

Evaluation of the Implementation of the English Studies Curriculum at the Upper Basic II Education Level in Abia State

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Abstract

This study evaluated the extent of implementation of the English studies curriculum at the upper basic II education level in Abia State. The study is an evaluative research design adopting a descriptive survey design. The sample for the study consisted of 575 respondents, which comprised 13 English studies teachers and 562 students. Sample was drawn using a stratified simple random sampling technique. The study employed a structured questionnaire titled the English Language Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire (ELCI), which was validated by three experts: two from Curriculum Studies and one from Measurement and Evaluation. Pearson Product-moment correlation was used to determine the stability of the instrument which yielded 0.86 while Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument at 0.87 coefficients. Out of 575 copies of the questionnaire administered, 542 copies, representing 94 percent return rate were used for data analysis. The data generated from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean to provide answers to the research questions, while the t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that the extent of the implementation of the contents of English studies curriculum at upper basic education level in Abia state as well as resources and strategies for its implementation were respectively low. Based on the findings, the study recommended, among others that Government as well as School authorities should have regular monitoring of English studies teachers to ensure that all the contents of the subject curriculum are well covered at every level before the students move to the next level or class.

Keywords: Evaluation, English Language, Studies Curriculum and Upper Basic Education

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is the fundamental right of every citizenry at least during the primary and post primary levels. But, the skills and knowledge which education provides for human development will not be possible without the language through which the concepts are expressed (Njoku, 2017). The significance attributed to the learning and teaching of foreign languages has been given recognition by educational authority, and foreign language courses have however taken their places in the core curricula at different levels across the world. This is where the English language comes in because in Nigeria, English is the language of education. Among the several types of languages, English is seen as the most preferred not only because of its widespread use but also because of its universal acceptance (Okoro, 2020).

A good knowledge of the socio-political history of Nigeria will enable one understand how English language came into Nigeria and occupied a colossal position in the Nigerian educational system. The country (Nigeria) is made up of multilingual and multi-ethnic nationals wielded together for the benefit of colonial administration; English language was then adopted as a language of necessity to enable the British run their colonial government. Clerks and interpreters were trained and those who wished to work with colonial masters strived to learn English (Njoku, 2017). When the British government took over the running of schools in Nigeria, they harmonized the subjects taught in the different missionary schools. They also came with a policy that made English language core subject as well as language of instruction in the 1882 and 1887 education ordinances (Njoku & Izuagba as cited in Njoku, 2017).

In the Nigerian context, English language obviously has gone beyond the status of just a language to be taught, learnt and passed in examination. This is because English language occupies a very special position as the official language or the lingua franca as well as the language of formal education (Onyemachi, 2017). The English language has conferred on Nigerians other privileges that border on human development as well as national development both on the home front and global scene (Njoku, 2017). On the home front, English language is essentially regarded as unifying factor, it has allowed Nigerians to co-exist peacefully even in their diversity. It is this peaceful co-existence that engenders development either in individual or national basis. Considering the multi-lingual nature of the country, the communication crises that would have occurred among people from different linguistic backgrounds are bridged by the use of English. It is also possible for Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds to study or work in any part of the country without fear of molestation (Okoro, 2020).

With all these status and functions imposed on English language in Nigeria, one would have expected a reasonable high performance and competence in it among Nigerians and particular among students and pupils. However, it is disheartening and worrisome that observations and data emanating from researches carried out so far in Nigeria and outside the shores of Nigerian on the performance of learners especially at Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), National Examination Council (NECO) reveal that students' performance are below expectation (Okoro, 2020, Onyemachi, 2017 & Torto, 2017). According to Akeredolu -Ale, (2007), Patrick, Sui, Didan and Ojo., as cited in Tom -Lawyer, (2015), there has been a significant rise in the number of failures recorded at the lower and upper basic examinations conducted in the country. Anyadiegwu (2012) observed that entrants into the Universities and Colleges of Education in the country are deficient in English language usage.

Often times, one observes: that students exhibit poor attitude towards attending English classes; students indulge in cheating or malpractice during organized class tests and examinations, that there is generally poor mechanical skills and expressions among students and teachers; that most students' attend English studies class without reading and writing materials; that teachers and students absent themselves from classes regularly without reason(s). This evidence

creates panic among stakeholders in education and the citizenry. Also, the success of any curriculum depends solely on how it is implemented. No matter how well a curriculum is being drafted, if not properly implemented, the question of practical success becomes a mirage. Curriculum implementation has to do with the practical translation into practice of the designed paper work in such a way that the stated objectives are practically achieved. Lewey, in Onyemachi, (2017) stressed that curriculum implementation is a process of achieving the practical result of curriculum objectives. In line with present circumstance, this study was brought forward to evaluate implementation of the English studies curriculum at the upper basic II education level in Abia State to fill the existing gap.

Statement of the Problem

English studies as an official language of communication as well as the language use in learning almost every school subject is expected to be an all distinction subject for students in the upper Basic Education level. Among the objectives of English studies curriculum in the Upper Basic level is to align and realign students to become proficient and competent in the use of English language. However, it is disheartening and worrisome that many learners after spending years in the basic levels still have problems in their use of English for both reading and communicative competence. However, earlier studies have shown that students' performance is not entirely dependent on teachers' qualifications, teaching methods applied and available instructional materials but on the effective implementation of the curriculum. The implementation of the Upper Basic English Studies Curriculum in Nigeria has been an issue for debate among scholars over the years but whether the implementation is being carried out according to specification remains to be seen. Despite all the efforts at finding the lasting solution to the problem of students' poor academic performance, it seems the problem is in the increase. The question still begging for answer is what exactly is the cause of this ugly situation? Could it be that specified instructional strategies are not being followed? What about the English studies objectives, are they being achieved at the end of each lesson? What about the content of the English studies curriculum, who knows if it is covered by the implementers of the curriculum? Are facilities and instructional materials available for the implementation of English studies curriculum? The problem of this study put in question form is: Is the English studies curriculum at the Upper

Basic level adequately implemented? It is on this premise that this research is proposed to be carried out to further evaluate the implementation of the English Studies Curriculum at the Upper Basic education level in Abia State. This is the problem the study is poised to investigate. Curriculum implementation as viewed by Okebukola as cited in Tom-Lawyer (2016) is the translation of curriculum goals from documents to practice. The curriculum is the blue print of any programme that must be properly translated from effective implementation. It involves the dissemination of the structured set of learning experiences, provision of resources to effectively execute the plan and the actual execution in the classroom setting where teacher/learner interaction takes place (Mkapa in Abraham, (2016). The implementation stage of a syllabus is the most important and vital stage in curriculum change. Markee (2016) noted that an approximate of 75% innovation is unsuccessful. This then suggests that better implementation according to Fullan, in Okoro (2020) is related to quality implementation which is accounted to represent 90% of the problem. Implementation entails the actual practice of an innovation. According to Ezeahurukwe (2018) the implementation of a curriculum is important even if the curriculum is properly planned, designed and documented. However, in spite of the design of a curriculum, it needs to be implemented for it to sway students (Ton-Lawyer, 2016).

Amadi (2016) discovered that curriculum implementation has significant relationship with curriculum objectives and evaluation of the objectives. Consequently, if English studies curriculum is ideally implemented, it then implies that the objectives of English studies are practically achieved in terms of cognitive, affective and the psychomotor domains which should reflect in both written and communicative competence of the learners. In addition, Eyengho and Peter (2022) researched on the Assessment of the Implementation of the upper Basic English language Curriculum in Ondo city, Nigeria. Findings of the study suggested there were not enough English language teachers for the implementation of Upper Basic English language curriculum. There was lack of commitment from the English language teachers to implement the curriculum, there was inconsistency on the part of government at various levels. Along this line, Salhuiddin, Khan and Raham (2016) conducted a study on the challenges of implementing English Curriculum at rural primary schools of Bangladesh, which revealed that most teachers had no training in the teaching of the

English studies. Furthermore, it showed that teachers mostly encountered challenges in implementing the English studies curriculum since they often do not prepare their lesson plan due school work load. Okello and Kagoire in Tom-Lawyer (2016) stressed that the success of the curriculum depends on the teacher. The present study is interested in the evaluation of the implementation of the English studies curriculum at the Upper Basic II education level in Abia state to fill the existing gap.

Research Questions:

Three research questions were posed and answered for the study:

1. What is the extent of the implementation of English studies curriculum content at the Upper Basic education level in Abia State?
2. What is the state of the availability of resources for the implementation of English studies curriculum at the Upper Basic education level in Abia state?
3. How the implementation of English has studies curriculum equipped students to develop their communication skills at the Upper Basic level in Abia state?

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent of achievement of the content of the English studies Curriculum at the upper basic education level in Abia state.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and students on the availability of resources for the implementation of English studies curriculum at the upper basic education level in Abia state.
3. There is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and students on how the implementation of English studies curriculum has equipped students to develop their communication skills.

Methodology

This study investigated the evaluation of the implementation of the English studies curriculum at the Upper Basic II education level in Abia state, Nigeria. The study adopted an evaluative research design. The sample for the study consisted of 575 respondents which comprised 13 English studies teachers and 562

students', research design drawn using stratified simple random sampling technique. The study made use of a structured questionnaire titled: English Language Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire (ELCIQ) which was validated by three experts: two from Curriculum Studies and one expert from Measurement

and Evaluation. An overall reliability index of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The data generated from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to provide answers to the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean Responses of Teachers and Students on the extent English studies Curriculum objectives has been implemented at Upper Basic education level in Abia state (N=542)

S/N Extent to which the following contents of English studies has been taught in our class	X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD	Xg ₃	Remark
1. Reading for understanding the writer's purpose	1.65	0.68	1.51	0.70	1.58	LE
2. Critical reading	1.57	0.79	1.52	0.83	1.55	LE
3. Reading for speed	1.55	0.78	1.59	0.81	1.57	LE
4. Writing an outline	1.42	0.79	1.68	0.70	1.55	LE
5. Composition writing	2.69	0.65	2.64	0.71	2.67	HE
6. Letter writing	2.65	0.78	2.63	0.75	2.64	HE
7. Summary writing	2.68	0.91	2.57	0.88	2.63	HE
8. Vowels and consonants	2.54	0.87	2.51	0.95	2.53	HE
9. Parts of speech	2.60	0.68	2.58	0.91	2.59	HE
10. Adverbials and tenses	2.55	0.70	2.54	0.73	2.55	HE
11. Figures of speech	2.62	0.77	2.60	0.66	2.61	HE
12. Drama	2.03	0.76	2.07	0.78	2.10	LE
13. Poetry	2.13	0.69	2.14	0.84	2.14	LE
14. Prose	2.16	0.79	2.01	0.96	2.13	LE
Cluster mean	2.20	0.76	2.19	0.80	2.20	LE

H.E=High Extent, X₁=Mean ratings of Teachers, X₂=Mean ratings of Students, Xg₃=Aggregate Mean LE

The result in Table 1. Show the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent English studies Curriculum objectives been implemented at Upper Basic education level in Abia state. The Table specifically showed that the aggregate mean ratings of teachers and students in all the items except items 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 ranged between 2.56-2.67 which falls within the real limit of numbers range of 1.50-3.49 indicating low extent mean ratings. Other items (5, 6, 7,

8, 9, 10 and 11) had mean ratings that ranged between 2.53-2.67 which fall within the real limit of numbers range of 2.50-3.49 indicating high extent mean ratings. The cluster mean of 2.20 which equally fall within the real limit of numbers range 1.50-2.49 affirmed that the respondents agreed that English studies curriculum objectives have been implemented to a low extent at Upper Basic education level in Abia State.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of mean rating of Teachers and Students on extent Curriculum objectives have been implemented at Upper Basic education level in Abia State.

Status	n	X	Sd	df	t-cal.	P-Value	Remark
Teachers	10	2.19	0.76	540	0.08	1.54	NS
Students	532	2.17	0.80				

Data in Table 2 reveal a Probability (P) value which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Since the

P-value is greater than 0.05 alpha level, the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. Therefore,

there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent English

studies Curriculum objectives have been implemented at Upper Basic education in Abia State.

Research Questions 2

Table 3: Mean Responses of Teachers and Students on the extent Resources for the Implementation of English Students Curriculum at Upper Basic education level available in Abia State (N542)

S/N	Extent of the availability of resources for Teaching English students	X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	Xg3	Remark
15.	Chairs and lockers are made available for Students' use in the classrooms	2.62	0.85	2.57	0.77	2.60	HE
16.	Our classrooms are equipped with functional fans	1.63	0.89	1.55	0.81	1.59	LE
17.	There is regular supply for teaching And learning in our school	1.56	0.79	1.69	0.73	1.63	LE
18.	There is portable water supply in our school for teaching and learning	1.79	0.88	1.61	0.85	1.70	LE
19.	Recommended textbooks are provided for teaching English studies	1.66	0.76	1.58	0.85	1.62	LE
20.	There are electronic gadgets such as Computers, Projectors, video tapes and Audio visual aids for English studies lesson	1.71	0.70	1.78	0.88	1.75	LE
21.	Teachers use recommended Instructional materials to teach English Studies	1.86	0.87	1.6	0.88	1.77	LE
	Cluster Mean	1.83	0.82	1.78	0.82	2.81	LE

L. E. Extent, X₁-Man ratings of Teachers, X₂ =Mean ratings of Students, Xg3= Aggregate Mean

The results in table 3 show the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent resources for the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education level are available in Abia state. The table specifically showed that the aggregate mean ratings of teachers and students in all the items except item 15 ranged between 1.59-1.77 which fall within the real limit of numbers range of 1.50-2.49 indicating low extent mean ratings. Item 15 had a mean rating of 2.60

which fall within the real limit of numbers range of 2.50-3.49 indicating high extent mean ratings. The cluster mean of 1.81 which equally fall within the real limit of numbers range of 1.50-2.49 affirmed that the respondents agreed that resources for the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education level in Abia state are available to a low extent.

Hypothesis 2

Table 4: t-test Analysis of mean ratings of Teachers and Students on extent Resources for the Implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education level are available in Abia state

Status	n	X	Sd	df	t-cal.	P-value	Remark
Teachers	10	1.73	0.77	540	0.16	1.73	NS
Students	532	1.69	0.80				

Results in the Table 4 reveal a Probability (P) value of 1.73 which is greater than the alpha value of 0.05. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05 alpha level, the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference

between the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent resources for the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education level are available in Abia state.

Table 5: Mean Responses of Teachers and Students on extent the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia state equipped students to develop their communication skills (N542)

S/N	Extent curriculum has equipped Students' students' Communication skills	X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	XD ₂	Xg ₃	Remark
29.	Teaching Students Grammar activities their speaking skills.	2.78	0.67	2.83	0.82	2.81	High Extent
30.	Exposing the students to reading and or listening activities improve grammatical knowledge of the students.	2.69	0.73	2.62	0.83	2.66	High Extent
31.	Reading and or listening activities improve students' understanding of texts.	2.77	0.86	2.71	0.74	2.74	High Extent
32.	Speaking activities are relevant For preparing for good Communication skills.	2.88	0.79	2.75	0.76	0.82	High Extent
33.	Students interact among Themselves in English language	2.87	0.67	2.67	0.75	2.77	High Extent
34.	Students and express their feelings in English language	2.80	0.76	2.77	0.71	2.79	High Extent
35.	Teaching Students Grammar activities improves their writing skills	2.67	0.88	2.59	0.87	2.63	High Extent
Cluster Mean		2.78	0.77	2.71	0.78	2.75	High Extent

He =High Extent, X1=Mean ratings of urban entrepreneurs. X2=Mean rating of rural entrepreneurs, Xg3

The result in Table 5 reveals that the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia sate has equipped students to develop their communication skills. The table

specifically showed that the aggregate mean ratings o teachers and students in all the items ranged between 2.63-2.82 which fall within the real limit numbers range of 2.50-3.49 indicating high extent mean ratings. The cluster mean of 2.75 which equally fall within the real

limit of numbers range of 2.50-3.49 indicating high extent mean ratings. The cluster mean of 1.81 which equally fall within the real limit of numbers range of 1.50-2.49 affirmed that the respondents agreed that the

implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic of education in Abia state has a high extent equipped students to develop their communication skills.

Hypothesis 3

Table 6: t-test Analysis of mean ratings of Teachers and Students on extent the Implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia state has equipped students to develop their communication skills

Status	n	X	Sd	df	t-cal.	P-value	Remark
Teachers	10	2.78	0.77	540	0.29	1.66	NS
Students	532	2.71	0.78				

Data in Table 6 show a probability (P) value of 1.66 which is grater that the alpha value of 0.05. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05 alpha level, the hypothesis of no significant difference was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of teachers and students on the extent the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia state has equipped students to develop their communication skills.

Discussion:

The result in Table 1 revealed that English studies Curriculum contents have been implemented to a low extent at Upper Basic education level in Abia state. Going by these results, it indicates that English studies contents such as: reading for understanding the writer's purpose, critical reading, reading for speed, drama, poetry and prose were implemented or taught to a low extent. This implies that the students do not cover much of the English studies curriculum contents at the Upper basic education level in Abia state. The results with Onyemachi (2017) findings which discovered that the curriculum was not fully implemented. It equally supported the findings of Eyengho and Peter (2022) who also found out that the implementation of English language curriculum at the upper basic was low, and they suggested that inadequate number of qualified English studies teachers as well as low commitment of the few available English studies were reasons for such.

The result in Table 2 revealed that resources for the implementation of English studies curriculum at Upper Basic education level in Abia state are available to a low extent. In other words, there was inadequate availability of relevant resource for effective implementation of English studies curriculum. This

result collaborates with the finding o Onyemachi (2017) who discovered among others that facilities for the implementation of the subject was inadequate. In a similar vein, the results supported Ojumor (2018) who noted that inadequate instructional materials, facilities and equipment hindered effective implementation of Basic education curriculum of junior secondary schools.

The result in Table 3 revealed that the implementation of English studies curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia state has to a high extent equipped students to develop their communication skills. The implied that the implementation of English studies curriculum at upper basic education in Abia state has highly equipped the students with communication skills. The result supported Odili, Ebezina and Ajua in Ojumor (2018) who maintained that efficient implementation of any school curriculum through its objectives, contents, materials and methods is crucial in realizing the general goals of education which is positive change in the character of the learners. The result also aligned with Okoro (2020) who discovered that with the effective implementation of curriculum, teacher's curriculum contents into knowledge, skills and competencies which the learners exhibit.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the extent of the implementation of English studies curriculum at the upper basic II education level n Abia state. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made:

1. English studies Curriculum contents have been implemented to a low extent at Upper Basic education level in Abia state.



2. Resources for the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education level in Abia state are available to a low extent.
3. Finally, the implementation of English studies Curriculum at Upper Basic education in Abia state has to a high extent equipped students to develop their communication skills.

Recommendations

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

1. Government as well as School authorities should have regular monitoring of English studies teachers to ensure that all the contents of the subject curriculum are well covered at every level before the students move to the next level or class.
2. Parent-Teacher Associations and other stakeholders in education should assist the government and school authorities to provide adequate number of resources needed for the effective teaching and learning of English studies at the Upper basic education level.
3. English studies teachers should regularly upgrade their communication skills to ensure that impart same to their students.

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