ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCY IMPROVEMENT NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATORS IN TEACHING LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS WITH MULTIMEDIA AIDS

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the competency improvement need of English language teachers for adoption of multimedia instructional aids in teaching listening and speaking skills in senior secondary schools in Enugu education zone. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in order to determine the specific skill set for teaching two language skills of listening and speaking. Disproportionate sampling technique was used to select 100 teachers from 5 schools from each of the 3 LGAs in the study area from the population of 31 senior secondary schools and 183 English teachers. A researcher developed instrument titled Competency Improvement Questionnaire (CIQ) was used to draw out the gap between a predetermined proficiency level for effective instruction with the use of multimedia instructional aids and English language teachers' skill set in the use of multimedia instructional aids. Data were arranged and interpreted using mean ratings and decisions were taken using the limit of real numbers according to research questions. Findings show that English language teacher' proficiency level in the use of multimedia aids to teaching listening and speaking skills are demanding. Hence, the major educational implication of the findings of the study is that there is still need for improvement in the programme delivery to meet the demands of quality teaching of the four language skills with multimedia aids in secondary education. The main recommendation is that curriculum planners and developers should expose both the pre-service and in-service teachers to the techniques and skill set in the use of multimedia aids by imbedding such task in curriculum activities.

Introduction

Secondary education is the education which is received after the primary and before tertiary level. As

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the foundation for higher manpower skills being offered in the tertiary institutions, it is aimed at preparing an individual for useful living within the society. A major factor that necessitates secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for pupils to acquire expected permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills at the end of the training (Chinelo, 2011). Acknowledging the important role of this level of education, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2004) in the National Policy on Education (NPE) therefore documented secondary education as an essential feature towards:

a. Providing all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
b. Offering diversified curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities, and future roles;
c. Providing trained manpower in applied science technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
d. Developing and promoting Nigerian languages, arts and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage;
e. Inspiring students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
f. Fostering national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
g. Raising a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals, and live as good citizens; and
h. Providing technical knowledge and vocational skills, necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development.

It can be deduced that with these prospects, the objectives of secondary education have well been articulated to equip students with skills and attitudes for effective living. Quality secondary education that realizes the above objectives therefore has the potential to transform all sectors of the nation's economy.

In implementing the NPE secondary school curriculum which cuts across many subject areas to prepare students for a useful living within the society, English language is one of the core subjects and also adopted as the medium of instruction. English language is regarded as the backbone of all other subjects taught in secondary school, because it is the medium of instruction (Oribabor, 2014). Efforts are therefore made in English language class to inculcate in learners the four language skills (also known as the four skills of language learning). These are a set of four capabilities that allow an individual to comprehend and produce spoken language for proper and effective interpersonal communication. These Skills are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW).

Multimedia technology has the potential to play a positive role in improving activities and initiatives of students and teaching of LSRW in the classrooms. According to Shyamlee and Phil (2012), the necessity of application of multimedia technology to English language teaching are to cultivate students' interest in study, promote students' communication capacity, widen students' knowledge to gain an insightful understanding to English language culture, improve teaching effect, improve interaction between teacher, student and the learning environment, creates a context for language teaching and, to provide flexibility to course content. Hence, modern instructional aids are utilized for the upliftment of

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modern pedagogy which satisfy both visual and auditory senses of the students. For instance, computer technology comprising multimedia, tutor, videos, simulations, guided drills and practices, World Wide Web, e-mail, chat etc., are playing significant role in supporting and promoting the process of teaching and learning. Torat (2000) observed that multimedia aids can provide a meaning-focused, communicative learning environment, which serves the purposes of communicative language teaching. Nonetheless, as observed by (Shyamlee and Phil 2012),

It is true that there are teachers who use 'cutting edge' technology, but the majority of teachers still teach in the traditional manner. None of these traditional manners are bad or damaging the students. In fact, till date they are proving to be useful also. However, there are many more opportunities for students to gain confidence practice and extend themselves, especially for English as Second Language (ESL) students who learn the language for more than just fun. For them to keep pace with English Language Teaching (ELT) and gain more confidence they have to stride into the world of multimedia technology.

But adoption of multimedia aids changes the role of the teacher a lot. To teach better with such, a teacher need to be update with the changes to and the skill requirement. With such modern instructional aids, the teacher is considered as a guide and friend of students who helps in learning, does not provide knowledge but create the enabling environment for students to explore and construct meaning out of the learning environment. To achieve these objectives, English language teachers have very important roles to play in being the bridge between the curriculum and the students.

As the language of instruction and the official language, use of English language has become vital for better learning and earning in the Nigerian context. And being a global language, almost all the fields of life, economic, social, political, technological, pedagogical etc. are greatly influenced by this factor. This made it necessary to teach and develop English language skills among the students from school level. But there has always been public concern about the poor performance of students in external English examinations like the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). This situation is worrisome and may impede on attainment of educational objectives

Statement of Problem

The continual release of poor results in English language by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) WAEC has engendered research interest in many quarters (Adekola (2012). Educational researchers have attributed the dismay reality to teachers variables (Ajayi, 2012), students' variables (Nta, Oden, Egbe and Ebuta (2012) teaching strategies employed by teachers (Adekola (2012) and (Faniran and Olatunji, 2011) and poor government policy implementation (Fakeye (2012). Some other researchers' focus has however shifted to the skills and adequacy of the training of English language teachers (Faniran & Olatunji, 2011) and (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu (2006).

In order to ensure an effective teaching learning process, it is important for the teacher to be thoroughly acquainted with the teaching resources and potentials of such instructional aids as multimedia. Hence, the literature is replete with teacher characteristics in English language teaching and learning with focus being shifted to the role of

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teacher. But there is paucity of data on specific teacher skill set that are needed in modern English language classroom. The problem of this study therefore is that there is no empirical finding on the competencies needed for effective teaching of the four language skills of LSRW with the aid of multi-media instructional aids in a modern classroom.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive Survey research design aims to obtain information from a representative sample of the population which the investigator presents the findings as being representative of the population as a whole. This research design is considered appropriate by the researcher because it will allow the researcher to collect data from a sample and make inference about the population. The area of the study is Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu education zone is made of Enugu North, Enugu East and Isi-Uzo Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The population for this study consists of all the 183 English teachers in the 31 senior secondary schools in Enugu education zone. This consists of the 90 English teachers in 9 public schools in Enugu North, 51 English teachers in the 10 public schools in Enugu East and the 42 English teachers in the 12 public senior secondary schools. The sample for this study is 100 English Language teachers. Disproportionate sampling procedure was first used to select 5 schools from each of the 3 LGAs in the study area. All the teachers in the selected schools were subsequently used because the sub population is manageable. A researcher developed instrument titled Competency Improvement Questionnaire (CIQ) was used for data collection. CIQ was designed to draw out the gap between a predetermined proficiency level for effective instruction with the use of multimedia instructional aids and English language teachers' skill in the use of multimedia instructional. CIQ has sections A and B. Section A is demographic while section B is in two clusters, one for each research question. Cluster one has 12 items on skills needed for teaching listening with multimedia and cluster two also has 12 items on speaking,

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. However, CIQ was first given to three language educators in tertiary education to determine an acceptable minimum competency benchmark needed for English language teachers to be effective in the use of multimedia instructional aids. A benchmark of 3.0 was approximated from the average ratings of the three language educators. To answer the research questions that guided this study thereafter, data obtained were interpreted using the limit of real numbers. Hence, mean scores and standard deviation were used for the questionnaire items. In determining the competency improvement needs of the English Language teachers for each item, the mean scores obtained were deducted from the predetermined minimum proficiency level set by the language educators for effective instruction with the use of multimedia instructional aids in teaching the four language skill.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the multimedia competency improvement needs of English language teachers in teaching listening skills?

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Table 1: *Competency needs of English language teachers for effecting teaching of listening skills with the aid of multimedia*

S/N	Items	X	P-X	SD
1	In the use of free and open source software, I can create instructional design using technology	3.0	0	.82
2	While using social media to demonstrate active listening, I can download the appropriate software	2.6	0.4	.83
3	In the use of Digital storytelling, I can search library databases	2.3	0.7	1.0
4	While using Digital pronunciation dictionaries, I can upgrade the software	2.2	0.8	.88
5	I use internet to download my instructional materials	2.4	0.6	1.0
6	I use virtual classrooms to teach my students listening skills	2.1	0.9	.91
7	My students listen to documentaries	2.2	0.8	1.0
8	Mobile Applications help me in meeting my students' need outside the classroom	2.5	0.5	1.1
9	My students listen to Online spoken tutorials, while I highlight points	2.3	0.7	1.0
10	I use Computer software to engage students	2.2	0.8	1.0
11	In teaching listening skills, I use Smart Phones to develop instructional materials using presentation software or an authoring tool (e.g. Authorware, Toolbook)	2.2	0.8	.89
12	I use online audio and video conferencing to teach listening skills	1.8	1.2	1.0

X= Mean, **P-X** = Predetermined Proficiency level less the Mean, **SD** = Standard deviation

Table 1 show that English language teachers are only proficient in the use of free and open source software, because they can create instructional design using technology. But they have needs in all other competencies needed to teach speaking skills.

Research Question Two: What are the multimedia competency improvement needs of English language teachers in teaching speaking skills?

Table 2: Competency needs of English language teachers for effecting teaching of speaking skills with the aid of multimedia

S/N	Items	X	P-X	SD
1	I can update Digital pronunciation dictionaries that is used to teach speaking skills	2.9	0.1	1.0
2	I use computer software to teach spelling	2.3	0.7	.98
3	I can operate Lingua phone to teach phonics	2.1	0.9	.98
4	I download Online spoken tutorials for teaching	2.2	0.8	1.10
5	Under my guide, students participate actively in Virtual classrooms	2.4	0.6	1.01
6	I can save recorded speech online	2.3	0.7	1.03
7	I use Smart Phones to support my students oral presentations	2.1	0.9	1.03

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8	I use email to share task on pronunciation drills	2.0	1	.97
9	online audio and video conferencing	2.1	0.9	.91
10	I use speakers to amplify students voice in speaking drills	2.0	1	1.06
11	I can download online audio karaoke	2.2	0.8	.94
12	I use tape recorder to save students speech	2.3	0.7	1.22

Table 2 show that English language teachers have needs in all competencies for teaching speaking skills with the aid of multimedia aids.

Discussion of the Findings
Multimedia competency improvement needs of the English language teachers in teaching listening skills

The data collected with reference to research question one ascertained the needs of English language teachers in the use of multimedia instructional aids to teaching listening skills. The adoption and utilization of instructional media is based on the conviction that learners possess intrinsic drive to explore their environment for personal growth and self-direction when they interact with didactic aids in a conducive environment for learning. With respect to the use of multimedia aids in teaching listening skills, findings show that the English language teachers are proficient in the use of free and open source software, because they can proficiently create instructional design using technology. This finding is in compliance with those of Yasmin (2018) which suggest that English language as a subject needs to be taught as a living language instead of a bookish language by establishing state of the art English language classrooms or language labs to integrate four skills of English language for an interactive process of teaching and learning

The findings of this study also show that in the teaching of listening skills with multimedia aids, English language teachers need improvement in competency to be able to download the appropriate software while using social media to demonstrate active listening; search library databases in the use of digital storytelling; upgrade the software of digital pronunciation dictionaries; use internet to download instructional materials; use virtual classrooms to teach students listening skills in documentaries; use mobile Applications in meeting students' need outside the classroom; use online spoken tutorials while highlighting points; use computer software to engage students; use smart phones to develop instructional materials using presentation software or an authoring tool (e.g. Authorware, Toolbook) and; use online audio and video conferencing to teach listening skills. These are similar with the findings of Tan (2016) that there is a serious problem in English language proficiency of the student teachers in terms of listening, writing and speaking. These competencies are skill set in the sense that English language teachers need to be proficient in the use of instructional media before they can smoothly transition same to English language learners to prepare them to meeting the challenges of real life situation. It is therefore necessary that teachers need in these areas of competence because the study of Akani (2011) which investigated the influence of instructional materials on students academic performance in English in Senior Secondary Schools revealed that the students taught with instructional materials performed significantly better than those taught without instructional materials and also that the use of instructional materials generally improved students' understanding of concepts and therefore leads to high academic achievements.

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Multimedia competency improvement needs of English language teachers in teaching speaking skills

Findings of the study indicated that English language teachers improvement needs with respect to the use of instructional aids to teaching speaking skill are in the areas of competencies to update digital pronunciation dictionaries; the use of computer software to teach spelling; know-how to operate Lingua phone to teach phonics; ability to download online spoken tutorials for teaching; guiding students to participate actively in Virtual classrooms and; recording speech online. Other areas English language teachers need improvement are in the use of Smart Phones to support students oral presentations; email to share task on pronunciation drills, managing online audio and video conferencing; configuring speakers to amplify students voice in speaking drills; download of online audio karaoke and; use of digital tape recorder to save students speech. Since speaking is an activity requiring the integration of many subsystems, the high improvement needs of teachers in competencies needed to teach listening skills with multimedia aids echoed those of (Bueno, Madrid and Mclaren, 2006) which found out that peaking is one of the most difficult skills language learners have to face. In spite of this, it has traditionally been forced into the background while teachers have spent all classroom time trying to teach students how to write, to read and sometimes even to listen in a L2 because grammar has a long written tradition. Competency in the use of multimedia aids is vital because in line with the study of Nbina (2012) which investigated the influence of teacher's competence on students; academic performance, significant relationship exist between teachers' competence and students' academic performance.

Educational Implication of the Findings of the Study

Based on the findings, the English language teacher' proficiency level in the use of multimedia aids to teaching listening and speaking skills are demanding. Hence, majority of students they teach could be suffering from what is known as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and are likely at risk for learning disabilities or failure. This is a worrisome situation because this implies that even if the Government provides and meets such infrastructural needs of implementing a programme of the use of multimedia instructional aids in schools, incompetence will constitute a challenge which would always deter effective utilization of the assistance multimedia knowledge can offer to the English teachers.

Recommendations from the Findings of the Study

In the light of the findings and educational implications, the researcher makes the following recommendations

1. The governments should allocate adequate funds to the education sector, to take care of training and retraining of English language in skill set for the use of multimedia instructional aids

2. Teacher preparation institutions should incorporate Hanson courses and programme in the relevant areas of the use of modern instructional aids

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