conversely, the elaborated code, more prevalent among middle-class educated populations, features context-independent language, explicit meaning-making, universalistic orientations, and linguistic structures that make communication accessible to diverse audiences without assuming shared experiential backgrounds. Bernstein argued that these codes are not merely different vocabulary but represents fundamentally different relationships to meaning-making, with the elaborated code providing greater access to abstract reasoning, logical argumentation, and the decontextualised language demands of formal education.

The theory emphasises that while both codes are functionally adequate within their respective contexts, educational institutions implicitly favour elaborated code competencies in curriculum design, instructional practices, and assessment systems. The systematic advantage help students who have been socialised in elaborated code environments while creating barriers for those whose primary linguistic socialisation occurs within restricted code contexts.

application of Bernstein's theory to teaching English as a Second Language in Nigerian secondary schools reveals profound implications for addressing persistent educational inequities and developing students' communicative competence across diverse contexts. The theory also suggests that effective English language pedagogy in schools should move beyond traditional grammar instruction and communicative language teaching to explicitly addressing the socio-linguistic realities shaping students' linguistic resources, systematically scaffolding their development of elaborated code competencies. This requires teaching not merely grammatical structures but the metacognitive awareness of how language choices create context-independence, and how to make implicit meanings explicit through subordination and logical connectors. It also shows how to employ universalistic orientations that make communication effective across diverse audiences.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative data with selected content analysis using the English language teachers and students' socio-linguistic diversity, pedagogical approaches to addressing code differences, and challenges encountered in developing students' academic English proficiency across contexts. It also focuses on interactions with teachers on students' academic writing and formal communication, and awareness of register variation and context-appropriate language use. Document analysis was the national English language curriculum, commonly used textbooks, and WASSCE examination papers to assess the extent to which these materials reflect awareness of code variation and provide systematic support for elaborated code development.More so, student writing samples and examination scripts were subjected to discourse analysis to identify linguistic features characteristic of elaborated versus restricted codes, including syntactic complexity, explicitness of logical relationships, contextualisation strategies, and register appropriateness. Data analysis employed qualitative data on thematic analysis using coding procedures to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights regarding code manifestation and pedagogical implications. The qualitative findings provided a comprehensive understanding of how Bernstein's theory manifests in Nigerian secondary school contexts and inform evidence-based recommendations for pedagogical transformation that promotes equitable access to elaborated code competencies essential for communication across diverse academic, professional, and social contexts.

Implications and Discussion

Qualitative Analysis of Study Findings Based on Research Objectives:

Objective 1: Examining the manifestation of elaborated and restricted codes in the English language usage of Nigerian secondary school students across

The qualitative analysis of student writing samples and oral presentations revealed distinct manifestations of elaborated and restricted codes across different socio-economic backgrounds in Nigerian secondary schools. Students from lower socio-economic and rural backgrounds predominantly demonstrated restricted code features in their English usage, characterised by heavy reliance on coordinate sentence structures using repetitive conjunctions like "and" and "then," implicit logical relationships requiring shared contextual knowledge for comprehension, frequent code-switching to indigenous languages or Nigerian Pidgin English when expressing complex ideas, and particularistic references assuming audience familiarity with specific contexts. For instance, when describing a school event, restricted code users produced narratives like:

"We went to assembly and the principal was talking and we were standing and it was hot and some students fainted."

The students employ simple coordination without explicit causal connections or subordination. Conversely, students from urban middle-class backgrounds with educated parents exhibited elaborated code competencies including complex sentence structures with subordination, explicit logical connectors such as "because," "although," "consequently," and "therefore,". This shows context-independent descriptions accessible to unfamiliar audiences, and metalinguistic awareness enabling them to adjust register according to communicative purpose. These students produced compositions featuring sentences like:

"Although the assembly lasted longer than usual due to administrative announcements, students remained attentive despite the uncomfortable heat, which unfortunately caused several individuals to experience dehydration-related fainting."

The discourse analysis of examination scripts further revealed that restricted code users struggled particularly with expository and argumentative writing requiring decontextualised explanation, often producing narratives even when analytical essays were requested, while elaborated code users demonstrated facility with abstract reasoning and universalistic orientations characteristic of academic discourse.

Objective 2: Identifying the pedagogical challenges English language teachers face when addressing code differences among students in the classrooms.

Document analysis on English language teachers revealed multiple interconnected pedagogical challenges in addressing code differences within Nigerian secondary school

classrooms. Teachers consistently reported difficulty diagnosing code differences versus general language proficiency issues, with many indicating they lacked theoretical frameworks for understanding why some students with apparent oral fluency struggled profoundly with written academic English. One experienced teacher stated that:

"I have students who can discuss any topic enthusiastically during break time but cannot write a coherent essay to save their lives. I used to think they were just lazy, but now I see something deeper is happening with how they organise ideas on paper."

Teachers described challenges managing heterogeneous classrooms where students operated at vastly different code competency levels, noting that instruction pitched towards elaborated code users left restricted code users confused and frustrated, while slowing pace to accommodate restricted code users resulted in elaborated code users becoming disengaged. The large class sizes typical in Nigerian public schools, often exceeding 50 students, compounded these challenges by making individualised scaffolding virtually impossible. Teachers also identified their own limited training in socio-linguistics and code theory as significant barriers, with several acknowledging they had never been exposed to Bernstein's framework during teacher preparation and consequently lacked systematic strategies for facilitating code transitions.

Additional challenges included curriculum and examination pressures that demanded coverage of extensive content leaving insufficient time for the sustained, explicit instruction required for elaborated code development, limited instructional materials that could model elaborated code features accessibly, and institutional cultures that attributed student difficulties to individual deficits rather than recognizing sociolinguistic factors requiring pedagogical response.

Objective 3: Investigating current English language teaching methodologies in secondary schools and their effectiveness in facilitating students' transition from restricted to elaborated code competencies.

The study revealed that current English language teaching methodologies in Nigerian secondary schools inadequately address the code transition challenge, often inadvertently reinforcing rather than bridging code differences. The predominant instructional approach used combined traditional grammar-translation methods emphasising decontextualised rule memorisation with superficial communicative activities that failed to explicitly develop elaborated code competencies. Teachers typically presented grammatical rules through formulaic explanations followed by fill-in-the-blank exercises and isolated sentence construction tasks that students could complete using restricted code strategies without developing context-independent communication skills. A teacher stressed that:

"I teach parts of speech, the tenses, the sentence types, everything in the syllabus, but when examination comes, they still cannot write properly."

The communicative activities observed, while well-intentioned, often occurred within restricted code contexts where students communicated with classmates sharing contextual knowledge, thereby not requiring the explicit, universalistic language characteristic of elaborated codes. Essay writing instruction typically involved presenting model essays for students to memorise and reproduce rather than explicitly teaching the discourse moves, logical organization, and context-independent explanation strategies that distinguish elaborated code writing. Significantly, teachers rarely made code differences objects of explicit instruction, missing opportunities to develop students' metalinguistic awareness of how language choices create accessibility across contexts.

The few instances of potentially effective practice involved teachers explicitly modeling how to explain something to someone who was not there, and systematically teaching transition words and subordination as tools for making logical relationships explicit rather than merely as grammatical features to memorise. However, these practices appeared idiosyncratic to individual teachers rather than systematic approaches embedded in curriculum or professional development. This suggests that current methodologies largely fail to facilitate restricted-to-elaborated code transitions.

Objective 4: Assessing the extent to which existing English language curriculum and assessment practices in secondary schools account for socio-linguistic diversity and code variation among learners.

Document analysis of the national English language curriculum and teachers' lesson plans, widely-used textbooks, and WASSCE examination papers revealed minimal acknowledgment of socio-linguistic diversity and virtually no systematic attention to code variation as factors requiring pedagogical consideration. The curriculum framework emphasised grammatical competence, literary appreciation, and general communication skills without recognising that students admitted into secondary school with fundamentally different linguistic repertoires shaped by socio-economic backgrounds. Textbook examination revealed that model texts and exercises overwhelmingly represented elaborated code patterns without providing scaffolding for students unfamiliar with such discourse styles, essentially assuming elaborated code competence rather than systematically developing it.

Reading comprehension passages also featured decontextualised, abstract texts without instructional guidance on strategies for processing context-independent language. Writing assignments requested analytical essays without explicitly teaching the discourse organisation, logical sequencing, and universalistic orientation such genres require.

The assessment practices reflected in WASSCE examination papers consistently favoured elaborated code competencies through questions requiring extended written responses, comprehension of context-independent texts, and formal register control. Yet, these WASSCE examination papers provided no accommodations or alternative assessment formats for students in code transition. Interactions with teachers identified that curriculum-assessment misalignment particularly affected rural and lower socio-economic students, with one stating that:

> "The examination assumes all students come from homes with books and educated parents who speak proper English; it doesn't consider that many of our students are first-generation school-goers whose parents are illiterate."

The silence of curriculum on socio-linguistic diversity effectively rendered code differences invisible, positioning student difficulties as individual deficiencies rather than predictable consequences of differential socialisation requiring systematic pedagogical intervention, thereby preserving rather than addressing educational inequities linked to social class and linguistic background.

Objective 5: Proposing evidence-based instructional strategies that can systematically develop students' elaborated code proficiency while building students' elaborated code competencies for enhanced communication.

Based on the qualitative findings, several evidence-based instructional strategies emerged as potentially effective for systematically developing elaborated code proficiency while appreciating students' existing linguistic resources. Firstly, explicit metalinguistic instruction should make code differences themselves objects of study, teaching students to recognise elaborated versus restricted code features in texts and consciously employ elaborated code strategies appropriate for academic contexts. Teachers could present paired examples using the restricted and elaborated code versions of the same content by asking students to identify differences and discuss when each might be appropriate. This will develop socio-linguistic awareness without devaluing restricted code competencies.

Secondly, systematic scaffolding of context-independent writing should begin with highly scaffolded tasks where teachers explicitly model writing for someone who knows nothing about the topic, progressively reducing support as students internalise elaborated code strategies. One teacher who employed this approach described having students pretend they are writing to their future grandchildren who will not know anything about their school life.

This successfully motivated context-independent description. Thirdly, sentence-combining and expansion activities specifically targeting subordination and logical connectors can develop syntactic complexity characteristic of elaborated codes, with teachers explicitly teaching how subordination makes relationships between ideas transparent rather than implicit.

Fourthly, contrastive analysis activities where students translate between informal oral language and formal written language can leverage their restricted code competencies as resources for developing elaborated code proficiency, positioning code-switching as a valuable skill rather than treating restricted codes as deficits. Lastly, collaborative peer revisions structured around explicit elaborated code criteria such as can someone unfamiliar with the situation understand this? Are the logical relationships clear? Have you explained rather than assumed? The aforementioned questions can provide repeated practice with elaborated code thinking. Sustained professional development for teachers in sociolinguistic theory on code analysis, and scaffolding strategies is essential, as teachers cannot teach what they themselves do not understand. Yet, current teacher preparation programmes provide virtually no preparation for addressing code diversity in multilingual, socio-economically diverse classrooms characteristic of Nigerian secondary schools.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Bernstein's theory of elaborated and restricted codes provides crucial insights into persistent educational inequities in Nigerian secondary schools, revealing that students from different socio-economic backgrounds gained entrance into the classrooms with fundamentally different linguistic repertoires that current teaching methodologies, curriculum frameworks, and assessment practices fail to adequately address. The findings from this study indicated that while restricted code competencies represent valuable communicative resources within particular contexts, secondary school students require systematic, explicit instruction in elaborated code proficiencies to succeed academically and participate effectively in formal, professional, and intercultural communication contexts. Ultimately, achieving equitable educational outcomes demands pedagogical transformation that recognises socio-linguistic diversity as a central rather than peripheral concern in English language teaching. This will require teacher preparation, curriculum redesign, and instructional approaches specifically designed to facilitate students' development of elaborated code competencies while respecting and building upon their existing linguistic strengths.

Recommendations

Flowing from the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations suffice:

1. Nigerian teacher preparation programmes and in-service professional development initiatives should incorporate comprehensive training in sociolinguistic theory, particularly Bernstein's elaborated and restricted codes framework, equipping them with theoretical understanding and practical strategies for diagnosing code differences.
2. The national English language curriculum should be revised to explicitly acknowledge socio-linguistic diversity and code variation, incorporating systematic progression from restricted to elaborated code competencies.
3. Educational authorities should commission textbooks and supplementary materials specifically designed to scaffold elaborated code development through explicit metalinguistic instruction and paired restricted-elaborated code examples.
4. Examination bodies should review assessment formats to ensure they measure communicative competence authentically rather than merely privileging elaborated code familiarity and scoring rubrics that recognise code transition.
5. English language teachers should implement evidence-based instructional strategies including explicit code comparison activities and logical contrastive analysis between oral and written registers to systematically develop students' capacity for effective communication across diverse academic and social contexts.

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INFLUENCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES ON QUALITY EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Nigerian public secondary schools continue to produce subpar results despite a plethora of educational reforms and governmental measures aimed at raising the standard of instruction. Low student success, weak teaching methods, and subpar teacher performance are among the system's ongoing problems. The impact that staff development plans and human resource management (HRM) practices have on the quality of education is one important topic that is frequently disregarded or not sufficiently addressed. Recruitment, incentive, performance evaluation, and capacity building are all HRM activities that are crucial for institutional efficacy, but they are frequently implemented inconsistently, inadequately, or with little funding in public schools. Additionally, programmes for staff development that aim to improve teacher competencies are often erratic, ill-coordinated, or out of step with the reality of the classroom. These discrepancies cast serious doubt on how well staff development and HRM procedures now in use accomplish intended learning objectives. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the extent to which HRM practices and staff development strategies influence the implementation of quality education in Nigerian public secondary schools. Three questionnaires (HRMPQ, SDSQ, and QEIQ) were utilised in this correlational survey study with 150 Ilorin teachers who were purposefully chosen. Means, percentages, and multiple regression at 0.05 significance were employed to analyse the data. The findings revealed that common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools were staff welfare and motivation.It was also revealed that common staff development strategies employed in Kwara State public secondary schools was career advancement opportunities.More so, the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools was high. The finding further revealed that there was a significant influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. The study comes to the conclusion that career advancement is the most effective staff development plan, greatly improving the quality of education, even though staff welfare is the most popular HR strategy. In order to promote better educational outcomes, the findings emphasise the necessity of ongoing teacher development, well-informed policies, and calculated investments.

Key Words: Human resource, management practices**,** staff development, quality education implementation

Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of every civilisation since it fosters advancement, creativity, and sustainable growth. This idea also holds true for businesses, especially when it comes to developing and managing their personnel. Education in the corporate setting contributes to the strategic development of people resources, which are an organization's most important asset. These people are the backbone of a country's production and competitiveness in addition to driving daily operations. Therefore, as the calibre of human capital significantly influences the nation's economic trajectory and long-term development, investing in employees' ongoing education and professional development is not only a business goal but a national obligation. They represent an aggregate of skills and attitudes resulting from education and training that equip the labour force with the capacity to plan, organize, and carry out economic processes when properly allocated (Adewolu-Ogwo, 2024). Their core mandate is to manage, nurture, educate, and prepare the prospective human resources of the society.

According to Akwei and Nwachukwu (2023), human resources include both national and institutional viewpoints, signifying the national population's cumulative knowledge, skills, and talents as well as the inherent abilities displayed by personnel in institutions. In order to accomplish educational objectives, this study highlights the critical role that human resources—which include administrators, instructors, non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders—play. All educational levels must have efficient human resource management to guarantee that staff members carry out their duties and successfully support learning goals.

In the words of Odoba et al. (2025), human resource management also includes hiring, training, determining staffing needs, and making sure personnel are performing well. Based on Akwei and Nwachukwu (2023), this strategic strategy combines welfare, education, and employment procedures to match worker competencies with company objectives. Nwanya and Achebe (2023) highlight the importance of human resource management in maximising an organization's potential, emphasising the role that leadership and human effort have in enhancing technology infrastructure. In order to ensure that employees have the necessary abilities and drive to continuously contribute to the success of the company, strong staff development initiatives are essential to human resource management. These tactics are essential for improving teacher effectiveness, job happiness, and, eventually, the provision of high-quality instruction.

Strategies for staff development are intentional policies and planned activities intended to improve the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and general competences of employees in a company. In the field of education, staff development is essential to raising the calibre of instruction and learning results, especially in public secondary schools in Nigeria. These tactics could include peer cooperation, mentoring, workshops, seminars, in-service training, and chances for additional academic growth. Nwuke and Yellowe (2025) asserts that ongoing professional development is crucial to preparing educators for new curricular developments, cutting-edge instructional strategies, and developing educational technologies. In the opinion of Adanu (2024), effective staff development is essential for long-term educational change since it increases teacher confidence, job satisfaction, and lowers teacher attrition.

The availability of resources, a supportive school culture, and dedicated leadership are all necessary for staff development in Nigerian public secondary schools. The significance of school administrators in determining training needs and coordinating professional development with institutional objectives is emphasised by Ogunode et al. (2023). Employee development needs to be an ongoing, cooperative activity that is integrated into regular school operations rather than a one-time occurrence. But obstacles including low infrastructure, inadequate finance, and restricted access to contemporary training resources sometimes impede advancement (Anago, 2024). Resolving these obstacles is essential to raising student achievement and the quality of instruction. Because competent and supported teachers are essential to providing high-quality

education, continuing investments in their professional development and in fostering a supportive learning environment are equally as crucial as changes to the curriculum or improvements to the facilities.

More than just guaranteeing access is needed to implement quality education in Nigerian public secondary schools; in order to achieve significant learning outcomes, educational standards, policies, teaching methods, and administration must all be in line. This entails encouraging curricular relevance, improving teacher proficiency, advocating for student-centered pedagogies, and guaranteeing that learning materials are accessible in a nurturing educational setting. In line with Nigeria's National Policy on Education, Mukherjee (2024) promotes education that fosters critical thinking, literacy, life skills, and values that promote both national growth and lifelong learning. However, systemic issues including packed classrooms, poor infrastructure, erratic funding, and inadequate teacher preparation continue to exist (Emeka et al., 2021). The achievement of national education goals and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to provide inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education for all, is threatened by these systemic problems as well as the unequal distribution of resources between urban and rural areas.

Comprehensive reform initiatives that place a high priority on accountability, community involvement, and capacity building are needed to address the enduring issues in Nigeria's public secondary education system. Teachers must be empowered through performance-based rewards, mentorship, and frequent in-service training if instructional quality is to be improved. Efficiency, digital literacy, and access to educational materials can all be improved by using technology into administration and instruction. Furthermore, it is crucial to maintain infrastructure investment, implement policies effectively, and work closely with parents, non-governmental organisations, and the commercial sector. To achieve the overall objective of providing high-quality education that equips students for individual success, responsible citizenship, and national growth, a coordinated and comprehensive strategy is essential.

Nigerian public secondary schools still have a lot of implementation gaps, even though high-quality education is essential to the country's development. Although they are fundamental to enhancing educational outcomes, staff development and efficient human resource management (HRM) are still applied unevenly. While studies like Kuku (2022) emphasise how teacher improvement improves student achievement, they also draw attention to the government's low level of support for continued professional development.

Practices include staff introduction, training, and participatory decision-making improve school management and service delivery, according to research by Akem et al. (2021) and Ineye-Briggs (2024). However, public school administrators are unable to properly implement these HR practices due to inconsistent execution and inadequate institutional support, authority, and resources. Schools perform better when HRM practices are strong, especially in training, monitoring, and rewards, as stated by Gbarador (2021) and Pam & Mashi (2023). This highlights the urgent need for systemic changes in public education.

There are structural inefficiencies in public secondary education that are brought to light by the differences in how HRM and staff development techniques are applied in private and public organisations. Although Ngaji and Wonah (2019) highlighted the importance of staff training, motivation, and appropriate selection practices in raising the calibre of instruction in private schools, public schools frequently face inadequate funding and disorganised human resources systems. Accordingly, it is imperative to investigate the ways in which HRM procedures and staff development plans affect the standard of instruction provided in Kwara State's public secondary schools. The study aims to bridge the knowledge gap by exploring the extent to which HRM practices—such as training, promotion, participation in decision-making, and staff supervision—affect quality education implementation, thereby offering evidence-based strategies for sustainable improvement.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. Specifically, the study intends to:

i. Assess common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools.
ii. Examine common staff development strategies in Kwara State public secondary schools.
iii. Identify the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools.
iv. Find out the influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools?

Research Questions

Based on the purpose stated above, the study seeks to answer the following research questions.

i. What are the common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools?
ii. What are the common staff development strategies in Kwara State public secondary schools?
iii. What is the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools?
iv. Is there any influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools?

Research Hypothesis

To give an appropriate direction to the study, the following null hypothesis was formulated and tested:

H_{o1}: There is no significant influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools.

Methodology

The research design that was employed for this study was the descriptive survey research method of the correlational type. According to Waters (2017), a correlational design is a quantitative research strategy that examines two or more quantitative variables from the same data set to see if there is a link (or co-variation) between the independent and dependent variables. This research design is therefore deemed relevant and applicable, since it was assisted in investigating influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. The population for this study were all teachers in Ilorin, Kwara State. A purposeful sample strategy was used to choose all the administrative staff of senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Kwara State. Thereafter, a total sample of 150 administrative staff of senior secondary schools in Ilorin, Kwara State was employed for the study.

Three instruments were used for data collection, that is; Human Resource Management Practices Questionnaire (HRMPQ), Staff Development Strategies Questionnaire (SDSQ), and Quality Education Implementation Questionnaire (QEIQ). The HRMPQ, SDSQ, and QEIQ were used to elicit information on human resource management practices, staff development strategies and quality education implementation respectively. HRMPQ, SDSQ, and QEIQ had 20, 20 and 10 items each with the response based on four Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4 points), Agree (A = 3 points), Disagree (D = 2

points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1 point). Mean rating and percentage were used to answer the research questions 1, 2 and 3, while research question 4 had corresponding hypothesis and the Multiple Regression analysis was used in the testing the formulated hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools?

Table 1: Ranking Order ofCommon Human Resource Management Practices in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Ranking
1.	Staff Welfare and Motivation	**16.73**	**1st**
2.	Training and Development	**16.08**	**2nd**
3.	Recruitment and Selection	**15.99**	**3rd**
4.	Performance Appraisal	**15.98**	**4th**

Table 1 presents the ranking of common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools based on their mean scores. The analysis reveals that Staff Welfare and Motivation rank 1st with the highest mean score of 16.73, indicating that it is the most prominently practiced and possibly the most valued HRM activity in the schools. This suggests that efforts geared towards enhancing staff morale, incentives, and general wellbeing are prioritized by school management. Following closely is Training and Development, ranked 2nd with a mean score of 16.08, showing that schools recognize the importance of equipping teachers and staff with up-to-date knowledge and skills for effective performance. Recruitment and Selection is ranked 3rd with a mean of 15.99, which points to the presence of structured processes in hiring qualified personnel, though, slightly less emphasized than welfare and training. Performance Appraisal, with the lowest mean score of 15.98, is ranked 4th, suggesting that while evaluation of staff performance is practiced, it may not be as systematically implemented or valued compared to the other HRM components. Overall, the ranking implies a strong institutional focus on motivation and capacity building, with relatively less emphasis on performance evaluation systems.

Research Question 2: What are the common staff development strategies in Kwara State public secondary schools?

Table 2: Ranking Order of Common Staff Development Strategies in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Ranking
4	Career Advancement Opportunities	**17.11**	**1st**
2	Mentoring and Coaching	**16.57**	**2nd**
3	Professional Development Workshops	**16.30**	**3rd**
1	In-Service Training	**16.16**	**4th**

Table 2 presents the ranking of common staff development strategies employed in Kwara State public secondary schools based on the average mean scores of respondents. The data indicates that Career Advancement Opportunities ranks 1st with the highest mean score of 17.11, signifying that strategies aimed at promoting staff career progression—such as promotions, scholarships, or opportunities for further education—are the most emphasized and valued by schools. Mentoring and Coaching follows as the 2nd most common strategy with a mean score of 16.57, reflecting that experienced educators often support less experienced colleagues through guidance and personalized professional relationships. Professional Development Workshops is ranked 3rd with a mean of 16.30, indicating a fair level of emphasis on periodic training programmes aimed at updating teachers' pedagogical and subject-matter knowledge. Lastly, In-Service Training is ranked 4th with a mean score of 16.16, suggesting that while it is practiced, it is slightly less prioritized compared to other strategies. In summary, the ranking shows that the most prevalent staff development techniques in these schools are a strong emphasis on supportive staff relationships and long-term professional advancement.

Research Question 3: What is the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools?

Table 3: Percentage Analysis of the Level of Quality Education Implementation in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

Level of Self-concept	Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	. . . . .	137	91.3
Average	21 – 30	4	2.7
Low	10 – 20	9	6.0
Total		**150**	**100.0**

Table 3 provides a percentage analysis of the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools based on respondents' ratings. The data shows that a vast majority of the respondents, 137 out of 150 (91.3%), fall within the high-level range of quality education implementation (scores between 31 and 40), indicating a strong perception that quality education practices are being effectively implemented in the public secondary schools. A small fraction of respondents, 4 individuals (2.7%), rated the implementation at an average level (scores between 21 and 30), suggesting limited concerns or inconsistencies in practice. Meanwhile, 9 respondents (6.0%) rated the implementation as low (scores between 10 and 20), reflecting a minority viewpoint that may point to challenges in certain schools or areas. Overall, the data reflects a predominantly high level of quality education implementation in the Kwara State public secondary school system, although the presence of average and low ratings suggests the need for continuous monitoring and targeted interventions in underperforming areas.

H_{o1}: There is no significant influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Influence of Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies on Quality Education Implementation in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Inference
Regression	589.66	2	294.83			
Residual	403.70	147	2.75	107.36	.00	S
Total	993.36	149				

ρ< 0.05

Table 4 presents the results of a multiple regression analysis examining the influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. The regression model shows a total sum of squares of 993.36, out of which 589.66 is accounted for by the predictors (human resource management practices and staff development strategies), while 403.70 is the residual or unexplained variance.

The mean square for the regression is 294.83, and the mean square for the residual is 2.75. The calculated F-value is 107.36, with a significance value (p-value) of .00, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level. This result indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. In other words, Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies have a significant joint influence on the implementation of quality education in public secondary schools in Kwara State. The significant inference (denoted as "S") confirms that these two variables are important predictors of educational quality and should be given strategic attention in educational planning and administration. To ascertain the contribution of the two independent variables (human resource management practices and staff development strategies) together, r^2 was computed and the output is reported in Table 5.

Table 5: Model Summary of the Influence of Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies on Quality Education Implementation in Kwara State Public Secondary Schools

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.77	.59	.59	1.66

a. Predictors: (Constant), Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies

Table 5 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis investigating the influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.77, indicating a strong positive relationship between the combined predictors and the dependent variable. The R Square value is 0.59, which means that 59% of the variance in quality education implementation can be explained by human resource management practices and staff development strategies. The Adjusted R Square, which accounts for the number of predictors and the sample size, remains the same at 0.59, reinforcing the reliability of the model. The Standard Error of the Estimate is 1.66, suggesting a moderate level of prediction error. Overall, this model summary demonstrates that the predictors significantly contribute to the explanation of quality education implementation in the schools under study, highlighting the critical role of effective HR practices and continuous staff development in achieving educational quality.Beta weight and the t-test were computed and outputs are reported in Table 6.

Table 6: Contributions of Each of the Independent Variables (Human Resource Management Practices and Staff Development Strategies) to the Dependent Variable (Quality Education Implementation)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Variables	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	3.64	1.58		2.31	.02
HRMP	.03	.02	.08	1.49	.14
SDS	.43	.03	.76	.14.44	.00

a. Dependent Variable: Quality Education Implementation

Table 6 shows the individual contributions of the two independent variables — Human Resource Management Practices (HRMP) and Staff Development Strategies (SDS) — to the dependent variable, Quality Education Implementation, in Kwara State public secondary schools. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for HRMP is 0.03 with a t-value of 1.49 and a p-value (Sig.) of 0.14, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that HRMP does not make a statistically significant unique contribution to predicting quality education implementation in this model. On the other hand, SDS has a much higher unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.43, a very high t-value of 14.44, and a significance value of 0.00, which is less than 0.05. This confirms that Staff Development Strategies significantly and strongly predict Quality Education Implementation. The standardized beta coefficient for SDS is 0.76, indicating it is the more influential predictor in the model. In summary, while HRMP appears to have a minor and statistically insignificant effect, SDS is the dominant factor driving improvements in the quality of education in the schools studied.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the finding revealed that the common human resource management practices in Kwara State public secondary schools were staff welfare and motivation. This may be because school administrators and education authorities in Kwara State prioritize teachers' basic needs and job satisfaction through welfare packages such as timely salary payment, housing allowances, and recognition schemes to retain staff and reduce attrition. This finding is similar to Obeng-Kyere, et al. (2022) found that the selected schools undertake job instruction as their main job training practices followed by seminars, coaching and job assignments. Barely a few adopt job rotations.

In a similar study, Ampoamah (2016) found that most institutions adopt seminars and job instructions in their training practices. Job instruction training is very essential in the second cycle institution due to the changing nature of knowledge in the society. Since schools are producing people who will continue the mantle to tertiary institutions, it is important to properly equip these students.

Additionally, Malleck and Kitula (2023) reported the main human resource management practices adopted in public and private secondary schools in Mbulu District, Tanzania was recruitment and selection of teachers. Amuta and Aja (2024) reported that the common public secondary schools' principals' human resource management practices in Anambra State were recruitment. Another result of the finding indicates that the common staff development strategies employed in Kwara State public secondary schools was **career advancement opportunities.** Teachers are often motivated by clear pathways for professional growth, and the availability of promotions, study leave, and training programems likely reflects a policy-driven emphasis on improving teacher capacity through advancement incentives. This finding aligns with the study by Fashiku et al. (2023), which reported that the primary staff development programmes in Kwara State primary schools, Nigeria, included in-service training (76.1%), mentoring (68.6%), seminars (63.9%), and workshops (62.7%). This finding agrees with the finding of Yusuf and Fashiku, (2016) who discovered that three major teachers' professional development programmes in terms of cluster-type seminars, face-to-face mentoring and on-the- job-training were the types of staff developmental programmes carried out in public secondary schools of North Central zone, Nigeria.

Additionally, result of the finding shows that the level of quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools was high. This could be attributed to a combination of effective school leadership, improved teacher competence through ongoing training, and active government oversight, which ensures adherence to educational standards and curriculum delivery. This finding aligns with Olaifa, et al. (2022) reported that the level of quality assurance practices and teachers' effectiveness in public senior secondary schools in Kwara State Nigeria was high.

Result further revealed that there was a significant influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation in Kwara State public secondary schools. HRMP appears to have a minor and statistically insignificant effect**,** SDS is the dominant factor driving improvements in the quality of education in the schools studied.

Staff development strategies likely had a stronger effect because ongoing professional training and growth opportunities directly enhance teachers' instructional skills, which in turn have a more immediate and measurable impact on students learning outcomes compared to general welfare practices. This finding supports that of Sani (2012) found that effective human resource management practices such as recruitment, training, and performance evaluation significantly enhanced employee commitment and institutional performance, particularly in educational institutions, thereby influencing the quality of education delivered.

Furthermore, Fashiku et al. (2023) reported that key staff development programmes—such as in-service training (76.1%), mentoring (68.6%), seminars (63.9%), and workshops (62.7%)—played a crucial role in improving teaching practices in Kwara State primary schools, thereby contributing to better educational outcomes.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that staff welfare and motivation is the most commonly practiced human resource management strategy, while career advancement opportunities stand out as the most utilized staff development strategy in Kwara State public secondary schools. The overall level of quality education implementation in these schools is high, indicating that educational standards and goals are being effectively pursued. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant joint influence of human resource management practices and staff development strategies on quality education implementation. However, a deeper analysis shows that staff development strategies, particularly career advancement opportunities, play a more critical role in enhancing educational quality, while human resource management practices have a less significant, though supportive, impact. This underscores the importance of prioritizing continuous professional growth and development opportunities for teachers in efforts to sustain and improve educational outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, several recommendations can be made to further improve educational outcomes in Kwara State public secondary schools:

1. While this remains the most common human resource practice, it is recommended that the government and school management diversify welfare strategies beyond basic incentives to include recognition programmes, health benefits, and mental well-being support to sustain teachers' morale and productivity.

2. Since this was found to be the most common and effective staff development strategy, it is recommended that clear and structured career growth pathways be developed, supported by regular assessments, promotion opportunities, scholarships for advanced studies, and exposure to national and international conferences to empower educators professionally.
3. To maintain and enhance this level, education stakeholders should consolidate effective policies, strengthen instructional supervision, and ensure adequate supply of learning resources to uphold the quality standard across all public schools. Given that staff development strategies significantly influence the quality of education more than
   HRMP, greater investment and focus should be placed on continuous professional development programmes.
4. Training needs assessments should be conducted regularly and development initiatives should align with modern teaching demands and innovations for sustainable educational improvement.

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EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOGRAPHIC SOCIAL SECURITY IN PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURIAL STEWARDSHIP IN SOUTHERN KADUNA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the practice of ethnographic social security in promoting entrepreneurial stewardship among indigenous business owners in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria. In the absence of strong formal welfare provisions, traditional social networks such as kinship ties, community savings groups, and age-grade associations function as vital economic buffers. According to Social Capital Theory, the quantitative study uses a descriptive survey method and entailed the application of structured questionnaires among 450 respondents selected through a multistage sampling process. Mean and standard deviation processed the research questions, whereas Chi-square tests tested the hypotheses. Findings indicate that although the respondents attribute ethnographic social support systems with effects on business start-ups, statistical testing fail to confirm a significant relationship. However, a significant link was found between traditional access to social support and entrepreneurial survivability, demonstrating that such systems extend business longevity, stability of revenue, and loyalty of clients. The study makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on informal economies by demonstrating empirically how embedded social capital in cultural institutions drives entrepreneurship in marginalized settings. It implies integrating these indigenous systems into formal policy platforms for inclusive entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: Ethnographic, Entrepreneurial Stewardship, Social Security, Social Capital, Sustainability

Introduction

The intersection of social security and entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention in recent years, particularly in developing regions where formal social safety nets are often limited or nonexistent (Song, Park, & Kim, 2020) (Hessels, van-Gelderen, & Thurik, 2008). In these contexts, traditional or ethnographic social security systems rooted in kinship, community, and cultural practices may play a crucial role in enabling and sustaining entrepreneurial activity (Simba et al., 2023). These informal systems, which often predate modern state-sponsored welfare programs, provide a cushion against economic shocks, facilitate access to resources, and foster a sense of collective responsibility that can be conducive to entrepreneurial stewardship (Kinoti & Kinoti, 2020).

Entrepreneurial stewardship, characterised by a long-term, community-oriented approach to business, contrasts with purely profit-driven models and emphasizes the entrepreneur's role as a caretaker of resources and a contributor to social well-being (Siegner et al., 2018). Nigeria, a country with diverse ethnic and cultural groups, presents a compelling case for examining the interplay between ethnographic social security and entrepreneurial behavior (Badiru, 2024). While the Nigerian government has implemented various social programs, their reach and effectiveness are often constrained by infrastructural challenges, corruption, and limited resources (Amin & Alhaji, 2022). As a result, many Nigerians continue to rely on traditional support systems for economic security, particularly in rural and underserved areas (Simba et al., 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Southern Kaduna, despite its rich cultural heritage and diverse ethnic composition, continues to experience significant entrepreneurial underdevelopment, with youth unemployment rates below expectation and widespread business failures among small and medium enterprises. While conventional economic analyses attribute this to limited access to formal financial services, inadequate infrastructure and security challenges, there remains insufficient understanding of how indigenous ethnographic social security systems including age-grade associations, kinship networks, rotating savings schemes and communal support structures influence entrepreneurial behaviour and business sustainability in the region. These traditional systems have historically provided safety nets, resource mobilisation mechanisms and collective risk-sharing arrangements that could potentially foster entrepreneurial stewardship, yet their role in contemporary business development remains largely unexplored and underutilised by policymakers and development practitioners.

The gap between the potential of ethnographic social security systems and actual entrepreneurial outcomes in Southern Kaduna presents a critical problem requiring scholarly investigation. Existing entrepreneurship promotion initiatives in the region have predominantly adopted Western-centric models that often disregard indigenous social capital and cultural frameworks, resulting in high intervention failure rates and limited community ownership of business ventures. Furthermore, the ongoing ethnic tensions and communal conflicts in Southern Kaduna have potentially disrupted traditional social security networks, yet there is no empirical evidence on how these ethnographic systems have adapted or continue to influence entrepreneurial stewardship defined as the responsible management and growth of business ventures with consideration for community welfare and intergenerational sustainability. Without understanding these dynamics, stakeholders risk implementing entrepreneurship development strategies that are culturally incongruent and economically ineffective,

thereby perpetuating poverty and youth restiveness in a region with significant untapped entrepreneurial potential. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by
exploring the influence of ethnographic social security in promoting entrepreneurial stewardship in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore the influence of ethnographic social security in promoting entrepreneurial stewardship in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intended to:

a. Examine the extent to which traditional social security structures influence entrepreneurial start-up decisions among indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna.
b. Assess the relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and the level of entrepreneurial sustainability among micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study

1. To what extent do traditional social security structures influence entrepreneurial start-up decisions among indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna?
2. What is the relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability among micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna?

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: Traditional social security structures have no significant influence on entrepreneurial start-up decisions among indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability among micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna.

Literature Review

Ethnographic social security refers to the informal and culturally embedded systems of support and reciprocity found among indigenous societies. These systems most commonly comprising kinship networks, age-grade organizations, clan alliances, and rotating credit systems such as *esusu* or *ajo* function as non-state social safety nets, especially where official social protection is weak or non-existent (Osei-Assibey, 2020). In Southern Kaduna, a highly ethno culturally diverse area with communitarian culture, these kinds of systems are crucial in shaping local livelihood strategies, including

The role of informal social security in contributing to entrepreneurship has become an empirical area of interest in the recent past. Evidence by Babajide and Effiom (2019) and Oladele (2021) affirms that informal community-level support systems reduce entry barriers for rural and semi-urban entrepreneurs significantly, such as access to startup capital, moral support, and risk-sharing (Badu, 2016). Ethnographic social security, in these contexts, is not only a financial protection but also a legitimization agency that holds social capital together and reduces exposure (Onodugo et al., 2016).

In Southern Kaduna, entrepreneurial stewardship defined as the capacity of individuals to initiate, sustain, and develop business enterprises without losing communal values intersects in multiple ways with cultural norms. Entrepreneurs normally look for the backing of venture emergence and growth by family, ethnic solidarity, and group obligation. Such ethnographic social security, according to Ajani and Olayemi (2018), tends to contribute to greater informal enterprise resilience and reinvestment in agriculture, artisanal production, and petty trade. Nevertheless, there is limited systematic, empirical research isolating and measuring the quantitative correlation between such ethnographic structures and entrepreneurial performance.

Therefore, most of the studies are qualitative, anecdotal, or at a broad geographic level, with a lacuna still existing in localized data-based analysis. Therefore, studying this relation in the socio-economic context of Southern Kaduna presents an opportunity to understand how such traditional systems enable or constrain entrepreneurship among marginal communities. Social Capital Theory is a sociological theory explaining how social relations and networks provide individuals and groups with access to resources, support, and opportunities necessary for social and economic growth. Formulated by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988), and Putnam (1993), the theory perceives social capital as the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked with the possession of a durable network of relationships. Putnam particularly identifies two general types of social capital: bonding social capital, which defines close, emotionally intense relationships such as family and kinship connections, and bridging social capital, in which more arms'-length relations link people across various social cleavages.

In the entrepreneurial context, social capital facilitates access to financial resources, market information, trust-based collaborations, and moral support. These intangible assets are as vital as physical capital in the failure or success of entrepreneurial ventures. Social capital

benefits entrepreneurship by reducing the cost of transaction, uncertainty reduction, and enabling collective action (Adler & Kwon, 2002). It provides an explanation for how informal networks, founded on reciprocity and trust, function as social safety nets and support systems particularly in environments with limited access to formal institutions or financial infrastructures.

In Southern Kaduna, ethnographic social security networks such as extended family structures, age-grade associations, village development associations, and local savings societies are concrete manifestations of bonding social capital. These culturally embedded institutions perform basic social insurance functions that complement, and more commonly replace, formal government-sponsored welfare systems. Through these networks, one is able to mobilize capital for business start-ups, access informal credit, and acquire labor or business apprenticeship without formal collateral or bureaucratic procedures.

The present study seeks to examine how such social capital underpinned informal systems influence entrepreneurial stewardship a term used to describe the ability to start, guide, and sustain ethical and community-conscious business endeavors. Social Capital Theory offers a relevant framework for the study, as it describes how trust, norms of reciprocity, and shared commitments influence entrepreneurial behavior. For instance, a person with good ethnic or kinship networks can receive interest-free loans or in-kind assistance for business expansion based on mutual cultural expectations and long-term relationship returns.

Moreover, the theory aligns with the research focus on entrepreneurial stewardship that extends beyond profit-making to include responsibility to community, ethical business practice, and intergenerational sustainability. In Southern Kaduna's communal society, the entrepreneur is not so much seen as an isolated player but as a custodian of shared values and wellbeing. This community sense of responsibility is both a function and an outcome of social capital. With the application of Social Capital Theory, the study is well-positioned to empirically explore the ways in which the strength and shape of such ethnographic networks are linked to measurable entrepreneurial results—like business start-up rates, levels of sustainability, and capacity for reinvestment. It also facilitates identification of the most important social capital dimensions (e.g., trust, shared norms, frequency of interaction) with a significant bearing on the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Southern Kaduna.

Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research design, specifically the descriptive survey design, with a view to investigating the influence of ethnographic social security on entrepreneurial stewardship in Southern Kaduna, Nigeria. The design is appropriate for the requirement to take and analyze quantifiable data from a population with the aim of describing existing conditions and testing relationships among variables. The target group is indigenous entrepreneurs involved in micro and small-scale enterprises in selected communities in Southern Kaduna who are members of traditional social security systems such as rotating savings schemes (esusu), kinship-based contributions, and communal labor support systems. Multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted: three Local Government Areas (LGAs) with high entrepreneurial activity and well-developed community structures will be chosen purposively; entrepreneurs in the LGAs was stratified by business type (e.g., agriculture, trading, crafts); and simple random sampling was employed to choose individuals within each stratum.

The sample size of 450 respondents was statistically strong and sufficient for generalization to the selected population. Data were collected through a structured researcher-administered questionnaire developed on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5) to quantify constructs such as access to ethnographic support, start-up motivations, and business sustainability indicators. For data analysis, mean and standard deviation was used in answering the research questions by ascertaining central tendencies and dispersion in the respondents' opinions. To test the formulated hypotheses, Chi-square tests of independence was employed in determining the significance of the relationship of ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial stewardship dimensions. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do traditional social security systems influence entrepreneurial start-up intentions among indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna?

Table 1: Extent to Which Traditional Social Security Systems Influence Entrepreneurial Start-Up Intentions among Indigenous Entrepreneurs

Item	VHE	HE	NE	LE	VLE	X	SD
Traditional savings groups help me start business.	112	152	93	67	26	3.57	1.18
Family networks pvide financial assistanc during business setup.	111	137	106	73	23	3.53	1.17
Community support reduces my business risk:	95	157	98	72	28	3.49	1.17
Cultural norms encourage entrepreneurial effo	128	156	79	69	18	3.68	1.16
Ethnic associations supportnew business initiatives.	116	159	96	56	23	3.64	1.14

Table 1 presents that the responses on how ethnographic social security systems positively influence entrepreneurial start-up intentions. The most highly rated statement was "Cultural norms encourage entrepreneurial efforts" with a mean score of 3.68, indicating very high extent that sociocultural expectations pose an inspiring effect on initiation of enterprise. Also, assertions such as "Ethnic associations support new business initiatives" (Mean = 3.64) and "Traditional savings groups help me start my business" (Mean = 3.57) further underscore the role of informal community mechanisms in facilitating entrepreneurial entry barriers. Standard deviations for all items ranged between 1.14 and 1.18, which represents moderate variability in responses. This implies that, despite most of the respondents sharing a common understanding, there are some variations in experiencing these traditional supports within the sample.

Research Question 2: What is the difference between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability of micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna?

Table 2: Difference between Access to Ethnographic Social Support Systems and Entrepreneurial Sustainability of Micro and Small Enterprises

Item	VHE	HE	NE	LE	VLE	X	SD
Social support increases my ability to sustain my business.	100	152	101	82	15	3.53	1.12
Traditional networks provide resources during business challenges.	96	175	88	70	21	3.57	1.13
Access to ethnogr aphic support improves my income stability.	111	154	85	69	31	3.54	1.21
Community trust enhances customer loyalty.	123	133	101	76	17	3.60	1.16
Cultural values influence long -term business decisions.	98	174	80	71	27	3.54	1.12

Table 2 indicates that respondents perceived a high extent between access to ethnographic social support and entrepreneurial sustainability. The statement "Community trust reinforces customer loyalty" elicited the highest mean of 3.60, suggesting that trust rooted in communal relations is what guarantees business continuity. Additionally, statements such as "Traditional networks offer resources amidst business adversity" (Mean = 3.57) and "Ethnographic support access enhances my income stability" (Mean = 3.54) confirm that traditional social structures ensure long-term business sustainability and resistance. The standard deviations were between 1.12 and 1.21, which mirrors a slightly broader spread of perceptions from Table 1. Nonetheless, internal consistency of mean scores on the five items suggests that entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna, on the whole, view ethnographic social security as a stabilizing and facilitative power in keeping their businesses in existence.

Hypothesis 1: *Traditional social security structures have no significant influence on entrepreneurial start-up decisions among indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna.*

Table3: Chi-Square Analysis on Traditional Social Security Structures Influence on Entrepreneurial Start-Up Decisions among Indigenous Entrepreneurs

Test	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.356	20	0.428
Likelihood Ratio	15.865	20	0.450
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.631	1	0.394

Table 3 shows that since the p-value (Asymp. Sig. = 0.428) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected**.** This suggests that there is no statistically significant association between traditional social security structures and entrepreneurial start-up decisions based on the sample data.

Hypothesis 2: *There is no significant relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability among micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna*.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis on Access to Ethnographic Social Support Systems and Entrepreneurial Sustainability among Micro and Small Enterprises in

Test	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.367	20	0.049
Likelihood Ratio	25.576	20	0.052
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.139	1	0.045

Table 4 reveals that the Pearson Chi-Square p-value (0.049) is slightly less than 0.05**,** indicating a statistically significant relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected**,** and the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant relationship between access to ethnographic social support systems and entrepreneurial sustainability among micro and small enterprises in Southern Kaduna accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the analysis of the study indicate that indigenous entrepreneurs in Southern Kaduna perceive conventional social security arrangements i.e., savings groups, family networks, and ethnic associations as strongly supportive in entrepreneurial start-up processes. Individuals with elevated mean scores, particularly those referring to cultural expectations and collective contribution, reveal that these ethnographic systems do not only provide financial help; they also generate motivation, reduce perceived risk, and increase the legitimacy of the business. This is consistent with Babajide and Effiom (2019), who set that informal networks were central to establishing access to startup capital and moral support among Nigeria's rural entrepreneurs.

Similarly, Osei-Assibey (2020) also pointed out that local safety nets provide business resilience by filling gaps in formal financial institutions where the latter are underdeveloped. However, the respective Chi-square test of Hypothesis 1 did not show a statistically significant relationship, suggesting that while influence is perceived as high, influence might not always be extended among all entrepreneurs, perhaps due to variances in cultural embeddedness or connectivity to communal frameworks.

Conversely, the study further showed a stronger association between ethnographic social support access and entrepreneurial viability. Mean scores across items revealed that community trustworthiness, income stability, and resource access are critical in ensuring micro and small businesses remain operational. The Chi-square result for Hypothesis 2 was significant statistically ($p = 0.049$), which implies that access to traditional support systems is indeed associated with sustainable entrepreneurial outcomes.

This finding is supported by Ajani and Olayemi (2018), who established that high-bonding social capital entrepreneurs through kinship and community networks registered higher business survival and reinvestment rates. Light and Dana (2013) also theorize that embeddedness in cultural norms and relations of trust elevates customers' loyalty and market risk mitigation.

In the case of Southern Kaduna, in which communal interdependence is a constitutive socio-economic feature, these ethnographic configurations continue in actual operation as primary pillars of entrepreneurial viability and informal economic governance.

Conclusion

This study establishes that ethnographic social security mechanisms comprising customary saving plans, kinship assistance, and communal trust play an important role in entrepreneurial stewardship among indigenous businesspeople in Southern Kaduna. While their perceived influence on business start-ups is considerable, statistical results of the Chi-square test affirm that their contribution towards decisions on start-ups is not typically substantial. However, there is a statistically significant relationship between access to such traditional support systems and the survival of micro and small businesses, primarily through enhanced income security, patron loyalty, and enterprise resilience during adversity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were offered:

1. Local Government Educational authorities (LGEAs) are required to legally recognize and support ethnographic social security measures by implementing them in entrepreneurship programs.
2. Targeted capacity-building efforts need to be introduced by the Government for entrepreneurs relying on traditional support networks.
   These need to include training in financial literacy, e-marketing, and cooperative business models and build on cultural values of trust,

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PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF AI-POWERED INSTRUCTIONS ON LANGUAGE SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY (FCT) COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZUBA, ABUJA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills among English language students at Federal Capital Territory (FCT) College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. Despite the critical importance of language skills for academic success and effective teaching, English language students in Nigerian teacher education institution appear to struggle with balanced proficiency development, potentially due to limited integration of AI-powered instructional approaches. A descriptive survey research design was employed with 226 students selected from a population of 519 using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire (PIAILAD) validated by experts and tested for reliability ($\alpha = 0.75$). Mean scores and standard deviations were used for data analysis, with 2.50 as the criterion mean. Findings revealed that AI-powered instructions influenced listening skill development ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.40$), speaking skill development ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.49$), reading skill development ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.50$), and writing skill development ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.49$). All the mean scores exceeded the criterion, indicating positive perceived influence of AI-powered instructions across all four language skills. The study concluded that AI-powered instructional approaches effectively support listening, speaking, reading and writing skill development among English language students. It was recommended among others that given the positive influence of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development, the college management should develop and implement a comprehensive AI integration policy specifically targeting listening skill enhancement.

Keywords: AI-powered Instruction, Listening Skills, Speaking Skills, Reading Skills, Writing Skills.

Honouring the Imprints of HRM, Oba Professor Stephen Billy Olajide

Introduction

Language remains central to human connection and societal function. This makes it critical to develop proficiency in English, especially in multilingual contexts. This proficiency in English enables one to convey a message or to receive a message effectively. Communicating effectively warrants that learn basic language skills. Language skills enable a speaker to convey ideas with precision. According to Harappa (2021), language skills are communication skills that allows one to convey ideas clearly and precisely. Not only does one learn to speak fluently, but also to listen carefully. Language skills are different aspects of using a language, such as listening, reading, speaking, and writing. A language is designed around those basic skills which are necessary for full and comprehensive communication experience.

Child Success Center (2019) submitted that the language skills are acquired in chronological order, with a speaker acquiring the ability to listen first, then to speak, and then to read and then to write. Listening and reading are known as 'receptive' skills while speaking and writing are known as 'productive' skills (Babalola & Ayodele, 2022). Initially, when learning a new language, learners tend to develop and acquire the receptive skills before learning the productive skills. For the natural skills, the learner acquires the listening skill first while for the learnt skills the learner learns the reading skill first. Listening is the ability to understand meaning (Ofemile, 2018). When someone speaks you understand what he says. Listening successfully usually ends with the listener asking follow-up questions about the speaker's intent. A good listener actively understands and engages in what the speaker is trying to convey. Al-Jiboury (2024) explained that deficiency in this language skill leads to breakdown in communication and indeed poor academic performance. Another important language skill is reading.

Reading is the ability to comprehend the written text. It pertains to a person's ability to read, comprehend, interpret and decode written language and texts (Kajal, 2019). Reading is a complex skill, that is to say, it involves a whole series of physical and psychological internetworking procedures. Reading skills involve identifying word meaning, drawing inferences, identifying writer's techniques and finding answers to questions. This implies that decoding, fluency as well as vocabulary skills are key to reading comprehension. Reading provides students with means of exploring ideas, views and experiences of others. By using effective reading skill and strategies, students are able to construct meaning and develop thoughtful and critical interpretations of a variety of texts such as both short and novel, fiction and non-fiction. A reader is able to connect ideas within sentences to be able to understand or comprehend the written text. When one reads, one takes time to understand what the author is conveying with his words. Another language skill is speaking.

Speaking is a basic skill that language learners should master with the other language skills. It is defined as a complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves nonverbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions (Al-Jiboury, 2024). Speaking skills allow us to communicate effectively. It is the ability to convey information verbally and in a way that the listener can understand, hence, the productive skill. Speaking is an interactive process where information is shared and acted upon by the listener (Babalola & Ayodele, 2022). A speaker should be able to communicate clearly and concisely to draw the attention of the listener. Developing your speaking skills will involve gaining fluency in spoken interactions with others, as well as practicing your pronunciation. Aside speaking, writing is another language skill.

Writing is a productive skill and is the most complex skill of the four language skills (Rao, 2019). It enables students to explore, shape and clarify their thoughts and as well communicate with others. It is the representation of the spoken on paper. Through writing, one expresses thoughts, feelings and experiences. The function of writing as a language skill includes information dissemination, entertainment, mobilization and education (Al-Jiboury, 2024). Effective writing entails the use of appropriate vocabulary, correct choice of grammatical structures, right use of punctuation marks and ability to link ideas coherently in writing. By using effective writing strategies, students are able to discover and refine their ideas and revise with increasing confidence and skill.

In language acquisition, Listening and speaking are the primary or natural skills through which a child acquires the first language or mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment, mostly in the familiar context of the home. The natural language skills are the foundation of literacy. Through listening and speaking, one communicates his thoughts, feelings, experiences, information and opinion as well as learn to understand himself and others. The child proceeds to learn to read and write either in the language of the home or in a second or third language in the school, while still continuing developing skills of listening and speaking in one or more languages. Reading and writing are powerful skills required for communication and learning (Ajepe & Yusuff, 2024). They enable students to extend their knowledge and the use of language and at the same time increase their understanding of others, their experiences and personal satisfaction. (Babalola & Ayodele, 2022) submitted that the language skills must be tied together appropriately to make for meaningful and effective teaching and learning.

Despite these skills' importance, many students in Nigerian teacher education institutions struggle with balanced language skill proficiency development. This challenge necessitates innovative instructional approaches, particularly AI-powered technologies that can address diverse learning needs and provide personalized experiences. Artificial intelligence is a powerful tool in teaching and learning. Artificial Intelligence (AI) came as result of transformative technology and aids in presenting personalized learning experiences. AI-powered instructions refer to the use of artificial intelligence tools and systems to personalize, automate, enhance or stimulate language learning experiences (Diala et al., 2024). It includes the use of chatbots, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), speech recognition and feedback tools like Elsa Speak, Duolingo, machine translation tools like DeepL, Google Translate, Adaptie learning platforms like Grammarly, in delivering instructions.

Aiyedun (2020) explained that these AI tools make lecturers to integrate multimedia elements, like images, videos, and animations, for effective explanation of complex concepts and connect students in the learning process. This ensures that students internalize learning. Achivida (2025) submitted that AI-powered instructions allow students to be more engaged with more meaningful means of understanding the content and context of their learning. Similarly, Zhang et al., (2022) noted that AI-powered instructions proved to complement, enhance, and provide more avenues for improvement and development on English language skills among students.

That is to say that AI-powered instructions help students to acquire language skills. Mohamed et al., (2024); Seyidov (2024) explained that tools like Rosetta Stone and Speechling employ AI-driven speech-to-text to assess students' pronunciation against native speaker models. They pinpoint specific articulatory errors and provide targeted feedback, helping learners build confidence and fluency in spoken communication. Again, virtual tutors and chatbots powered by Natural Language Processing (NLP) simulate realistic dialogues, offering a low-stakes environment for students to practice both vocabulary and cultural conventions (Anikushina et al., 2018). These virtual tutors can code-switch between languages, explain idiomatic expressions, and even suggest culturally appropriate responses, fostering empathy across linguistic communities.

AI-driven speech recognition technology has enhanced listening comprehension and eliminated listening anxiety among English as a foreign language (EFL) learner (Chen & Liu, 2025). Tools like ChatGPT with voice integration offer interactive ways to practice speaking and listening skills,

allowing students to engage in spoken conversations with AI, simulating real-life dialogue situations (Thompson & Rodriguez, 2024). Also, ELSA Speak, an AI-powered app, provides personalised feedback and exercises to improve English pronunciation. Research shows it effectively enhances students' speaking proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and content (Martinez & Chen, 2023). Gliglish – another AI tool, enables language learning through AI conversation which allows users to talk with teachers or roleplay real-life situations to improve speaking and listening (Williams, 2024).

Furthermore, adaptive AI platforms like Lingvist, uses AI to help users develop reading skills through personalized tutoring experiences (Johnson & Smith, 2025). Brown and Davis (2024) submitted that AI-powered reading comprehension tools provide instant feedback on text analysis and interpretation, enabling personalized learning pathways. Similarly, AI editors like Grammarly, WriteCream, and ProWritingAid offer real-time grammar correction, style suggestions, and plagiarism detection (Wilson & Taylor, 2024). Duolingo utilizes natural language processing technology to facilitate language learning across multiple skills, including writing, through interactive exercises and immediate feedback (Anderson & Lee, 2024).

These AI-powered tools align with contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasizing personalized, adaptive learning. Mohamed et al. (2024) and Seyidov (2024) posited that AI tools like Rosetta Stone and Speechling employ AI-driven speech-to-text assessment for pronunciation feedback. This means that those tools to enhance language skill development in students. Little wonder Garcia and Lopez (2020) established that technology-enhanced language learning significantly improves student engagement and language proficiency.

The integration of multimodal and AI-powered instructions represents a paradigm shift in language education. It offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance the development of the four core language skills (Liu & Ma, 2024). While traditional instructional methods have served educational purposes, the evolving demands of 21st-century communication require innovative approaches that can address diverse learning styles and provide personalized learning experiences **(**Mohamed, 2023**).** The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, with its diverse student population and commitment to educational excellence, presents an ideal setting to investigate how these contemporary instructional approaches impact language skill development. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, with its diverse student population and commitment to educational excellence, provides an ideal context to investigate how AI-powered instructional approaches impact language skill development.

This study examines the perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills among English language students.

Statement of the Problem

English language students at Federal Capital Territory College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, face some challenges in developing balanced proficiency across the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Preliminary observations and informal assessments reveal that many students demonstrate uneven listening, speaking, reading and writing skill development. This deficiency is particularly concerning because these students are future English language teachers who must demonstrate exemplary language competence to effectively teach students. The problem is multifaceted. First, traditional instructional methods predominantly employed in English language institutions rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches. These approaches provide limited opportunities for individualized practice and personalized feedback. Second, students have minimal exposure to authentic language use contexts and this results in mechanical rather than communicative language acquisition. Third, the lack of technology integration in language instruction limits students' access to adaptive learning experiences that could address their individual learning needs and pace.

This inadequate language skill development has far-reaching implications. Students graduating with insufficient language competencies may struggle to model effective English usage, provide accurate language instruction, and inspire confidence in their future students. This cascading effect could perpetuate substandard English language education across Nigerian secondary schools and this may further undermine national educational goals and students' global competitiveness. While AI-powered educational technologies show significant potentials for addressing these challenges through personalized learning experiences, adaptive feedback mechanisms, and authentic language interaction opportunities, their effectiveness in the Nigerian teacher education context appear to be unexplored. The scarcity of empirical evidence regarding how English language students at FCT College of Education perceive the influence of AI-powered instructions on their language skill development creates a critical knowledge gap that this study seeks to address.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on language skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought out to examine the perceived influence of:

1. AI-powered instructions on listening skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria.
2. AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. AI-powered instructions on reading skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria.
4. AI-powered instructions on writing skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study. What is the perceived influence of:

1. AI-powered instructions on listening skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria?
2. AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria?
3. AI-powered instructions on reading skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria?
4. AI-powered instructions on writing skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study comprised 519 English language students (198 year one students; 191 year two students and 130 year three students) in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja. Data were from the Head of Department's office of the institution. The sample size for the study was 226 students using Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination and respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique. A researchers' self-developed instrument which was constructed for English language students was used for data collection. The instrument contained 25 items and was divided into four parts: 1, 2, 3 and 4. Part 1 contains 7 items on perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development; part 2 has 6 items on the perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development in English language; part 3 has 6 items on perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on reading skill development in English, while part 4 has 6 item on perceived influence of AI-powered instructions on writing skill development.

The instrument was designed on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed **(SD)** – 4; Agreed **(A)** – 3; Strongly Disagreed **(SD)** – 2 and Disagreed **(D)** - 1 foranswering all the research questions. The research instrument was validated by experts from English and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot-test sampling 20 English language students who were not part of the study. Cronbach Alpha formula was used to test the reliability of the research instrument. The coefficient reliability of 0.75 was recorded. The researchers and two research assistants administered the instrument using direct administration method. These research assistants were instructed and briefed on how to administer the questionnaire to the respondents. All the 226 copies of the questionnaire distributed were retrieved and used for analysis. The rate of retrieval of the research instrument was at a 100% rate of return. Data collated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The decision rule was based on the condition that any questionnaire item with Mean score of 2.5 and above is regarded as "Agreed", while any one below 2.5 is "Disagreed".

Results

Research Question One: What are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development among English language students?

Table 1: Mean Statistics on Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Listening Skill Development among English Language Students

S/N	Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Listening Skill Development	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My ability to understand spoken English has ir using AI-powered listening instruction.	2.54	0.52	Agreed
2	I can now comprehend English audio materials that previously too difficult for me since using AI-powered instructions.	3.72	0.48	Agreed
3	My listening comprehension test scores have ir since I began using AI-powered listening tools.	3.56	0.43	Agreed
4	I can distinguish between similar English sounds mo accurately now than before using AI-powered listenir practice.	2.68	0.39	Agreed
5	My ability to follow English conversations in real improved through AI-powered listening practice	2.62	0.38	Agreed
6	I can understand English speakers with different acc better now since using AI-powered instruction.	3.48	0.43	Agreed
7	My ability to focus on longer audio materials has ir since using AI-powered instruction.	3.64	0.53	Agreed
	Cluster Mean	3.17	0.40	Agreed

Analysis of data in Table 1 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.5. This shows that there are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The cluster mean of 3.17 indicates that the items in the table were accepted by respondents as perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The aggregate standard deviation of 0.40 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Research Question Two: What are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development among English language students?

Table 2: Mean Statistics on Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Speaking Skill Development among English language Students

S/N	Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Speaking Skill Development	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My English pronunciation has become more accurate since using AI-powered speaking instruction.	3.64	0.53	Agreed
2	I speak English more fluently now than before I started using AI-powered speaking tods.	3.61	0.56	Agreed
3	My confidence in speaking English has increased since using AI-powered speaking instruction.	3.78	0.57	Agreed
4	I make fewer grammatical errors when speaking English now that I use AI-powered instructions.	3.82	1.58	Agreed
5	My vocabulary usage in spoken English has improved since using AI-powered speaking tools.	3.66	0.57	Agreed
6	I can express my ideas more clearly in English now since using AI-powered instructions.	2.58	0.45	Agreed
	Cluster mean	3.52	0.49	Agreed

Analysis of data in Table 2 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that respondents agreed that they are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The cluster mean of 3.52 indicates that the items in the table were accepted by respondents as perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development. The aggregate standard deviation of .49 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Research Question Three: What are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on reading skill development among English language students?

Table 3: Mean Statistics on Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Reading Skill Development among English Language Students

S/N	Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Reading Skill Development	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My reading comprehension in English has improved since using AI-powered reading instruction.	2.54	0.52	Agreed
2	I can read and understand more complex English texts since using AI-powered tools.	3.72	0.34	Agreed
3	My reading speed has increased since using AI-powered tools.	3.56	0.42	Agreed
4	I can now analyze and interpret English texts more effectively.	2.68	0.38	Agreed
5	I can read English texts for longer periods without losing focus.	2.62	0.32	Agreed
6	My English vocabulary knowledge has expanded through AI-powered reading instructions.	3.48	0.30	Agreed
	Cluster mean	3.43	0.50	Agreed

Analysis of data in Table 3 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that respondents agreed that they are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on reading skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The cluster mean of 3.43 indicates that the items in the table were accepted by respondents as perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on reading skill development. The aggregate standard deviation of .50 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Research Question Four: What are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on writing skill development among English language students?

Table 4: Mean Statistics on Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Writing Skill Development among English language students

S/N	Perceived Influences of AI-powered Instructions on Writing Skill Development	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My English writing has become more grammatically accurate since using AI-powered writing instruction	3.61	0.50	Agreed
2	I can organize my written ideas more effectively in English now	2.38	0.48	Agreed
3	My English writing style has improved since I began using AI-powered writing instruction	3.82	0.51	Agreed
4	I make fewer spelling errors in English writing since using AI-powered tools	3.66	0.52	Agreed
5	I now use punctuation marks better			Agreed
6	My ability to write different types of English texts has improved since using AI-powered writing tools	2.58	0.47	Agreed
	Cluster mean	3.42	0.49	Agreed

Analysis of data in Table 4 shows that all the items had mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. This shows that respondents agreed that they are perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on writing skill development among English language students in FCT College of Education, Zuba, Abuja, Nigeria. The cluster mean of 3.42 indicates that the items in the table were accepted by respondents as perceived influences of AI-powered instructions on writing skill development. The aggregate standard deviation of .50 shows that the data points are closely clustered around the mean, suggesting low variation in the opinion of respondents.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that AI-powered instructions positively influenced listening skill development among English language students, with a cluster mean of 3.17 indicating agreement among respondents. Students reported improved comprehension of English audio materials (M = 3.72), increased test scores (M = 3.56), enhanced ability to understand different accents (M = 3.48), and improved focus on longer audio materials (M = 3.64). These findings align with recent research by Chen and Liu (2025) demonstrating that AI-driven speech recognition technology enhances listening skill development and reduces listening anxiety among EFL learners. The results also support Mohamed et al. (2024) and Seyidov (2024), who found that AI tools provide targeted feedback for pronunciation and listening accuracy. However, the relatively lower scores for understanding spoken English (M = 2.54) and distinguishing similar sounds

(M = 2.68) suggest that while AI-powered instructions improve overall listening competence, phonetic discrimination may require additional specialized interventions. This divergence could be attributed to the complexity of English phonetic variations and the need for more sophisticated AI algorithms capable of addressing minute sound distinctions that are particularly challenging for Nigerian learners whose first languages have different phonetic structures.

It was also found out that AI-powered instructions demonstrated a positive influence on speaking skill development. It achieved the highest cluster mean of 3.52. Students reported significant improvements in pronunciation accuracy (M = 3.64), fluency (M = 3.61), confidence (M = 3.78), grammatical accuracy (M = 3.82), and vocabulary usage (M = 3.66). These findings strongly support Martinez and Chen's (2023) research showing that ELSA Speak effectively enhances students' speaking proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and content. The results also corroborate Zhang et al. (2022), who found that AI-powered instructions provide superior avenues for English language skills improvement. The high mean scores across all speaking indicators suggest that AI technologies address multiple speaking competencies simultaneously, offering comprehensive skill development. The slightly lower score for expressing ideas clearly (M = 2.58) indicates that while technical speaking aspects improve significantly, higher-order communication skills like coherent idea expression may require additional instructional support. This divergence could result from the difference between practicing isolated speaking elements and integrating them into meaningful, spontaneous communication contexts.

The study also found that AI-powered instructions positively influence reading skill development, with a cluster mean of 3.43 demonstrating strong student agreement. Students reported enhanced comprehension of complex texts (M = 3.72), increased reading speed (M = 3.56), expanded vocabulary knowledge (M = 3.48), and improved analytical abilities (M = 2.68). These findings align with Johnson and Smith's (2025) research on Lingvist's AI-powered personalized tutoring for reading skill development. The results support Garcia and Lopez (2020), who established that technology-enhanced language learning significantly improves student engagement and proficiency. However, the relatively lower scores for basic reading comprehension (M = 2.54) and sustained reading focus (M = 2.62) suggest that while AI enhances advanced reading skills, foundational reading habits may require different interventions. This pattern could be explained by AI tools' sophisticated text analysis capabilities that benefit students with existing reading competence while potentially overwhelming those with weaker foundational skills. The divergence may also reflect the difference between passive reading

Findings also revealed that AI-powered instructions showed significant positive influence on writing skill development, with a cluster mean of 3.42 indicating strong student agreement. Students reported substantial improvements in grammatical accuracy (M = 3.61), writing style (M = 3.82), spelling accuracy (M = 3.66), and text type diversity (M = 2.58). These findings support Brown and Davis (2024), who demonstrated AI writing tools' effectiveness in providing real-time grammar correction and style enhancement. The results align with Wilson and Taylor (2024), who found that AI editors like Grammarly significantly improve writing quality through instant feedback mechanisms. However, the concerning score for organizing written ideas (M = 2.38) suggests that while AI tools excel at surface-level corrections, they may be less effective for higher-order writing skills like logical organization and coherent argument development. This limitation could be attributed to AI tools' current focus on mechanical accuracy rather than conceptual coherence and rhetorical effectiveness. The divergence highlights the distinction between technical writing competence and communicative writing proficiency, suggesting that comprehensive writing instruction requires both AI-powered technical support and human guidance for conceptual development.

Conclusion

Findings of this study emphasise the complementary rather than replacement role of AI in language education. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on technology-enhanced language learning in African educational contexts, specifically Nigerian teacher education institutions. The positive student perceptions indicate readiness for AI integration and suggest potential for improved language teacher preparation through technological enhancement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following were recommended:

a. Given the positive influence of AI-powered instructions on listening skill development, the college management should develop and implement a comprehensive AI integration policy specifically targeting listening skill enhancement.
b. Based on the highest positive influence of AI-powered instructions on speaking skill development, National Commission for Colleges of Education NCCE should mandate the establishment of specialized AI-powered speaking competency programmes across all Nigerian colleges of education.

c. Considering the significant positive influence on reading skill development, the Federal Ministry of Education should develop a national AI-enhanced reading comprehension curriculum framework for all teacher education institutions.
d. Based on the positive influence of AI-powered instructions on writing skill development, TETFund should launch an AI-Powered Writing Excellence Initiative targeting all Nigerian tertiary institutions offering English language programs.

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ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS POETRY IN ABUJA MUNICIPAL AREA COUNCIL: IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PEDAGOGY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the attitude of secondary school students towards the study of poetry in Abuja. Two research questions and corresponding hypotheses were raised for the study. The descriptive survey research method was used for the study. The population of the study consists of 26 teachers of Literature in English and 894 students of Literature in English from SS1-SS3 in 21 public secondary schools in Abuja. The sample size was thirteen (13) teachers and four hundred and forty-seven students (447) students. A set of questionnaires was used to elicit information needed from the respondents. To ascertain the validity and reliability of the instrument, experts in the Department of Arts Education vetted the questions. It was then subjected to a pilot test, and a coefficient reliability value of 0.85 was recorded.The percentage was used in the analysis of demographic data. Mean was used to answer the research questions, and t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that two fundamental issues regarding the language of poetry and the methods used in teaching have significant implications for pedagogy and practice. The study concluded that poetic language influences students' attitudes towards studying the subject, which indicates that curricula should prioritise the selection of poems with relatable or progressively challenging language. Based on this, it was recommended among others that integrating role-playing into poetry instruction could serve as an effective pedagogical strategy. Educators should receive training in various instructional techniques, especially in dramatisation, to better address the factors influencing students' attitudes.

Keywords: Attitude, English Pedagogy, Literature, Poetry, Genre, Reciprocal

Introduction

Given the critical role that student attitudes play in shaping both engagement and learning outcomes, this research underscores the benefits, challenges, and effective pedagogical approaches associated with poetry, a literary genre often met with reluctance and negative sentiment by students. Attitudes, which include personal tendencies, biases, perspectives, anxieties, and firm opinions about a particular subject, are fundamental in educational contexts as they have evaluative propensity that directly impacts students' responses to learning materials (Oboh, 2025). Sigvardsson (2020) found that students with positive attitudes toward poetry are more likely to engage actively with poetic texts, employing effective learning strategies such as critical analysis and creative interpretation, which enhance their overall learning outcomes.

As one of the three primary literary genres, alongside prose and drama, poetry often presents distinct challenges for learners. Anecdotal and empirical evidence suggest that these challenges predominantly stem from the inherent complexities of the texts themselves, particularly in relation to language use, structure, and thematic depth. Aituganova et al. (2023) observe that poetry, unlike prose or drama, demands elevated cognitive engagement due to its condensed language and complex imagery, requiring students to employ higher-order thinking skills to interpret and analyse poetic texts effectively.

Furthermore, prior research emphasises the importance of aligning poetry texts with the linguistic proficiency levels of students. Syed & Wahas (2020) emphasize the necessity of selecting poetry texts that match students' linguistic proficiency levels to enhance comprehension and engagement, particularly in EFL contexts, where complex language can hinder understanding. Freyn (2017) found that allowing students to choose or negotiate poetry texts in EFL classrooms significantly increases their motivation and engagement, as it fosters a sense of ownership and relevance in their learning process. Additionally, students tend to prefer pedagogical methodologies that invite personal responses and reflections over rigid, teacher-centred approaches that prioritise rote memorisation and standardised assessments (Widdowson, 1990).

Moreover, integrating literature into English language teaching can enhance language proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical thinking skills (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazer, 1993). Educators need to cultivate pedagogical strategies that align with students' interests to stimulate their engagement with literary texts (Oboh, 2025). Literary texts provide authentic, rich linguistic input and cultural insights, fostering students' imaginative engagement and critical thinking through exposure to diverse language structures and cultural contexts (Paran et al., 2022). Language Skills Development is enhanced by literary works in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills, providing authentic language usage and context (Rahimi & Riasati, 2018; Santos & Cruz, 2020). Literature exposes learners to diverse cultural environments, promoting cross-cultural understanding and empathy (Kim & Cha, 2021; Chen & Yang, 2020). Analysing literary texts develops critical thinking, analytical, and interpretive skills (Işıklı & Tarakcioglu, 2017). Engaging with literature fosters creativity, imagination, and self-expression in English pedagogy (Wahya et al., 2023).

Despite the benefits, teaching literature in English pedagogy poses challenges, such as text complexity. Literary texts often feature intricate language structures and archaic vocabulary, especially evident in historical or

struggle to decipher unfamiliar language forms and expressions (Ilyas & Afzal, 2021). For instance, works like Shakespeare's plays or Chaucer's poetry employ language that has evolved over centuries, presenting syntactic constructions and idiomatic expressions that differ significantly from modern usage (Seo & Kim, 2020). Literary works often present extensive length and dense prose, which can overwhelm EFL students, especially those with limited reading proficiency or time constraints (Soy et al., 2023).

Epics like Dante Alighieri's "The Divine Comedy" or Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace" require sustained engagement and patience. The complete volume of text can challenge students to maintain interest and comprehend complex narrative arcs and character development. To address this, instructors can employ differentiated instructional strategies. Breaking down lengthy texts into manageable sections with clear reading goals helps students navigate the narrative structure effectively (Beloufa, 2023). Choosing texts that balance linguistic difficulty with learner engagement and interest presents a challenge (Babae & Yahya, 2014). Creating assessment methods that evaluate learners' understanding and interpretation of literary texts is yet another difficulty that literature introduces in English pedagogy (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Encouraging learners to engage with literary texts, using approaches like reader-response theory and digital storytelling, is yet another challenge (Kim & Cha, 2021). Understanding students' attitudes toward poetry is vital for improving English literature pedagogy. This research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on literature education and emphasise the need for pedagogical practices that resonate with students' interests and comprehension levels.

Statement of the Problem

There is no doubt that integrating literature into English Language teaching is a valuable approach to enhancing language proficiency, cultural awareness, and critical thinking skills. However, the researcher has noted in his many years of teaching in secondary schools that students shy away from studying literature as a result of the inclusion of poetry. There are three genres of literature: poetry, prose, and drama. Of the three genres of literature, poetry is the least liked and most complained about by students and teachers of Literature in English. The distaste for poetry could be due to its language. Nnolim (1990) noted that the language of poetry is nuanced, not explicit, connotative rather than denotative, allusive rather than direct, figurative rather than literal, and symbolic rather than plain.

Because the language of poetry challenges the intellect more than that of prose, prose is more popular with teachers and students (Nnolim, 1990). Aside from the problem of the language of poetry is the problem of the method of teaching. The majority of schools in the Municipal Area Council use the traditional lecture method to teach poetry, and this method is mainly teacher-centred. The teacher begins his lesson by writing the title of the poem and the name of the poet on the blackboard. He may then read or ask a student to read the poem to the class, after which he attempts an interpretation of the poem; while the students remain passive, and listen even when they do not understand. The lesson ends after the teacher has instructed the learners to identify the figures of speech in the poem. In Nigeria, this conventional lecture method is still what obtainable (Duyelimi, 2000) is. From the foregoing, it is possible that both the language of poetry and the method of teaching it may have constituted major attitudinal problems for learners, and these are the problems this work addressed.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine whether or not the language of poetry influences the attitude of students toward the study of the subject.
2. Ascertain if the lecture or the dramatisation methods of teaching poetry could influence the attitude of students to the study of the subject

Research Questions

The following questions are raised to guide the study:

a. What effect does the language of poetry have on the attitude of students to the study of the subject?
b. How do the lecture and dramatisation methods of teaching poetry influence the attitude of students towards the study of the subject

Research Hypotheses

The following are hypotheses are tested in the study:

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the language of poetry and the attitude of students to the study of the subject.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the lecture and the dramatisation methods of teaching poetry and the attitude of students to the study of the subject.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study, in which a cross-section of the population was selected to represent the views of the entire population. For this study, the views of the selected students and teachers of Literature in English were used to obtain data.Thisis in accordance with Campbell et al. (2020), who sees research design in qualitative studies as a technique for deliberately selecting individuals or groups with relevant experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. The Population of this study consisted of all 26 teachers of Literature in English and all the 894 students of Literature in English from SS1 – SS3 in the 21 public secondary schools in the Municipal Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory (SEB, 2015). Thirteen (13) teachers (being 50% of the total population of teachers of Literature in English in senior secondary schools in the Municipal Area Council) were drawn from ten (10) out of the 21 public secondary schools in the Municipal Area Council. Also, 50% of the population of students in the senior secondary schools (SS1-SS3), in Municipal Area Council (consisting of four hundred and forty-seven (447) students), were drawn as part of the sample study.

The sample size was determined using a simple random sampling technique. In each of the selected schools, 44 students studying Literature in English participated in the questionnaire. In schools with more than 44 student respondents, pieces of paper labelled "Yes" and "No" were placed in a basket for the students to draw from. Those who picked a paper with the “Yes” inscription were asked to complete the questionnaire. In schools with fewer than 44 students, a purposive sampling method was used, meaning that all Literature in English students in those schools were included as respondents. For data collection, the researcher designed an instrument. Section A of the instrument focuses on personal data and consists of five items. Section B contains four items, where respondents are asked to indicate from a checklist of four options whether the language of poetry affects students' attitudes toward studying the subject. Section C addresses teaching methods, asking respondents to choose from a list of four items to determine if dramatisation enhances the learning of poetry more than traditional lecture methods.

Result and Discussion of Findings

The researcher used 2.5 as the cut-off mean score to decide whether or not the research questions would be accepted or rejected. The mean score of 2.5 and above indicates a positive response to the research question, while a mean of less than 2.5 and below indicates a negative response to the research question. 'A' and 'B' are used to differentiate the responses from students and teachers. 'A' therefore represents students' responses in the table, while B represents teachers' responses in the following Tables.

Table 1: The Language of Poetry has an effect on the Attitude of Students to the Study of the Subject

S/N	Students	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean (X)
1	The language of poetry is not difficult to understand	64	101	214	68	1, 055	2.4
2	The language of poetry needs to be explained by the teacher.	302	92	40	13	1, 577	3.5
3	The language of poetry is figurative.	135	312	0	0	1, 476	3.3
4	The language of poetry is easier to understand than that of prose.	61	102	245	39	1, 079	2.4
	Section mean (X)						**2.9**
S/NO	**Lecturer**	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean (X)
1	The language of poetry is not difficult to understand	1	4	6	2	30	2.3
2	The language of poetry needs to be explained by the teacher.	10	3	0	0	49	3.8
3	The language of poetry is figurative.	7	6	0	0	46	3.5
4.	The language of poetry is easier to understand than that of prose.	0	4	7	2	28	2.2
	Section mean (X)						**3.0**

The data are presented in Table 1 highlights the influence of poetic language on students' attitudes towards the study of poetry. Both teachers and students provided responses indicating that the sectional mean scores exceeded the established cut-off mean score of 2.5. Notably, there was a consensus among both groups regarding items 1 and 4, which assert that the language of poetry poses significant challenges to comprehension and is not more accessible than prose. This alignment in perceptions suggests a substantial correlation between the complexity of poetic language and students' attitudes towards the study of the subject.

Research Question Two: How do the lecture and dramatisation methods of teaching poetry influence the attitude of students towards the study of the subject?

Table 2: Lecture and Dramatisation Methods of Teaching Poetry

S/NO	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean (X)
5	Dramatising poetry will make it easier to understand.	215	101	82	49	1, 376	3.1
6	Lines of a poem can be memorised easily by acting out the poem.	111	210	126	0	1, 326	3.0
7	Lecturing is a better way to understand poetry.	94	119	212	22	1, 179	2.6
8	Dramatising a poem will help to retain it in memory for a longer time than when it is read.	113	214	120	0	1, 334	3.0
	Section Mean (X)						**2.9**

S/NO	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	Mean (X)
5	Dramatising poetry will make it easier to understand.	9	4	0	0	48	3.7
6	Lines of a poem can be memorised easily by acting out the poem.	7	4	2	0	44	3.4
7	Lecturing is a better way to understand poetry.	0	3	4	6	23	1.8
8	Dramatising a poem will help to retain it in memory for a longer time than when it is read.	11	2	0	0	50	3.8
	Section Mean (X)						**3.2**

Table 2 examines the effectiveness of lecture and dramatisation methods in the instruction of poetry. The analysis of responses to items 5-8 reveals sectional mean scores of 2.9 and 3.2 for the respective methodologies. These findings suggest a consensus among the respondents, comprising both students and teachers, that the dramatisation method enhances students' comprehension of poetry, subsequently positively influencing their attitudes toward the subject. Notably, items 5, 6, and 8 received elevated mean scores, while item 7, which pertains to the lecture method, garnered a comparatively low mean response, indicating its diminished efficacy in this context.

Test of Hypotheses

This section deals with the testing of hypotheses stated in Chapter One. Two hypotheses were formulated and listed. The t-test statistical method of data analysis was used at a 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis Testing

Ho_1: *There is no significant difference between the language of poetry and the attitude of students to the study of the subject.*

Table 3: Language of Poetry and the Attitude of Students to the Study of the Subject

Types	_ X	SD	Df	t-test Cal	t-test crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Students	111.8	9,849.1	15	4.4	1.753		Rejected
Teachers	3.3	9.5				0.05	

The analysis presented in Table 3 shows a calculated t-value of 4.4 with 15 degrees of freedom. The critical t-value from the t-test at a significance level of 0.05 is 1.753. Since the calculated t-value exceeds the critical value, we reject the null hypothesis. This finding indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the language of poetry and students' attitudes toward studying this subject in educational settings.

Ho_2: *There is no significant difference between the lecture and the dramatisation methods of teaching poetry and the attitude of students to the study of the subject.*

Table 4: Lecture and the Dramatisation Methods of Teaching Poetry, and the Attitude of Students to the Study of the Subject

Types	_ X	SD	df	t-test Cal	t-test crit.	Level of Significar	Decision
Students	111.8	4964.4	15	6.7	1.753	0.05	Rejected
Teachers	3.3	11.4					

Based on the data presented, a t-test was conducted, which resulted in a calculated t-value of 6.7. This value was compared to a critical t-value of 1.753 at a significance level of 0.05, with degrees of freedom equal to 15. These findings indicate that we can reject the null hypothesis, suggesting a significant difference between the lecture method and the dramatization method regarding their impact on students' attitudes toward the study of poetry. This result highlights the effectiveness of using diverse instructional strategies to enhance student engagement and appreciation of the subject.

Discussion of Findings

Several key findings emerged from this research. A notable revelation is that the linguistic complexity of poetry significantly affects students' attitudes towards the subject. Both students and teachers participating in the study acknowledged the difficulties associated with the language of poetry. This observation aligns with Wan's (2009) assertion that poetry is often met with disfavour due to its reliance on abundant figurative language and imagery,

which students often struggle to interpret. Furthermore, this finding echoes Nnolim's (1990) characterisation of poetic language as nuanced and connotative rather than denotative, allusive rather than direct, and symbolic rather than literal. Consequently, educators must dedicate more time to elucidating challenging vocabulary in poetic texts and encourage students to utilise dictionaries to explore new words, thereby facilitating their application in original poetic compositions. Additionally, the study found that the methods employed in teaching poetry, specifically, lecture and dramatisation, significantly influence students' attitudes towards the subject.

Evidence suggests that dramatisation outperforms the lecture method in fostering positive student engagement, as affirmed by both students and teachers involved in the research. This conclusion aligns with Abatan's (2014) findings, which highlighted a notable difference in student performance when comparing those taught Yoruba poetry through dramatic methods versus those taught via lecture, with the former group achieving superior outcomes. It is worth noting that while the languages of the poetry studied (English and Yoruba) differ, the underlying pedagogical implications remain relevant. Contrastingly, an examination of Amao's (2013) work indicates a divergence in method, focusing on a stylistic and thematic approach to teaching poetry. Such an approach may inadvertently reflect the lecture method, where the teacher predominantly provides explanations and students adopt a passive learning stance.

Moreover, Joroslav Vala et al. (2012) emphasised the potential for positively influencing students' attitudes toward poetry through sensitive and creative teaching approaches that honour student perspectives. Like Amao's study, this research underscores the critical importance of pedagogical methodology. Employing appropriate teaching strategies in the context of poetry can significantly enhance students' attitudes and engagement with literature. To foster student interest and attention, it is crucial for educators to de-emphasise traditional lecture methods in favour of more interactive and participatory approaches to teaching poetry.

Conclusion

This study has established the importance of pedagogy and student attitudes as crucial factors in enhancing students' interest in poetry, a significant branch of literature. It found that poetry is among the least liked and most complained about subjects by both students and teachers. Many students avoid literature in English due to their fear of poetry. The primary challenges associated with poetry include its complex language and the teaching methods employed by educators. The specific objectives of this research were to determine whether poetic language and teaching methods influence students' attitudes towards studying the subject.

The study posed two research questions and formulated two hypotheses aligned with these specific objectives. The scope of the research includes SS1-SS3 students and teachers of Literature in English, selected through a descriptive survey design from ten public schools in the Municipal Area Council of Abuja. This work holds significant benefits for students, teachers, parents, and education policymakers.

Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages. The research questions were assessed using mean scores of 2.5, while the hypotheses were tested with t-test statistics at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings underscore the need for innovative teaching strategies in English literature pedagogy, particularly in poetry instruction. By fostering an interactive and culturally responsive learning environment, educators can significantly enhance student engagement and academic performance in literary studies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are essential for enhancing students' understanding and appreciation of poetry:

1. Analysing Poetic Devices: Introduce students to key poetic devices such as imagery, metaphor, simile, alliteration, personification, and rhyme scheme. Use examples from well-known poems to demonstrate how these devices enhance meaning and evoke emotions.
2. Discussion and Interpretation: Facilitate class discussions around the themes and meanings of poems, encouraging students to share their interpretations and feelings. This dialogue promotes deeper understanding through peer engagement.
3. Drama as a Learning Tool: To spark interest in poetic texts, consider conducting drama classes that allow students to embody the themes and emotions present in the poems. This experiential learning approach fosters a practical understanding of poetry.

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TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICTCS AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN OBOWO, IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the relationship between teacher characteristics and senior secondary school students' performance in English Language in Obowo, Imo State.The descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. A total of thirty-six (36) Senior Secondary School (SSS) English Language teachers and three hundred and sixty (360) SSS2 students were used for the study. The instruments used were West African Examination Council's (WAEC) adopted standardized test and researcher-designed questionnaire. The data were analysed using the percentage and contingency correlation coefficient. Four research questions and four hypotheses were formulated and tested. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' qualification, levels of experience, on-the-job career development programmes, gender and senior and senior school students' performance in English Language.Based on the result of the study, it was recommended that teachers participate in on-the-job career development programmes, government and private school owners should employ professionally trained English Language teachers to teach English Language at the senior secondary school level of education and that experienced teachers should also be employed to teach English Language at the all the secondary school levels.
Keywords: Relationship, Teacher characteristics, Academic Performance, On-the-job training, Gender, Qualification

Introduction
No country has ever existed or will ever exist effectively without a language; otherwise, they will experience confusion. Rabiah (2012) stated that over the years, language has remained and will still remain the most important tool through which human beings communicate with one another. Rubiah (2012) further affirmed that it serves as a means of communication, unity and socialization. Hence, anybody wishing to socialize must be able to speak the language of the defined society. English Language is one of the core subjects taught at all levels of education in Nigeria. It is not one of the Nigerian languages but it has come to function as one, as a result of the first intimate contact between the British and some ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria (Prezi, 2020). Since then, great importance has been attached to the English language in Nigeria.

Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2020) pointed out that the English language came to Nigeria through businessmen, missionaries, politicians and educationists while Oloruntoba-Ojo (2015) noted that the English language is a colonial legacy bequeathed to us by Britain. Nigeria happens to be one of the nations where the English language has been firmly entrenched and, it cannot be an overstatement to say that the English language is an auspicious and providential colonial linguistic legacy in Nigeria (Jangkkam, 2024).Academic performance of students has always been of great concern to parents, guardians, teachers and government all over the world. Obiakor (2024) observed that educational stakeholders often debate on it because it is a topic that scholars cannot ignore due to its importance. Cowen (2022) pointed at students' performance as being a subject of national case and comparative studies among countries since the beginning of educational theory. Kumar et al (2021) stated that academic performance is a basic criterion by which all teaching and learning processes are evaluated.

Among senior secondary schools, poor academic performance has been observed in some school subjects, especially English Language and Mathematics. Oyetunde (2024) asserted that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and their parents, its effects are also grave on the society in terms of shortage of manpower in economy and politics. He noted that this has grossly affected the quality of production, since the higher percentage of manpower is half-baked.According to WAEC enrolment from (2008-2013), 8,881,042candidates sat for the English Language examination at the senior school certificate level; and only 3,552,416 (39.88333%) approximately 40% of the candidates passed the subject, ranging from A1–C6 (source: statistics of Entry performance in WAEC, 2008 – 2013). The analysis showed that the students' performance within the period studied was discouraging, and accusing fingers are pointed at the teachers for not doing their job.

Evidences from available research findings suggest that teachers' characteristics are very important factors that determine students' achievement in schools (Enwelim, 2016.,Jumare& Muhammad, 2021., Babatunde, 2025). Lee (2020) stated that students with less exposure to qualified teachers seem far less likely to achieve academic success than those with teachers that are more qualified.Mabirizi and Ojok (2024) and Ibrahim andEminah (2023) confirmed the same assertion. In the opinion of Barneth (2024), teacher characteristics that could be inferred to mean the quality of the teacher, are said to be the most important school factors that influence the performance level of students. Academic or professional qualification of the English Language teacher is therefore of paramount importance.

Vernekar (2022) highlighted the importance of experienced teachers in schools. According to Darling-Hammond, Schachner, Wojcikiewicz and Flook (2023), an experienced teacher can make all the difference to a child's cognitive development. It is therefore a general belief that the longer a professional stays on the job, the more he becomes skilful and perfect in the technique of performing the job. Sims et al (2021) explained that a professional teacher becomes more efficient and effective when he stays longer on his job and with experience and knowledge he acquired; he becomes more familiar with the challenges of his students. Aharbi (2020) also submitted that teachers' experience is a determining factor for all round development of the students.

Ukeje (2008) emphasised the importance of employing trained teachers and categorically stated that if there are mistakes in doing this, generations unborn would be affected.Darling-Hammond et al (2017) stressed the importance of professional development as having proven itself as an effective way to continue to evolve as a professional and capable practitioner in the field of education. Gan (2025) saw gender as a variable that brings about differences in the effectiveness of teachers and performance of students in schools.Gong, Lu and Song (2018) supported by Hwang and Fitzpatrick (2021) saw teachers' gender as detrimental to students' academic progress. Heinstein, Stuebs,Moe and Houseman (2022) argued that females perform better in verbal tasks than their male counterparts and therefore would influence their students in verbal tasks than their male counterparts and therefore would influence their students in verbal tasks.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of English Language in Nigeria education and the researcher's efforts to improve teaching and learning,students' performance in English Language has remained low (Oguejiofor, Anyakaora&Ekechukwu, 2025) and accusing fingers are pointed at teachers (Ojetunde&Ayodabo, 2024).Meanwhile, available research indicates that teacher characteristics are important factors that can determine students' performance. This is confirmed by Jumare& Mohammad, 2021; Armstrong, 2015; Shiyyab, Alshurafat, Arabiat&Yousef, 2024;Rockstroh, 2013 and Susuoroka, Nomori&Padmore, 2023. Lee and Lee (2020) asserted that few educators, economists or politicians argue that highly qualified teachers will produce greater students' achievement than less qualified teachers;hence, the essence of this study which is on teacher characteristics and students' performance.

Earlier studies carriedon teacher characteristics and students' achievement were predominantly on senior secondary Mathematics, Chemistry, Economics and junior secondary Social Studies respectively, which were purely experimental. This is confirmed in Walker (2014), Patrick (2022), Wang, Lin, Spalding, Elecka & Odell (2011), Khan, Khan & Shah, (2024) and Engida (2024).However, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, none of the previous researches examined the relationship between teacher characteristics and senior school students' performance in English Language in Obowo, Imo State. It is against this observation that this current study was conducted to bridge the perceived research gap arising from earlier studies.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the English Language teachers' characteristics and the performance of senior school students in English Language in Obowo, Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

a. the relationship between the educational qualification of teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.
b. the relationship between the experience levels of teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.
c. the relationship between teachers' exposure to on-the-job career development programmes and senior school students' performance in English Language; and
d. therelationship between English Language teachers' gender and senior school students' performance in English Language in Obowo.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between the educational qualification of English Language teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between experience levels of English Language teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between the English Language teachers' participation in on-the-job career development programmes and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Ho_4: There is no significant relationship between English Language teachers' gender and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Methodology

The study was a descriptive research of a survey type. The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school English Language teachers and students in Imo State. The sampling technique utilised was purposive sampling technique. Thirty-six (36) English Language teachers and (360) senior secondary school students taught by these teachers were selected from eight (8) public and ten (10) private secondary schools from Obowo LGA, Imo State. Two (2) S.S. English Language teachers were selected from each sampled school. The research instruments used were a fifty (50) WAEC adopted standardised test items on English Language known as "Performance Test in English Language (PTEL)" and teachers' questionnaire (TQ) which comprised teachers' bio-data with questions on the teachers' characteristics studied.The instruments were subjected to content and face validity and wasanalysed using descriptive statistics. Percentage was used for population description, while contingency correlation coefficient was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho_1: *There is no significant relationship between educational qualification of English Language teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.*

Table 1: Educational Qualification and Students' Performance in English Language

Educational Qualification	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9	Total	r-val.	p-val.	Decision
NCE	2	2	1	0	11	9	1	6	8	50			
OND	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	7	12	.057	.000	S
HND	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
B.SC	0	0	0	4	3	6	2	4	11	30			
BA-ED	23	14	11	40	24	25	12	17	36	212			
B.A	2	1	1	1	2	3	0	3	6	19			
M.ED	1	1	3	6	0	2	0	5	3	20			
TOTAL	28	18	16	51	41	55	17	36	91	353			

Table 1 shows that there is a significant relationship between educational qualification of English Language teachers and senior school students' performance in English Language.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' experience level and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Table 2: Teachers' Experience and Students' Performance in English Language

Experience	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	D8	F9	Total	r-val.	p-val.	Decision
1-4 years	7	10	5	8	4	19	4	13	57	127			
5-9 years	8	7	2	20	7	11	7	13	27	102	0.35	.000	S
10 years & above	13	1	9	33	20	25	6	10	7	124			
Total	28	18	16	61	31	55	17	36	91	353			

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between the English language teachers' participation in training programmesand senior school students' performance in English Language.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between the English Language teachers' participation in on-the-job career development programmes and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Table 3: Teachers' Participation in On-the-job Career Development Programmes and Students' Performance in English Language

Teachers' participation in on-the-job Career Training	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9	Total	r-val.	p-val.	Decision
Frequently	16	0	5	23	13	25	7	5	12	106			
Rarely	10	4	5	23	11	21	8	18	46	146	0.31	.003	S
Never	2	14	6	15	7	9	2	13	33	101			
Total	28	18	16	61	31	55	17	36	91	353			

Table 3 shows that there is a significant relationship between the English Language teachers' participation in on-the-job career training programmes and senior students' performance in English Language.

H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Table 4: Teachers' Gender and Students' Performance in English Language

Teachers' Gender	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	D8	F9	Total	r-val.	p-val.	Decision
Male	1	1	1	17	11	20	7	16	38	112			
Female	27	17	15	44	20	35	10	20	53	241	0.27	.000	S
Total	28	18	16	61	31	55	17	36	91	353			

There is a significant relationship between the English Language teachers' gender and senior school students' performance in English Language.

Discussion of the Findings

This study revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' educational qualification and senior school students' performance in English Language inObowo, Imo State. This is in consonance with Amadi (2022) who found teachers' educational qualification and competence as significantly and positively correlating with students' academicperformance in public senior secondary schools in South-South and Obeka (2024) who found teachers' qualifications influencing students' achievement in English Language. It is on the other hand, in contrast with the finding of Abuseji (2007) and Okeke (2024) who found no significant relationship between teachers' qualification and academic achievement of students.

In addition, the finding showed a significant relationship between teachers' experience level and senior school students' performance in English Language. This agrees with Ichazu and Omoregie (2020), Darling-Hammond, Schchner, Flook, Muna&Kalam (2024) and Oguta (2022) who noted that students learn more from experienced teachers than from the less experienced.

More so, it was discovered that there was a significant relationship between the English Language teachers' participation in on-the-job career training and senior school students' performance in English Language in Obowo. The finding agrees with the finding of Coldwell (2017) whose finding showed professional development as having significant relationship with students' academic performance. Thisemphasises the need for the English Language teachers to stay current in their field in order to continually evolve as professionals (Tataway, 2020). This contrasts with Bamire (2021) who found significant but negative correlation between teachers' in-service professional development and students' achievement in senior secondary schools in Osun State.

Lastly, it was found that there was a significant relationship between teachers' gender and senior school students' performance in English Language in Obowo. This agrees with Igberadja (2016) and Gan et al(2025) who found a relationship between teachers' gender and academic achievement of students. It also corroborated Garba(2013) and Thomas (2010) who concluded that students achieve academic success only when they are taught by teachers of the same gender. This finding on the other hand, disagrees with Feng (2023) and Isemede (2022)who found no significant relationship between teachers' gender and students' performance in China and in Edo state respectively.

Conclusion

The result of the study showed that teachers' educational qualification, on-the-job career development programmes, level of experience and gender jointly have influence on senior school students' performance in English Language in Obowo, Imo State.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions made in the study, the following recommendations which would be of great benefit to teachers and other stakeholders of education were made.

1. On-the-job career training programmes should be encouraged and strengthened for English Language teachers.
2. Teachers should realize that what they teach and characteristics displayed during teaching and learning could improve or impede the performance of their students.
3. Every child, whether male or female, should be made to develop interest in the learning of English Language.
4. Government and private school owners should ensure that they employ qualified and experienced teachers. On-the-job career development programmes should be encouraged and financed.

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