

Students' Perception of Teachers' Factors in the Teaching and Learning of English Language in Nigerian Secondary Schools

Olorunfemi-Olabisi Florence Abiola (Ph.D.)

Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University,
Akungba- Akoko.

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Abstract

This paper investigates students' perception of teachers' factors (teachers' attitude, method of teaching and classroom management) in the teaching and learning of English Language in secondary schools in Nigeria. The study is a descriptive research design of the survey method. Two hundred (200) students were randomly selected from 5 secondary schools for the study while only 192 representing 96% who responded correctly to the instrument were used for the study. Three research questions and three hypotheses were generated. A self-constructed questionnaire titled "Students Perception of Teachers Attitude, Method of Teaching and Classroom Management Scale" (SPTAMTCMS) was used to collect data for the study. Frequency counts, percentages and chi-square statistics were used to analyse the data collected. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' attitude, method of teaching and classroom management to the teaching and learning of English Language as perceived by students. This implies that expected performance of students in English Language is based on the teachers' attitude, method of teaching the subject and classroom management. Based on the above-findings, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Attitude, Teachers, Performance, English Language, Teaching/Learning

1. Introduction

The performance of students in English Language in secondary school is generally very poor in Nigeria. Many students seeking admission into higher institution of learning could not be admitted because of their failure to obtain a credit grade in English Language. The importance of English language in the Nigerian Education process has remained unchallenged. Adeyoju (1986) , Ubahakwe (1980) located the roots of failure in the educational setting been the educational system, teachers' status and motivation, examination pattern, teachers' preparation and method of teaching, teachers qualification, classroom management, language philosophy among all others. Labo- Popoola (2002) affirmed that the most important element in the development of an educational programme is the teacher. Ngada (2007) stated that the success or failure of any educational programme hinges largely on the adequate availability of well qualified, competent and dedicated teachers.

A teacher is a very significant figure in the school environment where he works and so his attitude to work tends to have significant implications which cannot be dismissed if academic excellence is to be achieved in our educational institutions. It is very clear that teachers' way of thinking and beliefs guide his/her behavior in decision making in or outside the classroom. Teachers in Nigeria, according to Okebukola (2005), have problems because they face the problems of inadequate exposure to teaching practice, poor classroom management and control, shallow subject matter knowledge, lack of professionalism and inability to communicate effectively in English among others. In-order to carry out the teaching task effectively and efficiently, teachers are guided by some principles of teaching and learning which have great implication. To achieve academic excellence in the 21st century and beyond, the role of the teacher as portrayed by their students through his/her attitude to work needs to be addressed.

2. Teachers' Attitude

Attitude is concerned with an individual's way of feeling, thinking and behaving and this has serious implications for the learners, the teachers, the immediate social group and the school system (Yara, 2009). In other words, a person attitude is reflected through his/her behavior.

A teacher's attitude is portrayed in his behaviour towards his work of teaching. Bandura (1977) identified the causes of behaviour in terms of work performance as being external or internal. Internal causes are perceived to be ones genetic background and personality traits. While external causes are perceived to be related to one's physical environment and social setting. Internal causes are supposed to represent factors that are completely under the control of or within the individual while the external causes are supposed to be beyond the control or outside of the individual. Ezenweani (2002) defined teaching as the ability to guide one to gain knowledge in a classroom setting where the teacher does the work of guiding the learner through social interactions, (student-teacher-student-student) to gain experiences that are worthwhile for social living in the larger society. This means that effective teaching implies positive relationship with both causes.

Many studies like Olorunfemi, (2010), Olaofe, (2004), and Alaku, (2000) have noted some of the causes attributed to poor performance in English languages like teachers attitude, method of teaching, teachers' classroom management, teachers' qualification, teachers' motivation and so on. In addition, Popoola (2006) affirmed that when competent and qualified teachers are given the right training, there will be quality if one is self-motivated and responsible as a teacher. Most academic problems are solved if the teacher stimulates learning through cognitive and affective methods of teaching. The essence of being an effective teacher lies on what to do to foster student's learning. Adeyanju (1986) noted that a confident use of educated English is generally a good indication of intellectual potentials. This may be the reason while learners deficient in English language usually experience more difficulty in the learning of concepts demanding more than rote-learning tasks. It was revealed that students draw from their teachers' disposition to form their own attitudes which eventually influence their learning outcomes. Thus, attitude of teachers towards their students must be positive to enhance their learning in English Language

According to Morvis (1996), for learners to achieve in reading, there ought to be a very stimulating environment. Interest and desire to achieve play an important role in stimulating the student to learn how to read. Those who find it very difficult through lack of intelligence, linguistic ability or favorable influence in the home may require special stimulations in the school. Readiness to read on the part of the student may depend very much on the teacher's capacity to stimulate interest. The author maintained that reading achievement is related to the skills of the teacher; and that students taught by untrained, inexperienced and unskillful teachers tend to be specifically backward in reading.

3. Method of Teaching

Okpala (2006) stated that one of the important media of realizing the educational objectives is the appropriate teaching method. According to the author, the method adopted by the teacher either promotes or hinders learning. In consonance, Ebenezer (2009) states that teaching strategies that one uses will undoubtedly affect one's philosophy of teaching. The teacher should show interest to what they are teaching, make some explanation, show respect and concern for students and their learning. It has been observed that most teachers teach in way that only enables the learners to memorize the concepts without really understanding and applying what they've been taught. This happens as a result of teachers' teaching /learning process. Afe (2001) affirmed that for teaching and learning to be meaningful, teachers should be aware of the different teaching methods that will suit the a variety of students in the classrooms.

Quisenberry (1993) stressed on how teacher's inability to exploit the linguistic and cultural differences of learner's background has led to ineffective teaching and learning process. The author stated that learners perform poorly when they are faced with teachers who criticize and mock these cultural elements which are fundamental to learning of situation. Sarcastic mimicking of mistakes and deficiencies especially in pronunciation of certain sounds lead to student's loss of interest, self-esteem and confidence in learning the language. These among other reasons breed passiveness, truancy and poor performance in the language.

4. Classroom Management

Classroom management entails adequate class control, classroom organization, cleanliness and sitting arrangement. The management of the classroom therefore portrays the teacher's attitude to work. Adegboyeje and Afolabi (1992) see classroom management "as a process concerned with identifying, understanding, maintaining, stimulating, controlling and unifying human and material resources in teaching and learning situation". The teacher is essentially the centre in classroom management. The leadership style of the teacher in the classroom is worthy of note, as this will likely affect the performance of the students. Effective use of class discipline with adequate reinforcement is also part of classroom management reflecting the teacher's positive attitude to work. Seweje and Dahunsi (2004) are of the opinion that poor

classroom management had led to poor academic performance. Thus, failure to effect adequate classroom management depicts the teacher's negative attitude to work.

From the review of related literature, it is deduced that teachers' attitudes, method of teaching and classroom management could be associated with performance of learners. This paper therefore focuses on perception of students on the significance of these factors to academic performance in English Language.

5. Design

The study is a descriptive research of the survey method. Questionnaire were used to collect data from the students on their perception of teachers factors (teachers attitude, method of teaching and classroom management) on the teaching and learning of English Language in the secondary schools.

6. Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study was made up of 200 (two hundred) students selected from 5 (five) secondary schools. 40 (forty) students were randomly selected from each of the school making the total of 200 (two hundred) students involved in the study.

7. Instrument

A self- constructed questionnaire titled "Students Perception of Teachers Attitude, Method of Teaching and Classroom Management to the Teaching of English Language Scale (SPTAMTCMS)" was used to collect data needed for the study. The instrument was divided into two parts namely sections A and B. Section A sought for information on the bio-data of the respondents. This included Name of school, class, sex and age. Section B was composed of items on how students perceive their English language teachers' attitude, method of teaching and classroom management in the teaching and learning of the subject. The section consists of 15 items to collect data for the study. The instrument was subjected to the Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient value of 0.62 and thus ensured both face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained through test-retest method. The items of the instrument were responded to by ticking agree (A) or disagree (D)

8. Research Questions

1. How do students perceive teachers' attitude in the teaching and learning of English Language?
2. How do students perceive teachers' method in the teaching and learning of English Language?
3. How do students perceive teachers' classroom management in the teaching and learning of English Language?

9. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher's attitude, method of teaching and classroom management as perceived by students in teaching and learning of English Language.

10. Research Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study the following hypotheses were generated.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' teachers' attitude to teaching and learning of English Language.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' teachers' method of teaching and learning of English Language.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' teachers' classroom management to teaching and learning of English Language.

11. Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered by the researcher on the students selected for the study in the selected schools. The researcher collected the completed questionnaires from the respondents. Questionnaires were administered on the 300 students selected for the study. 267 questionnaires properly responded to by the students were subjected to statistical analysis.

12. Data Analysis

The data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages. Chi-square (X^2) statistically analysis was used to analysis the data collected and to determine the significance of the generated hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

13. Hypotheses Testing

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' teachers' attitude to teaching and learning of English Language.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis on perception of students to teachers' attitude towards teaching and learning of English Language

Response of students to teachers' attitude

S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree	RT	Df	CAL	X ² CRIT
1	My English teacher makes me to believe that English Language is not a difficult subject to pass at credit level.	89 (46.35)	103 (53.65)	192			
2	I enjoy my English lesson because of my teacher's attitude.	81 (42.19)	111 (57.81)	192			
3	My English teacher speaks English when addressing me in school.	79 (41.15)	113 (58.85)	192	4	34.50	9.49
4	My English teacher answers my question anytime I approach him or her.	68 (35.42)	124 (64.58)	192			
5	My English teacher encourages me whenever I make mistakes.	72 (37.5)	120 (62.5)	192			
	Column Total	389 (40.52)	571 (59.48)	960			

P=0.05 level of significance

Table 1 shows that the obtained chi-square value of 34.50 is greater than the critical value of 9.49 at $df=4$ at 0.05. level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship on attitude of teachers towards teaching and learning of English language is rejected. Therefore we can deduce that that there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitude and academic performance in English language as perceived by students.

H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' on teachers' method of teaching and learning of English Language.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis on perception responses of students on teachers' method of teaching and learning of English Language.

Response of Students to Teachers' Method of Teaching

S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree	RT	Df	X ² CAL	X ² CRIT
1	My teacher attends to students individually during English lesson.	77 (40.10)	115 (59.90)	192			
2	My teacher helps me to learn how to read and write correct English.	82 (42.71)	110 (57.29)	192			
3	My English teacher corrects error in an	72	120	192			

	appropriate way.	(37.5)	(62.5)		4	25.35	9.49
4	My English teacher's methods of teaching enable me to understand the subject when taught.	84 (43.75)	108 (56.25)	192			
5	Some topics are demonstrated in the class by my English teacher.	87 (45.31)	105 (54.69)	192			
	Column Total	402 (41.88)	558 (58.12)	960			

Table 2 shows that the obtained chi-square value of (25.35) is greater than the critical value of (9.49) at $df=4$ at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected, indicating that there is significant relationship between teachers' method of teaching on teaching and learning of English Language

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between the perception of students' teachers' classroom management to teaching and learning of English Language.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis on response of students to teachers' classroom management on teaching and learning of English Language.

Response of students to teachers' classroom management							
S/N	Items	Agree	Disagree	RT	Df	X ² CAL	X ² CRIT
1	My teacher keeps the classroom neat and orderly during English Language lessons.	93 (48.44)	99 (51.56)	192			
2	The discipline in the classroom makes the teaching and learning of English language effective.	83 (49.23)	109 (56.77)	192			
3	My teacher controls students' conduct and activities during English language lessons.	90 (46.88)	102 (53.12)	192	4	23.44	9.49
4	My teacher demonstrates efficient management over the resources available during the lesson.	67 (34.90)	125 (65.10)	192			
5	My teacher eliminates any distraction which might occur during teaching and learning of English language.	72 (37.5)	120 (62.5)	192			
	Column Total	405 (42.19)	555 (57.81)	960			

Table 3 shows that the obtained chi-square value of (23.44) is greater than the critical value of (9.49) at $df=4$ at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Thus, this indicated that there is significant relationship between teachers' classroom management on teaching and learning of English Language.

14. Discussion of Findings

The study found significant relationship between teachers' attitude, method of teaching and classroom management on the academic performance of students in learning English Language. The result of the findings as perceived by the students showed that teachers have a negative attitude to teaching of English language, therefore making learning of the subject difficult. This indicates that teachers' positive role is significant if academic excellence is to be achieved in our educational institutions. In order to achieve this academic excellence in the 21st century and beyond, the role of teachers as portrayed through their attitude, method of teaching and classroom management by their students cannot be overemphasized. This finding supports the assumption of Olaofe (2004), and Alaku, (2000) that attributed poor performance in English languages to teachers' attitude, method of teaching, teachers' classroom management, teachers' qualification, teachers' motivation and so on.

The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulated that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Thus, the success of English language programme depends greatly on the quality of the teachers. The results further ascertained the significant relationship that exists between teachers' method of teaching and academic performance of students in English Language. This result corroborates the finding of Okpala (2006) and Afe, (2001) which affirmed that the important media of realizing the educational objectives is the appropriate teaching method.

Okpala (2006) further ascertained that the method adopted by a teacher either promotes or hinders teaching and learning processes.

The result presented in table 3, revealed that classroom management has a significant relationship in the teaching and learning of English Language. This finding is in consonant with Okere, (2004), Seweje and Dahunsi (2004) findings that poor classroom management leads to poor academic performance. Thus, teachers must acquire skills and standard set for effective management of the classroom since failure to effect adequate classroom management depicts the teacher's negative attitude to work.

15. Conclusion

The roots of failure in the educational setting has been located to educational system, teachers' status and motivation, examination pattern, teachers' preparation and method of teaching, teachers qualification, classroom management, language philosophy and so on. Most academic problems are solved if the teacher stimulates learning through cognitive and affective methods of teaching.

No educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. It has been noted that the training of competent teachers was one compelling and persistent problem that African countries face. For high quality education, a high level of education of teachers becomes very important. A teacher is a very significant figure in the school environment where he works and so his attitude to work tends to have significant implications which cannot be dismissed if academic excellence is to be achieved in our educational institutions. The study has established that negative attitudes of teachers to the teaching of English language, inappropriate teaching method and poor classroom management are factors leading to poor academic performance of English Language.

16. Recommendations

This finding suggests that teachers' attitude should be pleasant for their students to develop interest during teaching and learning of English Language. Bandura (1977) affirmed that behaviors are acquired by watching another person or models performing a particular tasks or activities. The model displays while the learner observes and tries to imitate

The finding also suggests that teachers should be made to improve their knowledge through capacity building and the attendance of seminars and workshops. These will enable them to update themselves and be vast in knowledge. The quality of instruction delivered by a teacher is important for the achievement of instructional objectives. In order to ensure good performance of students, instructional content must be well selected, relevant material must be used and good method must be adopted.

Teachers should have their classroom under control. This is because without control, learning cannot take place. English language teachers should be good managers of their time and should make their lessons interesting.

Government should employ qualified teachers to teach each subject especially English Language.

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Appendix

Pupils' Evaluation of Pedagogical competencies of English Language Teachers in Nigeria Secondary schools

Students	Agree	Disagree	R T	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Critical
Male	48	52	100			
Female	30	62	92	1	6.75	3.84
Column Total	78	114	192			

Teachers' method of teaching

Students	Agree	Disagree	R T	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Critical
Male	39	61	100			
Female	28	64	92	1		3.84
Column Total	67	125	192			

Students	Agree	Disagree	R T	Df	X ² Cal	X ² Critical
Male	48	52	100			
Female	30	62	92	1	6.75	3.84
Column Total	78	114	192			

