AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SOME SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KANO STATE.

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ABSTRACT
English is a second language in Nigeria, a lingua-franca and a language of communication. It is the medium of instruction at all levels of education that is from primary to the tertiary institutions level, yet teachers find it difficult to teach it at all levels especially at primary school level. Hence, this research studies focuses on the investigation on the problems of teaching English at primary level selecting 6 samples out of total population of 10 primary schools in Tarauni local government, Kano state. Therefore, the main objectives of the study are (i) to investigate the academic qualification of English teachers, (ii) to highlight the problem of English among primary school pupil's (iii) to find out if there are any problem encountered by teachers of English. To achieve these objectives, questionnaire was used for the teachers. The data collected was based on questionnaires administered to the respondents. The findings revealed that most of the teachers are not qualified to teach English language, but most of them are using teaching aids to supplement their teaching. It also finds that the students make use of library for English purposes. From this analysis it was discovered that, the factors contributing to poor performance in English language among primary school pupil's include: inadequate number of teachers, unqualified teachers, mother tongue interference and students background. Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are offered: The schools should be supplied with adequate number of qualified teachers. School facilities such as library, language laboratory, infrastructural facilities and teaching aids should be provided to each school. English teachers should be made compulsory to submit the pupil's progress sheets to the head of the school, so that the head will know how far the pupils are progressing and dictate what difficulties are being encountered by the pupils.

Keywords: Problem of teaching English, Primary school pupil's, teachers, Mother tongue interference and Qualification of teachers.

INTRODUCTION
It is observed that, pupil's are finishing their primary schools without at least little communication in English language. This is of great problem because students continue learning English as the instructional language from primary to the university level. Therefore, this will affect their performance. The problem of teaching English is an area which ought to be given serious thought; it is a major issue in the sense that it is national and international problem. Primary school is the foundation level of learning and if the foundation is not well laid, there will be no progress in both teaching and learning. English
as a second language in Nigeria requires a logical teaching at all levels of education specifically primary level because English is not only a language of instruction, but also a lingua-franca and language of communication in local, national and international levels. This paper is concerned with the investigation on the problems of teaching English in selected primary schools in Tarauni local government of Kano state.

More so, school is the Centre where English can be taught effectively but problems arise where the school cannot perform the expected duty assigned to it. As such this paper seeks to investigate the academic qualification of English teachers, to highlight the problem of English among primary school pupil’s and also find out the problems encountered by teachers of English.

Basically, qualification is of great importance if good teaching and learning is to take place. Engholm (1965) opines that, there is no other secondary subject that is staffed by such a large proportion of people without appropriate qualification, nor there any object which borrows so many teachers from other areas of curriculum and assume that they can fill their role with little preparation. Therefore, the teachers of English should be specially trained before they can impart knowledge effectively. Steven and Peters (1973) assert that focus should be laid upon the linguistic implications of the fact that teachers determine the local contents of what their students are expected to learn in English. The teachers use of language and the materials provided, determines the character of the language through which the students gain access to that contents. It is the teacher’s attitude towards language teaching that make students grasps the concept either implicitly or explicitly. This in a way determines the character of the language assimilation by the students.

As is generally accepted, the method used by the teachers of English is one of the major factors that contribute to the students’ performance in the subject. There is a great possibility of obtaining good performance; if the methods are participatory methods, inquiry methods and question tag methods. If the methods are appropriately used, there will be less possibility of obtaining poor performance and good grades will be the result. On his part, Sauders (1976) opines that method is referring to procedure of language teaching to an overall plan for orderly presentation of language materials. It is so because if planning English language subject method is inappropriate, proper language teaching will not take place, but if it is appropriate a good language teaching will take place. Bright and Mc Gregor (1970) assert that, when children are to be taught language they should be taught skills, but not language. There are many different skills required for good listening, speaking, reading and writing. Skills like these can only be acquired through frequent practice and this practice is something we cannot do for the students they have to do it themselves. As Federal (1977) puts it, methods of instruction are diverse. He fashioned out two methods: traditional and direct. Traditional aspect was done by teaching the students rules of grammar and vocabulary, while direct is to teach the students to understand and speak the language. Traditional method left the students to be passive but inactive. The direct method
proves more successful. It is sometimes referred to as the linguistic method because it helps the students to express their inner desires and motives in foreign language. However, the discussion method is assume to be the most suitable for compositioning class, in this case, students can be grouped together to discuss a topic or the whole class discussing a topic on which an essay will be written. It has been discovered from research that much knowledge is gained from discussion than from individual or self-dependent reading. As things are kept in memory when discussed than when one reads alone. Ubahakwe (1979) argues that, I don’t think that language work in participant role will succeed till it arises naturally in the course of bigger enterprise, organized with class or group of students. This implies that, the problem of teaching English can be solved through the involvement of the students in series of practical activities where students learn through participation. He adds that, taking participant role will provide adequate opportunity for using an appropriate range of written language. Also Students will be interested enough to accept the participant role offered; the teacher should be equipped in selecting a vast number of more available choices that is most appropriate for his students, himself/herself and the teaching environment. To him, the ability to motivate students to be involved directly is one of the ways through which some of the problems of teaching English can be solved.

Furthermore, learning materials are always of great help to the teacher who thoroughly understand how, when, where not to use them. For instance, text plays a dominant role in English language teaching and speaking in Nigeria. In most cases it has been observed that a lot of textbooks in use are hurriedly prepared and poorly organized. Kohil (1996) views that, in most history of foreign language teaching research, there has been little investigation into the effectiveness of different textbooks which differ widely in the application of theory of instructions in style and order of presentation and in the type of students to whom they are addressed. Language teaching can achieve it is objective to the maximum height when compiled with the use of effective textbooks, but total dependence on textbook only is not a good method which the teacher should adopt. This is because the textbook alone cannot be expected to cope with the outstanding problems of linguistics of every student in English class. Das (1989) discover that in a group of high school near New York City, students that did not use language laboratory did not achieve as much as those that had use language laboratory. Again, Ismail (2008) in an experimental study found that effective teaching of English and French pronunciations can be done through the language laboratory.

However, studies have revealed that, teaching aids are no more available in the schools as they were before, radio, tape recorder were additional resources to teach English in the olden days. No matter how highly qualified and experienced a person is, teaching English needs a professional touch. One tends to find that there are certain instances where one has to bring some aids to supplement other teaching methods. Various techniques can help in
the students understanding of the language before the goal can be achieved. In this issue, teaching aids are important to help in language teaching if appropriately used. Best (1989) believe that, tape recorder made a carefully controlled study and the use of recorder is an effective aid in the method of teaching conversation, listening, comprehension and that even untrained teachers can effectively teach with tape recorder successfully.

It is observed that, language teaching needs a lot of time for it is practice to enable good performance in the language learning. The researcher discovered that, in most of the primary schools time allocated to English teaching ranges between 30-35 minutes only. In learning the first language the learner has all the advantages of learning the language from early age, favorable environment, enough practice and other activities, but yet the child does not attain a high proficiency in the language until he reached adolescence. How then is second language learning given a little attention and one wonders what a teacher who is handling a comprehension lesson will achieve during the lesson of 35 minutes duration before the time will be against him? The study has shown that a class given a single period of 35 minutes in a comprehension lesson will perform less than a class given a double period in the same comprehension lesson. The time of the day at which English lesson is taught is also contributory factor to students poor performance. It has been observed that students are more active in the morning hours than in the afternoon hours. Therefore, it is better for English lesson to be taught during morning hours. Thus the study is set to answer the following question:

1. What are the academic qualifications of English teachers?
2. What are the problems of English among primary school pupil’s?
3. Is there any problem encountered by teachers of English?

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In this study, I administered questionnaire to my participants. Questions in the questionnaire are asked within the research topic, based on the teachers Qualification, area of specialization, experience, teaching method, time table in relation to English period on the school, time table, Textbooks and other relevant things that can aid learning (see appendix 1). The questionnaires were administered and collected instantly. The research covers all the thirty one teachers of six selected primary schools in Tarauni local government area of Kano state. Six primary schools out of the ten were selected randomly. The schools selected are:

1. Daurawa primary school
2. Hausawa model primary school
3. Hotoro special primary school
4. Gyadi-Gyadi primary school
5. Kundila special primary school
6. Hausawa special primary school
RESULTS OF THE STUDY
As mentioned above, the factors affecting the teaching of English language in Tarauni local government primary schools, Kano state were investigated. The data collected was based on questionnaires administered to the respondents.

The teachers were asked whether they had any teaching qualification that is the certificated they had in order to teach English. The result shows that 10 (33%) respondents are NCE holders, 3% is for 1 B.A holder, 62% are for 19 Grade II holders and 3% is for 1 WAEC holder. NCE is the minimum qualification for teaching at primary school according to national curriculum, therefore only NCE holders are to teach in primary schools because they read it as their teaching subject. Again, there is only one degree holder but special honor in English. Based on this result it was concluded that most of the teacher’s response do not have basic knowledge in English before coming to teach it as subject in the primary school; they also lack both in content knowledge and method of teaching. They cannot maintain fluency while teaching English.

The lecturer were asked about their previous working experience. However, they have different number of schools they have taught before coming to their present schools to teach. sixteen teachers had taught in three or four schools before coming to their present school which represents 52%, seven teachers taught in two schools before coming to their present school which represents 23%, one teacher has never taught in any school before coming to teach in his present school which accounts 3%, four teachers taught in five schools before coming to their present school which indicates 13%. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the experience of the teachers of English and the pupil’s performance in the subject because knowing the individual differences of the pupil’s can make the teacher to manage his classroom effectively. In a good class-room there must be students of above average, average and below average. This will help the teacher to conduct the lesson effectively by including all the students in the lesson.

Furthermore, it is assumed that no matter the teacher’s academic qualification and experience in the teaching profession, a teacher must find certain instances where some teaching aids must be introduced to supplement students teaching activities before what is intended to be taught can be achieved. The lecturers were asked about the use of teaching aids, the responses are, ten respondents use teaching aids in their teaching which represents 97% while it was only one respondent that did not use teaching aids and it gives 3%. There is a significant relationship between the use of use of teaching aids and the students’ performance. The important of teaching aids in English teaching can never be over emphasized. For drilling good new structures needs a good number of audio-visual aids. It was also observed that the pupil’s performance in the subject is better in the school where teachers make use of teaching aids than in those schools where only some of the teachers make use of teaching aids in teaching, and other schools do not use them at all.
The lecturers were asked about the type of teaching aids used, the responses shows that seventeen teachers use pictures as their teaching aids which represents 55%, five teachers use charts and maps which accounts for 16%, four teachers use flash cards and it gives 13%, one teacher use flannel graphs which reflects 3%, four teachers use tape recorder which represents 13%, no teacher use radio. However, it was concluded that the pictures are more common and easy to get that is why teachers use them frequently as the students can even provide them. Again, aids can even include tape recorder, text book and language laboratory.

However, the importance of Library facilities in schools can be over emphasized. Text-books are never the only source of information. For enhancing the outlook of the pupil’s, creating interest in the subject and acquiring knowledge, the library is highly necessary. A flood and well equipped library when properly utilized serves all the purposes. But it is a matter of great regret that some schools in our State do not have library. Even if there is library they are poorly equipped. So that neither the students nor the teachers do not get any help out of it. The lecturers were asked whether they use library to improve learning English, and the responses revealed that seven teachers always refer their students to use library for teaching purpose which represents 23%, thirteen teachers refer their students to the library when the situation demands and it gives 42%, eleven teachers do not refer their students to the library because they felt it was not needed and it accounts for 36%. It was believed that most of the pupil’s are encouraged to develop reading habit due to the frequent use of library, the interest of the students were broadened and stimulated to meet their reading ability. As such, developing reading habit by the students becomes a difficult task.

The use of textbooks can be of great importance to the students in promoting additional material for what they were taught by the teachers. The text-book is the most important tool for teaching the language skill and very important source of information. Therefore, the researcher investigated the most popular books students read. six teachers use Macmillan Primary English course and it gives 20%, two teachers use Nationwide which represents 7%, three teachers use Understanding English and it reflects 10%, three teachers use Longman primary English which represents 10%, four teachers use Premier English which accounts for 13%, seven respondents use English book 1-3 and it gives 23%, six teachers use Nigerian Primary English book and it gives 20%. However, the most popular textbooks in use are English book 1-3, McMillan Primary English and Nigerian Primary English book. Ultimately, teacher can evaluate the usefulness of text materials and adopt them to suit the needs of a particular situation where necessary. The teacher can developed and write his own set of materials and these include lesson units, specific items or practice and drill.

Teachers textbooks are very important as guide for effective teaching, without it, it leaves teachers in the state of dilemma. The lecturers were asked if they have teacher’s guide, twenty-two teachers 71% responded in affirmative, while nine teachers do not have
textbooks accompanying the students which represents 29%. It was found that most of the teachers were guided on how to teach the different topics from the textbooks. The teacher’s textbooks are used to guide and give advice to teachers to improve their teaching quality. Teachers were asked about English periods and their teaching appropriateness per week. Thirteen teachers responded that seven English periods are given to each class per week and it gives 42%, four teachers responded that five periods are given to each class which represents 13%, twelve teachers responded that six periods are given to each class which reflects 39%, two teachers responded that four periods are given to each class which represents 7%. Therefore, teachers were asked about the adequacy and inadequacy of the periods, the responses shows that about fifteen teachers indicated that the periods are strongly adequate which represents 48%, eleven teachers said that it was adequate and it gives 36% and five teachers said that the periods are inadequate which accounts for 16%.

Time allocated to teaching English was asked to the students and it was discovered that 55% of the teachers indicated that English lesson last for about 35 minutes; others stated that most English lessons last for about 25 minutes. It is generally believed that the brain is still fresh and more ready to accommodate any form of mechanical activities in the morning hours. Unlike in the afternoon when the brain will have become less accommodating because of various activities and other problems.

Teachers were asked about the use of English in communication and they responded that 43% of the students communicate in English language occasionally that is only when the need arise, 41% of the students speak English all the time everywhere in the class and outside the class and 17% use English during the class hours only. However, it is believed that for one to be fluent in English language there is a need for frequent use of English language.

**DISCUSSION**

The data collected indicate that there is a relationship between the teacher’s qualification, time allocated to English lesson and the students’ performance in the subject. This is because the schools that have 35 minutes perform better than those with less than 35 minutes.

However, most of the teachers are not qualified to teach English language, although some of them are better qualified than others. Subsequently, it is discovered that where there is a shortage of trained teachers and shortage of equipment and facilities such as the language laboratory, language teaching is closely tied to text books. Furthermore, effective teaching can be done by using such materials as flash cards, pictures, charts and maps to appropriate topics of discussion through seeing and hearing. This also makes learning more effective. It was indicated that some teachers makes their students use library for English purposes and it stimulated the student’s interest to meet their reading ability. In respect to English periods, the result shows that they are adequate because a maximum of seven periods are
given. It is this adequacy of English periods that resulted in the inadequacy of other subjects which are not given as much periods as English. Also English periods take place in the morning, because it is assumed that morning hours are the best time for good English learning. During this time, the brain is fresh enough to take in new learning than in the afternoon when the brain is loaded with all sorts of learning materials.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Most of the teachers are not adequately qualified to teach at primary schools and there is a significant relationship between the qualification of teachers teaching English and the student’s performance in the subject.
2. The teachers who are at lower level are not among English specialist or combined honor but they are of WAEC and grade II paper holders. Thus, they are untrained in the concerned method.
3. Most of the teachers have teaching experience in some schools.
4. Almost all the Schools do not have sufficient number of aids.
5. The majority of the teachers pointed out that they are not referring their students to library.
6. Teachers indicated that they use two types of books to teach English in the same school but not in the same class. Primary 1-3 use different textbooks and primary 4-6 use different books.
7. Majority of teachers agreed that the periods are insufficient
8. The number of the English teachers in schools is not sufficient.

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to examine the problems of teaching English language among primary school pupil’s. From the finding of this investigation it was discovered that the factors contributed include: inadequate number of teachers, unqualified teachers, mother tongue interference, insufficient number of teaching aids and student’s background.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The schools should be supplied with adequate number of qualified teachers.
2. School facilities such as library, language laboratory, infrastructural facilities and teaching aids should be provided to each school.
3. English teachers should be made compulsory to submit the pupil’s progress sheets to the head of the school, so that the head will know how far the pupils are progressing and dictate what difficulties are being encountered by the pupils.
4. Time is very important because English lesson give room for practice during the lesson period, therefore, if 40 minutes will be allocated to English lesson it will be regarded as appropriate for the students.
5. Most of the parents do not attend western education. The teachers should not look down upon the parents for their inability to attend western education. Thus, the progress of their children should be communicated to them regularly.

6. A committee of experts should be appointed to make a survey of the present position of teaching English in the primary schools and recommend to the government whether English should be introduced at a later stage taking into active consideration the conditions prevailing in our schools.

7. There is need for a more detailed and comprehensive study.

REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1

TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear respondents,
I am conducting research on investigation into the problems of teaching English language in some selected primary schools in Kano state. Therefore, I will be grateful if you answer the following questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. What is your academic qualification?
   A. B.A/B.A ED
   B. N.C.E
   C. GRADE II
   D. WAEC
2. What level of English did you study?
   A. Combined honor
   B. Special honor
3. In how many schools have you taught English before coming to your present school?
   A. One
   B. Two
   C. Three
   D. Four
   E. Five
   F. Six and above
   G. Any other. Please specify
4. How often do you communicate to your students with English?
   A. Always
   B. Occasionally
   C. In the class hours only
5. Do you use teaching aids in teaching English
   A. Yes
   B. No
6. Which one among these?
   A. Flash cards
   B. Pictures
   C. Flannel graphs
   D. Charts and maps
   E. Radio
   F. Tape recorder
   G. Specify any other
7. Is there library of language laboratory?
   A. Yes
   B. No
8. How often do you refer the students to use library?
   A. Always
   B. Sometimes
   C. Not at all
9. What kinds of textbooks do you use for teaching?
   ➢ Name them
10. Do you have teacher textbooks accompanying the student’s textbooks?
    A. Yes
    B. No
11. What is the maximum English periods given your class per week?
   A. Four
   B. Five
   C. Six
   D. Seven and above

12. Are the periods adequate?
   A. Adequate
   B. Inadequate

Thank you for participating!