



TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO WORK AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AKPABUYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes to work and effective teaching of English Language in primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Variables as they affect teachers' effective teaching of English Language were briefly surveyed to provide multidimensional explanation. The sub variables of teachers' development attitudes to work considered in this study were teachers' attitude towards grading and questioning techniques. The design adopted for the study was ex-post-facto. The population of the study comprised all the teachers in the 15 public primary schools in the study area. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data and the sample size was one hundred and eight (180) teachers, 80 males and 100 females. The measuring instrument was a questionnaire which the researchers administered on 180 teachers drawn from six (6) public primary schools in the study area. Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis revealed that the teachers' attitudes to work such as attitudes towards grading and questioning techniques correlate positively with effective teaching of English Language. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that government should ensure that more efficient and competent teachers are recruited to teach in the primary schools. Also teachers should change their attitudes towards grading system, they should stop scoring pupils "zero of something" no matter how bad the child's work is.

KEYWORDS: Teachers', Attitude to work, Effective teaching

INTRODUCTION

The education sector remains the most significant and most strategic source of acquisition and practice of English in the country. Our education from pre-primary to university is understandably dominated by the practice of English.

In many societies where English is used as a second or foreign language, the acquisition of skills relevant for effective teaching of English in the classroom situation has been found to be problematic to the second language or foreign language learners. Curriculum designers, language policy makers, applied linguists and teachers, especially, have made attempts to

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address this problem through proposing a positive teachers' attitude that would assist teachers in their teaching assignment.

However, for a period of more than thirty years since Grieve (2000) the measurement of educational attainment, or more strictly linguistic attainment in the language has always revealed yearly no remarkable progress incompetence or ability. Although a progressively large number of individuals enter the system every year, and though a greater number of excellent performance is revealed in various domains of use, the rate of failure in the language at public examinations is frighteningly high – which points to it as an index of waste or attrition in such directions.

Gagne (2009) has revealed that in Nigeria, for instance, where English is the lingua franca, that is the official language and the language of communication from nursery to the University levels (the policy on mother tongue usage notwithstanding), learners dread English classes and perform minimally in internal and external examination.

Most of the times when learners perform poorly in English language examinations, efforts are made by groups and individuals to point at the sources of the problem. The results of Primary Six Placement Examinations (PSPE) yearly conducted by the Cross River State Ministry of Education is one examination in which massive failure in English Language always alarmed home and school as well as education theorists. Elsewhere, Gyuse (2021) has reported that less than 25% of graduating Primary Six learners who attempt the PSPE usually pass well enough to qualify for enrolment in junior secondary schools. Ministry of education officials tend to blame such massive failure on lack of commitment and professional commitment on the part of teachers. Teachers on the other hand blame it on population explosion in schools leading to overstressed facilities and overworked teaching staff.

This situation undoubtedly warrants a careful study and obvious remedies. This paper is therefore an attempt to examine the teachers' attitude to work and effective teaching of English language in primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Teaching being a dynamic activity requires a favourable attitude and certain specific competencies from its practitioners. Teachers' proficiency depends on the attitude they possess for the profession. The positive attitude helps the English language teachers to develop a conducive learner friendly environment in the classroom. This also costs a fruitful effect on learning of the pupils (Aniah, Anashie and Offem, 2021). Attitude being a social construct is influenced by many factors like teachers' workload, teachers' interest towards learners, teachers' attitude towards grading, teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques in terms of wait time and teachers' previous experience of the teaching job (Rothkopt and Bisbias, 2007).

Attitude according to Sheikh (2010) refers to one mental preposition which determines the next line of response to which attitude is directed. In this context attitude refers to the feelings and beliefs of teachers about effective teaching of English language to learners in schools, especially primary schools which could be expressed covertly or overtly in favourable or unfavourable degrees. Effiong (2001) concurred that many language educators and linguists claim that teachers' attitude to work is important and influential to effective teaching of English language in the classroom.

Salovery and Sluyter (2010) disclosed that teachers' attitude to teaching is one reason why many learners hate English language and subsequently fail the subject. This fear of failing according this author, is one of the sources of learners' anxiety in English language and that English teachers exacerbate this fear by their qualification, type of training, questioning skills and attitude towards grading.

The critical question then: is it really true that a pupil who scored zero out of say five English language activities given to him has "zero knowledge" in the five activities? The answer to this question is probably "no" in many instances. Teachers are fond of creating the impression that these pupils will never do well in English, and with time, these same pupils begin to believe that they can never do well in English in accordance with the self-fulfilling prophesy.

It is against this background that this study investigated teacher' attitude to work and effective teaching of English Language in Primary Schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Anyone familiar with the Nigerian schools today, knows that there are a number of serious problems confronting the teachers and the learners in the classrooms. Many English language educators in Nigeria have researched into these problems (Gyuse, 2013 and Montgomery, 1982). Based on the results of the numerous researches in the teaching and learning of English language at both the primary and secondary levels, these writers classify the problems into two broad areas namely learner centred problems and teacher-centred problems. In every teaching and learning situation, there are really two major actors, the teachers and the learners. The success or failure of the teaching and learning enterprise hinges principally on what these two groups do with the learning environment. There are many reasons why many learners hate English language and subsequently fail the subject. One of such reasons is the teachers' attitude to work, and the problems which revolve around the English language teachers include attitude towards grading and questioning techniques. Salovey and Sluyter (2010) disclosed that the fear of failing is one of the sources of learners' anxiety in English language. English teachers exacerbate this fear by their grading practices as well as their questioning teachers. From literature review, teachers' attitude to work plays an important role in effective teaching and learning of English language, but it is not quite understood whether positive teachers' attitudes to work are associated with effective teaching of English language. The task of this paper is to examine the teachers' attitudes to work with regards to grading system and questioning techniques as they affect effective teaching of English language in the primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' attitude to work and effective teaching of English Language in Primary School in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to

- i) examine if there is any significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and their effective teaching of English Language.
- ii) examine if there is any significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards questioning technique and their effective teaching of English Language.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research therefore was designed to find answers to the under listed questions:

- i) How does teachers' attitude towards grading relate to their effective teaching of English Language?
- ii) How does teachers' attitude towards questioning technique relate to their effective teaching of English Language?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i) There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and their effective teaching of English Language in Primary Schools.
- ii) There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards questioning technique and their effective teaching of English Language in Primary Schools.

METHODOLOGY

The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in the 15 public primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government of Cross River State, Nigeria. From the entire population, a sample of 180 teachers was purposely selected from 12 public primary schools, 15 teachers from each primary school (80 males and 100 females). The researchers adopted ex-post-facto design.

The instrument used for the collection of data for this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Teachers' Attitude to work and Effective Teaching Questionnaire (TAWETQ)". The Spearman brown corrected split-half reliability of the questionnaire, items of .62, .65 and .78 were observed. There were two hypotheses tested in this study at .05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical analysis technique. Both hypotheses were stated in a null form. The decision rule for rejecting or accepting a null hypothesis was that if the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise accepted.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and their

effective teaching of English Language in primary schools.

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between teachers' attitude towards grading and effective teaching of English Language in primary schools (N=180)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r_{cal}
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Teachers' attitude towards grading (x)	1586	13996	20313	2159
Effective Teaching of English (y)	2305	29526		

Significant at .05, Df = 178, critical r = .1946

The result in Table 1 depicts a significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and their effective teaching of English Language in primary schools. This is so because the calculated value of $r = .2159$ is greater than the critical r-value of .1946, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis.

This implies that there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitudes towards grading and their effective teaching of English language in primary schools.

It means therefore that the respondents are in agreement that teachers' attitude towards grading enhance effective teaching of English language

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques and their effective teaching of English Language in primary schools. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques and their effective teaching of English Language in primary schools. (N=180)

Variables	ΣX	ΣX^2	ΣXY	r_{cal}
	ΣY	ΣY^2		
Teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques (x)	1725	16535	22091	2423
Effective Teaching of English (y)	2305	29526		

Significant at .05, df = 178, Critical r = .1946

The result in Table 2 depicts a significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques and their effective teaching of English language in primary schools. This is so because the calculated value of $r = .2423$ is greater than the critical value of $r = .1946$, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis.

This implies that there is a significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards questioning technique and their effective teaching of English language in primary schools.

It therefore means that the respondents are also in agreement that teachers' attitude towards questioning techniques enhance effective teaching of English language.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

i) Teachers' attitude towards grading and effective teaching of English Language.

Investigation on this hypothesis which posited that there is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and effective teaching of English Language. The results of analysis of Pearson Product Moment Correlation employed, showed a significant relationship between teachers' attitude towards grading and effective teaching of English Language in primary schools. In affirmation of the above result, Worell (2015) in her study evaluating teachers' teaching effectiveness reported that the more positive an individual cultivates attitude towards a thing, the more realistic individual's level of aspirations in school.

In a similar view, Doleres (2005) in his study on teachers' teaching effectiveness reported that effects of teachers' attitude towards grading correlates positively with pupils' academic performance. And that pupils' achievements were increased by teachers' professionalism as well as the mastery of the subject matter.

The result of this finding was in consonant with the work of Salovery and Sluyter (2010) who disclosed that teachers' attitudes towards their teaching assignment is one reason why many learners fear and hate English language and subsequently fail the subject. English language teachers exacerbate this fear by their qualification, type of training, grading system and questioning technique.

ii) Teachers' attitude towards questioning technique and effective teaching of English Language

Data were collated and analysed on the hypothesis. The result indicated a very high significant relation between teachers' attitude towards questioning technique and their effective teaching of English Language in primary schools. In support of this result, Rothkopf and Bisbieos (2007) asserted that questions are very effective in improving pupils' achievement and that a very important consideration in the questioning behaviour of teachers is the wait – time which teachers often practice in order to make their teaching effective and efficient.

The findings of this study was in agreement with the views obtained by Effiong (2001) who affirmed that many language educators and linguists claim that teachers' attitude to work like questioning technique is important and influential to effective teaching and learning of English language in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

English language teaching especially at the senior primary school level is problematic because of the poor foundation laid at the pre-primary level. Some of the English language teachers are not competent in teaching some senior primary school English language topics and those who claim to be competent do the teaching with negative and non-challant attitude towards grading and questioning technique. Hence teachers' attitude to work has a significant positive relationship with their effective teaching of English language in primary schools in Akpabuyo Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

i) Teachers' attitude towards grading system could be improved through a sustained campaign delivered through attitude improvement workshop organised occasionally by English language educators.

ii) Many English language educators generally agree that questions are very effective in improving learners' achievement. This special attribute of English language must be understood by English language teachers in order to appreciate the special problems confronting English language learners. If English language teachers appreciate this problem, they will be in a better position to readily offer remedial teaching to primary school learners.

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