



TEACHERS' CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TO TEACHING AS PREDICTORS OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH IN IBADAN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

Literature-in-English is a subject of utmost importance for students of Arts and Humanities in the senior secondary school in Nigeria and as such this study was carried out to find out how some teacher factors can predict students' achievement in Literature-in-English. This study is descriptive research of the survey type which hinges on teachers' content knowledge and attitude in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State. Forty teachers of Literature-in-English were randomly selected from twenty schools as sample. Two research instruments were used, which are; Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitude to Teaching Literature-in-English and Scale on Teachers' Subject Content Knowledge in Literature-in-English. The instruments were subjected to both face and content validity with reliability co-efficient of 0.86 and 0.83 respectively. The findings of this study revealed that teachers' subject content knowledge has a positive significant relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English. The study also revealed that teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English contributes a little to students' academic achievement in the subject. It was recommended that teachers with the appropriate qualification and competence should be assigned to teach the subject so as to bring out the best in students. Teachers should be exposed to professional advancement programmes such as seminars, workshops, refresher courses and evaluation programmes to improve their content knowledge of the subject.

Keywords: Teacher factors, subject content knowledge, predict and attitude.

Introduction

Literature is an important subject at the senior secondary school in Nigeria, and it is offered as Literature-in-English. There are two types of literature and they are: Literature-in-English and English Literature. Literature-in-English refers to literature of any people written in English Language. On the other hand, English Literature refers to the literature of English people. The term Literature-in-English is therefore more encompassing because it embodies literature of different people/ the world over which is relayed in English Language. As a subject in the Senior Secondary School, students are required to read African and non-African prose, drama and poetry.

The following are the values of Literature-in-English as stated by Fakeye (2012): It provides entertainment

and a means of relaxation. It stirs the readers' emotions and gives them insight into understanding life; that is why students of literature are better equipped to face the realities of life more than students from other fields of specialisation. It serves as a tool for correcting social ills in the society, and it teaches morals. Readers become aware of other people's language, culture, beliefs and general practices. Literature-in-English helps in making language use tremendously more effective. The study of Literature-in-English is an inroad to critical thinking about characters and events and by doing so, enhances the thinking faculty of human beings. It also serves as a means of sensitizing citizens and spurring them into action by jolting them out of their complacency.



Literature-in-English is subsumed under English Language as a subject in the Junior Secondary School and a subject of study for students of Arts and Humanities in the Senior Secondary School Curriculum (National Policy of Education, 2013). It is also a prerequisite for any student who wants to study Law, International Relations, Journalism and other Social Science and Arts related courses in tertiary institutions.

The report from the Chief Examiners of West Africa Examination (WAEC) on Literature-in-English indicated the need for improvement in the subject. For instance May/June 2015 report Paper 2 (Drama and Poetry) noted that poor performance of candidates arising from failure of most students to study the prescribed texts instead they relied on summaries of texts. Similarly, the report on Paper 3 (Prose) stated that the candidates' performance was below average as just a few exhibited evidence of having read the texts while most of them read short notes and summaries of the texts for preparation. The report submitted that the following weaknesses were generally noted; misinterpretation of questions, violation of instructions, and failure to express answers in good English coupled with lack of competent teachers and unfamiliarity with the demands of the subject (WAEC Chief Examiners' Report Nov/Dec 2007 and May/June 2015).

The causes of mass failure of students in Literature-in-English in examinations such as WAEC and NECO include students' weak background, lack of aptitude and interest in the subject, lack of qualified teachers, lack of dedication from teachers, poor parental motivation among others. Recurring factors among the stated causes of mass failure are the teachers (Obe, 1996) However, for some time now the focus of most researches have been on strategies of improving teaching of Literature-in-English, quality of teachers through self-efficacy and retraining (Enonta, Oden, Egbe and Ebuta, 2012), school factors as inhibitors of performance in Literature-in-English. Despite all these and many more researches, the problem of mass failure still persists. It is in desperate search of solution to this problem that researchers are now beaming their searchlight on teacher-related factors. Studies have shown that teacher qualification, ability and experience are connected with increase in students' achievement across schools. . Teachers and students' home background

are among the most important factors affecting students' achievement.

Helping students learn the subject matter involves more than the delivery of facts and information. The goal of teaching is to assist students in developing intellectual resources to enable them to participate in, not merely to know about, the major domains of human thought and inquiry. These include the past and its relation to the present, the natural world, the ideas, beliefs, and values of our own and other people, the dimensions of space and quantity, aesthetics and representation, and so on. A conceptual mastery of the subject matter and the capacity to be critical of knowledge itself can empower students to be effective actors in their environment. It takes a skilled teacher to be able to teach these foundations of Literature-in-English (Fakeye 2012).

Adediwura and Bada (2007) asserted that if a teacher is largely ignorant or uninformed he can do much harm. When teachers possess inaccurate information or conceive of knowledge in narrow ways, they may pass on these ideas to their students. They may fail to challenge students' misconceptions; they may use texts uncritically or may alter them inappropriately. Subtly, teachers' conceptions of knowledge shape their practice the kinds of questions they ask, the ideas they reinforce, the sorts of tasks they assign. After all, if teaching entails helping others learn, then understanding what is to be taught is a central requirement of teaching. The myriad tasks of teaching, such as selecting worthwhile learning activities, giving helpful explanations, asking productive questions, and evaluating students' learning, all depend on the teacher's understanding of what it is that students are to learn.

A teacher competent in his profession has a thorough knowledge of the subject matter or knowledge of contents. The teacher who has a good command of the subject matter can provide more and more information to the students in the classroom. Knowledge of key concepts, inquiry tools, and structures and its implication are essential for combined part and lesson planning for the class (Safdar, Gulap, Muhammad and Muhammad 2013). Further, through integrated lesson planning, the class teachers are capable of an authentic knowledge sharing and teaching learning strategies which are



helpful to strengthen student learning and development of creative thinking (Davis-Kean, 2007). It is intuitively obvious that teachers must possess a professional knowledge base and exhibit knowledge of the subject matter. Successful teachers have a vast repertoire of instructional strategies and techniques that reflect their knowledge of the subject. According to Tella (2008) and Gess-Newsome and Lederman (2001), teachers are those that consciously reflect upon, conceptualize, and apply understandings from one classroom experience to the next.

Adebulu (2015) found that the quality of the education system depends on the quality of teachers and a school without competent and resourceful teachers will not be able to achieve the goals and objectives of the education system. Olaleye (2013) also revealed that teachers are the primary indicator and determinant of the quality of education. The ability to teach effectively depends on the knowledge of teachers and knowledge that exists in many forms. Teacher subject content knowledge will be hampered if the teachers are not familiar with the body of knowledge that is taught and specifically teacher effectiveness. The implication of this for teachers is that teachers must thoroughly understand the content of what they teach. Olaleye (2013) in his study of teachers' characteristics in Osun State concluded that perspective of students to teachers in this mastery of the material have a significant influence on students' academic performance.

Another factor that could influence students' achievement in Literature-in-English is the attitude of teachers. Attitude predisposes an individual to action that has some degree of consistency and can be evaluated as either negative or positive (McMillen, Seastrom, and McGrat 2000). Attitude may also be defined as the sum total of a person's inclinations and feelings, likes and dislikes, preconceived notions, fears, threat, convictions and general predisposition towards any specific topic or issue. According to Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) a teachers' attitude may make students to either run away from class in a particular subject and it could also make a student love the subject too. Moreover, adopting a bad methodology, cursing and calling the students derogatory and distracting names may lead to acts of truancy and cause distractions in class. This is also true for pre-service teachers, as is reported in the study by Rech, Hartzell, and Stephens (1993) who

compared the mathematical competencies and attitudes of American pre-service elementary education students against a representative college population, over three years. The results supported Adeyemi and Adeyemi's findings and also showed that the pre-service students possessed significantly more negative attitudes toward mathematics. The significance of research involving the attitudes of teachers is due to the potential influence of these people upon students. The experiences of teachers influence the formation of attitudes and these, in turn, influence their classroom practices. These attitudes and practices may sometimes be at variance with the main direction of their tertiary teaching methods courses. Thus, it is crucial to make teachers know that these attitudes are made explicit and examined in order to adapt tertiary courses to the needs of these students. Research has argued that positive teacher attitudes contribute to the formation of positive pupil attitudes (Reeves, 2006). Other studies have shown that classroom strategies used to teach a subject are influenced by teachers' attitudes which, in turn, influence pupil attitudes (Stuart and Phyllis 2004).

From the foregoing, one would note that most of the previous studies on teacher subject content knowledge and attitude have been located outside Nigeria and those within Nigeria are not on Literature-in-English in Ibadan Metropolis. This study, therefore, considers teacher factors (subject content knowledge and their attitude) as factors that could predict students' achievement in Literature-in-English, specifically in Ibadan Metropolis of Oyo State.

Statement of the Problem

The relevance and importance of Literature-in-English cannot be over-stated due to its numerous benefits. However, the achievement of students in this subject has not been improving due to the several reports of recurring poor performance of students in Literature-in-English at the Senior Secondary School level of education and other external examinations. Efforts to address this problem had led researchers to experiment with various instructional strategies, such as thematic, stylistic methods and advanced organizer, and teachers' awareness and utilisation of these strategies but performance has still not improved. Researchers have, therefore, canvassed a shift of research focus



on ways of handling the subject by qualified teachers who have no proper mastery of the subject, ineffective teaching strategies, interest and attitude of students, lack of locus of control. There have also been emphases on other school subjects such as Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry, but very little on Literature-in-English and attitude of teachers towards teaching itself.

Research Questions

To successfully find solution to the problem, the following questions were raised and answered:

1. What relationship exists between teacher attitude and subject content knowledge and students' achievement in Literature-in-English?
2. What is the relative contribution of teacher-related factors (attitude and subject content knowledge) on students' achievement in Literature-in-English?
3. What is the composite contribution of teachers' factors (subject content knowledge and attitude) on students' achievement in Literature in English?
4. Which of the teacher-related factors (subject content knowledge and attitude) could better predict student achievement in Literature-in-English?

The Scope of the Study

The study is focused on how teachers' attitude and subject content knowledge could predict the achievement of senior secondary students from schools in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State, particularly those teaching Literature-in-English in their school.

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive design of the correlative type. This is because the variables to be studied have already been manifested and the researcher has no control over them.

Population of the Study

The population consisted of all Senior Secondary teachers teaching Literature-in-English in public secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

Simple random technique was used to select two local governments out of the five in Ibadan Metropolis. Purposive sampling technique was used to select twenty (20) senior secondary schools from the two local governments using the following criteria:

1. Mixed-gender schools
2. Schools that have consistently presented students for external examination in Literature-in-English for the past five years.

In all, a total of forty (40) teachers participated in the study.

Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used for the purpose of data collection in this study. They are:

1. Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitude to Literature-in-English.
2. Scale on Teachers' Subject Content Knowledge in Literature-in-English.

Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitude to Teaching Literature-in-English.

The self-constructed questionnaire sought to elicit responses from teachers concerning their attitude towards Literature-in-English. The instrument had 2 sections. Section A consisted on demographic information such as gender, qualification and years of experience. While Section B contained 25 items that measure teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of Literature-in-English which was placed on a modified four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitude to Teaching Literature-in-English (QSHB)

The Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitude to Literature-In-English underwent face and content validity by the researcher and some lecturers in the department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan. A trial-test was conducted in order to establish the reliability of the instrument on five teachers who were not part of the main study. The test was subjected to reliability test using Cronbach method and an Alpha value of 0.86 was obtained.

Scale on Teachers' Subject Content Knowledge in Literature-in-English.

This instrument was constructed by the researcher and was divided into two sections. The first section required the participants' demographic information. These include sex, age, level, qualifications, and years of teaching experience. The second section contained items that measured teachers' subject



matter knowledge in the teaching of Literature-in-English. It contained 10 items of a modified Likert scale format with responses ranging from never, rarely, regularly and always.

Validity and Reliability of Scale on Teachers' Subject Content Knowledge in Literature-in-English

The researcher presented the instrument to lecturers in the Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan to assess the face and content validity after which modifications and corrections were made. In order to find the reliability of the instrument, it was trial-tested using 2 scorers. Scott Pie was used to determine its coefficient and inter-rater reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher got a letter of introduction from the Department which was presented to principals and

Heads of Departments of the selected schools. The instruments were administered to the respondents in the schools by the researcher. The purpose and various sections of the instruments were explained to the respondents, they were instructed not to leave any of the items unanswered except where otherwise stated. Data collection lasted six (6) weeks.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, simple percentage and inferential statistics; multiple regression analysis.

Research Question 1: What relationship exists between teacher-related factors (attitude and subject content knowledge) and students' achievement in Literature-in-English?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of relationship between teacher-related factors and students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Statistics	Variables	Achievement Test	Teacher Attitude	Content Knowledge
Pearson correlation	Achievement test	1.000	-.021	.518
	Teacher attitude	-.021	1.000	-.412
	Content knowledge	.518	-.412	1.00
Sig. (1 tailed)	Achievement test	-	.388	.000
	Teacher attitude	.388	-	.000
	Content knowledge	.000	.000	-
Mean		33.19	59.52	27.08
Standard deviation		13.71	6.445	2.031

Table 1 shows that teacher attitude to teaching does not have a significant relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English ($r = -.021$; $P > 0.05$). This implies that teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English does not contribute to students' academic achievement in the subject.

However, teachers' subject content knowledge has a positive significant relationship with students'

achievement in Literature-in-English ($r = .518$; $P < 0.05$). This implies that teachers' content knowledge in Literature-in-English contributes to students' academic achievement in the subject.

Research Question 2: What is the relative contribution of teacher-related factors (attitude and subject content knowledge) to students' achievement in Literature-in-English?

Table 2: Relative contribution of teacher-related factors (attitude and subject content knowledge) to students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Variables	Unstandardised coefficient		Standardised Coefficients	Rank	t.	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	-108.378	17.764			-6.101	.000
Teacher attitude	.493	.144	.232	2 nd	3.421	.001
Content knowledge	4.144	.458	.614	1 st	9.057	.000



Table 2 shows that teachers' content knowledge made the greatest contribution to students' achievement in Literature-in-English ($B=.614$; $t=9.055$; $P<0.05$). While teachers' attitude comes next in the order of distribution ($B=.232$; $t=3.421$; $P<0.05$).

Table 3: Model summary. Analysis of Variance of Regression on teacher-related factors and students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1.	.560 ^a	.313	.306	11.423	
Model	Sum of squares	df.	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Regression	10719.508	2	5359.754	41.073	.000
Residual	23488.798	180	130.493		
Total	34208.306	182			

a. Dependent variable: achievement test

b. Predictors: (constant), content knowledge, teacher attitude

From table 3, the teacher content knowledge and teacher attitude taken together contributed significantly to students' achievement in Literature-in-English. ($R=.560$) also, they all jointly explain 30.6% of the total variance in students' achievement in Literature-in-English. The remaining 64% could be due to factors or errors not considered in the study. Table 3 is used to test the significant or otherwise of the R value. The table further shows that the adjusted R value of .306 is significant ($F=41.073$; $P<0.05$). It is therefore concluded that the adjusted R value is not due to chance.

Research Question 4: Which of the teacher-related factors (subject content knowledge and attitude) could predict student achievement in Literature-in-English?

As obtained from table 3, the two variable; subject content knowledge ($B=.614$; $P<0.05$) and teachers' attitude ($B=.232$; $P<0.05$) could predict students' achievement in Literature-in-English. However, the teachers' subject content knowledge has a higher predicting power than teachers' attitude.

Discussion of Results

The study showed that teachers' subject content knowledge has a positive significant relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English. The

Research Question 3: What is the composite contribution of teachers' factor (subject content knowledge and attitude) to students' achievement in Literature in English?

findings corroborates the findings of Olaleye (2013) who observed that teachers' subject knowledge and teaching skills have positive and significant relationship with students' achievement. This finding is also consistent with Ojo (2008) and Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) who observed that teachers' subject mastery has a significant correlation with students' achievement. This adduced to the fact that a teacher whose understanding of a topic or subject is thorough uses clearer language, their discourse is more connected and they provide better explanations than those whose background is weak. Also, the way students perceive their teacher's competence through mastery of the subject may also affect students' academic performance Adediwura and Bada (2007). This result negates the findings of Makinde and Tom-Lawyer (2008) who found that there was no significant relationship between students' academic achievement and teachers' subject mastery

In addition, the finding indicated that teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English does not contribute to students' academic achievement in the subject. This supports Nwene (2015) and Akinsulire (2015) findings which affirm that no significant relationship exists between teachers' attitude and students' academic achievement in English Language. Though attitude might not be the most significant predictor of students' achievement from the findings of this study, a positive attitude still needs to be cultivated by teachers. This is because attitude such as friendliness to students and co-workers, preparation and readiness for a class, and interesting method of teaching all have great influence on students' perception and achievement



in a subject (Stuart and Phyllis, 2004; Reeves, 2006). This result therefore is inconsistent with the claims of Oyinloye and Ajayi (2011).

Summary of Findings

Teachers' subject content knowledge has a positive significant relationship on students' achievement in Literature-in-English ($r=.518$; $P<0.05$). This implies that teachers' content knowledge in Literature-in-English contributes to students' academic achievement in the subject, while teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English does not contribute to students' academic achievement in Literature-in-English.

Teachers' content knowledge made the greatest contribution to students' achievement in Literature-in-English, while teachers' attitude comes next in the order of distribution. This means that teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English is not a crucial factor that can improve students' achievement. Teacher content knowledge and teacher attitude to teaching Literature-in-English taken together contributed significantly to students' achievement in Literature-in-English. They jointly explain 36% of the total variance in students' achievement in Literature-in-English.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the procedure for recruiting teachers should be such that considers very important the factors of teachers' content knowledge of the subject to ensure that quality teachers are employed. Teachers should be exposed to professional advancement programmes such as seminars, workshops, refresher courses and evaluation programmes to improve their content knowledge of the subjects they teach. Also, employers should find a way of improving the attitude of teachers.

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