TOWARDS EFFECTIVE DELIVERY AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS: A STUDY OF THE FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, IDAH

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ABSTRACT
The inclusion of Use of English, Communication in English and Literary Studies in the Polytechnic Curriculum in Nigeria is to enhance students' proficiency and competence in the use of English language and communication in English. It is to help communicate their experiences effectively within and outside the classroom situations using appropriate registers. However, the general poor performance of students in the Use of English, leaves much to be desired. This paper therefore, examines the factors militating against students' good performance in English as well as ways of achieving effective delivery and learning of English in polytechnics. To achieve the set aim, the paper employs questionnaire survey to elicit information from teachers and students of The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State, on the subject matter. It compares NDII students' performances in English from four of the five schools of the institution. The study reveals that teachers' negative attitude to teaching, students' negative attitude to learning, and lack of adequate infrastructures, are some of the factors militating against effective teaching and learning of English among the students of the Institution. The paper recommends among others, that teachers of English should display positive attitudes to teaching and relate the topics to the specific needs of the students in their different disciplines, bearing in mind the importance of English for Special Purposes (ESP) to polytechnic students. They should also enliven the class and motivate students to learn. Students should also cultivate positive attitude, while the institution should promote effective teaching and learning by providing adequate facilities

Keywords: English Language, Communication, Effective Delivery and Learning.
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INTRODUCTION

The place of effective delivery and learning of English as a second language (ESL) in tertiary institutions in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. This is as a result of the prime place English language occupies in the educational, social, political, economic, religious and international relations of a multi-ethnic and multilingual country like Nigeria. Hence, English Language remains the major language of national unity and integration. It equally assumes and serves as a language of administration, politics, mass communication, education, science and technology, trade and commerce, sports and international relations. Through English Language, all social interactions are made possible locally and internationally.

As an all-important "colonial heritage", which Bamgbose (1991), describes "as a language of nationalism concerned with political integration and efficiency…." English language has come to stay in Nigeria, especially when the country is yet to and may never be able to develop any of the indigenous languages to the level of a wider and general acceptability by all Nigerians. Therefore, there is the need to pay serious attention to its teaching and learning at all levels of education. The need becomes imperative, especially in this 21st century, when the entire world has transited to a global village and English is used as an international language with approximately 80% of the world population speaking it as native speakers and "as a second language by British ex-colonies in Africa and Asia". (Fromkin and Rodman 1979 cited by Okafor (2012).

Corroborating the significance of English language as a world language, Crystal (1997), observes that "most of the sciences, technologies, and academic information in the world are expressed in English and over 80% of all information stored in the retrieval system is in English". It becomes imperative for any individual or group who wants to be relevant in the operations of world sciences and technologies to know how best to manipulate English language in the world's

global village. Elegba (2009), asserts that English language is very important to national development because of its role in external communication in relation to science, technology, and the intricacies of national development in other different areas. Proficiency in its use becomes non-negotiable in order to function effectively in the globalised world. Lending credence to the above, Ugwuanyi and Omejhe (2013), opines that in order to participate in the global world activities:

Nations, institutions, groups and individuals have to prove that quality. And competence in English language and other requisite training and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy are somewhat linked to English proficiency. It is important to be proficient in it in order to meet up with the demands.

Ihejirika (2014), also emphasizes the relevance of proficiency in English language in curbing the problem of poor performance among Nigerian students when he opines that "it is also expected that a high level of proficiency in English language on the part of Nigerian students would be the needed panacea to the intractable problem of academic performance currently threatening the education industry".

The importance of English language to the overall development of individual citizen and the country, therefore, attests to its inclusion in the curriculum at all levels of education in Nigeria. Its inclusion in the Polytechnic Curriculum is to enhance students' proficiency and competence as they interact within and outside classroom situations. However, the recurrent and alarming rate of students' poor performances in the subject, call for a greater concern by all stakeholders. The embarrassing situations whereby some polytechnic graduates can hardly fill forms on personal information at the National Youth Service Corps' orientation camps and also find it extremely difficult to converse with their colleagues confidently in English language, call for serious attention.

This paper therefore examines the factors militating against effective teaching and learning of English as a second language in Nigeria's tertiary institutions with emphasis on The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, Kogi State. This is with the aim of identifying and highlighting the factors militating against effective delivery and learning of Use of

English and Technical English in the institution. It recommends ways of achieving quality delivery and learning by the teachers and the students.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study employs Questionnaire survey to elicit information on the perceptions of teachers and students on the factors militating against effective teaching and learning of Use of English and Technical English in the institution. Fifteen teachers' opinions were sampled altogether comprising of nine English teachers of the institution and six Heads of the Departments selected for the study from four schools out of the five schools in the institution. The questionnaires were distributed to fifty NDII students from each of the selected departments of Estate Management from the School of Environmental Studies, Electrical / Electronic in the School of Engineering, Hospitality Management and Tourism in the School of Technology, Office Technology Management and Business Administration from the School of Business Management respectively.

The Questionnaire contains fourteen statements based on the modified Rensis Likert's scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). One Open-ended question which demands the respondents to state other factors militating against effective teaching and learning of English language in the institution was included.

Students' performances in the Use of English and Technical English in the first semester examination of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 of the six selected departments, were examined and compared with the students' other scores. The study indicated that, Use of English had average of 48% and 49% in the two departments that offered it. Technical English had 51% in two departments, 47% and 43% respectively in another two departments. Technical English ranked last position in one class and ranked second to the last position in three other classes while Use of English, ranked second to the last position in the two classes that offered it.

Interactions with some Heads of Departments selected together with some lecturers in such departments, revealed that students' performances in the two aspects of English language under investigation, have improved

considerably over the last three or four sessions. One of the lecturers asserts that, "GNS English teachers have changed their attitudes a bit, even though the scores are still low but Carry-Over cases have reduced. We sometimes wonder why English marks are always low, after all, examinations of other courses are written in English". When in effect, their emphasis is on the contents and not on English language used. The lecturers confirmed that students used to fail GNS courses woefully with close to half of students in a class carrying the courses over. They confessed to situations whereby they had to reject some results on account of mass failure.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several scholars among whom are (Bloom 1976, Carroll 1984, Presley and Harris 2006, Beach 2008, Well 2009, Rowe & Rowe 2009, Babatunde 2002, Nguyen et al., 2014, Fatiloro 2015, and Obiegbu 2016) have written on the teaching and learning of English as a second language, and have in fact, revealed that there are various factors militating against effective teaching and learning of the language. Such factors range from students, teachers, institutional, to social cum environmental factors. Some of the identified students' factors by scholars are poor educational backgrounds from primary through secondary schools, which are contributory factors to students' poor performances in learning English as a second language in tertiary institutions. Proper understanding and mastery of the basic language skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing, are also considered to be very important for students' learning and good performance in English language.

Well (2009), emphasizes the importance of early improvement in the basic language skills since such an early improvement facilitates students' quick understanding of written and spoken texts. It helps their ability to process difficult texts and comprehension generally at later stages of learning and use English Language to communicate. Presley and Harris (2006), relate pupils' early exposure to phonology with subsequent reading achievement because reading ability will enhance their ability to decode information, fluency in reading and knowledge of vocabulary development.

Other important students' factors identified by scholars are students' attitudes and lack of motivation to learn. Beach (2008,), observes that favourable attitudes towards learning (reading) are related to general success in school and contribute to positive students' self-esteem. But a situation where students display negative attitude to learning, poor performance and lack of self-esteem will be the outcome. Students' positive attitude to learning is, therefore, directly related to good performance, which can be achieved through creation of effective learning time.

Bloom (1976) and Carroll (1984), believe that students should create effective and active learning time because according to them, "the amount of time needed to achieve certain degree of proficiency, is a direct function of the amount of attention or effort invested by an individual in a learning task". Corroborating the above, Rowe and Rowe (2009), indicate that attentiveness and interest are directly related to students' achievement outcomes which include reading. Attentiveness in class, active learning time and interest are therefore, important for students to achieve effective learning.

Other students' factors militating against their effective learning of English language identified by researchers include: mother-tongue interference, students' physical and psychological problems, and students' inability to buy necessary textbooks, et cetera. While some of the teachers' factors include the following: teachers' negative attitude to teaching, lack of adequate preparation, poor class administration, insufficient professional teachers, poor methods of teaching, limited use of instructional materials, etcetera (Nguyen, H.T. et al., 2014).

Babatunde, (2002), opines that "teachers' low level of competence in the language skills" is one of the factors responsible for English language learners' poor performance. Nguyen et al., (2014, p. 94), also identify the following as teachers' factors militating against effective delivery and learning of English as a second language: teachers' limited ability in classroom organization, uninteresting teaching styles, inadequate preparation for lecture, limited use of teaching aids and technology. In a similar vein, Obiegbu (2016), identifies teachers' inadequacy to teach effectively, lack of exposure to modern teaching methods and poor motivation as some of the teachers' factors militating against effective teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Institutional factors identified by some of the scholars include: lack of conducive atmosphere, insufficient time for communicative activities, lack of instructional materials, over-population, et cetera. Time and space will not allow further elucidation on the identified factors.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Fifteen questionnaires distributed to the teachers were all filled and returned which represent 100%. However, only 250 out of 300 questionnaires distributed to the students were returned, representing 82.6%. The items are classified into sections ABC and are labelled teachers'; students' and institutional factors. Section A, has five factors, B, has four factors and section C, has five factors.

Table 1: Teachers' Perception Rating

SN	ITEM	TEACHERS' PERCEPTION				RANK
		SA	A	D	SD	AGREED
A	**Students' Factors**					
1	Students' lack of exposure hinder good performance Percentage (%)	8 53.3	7 46.7			1ST
2	Students' negative attitude towards learning, e.g lack of attentiveness in class Percentage (%)	8 53.3	7 46.7	-	-	1ST
3	Students' poor vocabulary level Percentage (%)	10 66.7	5 33.3	-	-	1ST
4	Students' poor understanding of the subject Percentage (%)	7 46.7	6 40.0	2 13.3	-	2nd
5	Students' lack of necessary textbooks Percentage (%)	4 26.7	6 40.0	4 26.7	1 6.7	3RD
B	**Teachers' Factors**					
1	Teachers' poor handling of subject Percentage (%)	4 26.7	8 53.3	2 13.3	1 6.7	1ST
2	Teachers' poor attitude to teaching Percentage (%)	5 33.3	6 40.0	3 20.0	1 6.7	2ND
3	Teachers' poor understanding of different techniques of imparting knowledge to students Percentage (%)	6 40.0	6 40.0	2 13.3	1 6.7	1ST
4	Teachers' failure to relate the subject to students specific needs in their different disciplines Percentage (%)	4 26.7	8 53.3	3 20.0	-	1ST
C	**Institutional Factors**					
1	Lack of instructional materials for teachers' use in class Percentage (%)	5 33.3	7 46.7	1 6.7	2 13.3	1st
2	Over-population of students Percentage (%)	5 33.3	4 26.7	6 40.1	-	3RD
3	Lack of public address system especially in the case of large classes Percentage (%)	3 20.0	7 46.7	5 33.3	-	5TH
4	Lack of conducive learning environment Percentage (%)	4 26.7	8 53.3	3 20.0	-	1ST
5	Insufficient time for the subject Percentage (%)	4 26.7	7 46.7	2 13.3	2 13.3	2ND

Table one, section A, which is on students' factors such as lack of exposure, poor attitude to learning and poor vocabulary level, ranked first with 100% agreement, while students' poor understanding and lack of necessary textbooks, ranked second and third with 86.7% and 66.7% respectively. Section B, which is on teachers' factors such as poor method of teaching, poor

handling of subject and failure to relate subject to students' specific needs, ranked first position with 80% agreement, followed by teachers' poor attitude with 73.3%. Section C of the table, is on the institutional factors. Lack of conducive learning environment and instructional materials, ranked first with 80% agreement. Insufficient time for the subject, ranked next with 73.4%, followed by lack of public address system with 66.7%, while over-population, ranked last with 60% agreement. The outcome of the analysis shows that the teachers agreed that teachers', students' and institutional factors militate against effective teaching and learning of English language in The Federal Polytechnic, Idah.

Table 2: Students' Perception Rating

SN	ITEM	STUDENTS' PERCEPTION				RANK
		SA	A	D	SD	AGREED
A	**Students' Factors**					
1	Students' lack of exposure hinder good performance Percentage (%)	108 43.2	112 44.8	17 6.8	12 4.8	1ST
2	Students' negative attitude towards learning, e.g. lack of attentiveness in class Percentage (%)	95 38.0	97 38.8	35 14.0	22 8.8	3rd
3	Students' poor vocabulary level Percentage (%)	84 33.3	99 39.6	52 20.8	15 6.0	4th
4	Students' poor understanding of the subject Percentage (%)	91 36.4	103 41.2	40 16.0	16 6.4	2ND
5	Students' lack of necessary textbooks Percentage (%)	85 34.0	96 38.4	41 16.4	27 10.8	5TH
B	**Teachers' Factors**					
1	Teachers' poor handling of subject Percentage (%)	79 31.6	74 29.6	59 23.6	36 14.4	4th
2	Teachers' poor attitude to teaching Percentage (%)	70 28.1	94 37.8	60 24.1	25 10.1	3rd
3	Teachers' poor understanding of different techniques of imparting knowledge to students Percentage (%)	89 35.6	96 38.4	32 12.8	33 13.2	1ST
4	Teachers' failure to relate the subject to students specific needs in their different disciplines Percentage (%)	78 31.4	97 39.1	50 20.2	23 9.3	2ND
C	**Institutional Factors**					
1	Lack of instructional materials for teachers use in class Percentage (%)	68 27.3	105 42.2	47 18.9	29 11.6	3RD
2	Overpopulation of students Percentage (%)	67 27.5	46 18.9	75 30.7	56 23.0	5TH
3	Lack of public address system especially in the case of large classes Percentage (%)	100 40.2	78 31.3	42 16.9	29 11.6	2ND
4	Lack of conducive learning environment Percentage (%)	112 45.0	89 35.7	30 12.0	18 7.2	1ST
5	Insufficient time for the subject Percentage (%)	67 27.0	74 29.8	67 27.0	40 16.1	4TH

Table two, shows students' perception rating. Section A of the table, is on students' factors. Students' lack of exposure ranked first with 88% agreement, followed by students' poor understanding with 77.6%, Students' negative attitude 76%, students' poor vocabulary level, ranked third with 73%, and students' lack of necessary textbooks, ranked fourth with 72% agreement. Section B, contains teachers' factors. Teachers' poor method ranked highest with 74% agreement, followed by teachers' failure to relate the subject to students' specific needs with 70.5% agreement. Teachers' poor attitude, ranked third

with 66%, while teachers' poor handling of the subject, ranked last with 61.2%.

Section C of the table, is on the institutional factors. Lack of conducive learning environment, ranked highest with 80.7%, followed by lack of public address system with 71.5%. Lack of instructional materials, ranked third with 69.5%. Insufficient time for the teaching of the subjects and over-population in class, ranked fourth and fifth with 56% and 46.4% respectively. The analysis confirms that students', teachers' and institutional factors militate against effective teaching and learning of English language in The Federal Polytechnic, Idah.

More than 50% of the students' respondents disagreed on students' over-population as a factor affecting effective teaching and learning of English language in the institution. Though, The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, may not seriously experience over-population in class, but there are several higher institutions with over 800 students in a class. In such situations, effective teaching and learning would be difficult to achieve.

Table 3: Summary of Teachers' and Students' Perception Ratings

SN	ITEM	STUDENTS' PERCEPTION		TEACHERS' PERCEPTION	
		AGREED (%)	DISAGREED (%)	AGREED (%)	DISAGREED (%)
1	Students' lacks of exposure hinder good performance **Percentage (%)**	88.0	22.0	100	-
2	Students' negative attitude towards learning e g lack of attentiveness in class **Percentage (%)**	77.6	32.4	100	-
3	Students' poor vocabulary level **Percentage (%)**	77.0	33.0	100	-
4	Students' poor understanding of the subject **Percentage (%)**	77.6	32.4	86.7	14.3
5	Students' lack of necessary textbooks **Percentage (%)**	72.4	27.6	66.7	33.3
6	Teachers' poor handling of subject **Percentage (%)**	61.2	38.2	80.0	20.0
7	Teachers' poor attitude to teaching **Percentage (%)**	66.0	36.0	73.3	26.7
8	Teachers' poor understanding of different techniques of imparting knowledge to students **Percentage (%)**	74.0	26.0	80.0	20.0
9	Teachers' failure to relate the subject to students specific needs in their different disciplines **Percentage (%)**	70.5	29.5	80.0	20.0
10	Lack of instructional materials for teachers use in class **Percentage (%)**	69.5	30.5	80.0	20.0
11	Overpopulation of students **Percentage (%)**	46.4	63.6	60.0	40.0
12	Lack of public address system especially in case of large classes **Percentage (%)**	71.5	28.5	66.7	33.3
13	Lack of conducive learning environment **Percentage (%)**	80.7	19.3	80.0	20.0
14	Insufficient time for the subject **Percentage (%)**	57.0	43.0	73.4	26.6

Table 3, is a summary sheet of teachers' and students' perception ratings. The table revealed that both teachers and students strongly agreed that students' lack of exposure, negative attitude, poor vocabulary level and poor understanding are factors militating against students' good performance in English. Almost three quarters (72.4%) of student-respondents agreed that students' lack of necessary textbooks is a key factor negatively impacting on their effective learning of English language, while 66.7% of the teachers agreed with the statements.

Surprisingly, and because it sounds like self-indictment, teachers overwhelmingly and strongly agreed (80%) that teachers' poor handling of the subject, poor attitude, inadequate teaching methods and failure to relate the subject to students' specific needs, are contributory factors to students' inefficiency in learning and using the language. Students also agreed with all these items. Teachers equally and strongly agreed that lack of instructional materials, lack of public address system, lack of conducive learning environment and insufficient time for the subject, negatively affect students' educational performances. They also

agreed that over-population hampers good performance. Students equally agreed on all these statements, but strongly disagreed on over-population. Only 46.4% agreed to the contrary. This is the only point of serious disagreement between teachers and students (60% versus 46.4%).

The study, therefore, revealed that effective teaching and learning can be negatively impacted upon by teacher-related, student–related and institutional-related factors. In addition to the factors itemized, teachers and students' responses to the open-ended item of the questionnaire, show some recurring factors inter alia:

1. Students' Factors: Poor educational background, poor reading culture, students' inattentiveness, or absenteeism.
2. Teachers' Factors: Absenteeism, unethical behaviors such as intimidation, harassment, threat, teachers forcing textbooks on students, teachers using big grammar without adequate explanation, teachers' failure to supply answers to questions asked in class, and teachers' poor methods of teaching.
3. Institutional Factors: Inadequate infrastructures, inadequate library service, poor internet facilities, and inadequate healthcare facilities.

CONCLUSION

This study had examined the factors militating against the effective delivery and learning of English as a second language in Nigerian tertiary institutions using The Federal Polytechnic, Idah, as a case study. It identified several factors that are responsible for students' poor performance in English language. Some of such factors are teacher cum student- related and institutional-related. The study concludes that if all the stake-holders should display positive attitudes, there would be great improvement in the teaching and learning of English language in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and students' performance and communicative competence will be enhanced for effective functionality in the globalized world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from the analysis of data collected, and in order to achieve effective delivery and learning of English as a second language in Nigerian Polytechnics, all the stakeholders should play their parts conscientiously. Hence, this study recommends that:

- Teachers should have positive attitude to teaching;
- Teachers should shun all unethical behaviours such as intimidation, harassment, assault, threat et cetera;
- Teachers should attend workshops, seminars, conference, re-training programmes to update their knowledge of the course and learn more methods of imparting knowledge to students with less stress;
- Teachers should motivate students to learn through the use of examples, illustrations, comparison, peer teaching and group work, demonstrations and repetitions, drawings, games and through modellings i-e showing good examples in the use of language, through words and actions;
- Teachers should adopt student-centered approach rather than contents or teacher-centered approach;
- Students should develop positive attitude towards learning;
- Students should possess necessary textbooks and participate actively in class using the language;
- Government should employ professional teachers to teach the subject;
- Government should adequately fund polytechnic education ;
- Polytechnic management should ensure that conducive atmosphere and necessary infrastructures are provided for effective teaching and learning.

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