

English Language As A Prerequisite For Admission Into Nigerian Universities: Implications For Manpower Development In Educational Technology

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Abstract

The National Policy on Education, (2004) stated that English Language is the medium of instruction from primary school to tertiary level. English Language is not only a core subject in Nigeria's Education system but a credit pass in it is a prerequisite for admission into the universities for all the programmes. It is in this light that the paper looked at the role of English Language as a prerequisite for admission into Nigerian universities and its implications on manpower development in Educational Technology. It concludes that constant use of instructional media in schools should be encouraged to make teaching of English Language more interesting and effective. Also, Language laboratories or studio was suggested to be provided by ministries of Education and equipped with various instructional media aids for practical learning of the language. Qualified and experienced English Language teachers should be employed and trained through periodic workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service programmes, this will help boost students' performance, rate of admission and consequently enhance manpower needs in Educational Technology.

Introduction

English Language is widely spoken and used more than any other language on the globe. Today large numbers of non English speakers use English Language in order to survive or find employment with governing class. The role and functions has changed from being an instrument of subservience to other quite different ends such as window on the world of science and technology or as the only language not neglected by one section of the population or another. English Language is used in numerous books providing international aid and administration. As the telecommunication revolution got underway English Language became dominant in the international media, radio and television, magazine and newspapers including trade. English as a Language is very important than inventions itself because without language most inventions, discoveries will be difficult to preserve and transmit from generation to generation. Adebayo, (1988) stated that technology and science may control environment but solution to its problems rest upon English Language as medium of passing information and commands.

The role English Language plays in the world of communication and scientific advancement cannot be overemphasized. Our educational policy is centered on English Language, virtually all the books we use in our schools are written in English Language. Consequently, both arts and science students need proficiency in English. As the language of wider communication every school child or student no matter his course must study English Language. Ferguson, (1981) stated that English Language is needed to promote our culture and to know and appreciate other people. Most of the novels, plays and poems are written in English Language, the language therefore has to be learned to an appreciable degree to know and value our culture.

In Nigeria, English Language is learned and studied as a subject. There is a conscious effort to study the language deeply or extensively because of some advantages to be derived from the exercise. According to the National Policy on Education, (2004) the use of English Language in the educational institutions should start from the primary school. In Nigeria schools, all subjects offered are taught and learned using English Language as a medium. It therefore holds that for any meaningful achievement in science and technology to take place English Language must be made compulsory as a pre-

Students Performance in English Language and the Role of Educational Technology

requisite for admission into our higher institutions of learning. Oyewole, (1978) stated that there is no doubt that Nigeria has lost and is still losing potential scientist, teachers and experts just because such candidates could not make the required grades in English Language.

Aniah, (2004) according to statistics obtained from Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority, Minna and the State Universal Basic Education Board using First

School Leaving Certificate Examination Results, in English Language, 2000-2002, WAEC and NECO Results 2005-2007 as shown on tables below indicated that students performance was poor. It was further observed that if this problem of poor performance is not checked right from the primary school which is the foundation upon which all other levels of education are built will lead to poor turn-out of graduates who cannot fit into the Nigerian society.

Table 1: Pupils Results in English Language (2000-2002)

SCHOOLS	2000		2001		2002	
	No & % Pass	No & % Fail	No & % Pass	No & % Fail	No & % Pass	No & % Fail
IBB Pry. Sch. Minna	123 (28%)	311 (72%)	163 (36%)	284 (64%)	126 (37%)	215 (63%)
Madaki Pry. Sch. Minna	33 (34%)	60 (66%)	41 (34%)	79 (66%)	34 (38%)	55 (62%)
Dr. Faruk Pry. Sch. I Minna	58 (29%)	142 (71%)	89 (36%)	145 (64%)	29 (20%)	113 (80%)
Limawa Pry. Sch. Minna	114 (32%)	243 (68%)	73 (26%)	206 (74%)	81 (24%)	260 (76%)

Source: Chanchaga Local Government Education Authority Minna, Niger State

Table 2: Students WAEC Results in English Language (2005-2007)

SCHOOLS	2005		2006		2007	
	No & % Pass	No & % Fail	No & % Pass	No & % Fail	No & % Pass	No & % Pass
Hill-top Model Sch. Minna	19 (16.5%)	97 (83.7%)	33 (25%)	99 (75%)	3 (1.9%)	204 (98.1%)
GSS Minna	0 (0%)	286 (100%)	101 (33.2)	199 (76.8)	6 (1.3%)	301 (98.7)
DSS Minna	0 (0%)	297 (100%)	0 (0%)	372 (100%)	0 (0%)	375 (100%)
Army DSS Sch Minna	4 (1.2%)	204 (98.8%)	2 (0.2%)	256 (99.8%)	0 (0%)	201 (100%)

Source: Niger State Ministry of Education, Department of Schools and Educational Services

Table 3: Students NECO Results in English Language (2005-2007)

SCHOOLS	2005		2006		2007	
	No & % Pass	No & % Fail	No & % Pass	No % Fail	No & % Pass	No % Fail
Hill-Top Model Sch. Minna	13 (11.1%)	105 (88.9%)	12 (9.2%)	120 (90.8%)	6 (2.4%)	199 (97.6%)
GSS Minna	11 (5.2%)	243 (94.8%)	35 (13.4%)	233 (86.6%)	138 (44%)	165 (65.5%)
DSS Minna	49 (7.7%)	601 (92.3%)	8(0.2%)	837 (99.8%)	10 (1.3%)	700 (98.7%)
Amry DSS Sch. Minna	1(0.1%)	409 (99.9%)	14 (2.7%)	446 (97.3%)	0 (0%)	389 (100%)

Source: Niger State Ministry of Education, Department of Schools and Educational Services.

Technology is generally regarded as applied science, entails creation of methods, techniques, materials, goods as well as

essential conditions for human welfare, it is also concerned with how knowledge is utilized in order to make the physical

environment serve man better (Connell, 1982). Educational Technology can be viewed in two broad ways; firstly, it can be seen as the application of communication media borne out of the physical and engineering sciences involving the use of a variety of resources, such as media devices, electronic information carriers, projections and amplification in instructional processes. This view regards educational technology as tool technology mainly hardware equipment and related materials. Secondly, educational technology is viewed as a systematic way of analyzing educational and learning problems, synthesizing and evaluating logical solution strategies within the prevailing circumstance in the environment or society at large. Ogunranti, (1982) defined Educational technology as a principle and method which brings together man and resources in a systematic bid to effectively resolve educational problems.

Educational Technology therefore can be seen as a field of study which has evolved an integrated method of planning, designing, implementing and evaluating the total processes and problems of instructions. The main concern of educational technology is human competence and effective performance. It is a discipline that provides an avenue for continuous educational, scientific and technological research activities emphasizing innovation and cross fertilization of ideas. It foster the use of recent and effective information technology in instructional system, improves the quality of teaching and learning, enhances training of vocational and technical staff, promotes mass literacy and provides basic for reducing illiteracy. It provides basis for the provision of effective instructional strategy, effective human and material resources and favorable learning environment that could yield optimum learning outcome. In other words Educational Technology:
Increase the rate of learning at the same time allows the teacher to use more time on other useful activities.

Re-enforce verbal and visual messages, students would generally find it difficult to understand abstract ideas discussed by the teacher. However, if the abstract ideas are put in form of pictures etc students will understand them with ease and they remained permanent in their memories. Through the use of media emphasis is placed on realistic learning rather than rote learning. Instructional materials motivate and arrest students attention; student curiosity and consciousness increased thereby providing sound environment for realistic and enjoyable teaching and learning atmosphere. Terms and concepts especially in the areas of science are best illustrated through the use of instructional media. **Students Constraints in Learning of English Language** Lack of modern instructional materials has been identified as one drawback in teaching and learning of English Language. Ogunlaye, (2000) About 80% of teachers in Nigeria are mostly using the chalkboard and textbooks method (traditional method) of teaching in spite of the impact of modern technology on education globally. Most schools do not have modern equipment and materials for teaching and learning, the few schools that have are unable to use them effectively as a result of erratic power supply and inability of some teachers to operate some of these equipment; however, one of the major problem faced by students with the traditional method is inability of students to remember what has been learnt resulting from passiveness during instruction. It is perceived that when modern instructional materials such as computers are used, they reduce boredom, forgetfulness and allow students to participate actively during instruction. It is also believed that lack of modern and up-to date method of teaching contributes to poor performance in English Language teaching and learning. Adebayo, (2008) stated that the selection of appropriate and most effective method of teaching and learning is very crucial to the

success of the learners because teaching methods determine whether the teacher is actually communicating with the learners or not. Absence of quality education and lack of certificated and experienced English Language teachers is a source of great concern to our country (Nigeria). Seminars, workshops, conferences and in-service programs for teachers of English Language in our schools are no longer there, government does not show much concern to education sector, teachers' are not motivated or promoted promptly as at when due. Until such challenges are urgently addressed we will stand a better chance for qualified teachers and indeed quality education as a way forward to learning of English Language. It is also important for curriculum developers to take into consideration the needs and aspiration of students bearing in mind their cultural background when drawing up a blue print or program of English Language activities. Interference of first language (mother tongue) contributes to some extent to problems of students learning of English Language especially in the area of pronunciation of English Language words and sentence structure thereby affect the meaning attached to words and sentences including students' performances and until the right steps are taken to address this problem at the early stages of primary education as foundation for other levels of education or it will continue to affect the production of manpower development in Nigeria as a result of inability to credit English Language. Gimson, (1991) stated that learners' age, natural ability, his motivation and the need to which he intends to put the language to use could also be a problem.

Implications for Manpower Development in Educational Technology.

It is believed that if students' scores in English Language improve as a result of their performances, it means that more students would likely be admitted into the universities

to read Educational Technology courses. Consequently, Universities will turnout graduates of Educational Technology who will become teachers in secondary schools, universities, and work in Educational resource centre and also contribute meaningfully in the development of instructional materials and devices thereby boosting the manpower development needs in Educational Technology in Nigeria. On the other hand, poor performances in English Language would limit or reduce the chances of large number of students getting admission into tertiary institutions of learning; thereby affecting the production of potential scientists, teachers, media experts and educational technologists as a result of lack of required grade in English Language at either WAEC or NECO levels which is a pre-requisite for admission.

Conclusion

In order that students overcome the problem of deficiency in English Language as a pre-requisite for admission into Nigerian universities, the paper recommends that urgent solid foundation be built at the primary and secondary school levels of Education through constant use of instructional media in schools; this will make teaching of English Language more interesting and effective. Language laboratories or studio should be provided by ministries of Education and equipped with various instructional media aids for practical learning of the Language. Qualified and experienced English Language teachers should be employed and trained through periodic workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service programmes to keep them abreast with the latest technological development in education. This would certainly boost admission rate into the Nigerian Universities thereby increasing the rate of expert graduates particularly in the area of educational technology and by implication enhancing the manpower needs in this area.

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