

DESIRED CURRICULAR IMPLEMENTATION CHANGES IN THE  
UNIVERSITY USE OF ENGLISH PROGRAMME: FOCUS ON THE  
TEACHER AND HIS METHOD

BY

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**Abstract**

This study focused on some of the curriculum implementation problems facing the Use of English programme in the university system. Specifically it looked at the teachers' qualifications, experience and methodology of teaching the Use of English in the universities. All the Use of English lecturers in the four sampled universities (two public and two private) were used and it gave a total of 54 subjects. Four research questions were posed to guide the study. Two instruments were used for the study-a questionnaire requesting information on the teacher's qualifications, area of specialization and teaching experience and an observation schedule. Data analysis showed that many teachers of Use of English had no teaching qualification and so were not competent in using modern methods of teaching. It was recommended that these teachers should go on in-service training and also older and more experienced teachers should monitor the Use of English classrooms to ensure effective curriculum implementation.

**Introduction**

Education is the means of achieving a better society through the development of human capital. The education system works through the instrumentality of the curriculum and its implementation. The curriculum is an organized programme of experiences meant to achieve the nations educational goals. According to Ogunyemi (2009:1), the curriculum is supposed to address the following educational issues such as: (a) the purpose of the school (institution), (b) what is taught or should be taught, (c) how it is taught and to whom it is taught, and (d) the effectiveness of what is taught and/or relevance of the entire programme to the needs of individual learners and their society.' Items (b) and (c) are of much interest to this paper because they involve

curriculum implementation. Effective curriculum implementation is very essential to the realization of the educational goals of a nation. And researchers have shown that the curriculum implementation level is fraught with lots of challenges (Offorma 2009).

Every level of the education system has goals that are relevant to that level. Curriculum at the tertiary level goes in line with the goals of education for this level as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004:36) as follows:

- \* To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
- \* To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society.
- \* To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments.
- \* To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self reliant and useful members of the society. (generic skills)
- \* To promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
- \* To forge and cement national unity, and
- \* To promote national and international understanding and interaction.

In line with the national goals, the curricula for higher education are geared towards offering to the learners a high level manpower training as well as improved intellectual capabilities to understand and appreciate the local and external environments. Such curricula are expected to inculcate into the learners required generic skills and proper values for their survival and the survival of the society in which they belong.

### **Theoretical Background**

This paper leans heavily on the cognitivist/constructivists/Participatory theories of Piaget, Vygotsky and others, which states that man has innate abilities and potentials and as an intelligent being he is an active participant in the learning process and his actions are purposeful and goal oriented.

So this paper examines the roles of the teacher and the learner in curriculum implementation. Successful curriculum implementation leans heavily on the teacher who is the implementer.

Curriculum process requires the joint efforts of the government, school administrators, teachers as well as other stakeholders. But curriculum

implementation proper has the teacher at the center because he is closest to the learners and so is better positioned to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. That is why Amadi (1993), sees curriculum implementation as that stage in the curriculum process whereby all the relevant curriculum inputs are brought into direct contact with the learners through a wide variety of activities, provided by the teachers, so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized at a minimal cost. Therefore there is need to carefully define who qualifies to be a teacher. Mk pa (2009: 104) states clearly that teachers are 'those individuals who have been found worthy in content knowledge, skills, methods, techniques, and are capable of providing good teaching by virtue of their professional training and competencies acquired.'

The National University Commission (NUC) stipulates that Ph.D should be the minimum acceptable qualification for a lecturer to teach in the University. A master's degree holder is only regarded as an assistant lecturer. In addition, the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) has stipulated that anybody to be qualified to teach at any level of the education system of this country must be in possession of a teaching qualification such as Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE), Bachelor's Degree in Education (B.Ed) or a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) or Professional Diploma in Education (PDE). But what do we have in our universities? Many university lecturers are reluctant to acquire the teaching qualification that will qualify them as teachers and make them able to deliver their lessons effectively.

It goes without saying that no one can give what one does not have. In the same way no one can teach what one does not know. Teachers of English need both specialized and general knowledge training to teach effectively. For the fact that English is our second and official language used daily at work, as a means of instruction in our schools, used for serious academic work and in everyday communication, extra care needs to be taken in engaging the right caliber of personnel to teach our students who are the future of this country. Therefore, there is absolute need to use highly qualified and educationally trained teachers of English in teaching Use of English to ensure the attainment of the goals of education as it concerns developing the requisite language skills. So two things stand out clearly-high level of academic attainment and professional training. Both are essential for any successful teaching.

Inexperience and lack of depth of knowledge of subject matter could create serious problems in effective teaching and learning of a subject. The quality of education is measured by its productivity. The average university graduate is expected to express himself in good English and that is the first sign of productive

education (Ene, 2014). This productivity is dependent on many factors of which the teacher may be the most important.

Another important factor that negatively affects the implementation of curriculum of the Use of English is the methodology used in imparting knowledge at the higher institutions. Method is defined by Mkpá (2009: 105) as a way of doing the teaching business, the procedure, orderliness, in planning and execution of teaching proper with the appropriate integration of instructional materials to achieve the objectives 'of education' at the classroom level. This implies that teaching methodology should not be haphazard. It requires skill acquisition and proper application to suit the different ages and levels of learners. Language learning even places a higher demand on the pedagogical skills of the teacher because of the complexity of language. Obiora (1976) maintains that there is absolute need to have qualified teachers of English due to the complexity of language learning which demands that the teacher must have different methods at his fingertips and a number of skills/techniques at his disposal. This will ensure that he can reach all learners with different learning styles. Mkpá (2009: 107) observed that methods used are either teacher-centred (TCM) or learner-centred (LCM).

She also categorized most methods into four groups viz-

- a) The Information Transmission and Reception Method egs lecturing, recitation, textbook and assignment methods
- b) The Cognitive Strategies Development Methods examples are the discussion, activity, and project methods.
- c) The Attitudes Development Methods eg, Inquiry , role-playing, dramatization, modelling and laboratory methods.
- d) The Cognitive and Motor skills Development methods eg demonstration, guided discovery, concept mapping and games.

As regards methodology of teaching English language, two main approaches stand out—the traditional and the modern. The traditional method used more of translation, recitation and rote learning of grammar rules making it teacher-centred. Newer and more recent methods like, project, direct, oral, audio-lingual and audio-visual methods that are learner-centred have evolved. Because language is dynamic, methods of imparting it also keep changing. Today there are new, interactive methods of English Language Teaching (ELT) such as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which are activity based and learner friendly.

**Statement of the Problem:**

The issue of teachers is at the centre of the crisis in the education system of many countries especially as it concerns curriculum implementation. Nwagwu (1998:150) states that teachers, next to students, are the largest, most crucial inputs of an educational system. But unfortunately, teachers are not given their pride of place in Nigeria especially as regards curriculum planning and implementation. It is for this reason that some experts (Offorma 2009) have considered the curriculum implementation as the greatest problem area of the education system in Nigeria.

It has been established that subject matter knowledge, experience as well as pedagogical knowledge are all very important in effective teaching and learning of the Use of English in the universities. The absence of the right qualifications of the teachers may have negatively affected the standard of English, spoken and written by university graduates. As a result of the poor performance of many Nigerian graduates in the field of work, (World Bank Report 2000), the researcher suspects that there may be problems militating against the effective teaching of the Use of English. The researcher therefore aims at finding out the types and level of qualifications and experiences of the lecturers in the Use of English programmes of universities. In addition the type of methods used in teaching Use of English will be investigated.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent are university Use of English lecturers qualified to teach?
2. To what extent are their qualifications relevant to their classroom jobs?
3. To what extent are university Use of English lecturers experienced?
4. To what extent do the lecturers of Use of English use the learner-centred methods in teaching?

**Method**

The design of the study is descriptive survey. Through stratified random sampling, four schools made up of two private and two public universities were selected.

The two public universities (Enugu State University of Science & Technology and University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus) were automatically used. Two out of four private universities were sampled and they are Godfrey Okoye University and Caritas University, Emene) universities in Enugu State were sampled. All the lecturers in Use of English programme of the four universities were used and they

came to a total of 54.

The instruments used for data collection were a) a 3-item questionnaire and an observation schedule for recording the types of methods used and frequency of use. One item in the questionnaire elicited information on the teachers' qualifications, another item was on teachers' areas of specialization and the third elicited information on the years of teaching experience. The researcher observed the teachers during two different lecture periods in the Use of English class to find out the methods used and these were scored.

The validation of the instruments was by lecturers in the curriculum department of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu.

### Results

**Research Question 1.** To what extent are university Use of English lecturers qualified ?

**Table 1: Qualifications of teachers/lecturers of the Use of English.**

S/n	Qualifications	No of teachers	Percentage(%)
1	B.A. (English)	10	18.51
2	B.A.(Educ/English)	6	11.11
3	M.A.(English)	14	25.92
4	M.A.English+ PGDE	10	18.51
5	M.Ed (English/Educ.)	6	11.11
6	Ph.D English	4	7.40
7	Ph.D English +PGDE	3	5.55
8	Others eg LLB	1	1.85
	Total	54	100%

From the table, MA (English) has the highest number being 14 which is 25.92% and they have no professional teachers' training at all. This number is followed by M. A. (English + PGDE) and B.A.(English) numbering 10 each which is 18.51%. Others are Ph.D English numbering 4 and Ph.D English + PGDE that are 3 in number. Their percentages are 7.40% and 5.55% respectively.

**Research Question 2.** To what extent are their qualifications relevant to their teaching/classroom job?

**Table 2:** Areas of specialization of Use of English lecturers.

S/n	Teachers' area of Specialization	No of teachers	Percentage
1	English Language	15	24.78
2	English Literature	22	42.74
3	Not Applicable	17	32.48
	Total	54	100%

From the table only 15 teachers which is 24.78% hold a Masters or Ph.D in English Language proper. This is followed by 22 teachers which is 43.74 % who specialize in Literature. Others which comprises of non English language majors or those who hold a first degree only are 17 in number being 32.48%.

**Research Question 3.** To what extent are university Use of English lecturers experienced in teaching?

**Table 3:** Years of experience of teachers of Use of English

S/n	Range of Years	Number of teachers	Percentage%
1	0-3	15	27.78
2	4-6	18	33.33
3	7-9	11	20.37
4	10-12	06	11.11
5	13 and above	04	7.41
	Total	54	100%

**Table 3** reveals that the teachers with 4-6 years of experience have the highest number of 18 which is 33.33 %. This is followed by those with 0-3 years of experience with 15 and 27.78%. Only 4 teachers which is 7.41% has up to 13 years of experience or more.

**Research Question 4.** To what extent do the lecturers of Use of English use the learner-centred methods in teaching?

**Table 4:** Methods used by the teachers of Use of English

S/n	Methods	Frequency of use	Percentage
	Grammar Translation	8	3.25
	Lecture	52	21.13
	Questioning	36	14.63
	Play way	09	3.65
	Discussion	13	5.28
	Project	26	10.56
	Audio visual	05	2.03
	Group	16	6.50
	Audio lingual	02	0.81
	Direct	34	13.82
	Demonstration	11	4.47
	Activity	13	5.28
	Interactive	12	4.87
	E- learning	10	4.06
	Total	246	100%

The above table shows the frequency of use of each of the methods. As seen from the table, lecture method is the most frequently used followed by questioning, Direct and project methods with frequencies as follows- 21.13%, 14.63%, 13.82% and 10.56% respectively. Others are Discussion, Demonstration, Activity, Interactive and E-learning methods. Their percentages are 5.28%, 4.47%, 5.28%, 4.87% & 4.06% respectively. Audio lingual and Audio Visual methods with 5 and 2 frequencies have 2.03% and 0.81% respectively.

### Discussion

Here are the implications of the results of the study based on the analysis of the data findings. From the data analyzed, **Table 1** shows that only 19 out of 54 teachers who were used for this study are qualified to teach English Language. Considering the crucial and indispensable role of English Language in the success of education at the tertiary level and the education system of this country



as a whole, the researcher considers 65% representing the unqualified teachers (otherwise referred to as auxiliary teachers) in the Use of English rather high. Table 2 also shows that only 15 teachers being 24.78% of the teachers specialize in English language. Which means that many of the teachers of Use of English are not qualified in terms of the subject matter knowledge to teach it. This finding fails to meet up with expert opinion that knowledge of the subject matter is the most important qualification a teacher must possess (Fafunwa's (1967). This fact may be contributing to the poor performance of our university graduates in the field of work. World Bank report (2000) stated clearly that Nigerian graduates are deficient in oral and written English as well as technical skills. In addition, many of the teachers are highly inexperienced as shown in Table 3. Research has also shown that inexperienced teachers are not at home with their teaching skills and methods. Experience is very crucial in making the teachers very effective in the delivery of their lessons.

Concerning the methods used in teaching Use of English, it is found that there is a lot of variations in the frequency of use of various methods. Table 4 shows that the lecture method with 21.13% is the most predominantly used followed by questioning and project methods with 14.63% and 10.56% respectively. Lecture method which is predominantly used by most lecturers is among the traditional methods that allow the teacher to dominate the lesson. It is therefore teacher-centred. This is against the constructivist theory which is learner-centred. It is the modern educationist's approach. According to Obanya, Okoye, Ezenwu and Adejumo (1985:135) the traditional educationists emphasize and direct attention to the subject matter, knowledge acquisition and the passing of examinations. Modern educationists with their constructivist agenda, direct their emphasis and attention on the learner; his involvement and participation without ignoring knowledge acquisition). Even the current English Language (ELT) approach emphasizes learner-centred education. Learner-centred approaches encourage the use of task-based, activity based, project and other interactive methods. These are part of the cognitivist/constructivist approach which enjoins teachers to engage students in the use of activities that encourage interaction, group work and peer learning. Untrained teachers cannot handle these methods or the attendant strategies for effective lesson delivery.

According to modern English Language Teaching (ELT) methods, the new trends in ELT is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which employs activity method, interactive method, audio-lingual and audio-visual and group methods. It was observed that these methods which can be said to be effective, stimulating and involving are not adequately used judging by their low scores of

5.28%, 4.81%, 2.03%, 0.81%. Even the most recent on-line and e-learning is largely unused with only 4.06% use. The non-use of these interactive and learner-centred approaches may be because these auxiliary teachers lack the professional know-how and so lack curriculum literacy. The non-use of more preferred methods of teaching may be contributing to the poor communicative competence of our university graduates and undergraduates. Offorma (2009) posits that selection of proper methods and materials for teaching is very crucial to the success of curriculum implementation. She maintains that the greatest problem with curriculum planning in Nigeria is at the stage of implementation. The National University Commission may have prepared a general guide for universities to cover in their Use of English in our tertiary institutions. But it requires knowledgeable, qualified and competent teachers to select methods and resources that will match the topics for experiential knowledge to be imparted to the learners. Great educational philosophers like Jean Jacques Rouseau (1712-1778), Friedrich Frobel (1782-1858), Edward Thorndike (1874-1949) favour experiential learning. Meanwhile experiential learning is a product of experiential curriculum which favours activities that make practical meaning to the learners. (Jean Jacques Rouseau and John Dewey (1975) emphasized the twin concepts of activity-based and experiential learning. This concept formed the basis for constructivist education (Sheehy, 2002; Mahoney, 2004).

Incompetent teachers have been classified as 'curriculum illiterates' (Mkpa 2005; Ogunyemi 2009). They are teachers who are not able to make useful contributions to the curriculum process or translate curriculum documents into useful working materials and complete the curriculum process. This is part of the reason why education experts feel that Federal & State governments and other education stakeholders should intensify effort to promote and support quality pre-service and in-service teacher education in our country's education system.

This knowledge must be translated into practical terms. It has to be seen in the oral and written productions of our students and graduates. Until this is done we shall still contend with the world bank statement (2000) that Nigerian graduates are not competitive enough in today's world of work.

It must be recognized that English Language has assumed the status of a generic skill (NERDC 2003) and so a greater level of importance in the survival of our people. This is why NERDC (2003) called it 'primus inter peres' of all subjects studied in the school.

Nnachi (2009) listed the following as strategies for implementing curriculum at the tertiary level.

- \* Educational training of all academic staff of tertiary institutions
- \* Careful planning of instructional activities
- \* Construction of syllabuses for use by tertiary institutions
- \* Production of standard course outlines
- \* Creation and use of monitoring units for curriculum implementation lesson plan
- \* Use of proper evaluation method.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing, it can be seen that qualifications and methods and experience are key factors in the effective delivery of lessons especially the Use of English. It must be borne in mind that English is not our mother tongue and yet English plays the key role in our daily lives at local and international levels. So, no effort should be spared in ensuring effective teaching of this all important language to our students who are the future of our nation.

### **Recommendations**

From the foregoing it is recommended as follows

- \* Only high caliber staff should be engaged to teach in our university Use of English programmes.
- \* All teaching staff of tertiary institutions should be educationally trained.
- \* In-service training should be organized for the Use of English staff.
- \* Older staff should be involved in preparing the course –outlines and other instructional activities.
- \* Older and more experienced staff to be monitoring the younger ones

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