

# **P**ROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHING LEXIS AND STRUCTURE IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IBARAPA CENTRAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE

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## **ABSTRACT**

**T**he study examines the problems and prospects of teaching Lexis and Structures in some selected Senior Secondary Schools in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State. The researcher sought information through the use of questionnaires. In analyzing the data, the researcher used frequencies and percentages. The results of findings show that most of the hypotheses of the study are upheld to be true in that it is proven going by the data collected that teacher's attitude to Lexis and Structures is a negative one. It is the conviction of the researcher that this part of the English Language study is the bedrock of English. As teachers are more and more becoming aware of this aspect, efforts should be made towards ensuring students' mastery of it. With these recommendations adhered to, it is certain that the hitherto elusive prospects of this aspect will be fully realized.

**Keywords:** *Prospects, Teaching, Lexis, Structure, Secondary Schools.*

## **Introduction:**

Over the years, it has been a regular occurrence in almost all Nigerian Secondary Schools to have mass-failure in English Language at the West African Examinations Council's Examinations. It is of importance to aver that a lot of research has been carried out on this problem. (Sa'ad & Usman, 2014). But in the course of this study, one deems it profoundly expedient to concentrate on an aspect of the whole encompassing English Language. This aspect is Lexis and Structure.

Furthermore, it is an empirical fact that in this country, success at the Secondary School level of

Education depends greatly on students' knowledge of English Language. The importance of English Language is also emphasized in that it is, apart from being a teaching subject, used as a medium of instruction. With due regard to the format of English Language examination questions, there are three major sections, these are: Lexis and Structure, Letter Writing and lastly Summary and Comprehension.

The section on Lexis and Structure has been a Cinderella of the rest. Despite its invaluable importance, it is an aspect that should attract mostly the teachers' attention. Lexis and Structure is the bedrock or simply the foundation of English Language studies. And, as such if any effort could be genuinely made to arrest the downward trend of students' performance in English Language, it must be that which seeks to improve this performance with respect to Lexis and Structures. As a participating observer, that is, one who has taught English Language for years in the secondary school, experienced practice teaching, what one observed was that students who have no good background of Lexis and Structure are asked to write letters or make meaningful statements in simple and correct English: the paradigm of which could be likened to an instruction passed onto a steward to make a palatable stew without good and sufficient ingredients. In view of the importance of Lexis and Structure as a component of English Language and the overall important position that English Language occupies in our society, this research identifies some of the problems and prospects of teaching Lexis and Structure. And possible remedies are suggested to ensure the attainment of the expectations of the students and their parents.

### Statement of the Problem

This paper intends to investigate the problems facing the teaching of lexis and structure as an integral component of English Language in some selected senior secondary schools. The researcher goes further to explain clearly the prospects of teaching the aspect of Lexis and Structure in English Language. The investigation is aimed at giving the aspect a sort of

precedence over the other aspects; exploring the elements that take up the Lexis and Structure and show their relationships and impact on the general understanding of the subject - English Language.

The investigator is of the opinion that teachers' attitude to the teaching of Lexis and Structure should be improved upon and that their efforts on it should preponderate upon other aspects, because Lexis and Structure forms the basis of English Language as a teaching subject. The study focuses at procuring solutions to the following research questions:

- i. What are the problems confronting the teachers in the teaching of Lexis and Structure?
- ii. How far will the teaching of Lexis and Structure – improve the students' understanding of English Language?
- iii. Do the teachers aim at improving the students' knowledge of Lexis and Structure, if so how do they go about it?
- iv. Do the schools curricula tailored towards accomplishing this effort?
- v. Are there necessary and sufficient instructional aids to carry out this pedagogical task?
- vi. Are students' attitude to this aspect accented with the kind of seriousness it deserves or it is regarded, as a walk-over?

### **Significance of the Study**

The importance of this study holds in the fact that it delves into the problems of teaching Lexis and Structure in the Senior Secondary Schools in a rural area with the study focusing on the peculiar problems that teachers in the rural areas encounter in teaching Lexis and Structure of English Language.

The consciousness of the above problems will enable the appropriate authorities to find solutions to them. The study also certainly has implications for curriculum planners, book writers, examination bodies, school administrators and school teachers.

### **Research Questions**

This paper proffers solutions to the following research questions

- (i) What problems are often faced by teachers in the teaching of English lexis and structure in Ibarapa Central secondary schools?
- (ii) Does mother tongue interference have any effect in the pedagogy of English lexis and structure in Ibarapa Central secondary schools?
- (iii) Do teachers of English in Ibarapa Central secondary schools face more problems in teaching the lexis and structure of English than other aspects of the language? and (v) What can be done to solve problems faced in the pedagogy of English lexis and structure in Ibarapa secondary schools?

### Research Hypotheses

For the essence of this study, these operational hypotheses are postulated:

- H<sub>0</sub> - Emphasis on Lexis and Structure by the teachers will not make students more successful in English Language learning when it is placed on the summary and essay writing.
- H<sub>1</sub> - A thorough learning of Lexis and Structure will give room for easy and better understanding than learning it as a mere ancillary worthy of little attention
- H<sub>2</sub> - A more sequential ordering of the learning experiences would have been achieved by the teachers if the teaching of Lexis and Structure is given enough effort and time and is taken as a basis for subsequent aspects than it is other way round.
- H<sub>3</sub> - There is no difference between the problems facing teaching of Lexis and Structure and those facing other components of English Language since it is the foundation for other components.

### Literature Review

A lot of studies have been carried out on the problems facing the teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian Secondary schools. However, little or no focus has been placed on the aspect Lexis and Structure which is the core and integral component of English Language. This study

therefore, intends to modify as well as extend or enlarge upon the existing studies. Lexis and structure as stated earlier is a very important part of English Language which has always been deprived of its well-deserved attention in various pedagogical settings. There is no gainsaying the fact that Lexis and Structure has both intrinsic and extrinsic values.

It is good and indispensable in and of itself in any linguistic endeavour and more importantly, it is indispensable as a means of attaining peerless valency, communicative competence and language proficiency. And if without mincing words, our aim is to make students more successful in their ability to use the language then pedagogical efforts should be intensified on Lexis and Structure as an aspect of English Language.

### **The Importance of Lexis**

Words are very important in English Language teaching, their understanding makes for basic knowledge of the subject and this evinces great success in other aspects of the subject. Hence, it is of no mean significance to highlight the problems that have bedeviled the teaching of this aspect. The first problem of the pedagogy of lexis and structure is hinged on the fact that teachers appear ignorant of the proper meaning of: “mastering vocabulary content.” And, as such, they have been misdirecting students with respect to learning vocabulary with a kind of misconception that is very inimical to their thorough understanding. Fries (1945) opine that: “The linguistic students should never make the mistake of identifying a language with its dictionary.” He offers this warning to any person who turns his attention to language learning and language teaching. That one should not take language learning to mean learning the “words” of that language. He asserts that one could memorize all the “words” in the largest dictionary of a language, and knew only that part of the language; he could not understand a single utterance. Important as the words with their lexical meanings are, they are by no means the only essential meanings in the symbols and devices of a language.

### **Lexis and its Four Levels of Meanings**

Fries (1945) further states that the four levels of meanings are the following:

**The lexical meaning:** This explains content of the various words – the words as listed and defined in a dictionary. Thus, in the sentence “The old man killed the little bear.” The dictionary does not tell us the kind of beings to which “man” and “bear” refer. It explains the kind of action for which the word *kill* is a symbol. And it will give some notion of qualities included in the meanings of such words as *old* and *little*. This is all the help the dictionary can give. It does not tell us whether *old* is to be taken as a characteristic of the *man* or of the *bear*: or whether the *man* or the *bear* or both are little. It can’t tell who performs the action whether the *man* or the *bear*.

**Syntactic Meaning:** Charles Fries puts this to mean the positions in which old and little stand in relation to man and bear gives us the essential meaning that it is them that is old and the bear that is little. Again, the fact that “*The old man*” precedes the verb killed and that “*The little bear*” follows shows that the man rather than the *bear* performed the action. Here the word order aids the understanding of the utterance.

**Morphological meaning:** The forms of the words carry the meaning here. The form of the word *man* (as opposed to men) and that of the bear (in contrast with bears) signal that there was *one man* and *one bear*. Similarly, the form of the word *killed* shows that the action has already occurred. It is not in process nor projected for the future.

- a. **Intonational Meaning:** The meaning of a word is carried by the pitch contours with which the words are spoken. A word, when spoken with different intonation, will assume different meanings. For example, a word like “fire” pronounced with a voice pitch starting high and ending low will mean a kind of summons or warning. But if it is the other way round that is, if the pitch starts low and ends high then it could be taken for a question “fire?”

Quite apart from problems noted with the conception of vocabulary content and its organisation into structural patterns, are those that affect English Language teaching in its entirety. It is felt that such problems will



in no small measure, affect the teaching of Lexis and Structure in that it forms a part of English Language. Some of these problems are enumerated in Adegbite (2020,p.38).

### The Linguistic Data

This refers to the content of the topic itself ; that is what is to be taught in a L2 context differs from what to be taught in a L1 context of English .Language is not taught or learnt in a vacuum, there must be a data for it. It is discovered that the data available for teaching in non-native context are limited and artificial. The students particularly in the rural areas find it difficult to comprehend the learning experiences that are opposed to some traditional concepts they must have developed as adults.

Lexical items like “computer” as a word may not have been understood by a rural secondary student; such that all efforts to make him understand it will not be effective as if he were to see it physically. This argument takes us to the fact that the environment where the teaching and learning takes place contributes in no small way, either positively or otherwise to the task of teaching therein undertaken. For these reasons, the vocabulary of the students is very limited and their knowledge of the vocabulary and how they are organized into a meaningful statement is shallow.

The choice of words of the students will then be acutely limited. A student then finds it difficult to decipher the meaning of this simple idiomatic expression for example:

The old man quietly *passed away* (meaning ‘died’) might denote the action of mere passing or moving, to some rural secondary students. Learners of English in a second language Nigerian context will not easily decode the meaning of some English words and expression since their world experience differs from that of the Europeans. Hence, a Yoruba children will call a cattle egret as *white bird*. This often leads to flouting of semantic rules in their learning of English as a second language(Dada,2016).

The facts here are additional to those relayed under linguistic data above that students’ exposure to use and usage of English in rural areas is very limited. Novels, comics and newspapers from which they can derive new

words to enrich their vocabulary are not readily available. The teaching of Lexis and Structure would have posed little or no difficulty but for the ignorance on the part of the teachers themselves who happen to be working in the rural areas. The location of the school is responsible for teachers' ignorance to current developments in the teaching of the topic. The language is very dynamic and never static. It changes with time. For example, it appears this idiomatic expression - "More grease to your elbow" has outlived its usage. The statement in vogue now is 'More power to your elbow'. This and many others might not be readily available to a rural teacher.

The problem that confronts Lexis and Structure in English lies in the illicit manner of the secondary school syllabus. Lexis And Structure should be taught gradually and with the adoption of a sequential peace meal method with simple ideas and simple words introduced and organized into simple structure till it develops into a more complex structure.

Broughton (1980) share the above view and stresses that: 'One of the greatest weaknesses of secondary school syllabus is ambition and frequently, they teach far more than is possible in the time available'.

Brumfit (1980) further writes that:

*Even books where the structure of English is approached systematically it is impossible for the writer to take into account the local problems of the first language interference in every region in Africa.*

These are the sources through which the students can come in contact with the linguistic data. But in the rural areas, the secondary schools have little or no agents in that only the teachers and few textbooks are available. This restricts the exposure of the students in the rural areas such that apart from the period allotted for teaching English Language the learning gets discontinued. Most of the parents are illiterates. The peer group or friends are other disadvantaged students who are no better than their friends. Thus, there is no room for cross-fertilization of ideas.



There is also the problem of paucity of necessary facilities for effective teaching like language laboratory – where students could gain practical experiences particularly in the area of oral English where Lexis plays an important role. Different words have different phonological structure, the knowledge of which is better learnt in a language laboratory. But the existence of this is that of a comparative rarity in the rural areas. Library facilities are also not available in these areas and it is in the library that students get exposed to various books on Lexis and Structure. Audio visuals and other essential teaching aids are not present in these schools. The problem of teaching Lexis and Structure is also grounded in non-availability of enough time. The sized of the class also determines the success of teaching this aspect. It will be a fag for teachers to attend to students individually as the occasion might demand, in a class of sixty students than where we have only twenty five or thirty students. Time devoted for teaching is too short, therefore a lot of learning experiences is taught the students within a very short period. This makes the teaching defective and invariably little learning would take place. Teachers themselves are a problem in the sense that most of them in most secondary schools are not trained teachers and so they are incapable of teaching the subject effectively.

Adegbite (2020) states that “The lower educational qualification of large numbers of secondary school teachers means that English introduced to pupils by these teachers are least fitted to do so’. Lexis and Structures as an aspect of English Language is given little or no touch of expertise. This aspect which has an involutes structure will then constitute a kind of ever haunting terror to the students. An argument as to who a professional English teacher is usually arises. Does he need to be trained or he should tap only his natural qualities? Although, it is true that some teachers are naturally good, it is agreed upon that English teachers must be professionally trained. Broughton (1980) points out that:

*Clearly, there are people who teach English successfully without professional training, succeeding only by virtue of those sympathetic and sensitive qualities which make the*

*natural teacher ideally, however, the professional English Language teacher must have acquired personal qualities and training in the discipline and fields of study appropriate to the language teaching process.*

One other problem that begets the others in teaching of Lexis and Structure is that of weak foundation of English which pupils have in their primary schools which provides the carry-over effect into junior secondary schools until it gets ossified in the senior secondary schools. The discovery of the fact that pupils are not taught well in primary schools in that a teacher of English will be teaching all other subjects is a confirmation of the above statement.

This is in a way of saying that effective teaching of English Language calls for English specialist teachers handling the subject. What further compounded the problem is the policy statement as contained in the National Policy On Education, which deemphasizes the use of English Language in primary schools as a medium of instruction. Obviously, it is a truism to assert that if English has been accorded the prominence it deserves right away from scratch, this will have made for better understanding of its basic aspects like lexis and structure on the part of the students. It will make for a solid entry requirement upon which further learning are built by the teachers.

Of importance equally, is the problem of methodology, which has been identified as one of the factors affecting the teaching of English Language. The most important of all is that teachers of English Language should be enthusiastic about the subject. English language teachers should be immensely interested in teaching the subject and its vital aspects like Lexis and structure . Ultimately, there is the problem of interference which is a universal linguistic phenomenon. Teaching and learning problems arise out of “interference” of one sort or another. A Yoruba man teaching English Language is likely to “carry-over” the features –phonetics, lexical and grammatical – of his own language when he teaches these aspects of English Language (Salami, 2014).

Thus, we see that some teachers that often use their local dialect in pronouncing some English words. Often times, we hear teachers pronounce – the word church /tʃə:ʃ/ as /ʃə:ʃ/. As for a lexical choice – He often uses a quantifier ‘one’ instead of an article ‘a’ because there is no such difference in Yoruba Language. Both ‘one’ and ‘a’ have ‘kan’ as their meaning in Yoruba. Grammatically, it is not appropriate to make a statement like this – ‘Ade and Olu are beating themselves’ - but this is very common even among the teachers of senior secondary schools. This is the adverse impact of the ‘interference’. The correct statement should be – Ade and Olu are beating each other.

According to Adegbite (2020), we have different types of interference which comes from sub-standard forms of English from Pidgin English or from faulty language habits acquired in the primary schools. Interference is also noticed with the sound system of the mother-tongue that is accent. Also, the problem of the correct answer to give to negative questions and so on.

Ex 1: *Did you not come to school on Monday?* **Wrong answer** – *Yes, I did not come*

**Correct answer** – *No, I did not come.*

With the consciousness of these problems, it will be of rational consideration to channel the trend of this study towards elucidating some learning experiences as contained in some books that have passed the tests of time and academic excellence. Again, this step will give credence to the hypothetical assertions as contained in the preceding chapters. In explaining the meaning of ‘word’, Akere (1990) states that ‘Human beings generally think, speak and write in words from the building blocks of communication in most written works and oral presentations of ideas’. A knowledge of as many words as possible in a particular language makes speaking, reading and writing pleasant endeavours. ‘Words are shades of Meaning’ (Akere, 1990). Words reflect meaning by directing attention to what they refer the listener or reader to - that is, the ‘referent’. Words relate to the referent in two basic ways. These are Denotative and Connotative words. Denotative words, according to

Akere(1990), point to or delimit the referent without adding evaluations or emotional shades to it. This is direct use of words called Denotation. It also points at the referent by revealing its value or establishing some emotional response. This constitutes an indirect pointer to the referent called connotation. The following examples as given by Akere(1990):(i)The (girl, wench, lass) is here, (ii)That (bloke, man, guy) bought a new car, and (iii)Who saw the (child, brat, imp)? The words in bracket in the following sentences show levels of involvement by the writer. The underlined words are **denotative** words. The contexts in these sentences remain the same whichever word one chooses from the brackets but the meaning changes as one substitutes one word with the other. The words not underlined in the brackets point to the **connotative** use of words.

Furthermore, Akere(1990) asserts that poetry and most creative works use words connotatively. He states further that 'Works that seek to persuade or convert the individual will choose words that are charged with emotions'. It is also discovered that some words are often used connotatively. The same word used can call forth different reactions in response to context of usage. The use of "free" in the following sentence illustrates the point. "We need "free food" and 'we need 'free' "woman." In the last sentence, the word 'free' has both cognitive and connotative meanings.

### Figurative Use of Words

According to Akere (1990), denotative and connotative words can be used figuratively. He said that while connotative words can be regarded as "Natural to figurative expressions," denotative ones become connotative when used figuratively. For instance, 'girl' in "The girl is here" which is used denotatively can become connotative in a figure of speech as in "She is a girl". Figurative language is based on some form of indirection, achieved through comparisons, analogies and contrast. This according to Akere hinges on a manner of analogy and / or comparison that differentiates simile from metaphor. An example of metaphor is "He is a lion"; while "He is as strong as a lion" or "He is like a lion" is simile.

Apart from metaphor and simile, figurative usage of the words can be in form of personification. That is giving attributes of human being to non-human or inanimate things.

There is personification in “The fire *leapt* and *shaved* off the paint from the wall.”

Akere (1990) explains ‘words in action or words in grammatical contexts’. According to Akere (1990), ‘word has an intrinsic meaning, it has no direct or logical relationship with what it signifies. The word acquires meaning in the context of usage. The above statements signify that words generate specific meanings as they collocate.

Collocation, according to Hornby (2016) means “Coming together of words combined in a text or language.” For instance, ‘unalloyed’ collocates with ‘support’; while ‘inextricably’ *collocates* with “bound”. We can have “strong tea”. “Heavy drinker”, etc.

Again, there are propositional phrases that have the unique way of collocating. Examples are: in spite of, despite, for tall, with tall, notwithstanding, I admire him in spite of his faults, he lost the fight, for all his boasting. Moreover, grammatical items that can be subsumed under this collocation are the *phrasal verbs*: some of these are: run-up, run on, run down, turn in, turn out, take in, take up etc. Each of these phrasal verbs portrays different meaning. Collocation rules also specify the type of ‘adjective’ that can go with a “noun”. Examples are: “The *rancid* butter” or “The butter smells rancid”. Will be more – grammatical than to say “The *spoilt* butter.

### Words as used in Idiomatic Expressions

According to Akere (1990), idiomatic expressions are kinds of expressions used mainly in denotative words. However, a mere understanding of the meaning of each word within the idiomatic structure cannot yield the meaning of the idiom. An examples is:(i) ‘Ojo kicked the bucket’, which means ‘Ojo died’. Another example of idiom is ‘The old man *passed away* peacefully’.

### Concord in English Expressions

Ayowe (1990) defines concord as 'the agreement between the subject and the verb in a sentence'. There are different rules of concord. These are stated thus:

*Singular subject should take on singular verb.* Examples are: (i) 'He takes the tools to the farm' and (ii) 'She reads the letter with a transparent gusto'.

*Plural subject should take plural verb.* Examples are: (i) 'They play the game impressively' and (ii) Ade and Tolu are brothers. Again, *sentences that begin with: 'Each (of)', 'None,' 'Not one of,' 'either ... or,' 'Neither'... nor among others, take singular verbs.* Examples are: (i) 'Either Titi or Ayo is invited' and (ii) 'Neither Titi nor Ayo is invited'.

### Concord and Subordination

According to Ayowe (1990), "group of subjects joined by "with" as well as, etc. must take singular verbs. Examples are: (i) 'Olu, as well as his brothers, is invited', (ii) 'Bisi, like Ade, is a tall boy', and (iii) 'The man, with his wife, goes to church regularly'.

### Proximity Concord

Here, there are two sets of subjects, such that the one that is the nearest to the verb controls the verb. Examples are: (i) 'Either the boys or the girl is allowed in', and (ii) 'Either the boy or the girls are around'.

### Research Methods

The research design of this study is in the survey design whereby a group of teachers and students were given questionnaires to respond to. The population for the study are SSCE students in fifteen secondary schools in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State; but the sample respondents were drawn from three out of these fifteen schools: (i) Igboora High School, Igboora, (ii) Ayelogun Grammar School, Idere and (iii) Oke-Idere High School, Idere. The sampling procedure used was the random sampling technique in selecting the respondents. The researcher gave to SS 3 levels 27 copies of questionnaire in each of the three schools selected



which put the total number of copies at about 80. The copies of the questionnaires were given to the students to fill within two days and were collected at a given period of time.

Twelve (12) copies of questionnaires were administered to English teachers in SS 3 levels in each of the three selected schools, thereby making the number of the questionnaire to be 36. The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. Two different types of questionnaires were used for data collection. The fifty questionnaires were administered to students. Simple percentage statistical tool was used for analysis of data. The questionnaires used were the closed form, or structured questionnaires.

### Data Analysis

The analysis of data are presented in 'Table 1' and 'Table 2' below.

**Table I: Analysis of Teacher-Respondents' Age and Qualifications**

S/N	ITEM I	CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Educational qualification of English teachers.	(a) B. A (Hons.)	04	11.5
		(b) B. A. Ed. English	06	17.1
		(c) N. C. E.	25	71.4
		(d) Teacher's Grade II	-	-
	Total		35	100
2	ITEM II			
	Age bracket	(a) 20-25 years	12	34.3
		(b) 26 - 31 years	12	34.3
		(c) 32 - 37 years	09	25.7
		(d) 38 - 45 above	02	05.7
	Total		35	100
3	ITEM III			
	Gender	(a) Male	30	85.7

		(b) Female	05	14.3
	Total		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>ITEM IV</b>			
	Teaching Experience to date	(a) 1- 4 years	14	40
		(b) 5 - 9 years	06	17
		(c) 10 - 14 years	06	17
		(d) Above 14 years	09	17
	Total		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

### SECTION B: Analysis of Teachers' Responses to Questionnaires

S/N	ITEM I	CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>1.</b>	<b>ITEM V</b>			
	Do you find teaching of Lexis and Structure interesting?	(a) Yes	15	42.8
		(b) No	20	57.2
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>ITEM VI</b>			
	Do you consider the time allotted to teaching English Language adequate?	(a) Yes	30	85.7
		(b) No	05	14.3
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>ITEM VII</b>			
	Do you consider the class too large for teaching Lexis and Structure effectively?	(a) Yes	16	45.7
		(b) No	19	54.3
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>ITEM VIII</b>			
	If your answer to item VII above is 'Yes' then, what	(a) It leads to students' mastery		

	effect does it have on the students performance in the aspect of Lexis and Structure?	on Lexis and structure. (b) Has no effect (c) Effect is insignificant to affect students' performance. (d) Adversely affect students' performance.	06 06 18 05	17.1 17.1 51.5 14.3
<b>5.</b>	<b>ITEM IX</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
	Does your school have audio-visual aids to augment your effort in teaching Lexis and Structure particularly?	(a) Yes (b) No	- 35	- 100
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ITEM X</b>			
	Does your school have language library or enough literature on Lexis and Structure?	(a) Yes (b) No	10 25	28.6 71.4
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ITEM XI</b>			
	If 'Yes' how often do you go to the library for your preparation of lesson plans as regards the teaching of Lexis and Structure?	(a) Once in a week (b) Occasionally (c) I have never gone there	07 03 25	20 8.6 71.4
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>8</b>	<b>ITEM XII</b>			
	Does your school have language laboratory to help students' pronunciation skill both at Lexical and Syntactic levels?	(a) Yes (b) No	- 30 05	- 85.7 14.3
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>ITEM XIII</b>			
	How essential do you think teaching of Lexis and Structure is to the thorough understanding of English Language?	(a) Averagely essential (b) Considered as building the foundation of English and thus, really essential. ⓐ It is of little or no importance.	25 08 02	71.4 22.9 5.7
<b>10</b>	<b>ITEM XIV</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
	If you find Lexis and Structure essential what efforts are you making to make the students realize this?	(a) By mere telling them that the aspect is important (b) By exposing them to reading and the practical usage of grammar.	05 30	14.3 85.7
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>ITEM XV</b>			
	If you find Lexis and Structure not essential then which aspect do you intend to emphasize?	(a) Composition and letter-writing. (b) Summary and comprehension.	06 04	17.1 11.5

		(c) Teaching all aspects with no emphasis on any.	25	71.4
			<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>ITEM XVI</b>			
	Which type of test do you conduct for the students?	(a) Supply response tests. (b) Practical exercises on how they could put Lexis and Structure into use by constructing sentences.	25 10	71.4 28.6
	Total		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table II: Analysis of Students' Responses to Questionnaires  
Section B**

S/N	QUESTION	CHOICES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>1</b>	<b>ITEM I</b>			
	Do you find learning of Lexis and Structure interesting?	(a) Yes (c) No	20 60	25 75
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>ITEM II</b>			
	If 'No' which area do you encounter problem in Lexis and Structure?	(a) Tenses (b) Synonyms and Antonyms (c) Using prepositions correctly (d) All of the above and other areas.	10 10 20 40	12.5 12.5 25 50
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>ITEM III</b>			

	Do you study Lexis and Structure on your own apart from the classroom setting?	(a) Yes (b) No	15 65	18.8 81.2
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>ITEM IV</b>			
	If 'Yes' which other place(s) do you come in contact with English Language to practice your learned experiences on Lexis and Structure?	(a) Home (b) Social gathering ☐ No other place	44 30 06	55.6 37.5 7.5
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>ITEM V</b>			
	Do you learn spoken - skills and novel words from speakers when they speak?	(a) Yes (b) No	20 60	25 75
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>ITEM VI</b>			
	Do you have access to reading newspapers and novels to improve upon your vocabulary?	(a) Yes (b) No	15 65	18.8 81.2
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ITEM VII</b>			
	If 'Yes' how often do you read them?	(a) Daily (b) Twice in a week (c) Once in a week.	12 40 28	15 50 35
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>ITEM VIII</b>			



	Do you have a language laboratory?	(a) I have never heard of any existing one. (b) Yes (c) No	06 - 74	7.5 - 92.5
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>ITEM IX</b>			
	If 'Yes' how often do you use it?	(a) Once in a while (b) Occasionally (c) I have never gone there.	16 26 38	20 32.5 47.5
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>ITEM X</b>			
	Do you have a language library in your school?	(a) Yes (b) No	18 62	20.5 77.5
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>ITEM XI</b>			
	If 'Yes', how often do you use it?	(a) Occasionally (b) Twice in a week (c) I have never been there.	16 16 48	20 20 60
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>ITEM XII</b>			
	Are you a member of the Literary and Debating Society?	(a) Yes (b) No	30 50	37.5 62.5
	Total		<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>ITEM XIII</b>			
	What format does your examinations take on Lexis and Structure?	(a) supply response tests. (b) Practical exercises tailored to use knowledge	74	92.5

		of Lexis and Structure in sentence construction.	06	7.5
	Total		80	100
14	ITEM XIV			
	If your answer to Item XIII is 'A' how essential do you find the study of Lexis and Structure ?	(a) I waste no time on it, for I pass tests on it through random selection of options. (b) I prefer reading books on letter writing and summary which carries a lot of marks. (c) I have not read materials on it, I don't even know what to read on it.	30	37.5
			20	25
			30	37.5
	Total		80	100

The findings revealed that educational qualification of teachers who teach English Language in SS I – III of the three project schools showed that there are scarcity of English graduate teachers in that local government since only 4(11.5%) out of 35 English teachers studied were university graduates, while 25 teachers had the N.C.E. which represented 71.4% of the total respondents. The age bracket of the respondents fell into four groups thus: Twelve teachers or 34.3% were in the age – bracket – 20 – 25 years, twelve others or 34.3% were between 26 and 31 years. For the age bracket 32 – 37 years, there were nine or 25.7% respondents; while the

age bracket 38 - 45 years and above had two respondents or 5.7%. For the sex of the respondents thirty or 85.7% of the total population were males, while five or 14.3% were females.

The teachers teaching experience showed that teachers within the range of 1 - 4 years tended to predominate as they were 14 or 40% of the population; for the respondents that fell within 5 - 9 there were six or 17% of the population; while 10 - 14 years represented the group of other respondent who were also six or 17%; for the respondents that fell between 14 and above years of experience, there were nine or 26% of the total population. Expressing opinions on their interest in teaching Lexis and Structure, fifteen or 42.8% respondents answered 'Yes' while twenty or 57.2% said 'No.' .On the adequacy of the time allotted for teaching English Language, 30 or 85.7% out of the total population of the teachers were of the conviction that the time was adequate; while five or 14.3% of the population of the respondents indicated the time as inadequate.

When responding to the problem of teaching facilities, all the thirty -five subjects or 100% of the population admitted that they had no teaching aids. Answering further questions on the issue of teaching facilities pertaining to availability of language laboratories and libraries, as well as enough literature on Lexis and Structure, 25 or 71.4% of the respondents indicated that these facilities were not available, while 10 or 28.6% responded that the facilities were available. Responding to the importance of the teaching an studying of Lexis and Structure, twenty five teachers or 71.4% considered this aspect of English a worth while exercise; eight or 22.9% of the respondents maintained that teaching and studying of Lexis and Structure were really essential; while two or 5.7% of the respondents indicated that teaching and studying of Lexis and Structure were of little or no importance.

It was found that 25 teachers or 71.4% indicated that when testing students on Lexis and Structure, they normally gave the "the supply the answer" type of questions but 10 teachers or 28.6% said that they favoured practical exercises, enabling students to put Lexis and Structure into use through the constructing of their own sentences. Analysing the

responses by students from the students' questionnaire, the following are the trends. The attitude of the students to learning of Lexis and Structure could be categorized into two judging from their responses. Twenty or 29% of the students indicated that they found the learning of Lexis and Structure interesting; while sixty or 75% responded that they did not find the learning of this aspect of English interesting at all.

The problems encountered by students in learning Lexis and Structure received responses from ten or 12.5% of the respondents indicating "Tenses" as a problem area: again, ten or 12.5% of the students population indicated "Using prepositions correctly" as a difficult area; while forty or 50% of the respondents indicated both "Tenses" and "Using prepositions correctly." Furthermore, respondents were asked whether they came in contact with English Language outside the classroom, in order to practice their learned experiences in Lexis and Structure. To this question, six or 7.5% of the respondents indicted 'home' as the other place of contact with English, thirty or 37.5% of the students selected "Social gathering" as their point of contact after classroom; while forty four of the respondents or 55% choose "no other place" of contact except the school environment.

On the issue of facilities available in the schools such as language laboratories and libraries, six or 7.5% indicted that these facilities were available; while 74 or 92.5% indicated that they did not have a language laboratory or a library. When asked whether the students were members of the library and debating society, thirty or 37.5% of them indicated that they were members; while 50 or 62.5% of the students admitted that they were not members of the literary and debating society. Responding to the format their questions on Lexis and Structure normally take, the whole of the population of the students indicated "supply the answer" as the format of the question. This led to the subsequent questions of how the students normally answer the question of this type: 30 or 37.5% indicated that they merely employ random selection of answers and they always passed well; while twenty or 25% of the respondents showed that they favoured reading books on letter writing and summary which carried more marks.

Another thirty or 36.5% even admitted that they had never read materials on Lexis and Structure and that they did not know what to learn about it. The researcher noted that the effects or the implications of these responses are that the students' negative attitude towards learning Lexis and Structure will undermine their ability to understand English Language and as a result their performances in the examinations will be unimpressive.

## Summary, Recommendation and Conclusion

### Summary

This paper adds to the views addressed by many studies already carried out on the problems of teaching and learning of English; but it takes a radical departure from the former by dealing with the difficulties and potentialities of teaching and learning Lexis and Structure. This paper is significant because if not the first, it is one of the few studies that deal with such problems in the rural areas.

The motive behind this study then is that these problems can be ameliorated, if they are constantly and persistently harped on, thereby ascertaining the improvement of students' performance in English Language in the senior school certificate examinations or other similar examinations. The findings in this page revealed that where most of the problem stated as revealed in the questionnaires are absent, teaching of Lexis and Structure is still not smooth thereby narrowing down the expected prospects, for instance, the last writing showed that there are many qualified teachers instead of unqualified teachers which the study states as one of its problems. The data disapproved the hypothesis, not only are there no unqualified teachers but that the least qualified teacher holds the National Certificate in Education (NCE)

There are other stated problems in the hypothesis which the collected and analysed data disapproved, amongst which are the problems of inadequate time allotted to teaching, classroom size and so on. One then notices that in spite of the absence of these problems, students still perform below average in English Language. Essentially, this showed that problems like non-availability of language laboratory on the subject and so on are the real

problems of teaching Lexis and Structure in English Language with the consequences of a narrow prospect of its teaching and learning. These problems inter-alia are affecting the teaching of Lexis and Structure in the senior secondary schools in this area.

One therefore feels that if these problems are addressed and offered solutions, mastery of students in English will be enhanced and problems of teaching Lexis and Structure will be drastically reduced if not totally eradicated.

### **Recommendation**

For many important pedagogical reasons, it is essential that all teaching facilities are provided in all schools; as such, the serious problem of inadequate provision of teaching aids must be addressed. Again, looks at most secondary school libraries, where available, present them as being ill-equipped. This problem of inadequate supply of English books to both teachers and students should be taken care of. Books are very essential for effective learning; but ignorance coupled with poverty; on the part of majority of the rural dwellers, has blurred their views to appreciate this essence. Along this line, efforts should be made to make both teachers and parent see the importance of textbooks in the learning of their children. It is however recommended that the government should take over the responsibility of supplying necessary textbooks to students and teachers. Also, it is recommended that teachers with the minimum teaching experience of five years be employed to teach English Language. Also, teachers should get themselves acquainted with the entry behaviours of newly admitted students from junior secondary schools as it is felt that this will help conduct the students need assessment by the teachers.

Futhermore, students should also be urged to join literary and debating societies to complement their learning experiences in the classroom. To cater for the problem of over ambitious English syllabus, it is recommended that an achievement syllabus be worked out in which case; the scheme of work of each new class in English is covered within the



allotted period. This would serve as a convenient point for continuation at other classes.

### Conclusion

The importance of English Language which cannot be over emphasized as both a medium of instruction and a teaching subject coupled with its use in the Nigerian context as a restricted lingua franca and official language spurred the investigator to research into an aspect of the language by looking at the problems and prospect of teaching Lexis and Structure with a view to improving the learning ability of the students in this aspect. Mass failure in English Language in the School Certificate Examinations as discussed earlier on also shows the need for more attention to be given to the problems and prospects of teaching Lexis, an aspect the researcher regarded as the pivot around which other English aspects revolve. From the foregoing, it is thus felt that at one time or the other that this study is considered, its recommendations will be acceptable, for they will surely stand the test of time.

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