

# ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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## **ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to investigate the English as a second language teachers' perception of a new Senior Secondary School English language curriculum objectives, content items, instructional materials/aids, modes of evaluation and the adequacy of the instructional personnel to successfully implement the curriculum in Niger State, Nigeria. The research sought answers to the five research questions to guide the study. A survey research method was used and a questionnaire designed patterned on Likeert's five-point scale was used for data collection. The content validity of the questionnaire was established through critical examination by experienced teachers. The reliability of the questionnaire was established on the analyses of result of its administration using test-retest method on ten randomly selected experienced secondary school English language teachers. The reliability coefficient value of 0.843 was arrived at using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical technique. The 0.843 r value is above the reliability coefficient acceptable level. The population in this study was two hundred and fifty English Language teachers and sixty were selected for use through the simple balloting and stratified random sampling techniques. The sixty English teachers used as respondents were visited in their schools by the researcher and the respondents responded to the questionnaire there and then except for some few copies that had to be left with H.O.D., Language for administration and collected on second visit. The data was analysed using the frequency counts, simple percentile and mean statistical techniques to answer the research questions and the t-test statistical technique was used in testing the paired null hypotheses. The results revealed that the English teachers perception of the curriculum objectives and content items was favourable except that they opined that the time allocated for the coverage of the content items was inadequate. Findings on other aspects of the curriculum were that the recommended instructional materials and teaching/learning aids were neither provided nor available for procurement; teachers may be bias in the use and conduct of continuous assessment and the recommended modes of evaluation could be expensive to produce. Other findings are that professional English teachers were inadequate in number and in preparation to implement the new curriculum and the available teachers should be encouraged to attend both in-service or on- the- job training on full-time or part – time basis and workshops to make them better qualified and prepared to teach the new English curriculum. It is therefore, recommended that the curriculum items should be streamed to ensure its coverage within the specified period; the state Ministries of Education should adequately make available the necessary instructional materials and teaching/learning aids and test banks should be established in our SSS and a number of standardised and validated test should be made available for retrieval and use in continuous assessment. Other recommendations are that mass recruitment of professional English teachers especially of University graduates, to teach the SSS curriculum and the available teachers should be encouraged to attend both in-service or on- the- job training on full- time or part – time bases and workshops to make them better qualified and prepared to teach the new English curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum, English Language, English Teachers, Perception, Second Language, Senior Secondary Schools.

#### INTRODUCTION

It is worthwhile to reiterate on the role and function of English language in Nigeria as that which warrants concern when student's performance in it is poor. English language is used as the medium of instruction and in learning other subjects in all Nigerian educational institutions. Equally too, no student is qualified for admission into the Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions without scoring a credit pass in it among others, in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO). In addition, English language seems to be the greatest colonial heritage, which serves as an instrument for the survival of Nigeria as a political entity. It is also used as a second language in Nigeria.

Thus, the much-desired high level of student's proficiency in it to enable the Nigerians cope with the challenges of it usage as a second language and to reduction the students' high rate of failure in it can only be enhanced if our English curriculum is viable. A curriculum is viable if it is dynamic, realistically implementable and coverable within the time stipulated for it among others. This status of the new senior secondary school (SSS) English language curriculum can be achieved by subjecting it to continuous evaluation. One way we can do this is to seek for the opinion of the English teachers about it since they do its implementation at the grassroots level and because. Sadly, they also form only 28.13% of the participants that designed it (FMEST, 1985). This meager SSS English teacher's representation at the planning level supports the observations that the Federal Government over relies on experts with minimal, and at times no, teachers' input (Gillet, 1981). This inadequate involvement of classroom teachers might be due to lack of recognition of the fact that teachers retain the ultimate power to ensure or defeat the successful implementation of curriculum change (Coombs, 1977).

If their participation was so low, then would the curriculum be acceptable to them? Hence, objective of this study was to investigate perception of the English as a second language teachers on the new English language curriculum objectives, content items, instructional materials/aids, modes of evaluation and the adequacy of the instructional personnel to successfully implement the curriculum in Niger State, Nigeria.

# **Research Questions**

In the course of this study, the research sought answers to the following questions: What is the perception of the English as a second language teachers on:

- 1) objectives of the new SSS English curriculum?
- 2) content items of the new SSS English curriculum?
- 3) instructional materials recommended in the new SSS English curriculum?
- 4) modes of evaluation of the new SSS English curriculum and
- 5) the adequacy of instructional personnel to successfully implement the of the new SSS English curriculum?

The aspects of the SSS English language curriculum covered by this study are objectives, content items, the adequacy of the instructional materials, modes of evaluation and the adequacy of instructional personnel to implement it.

Since this is an evaluative study, it is hope that the findings of it will be useful to the planners and developers of new SSS English language curriculum in assessing the extent of their success and or otherwise of the work they have done. Secondly, it is hoped that the curriculum specialists and Ministry of Education Officials will find this work useful when innovating this curriculum and when planning any other English language curriculum.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Curriculum experts have defined curriculum evaluation in different ways. Cooley and Lohnes (1964) defined evaluation as "a process y which relevant data are collected and transformed into information for decision-making". Bloom, Hasting & Madaus (1971) defined curriculum evaluation as a process of greeing upon programme standards, determining whether a discrepancy exists between aspects of the programme and standards and using discrepancy information to identify the weakness of the programme. Johnstone (1978) quoting Stufflebeam is of the option that" evaluation is the process of gathering useful information for judging decision alternatives," getting the information, analyzing it and drawing a final conclusion". In all these definitions, it is clear that evaluation is considered as a process which involves collecting information which serves as feedback to be used for further decision-making.

This study adopted Stufflebeam's C.I.P.P. model which has four phases or sages of evaluation according to Popham (1975). These are context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation and product evaluation. The six aspects of curriculum (objectives, content, methods, materials, evaluation and personnel) are encapsulated in the C.I.P.P. model.

Some empirical studies on this subject matter revealed some interesting findings. Ameyeu (1988) has done an evaluation of the JSS English curriculum. He used interview questions in data collection. He used frequency counts and simple percentile statistical techniques in analyzing this part of his data. His study revealed the following findings: though the curriculum goals were found to be related to the 6-3-3-4 Educational system, they were neither adequate nor desirable;

- (i) the curriculum contents were comprehensive relevant and suitable to learners' needs;
- the organisational pattern of the items required overhauling;
- (iii) English teachers felt that they were not adequately equipped in communicative and linguistic competence to help the learners achieve the goals of JSS curriculum;
- (iv) The supply and the improvisation of teaching and learning materials were is a deplorable condition in school;
- The JSS leaving certificate, which they felt should be conducted by the states' Ministry of Education, was strongly accepted to be used as end –of –course examination;
  - (a) English teachers felt that the award of JSS certificate to the graduants of the JSS English curriculum is appropriate and
  - (b) English teachers agreed that the curriculum can equip the graduates of the JSS English curriculum to cope with advanced work in English and other subjects at the JSS level.

Yasemin K. (2008). Investigated teachers' impact of teacher understandings and training upon their implementation curriculum innovation in teaching English to young learners in Turkish state schools. The results showed that teachers' prior training had an impact on the extent of their implementation of the curriculum initiative. The study therefore recommended provision continuous teacher training and teacher development opportunities, particularly during the critical first few years of the innovation process to promote the implementation of curriculum innovation in Turkish primary education. Equally too, Salem (2013) studied teachers' perception of the English language curriculum in Libyan public schools; and the results revealed that teachers' lack of training has impacted on their perception of curriculum implementation.

Adin-Surkis (2014) investigated teachers' evaluation of a new curriculum in English and reported that Teachers did not perceive the textbook to possess the potential to meet up with challenges of new English language curriculum. Ghazala e. al. (2014) studied the Perception of Teachers regarding the Effect of Curriculum and Examination System on Pakistani College Students' English Language Performance. One of the major findings revealed that college teachers' did not perceive the curriculum to be useful for English language learning and teaching in Pakistani colleges because it has failed to address practical problems and difficulties faced by the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum at the college level. The study has recommended teachers' involvement in curriculum development as that will create ownership in them and they will encourage them to play active role in teaching English curriculum.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research design used in n this study is survey method and the instrument of this study is a questionnaire designed patterned on Likeert's five point scale and scored for positive questions as:

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Strongly Agree (SA) = 4
Agree (A) = 3,
Disagree (D) = 2
Strongly disagree (SD) = 1
Negative questions and responses were scored as:
Strongly Agree (SA) = 1,
Agree (A) = 2,
Disagree (D) = 3,
Strongly disagree (SD) = 4,
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To establish the content validity of the questionnaire, sample copies were given to ten randomly selected experienced English teachers for critical examination and their positive observations were used. The reliability of the questionnaire was established on the analyses of result of its administered twice on ten randomly selected experienced secondary school English language teachers using the Pearson product – moment correlation co-efficient statistical technique. The calculated value of r was 0.843 which is above the reliability coefficient acceptable level. The population in this study was two hundred and fifty (250) English Language teachers out of which sixty (60) were selected for use through the use of simple balloting and stratified random sampling techniques.

The sixty English teachers used as respondents were visited in their schools by the researcher and they responded to the questionnaire there and then. Some few copies of the questionnaire had to be left with H.O.D language for administration and returned later to such schools for collection personally by the researcher. The data was analysed using the frequency counts,

simple percentile and mean statistical techniques to answer the research questions and the ttest statistical technique was used in testing the paired null hypotheses

#### **Results**

The results in table 9 show English Teachers' perception of the new SSS English Language Curriculum objectives, content items, instructional materials, modes of evaluation, and the adequacy of instructional personnel to implement it.

# **Curriculum Objectives**

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers' Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Objectives

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
1	9	15.0	44	73.3	7	11.7	_	0	60	100
2	4	6.7	32	53.3	21	35.0	3	5.0	60	100
3	-	0.0	13	21.7	39	65.0	8	13.3	60	100
4	8	13.3	39	65.0	13	21.7	-	0	60	100
5	1	1.7	4	6.7	35	58.3	20	33.3	60	100
6	19	21.7	34	56.7	7	11.7	_	0	60	100

The results in table 1 show that out of 60 English Teachers that responded to the questionnaire, 9 (15%) strongly agreed, 44 (73.3%) agreed, 7 (11.7%) of them disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed that the objectives of the curriculum were assessable (Item 1). Out of the 60 English Teachers, 4 (6.7%) strongly agreed, 32 (53.3%) agreed, 21 (35%) disagreed and 3 (5%) strongly disagreed that the objectives were comprehensive (Item 2). Of the 60 English teachers, none strongly agreed, 13 (12.7%) agreed, 39 (65%) disagreed and 8 (13.3%) disagreed that the objectives were achievable (item 4). Out of the 60 English Teachers, 8 (13.3%) strongly agreed, 39 (65%) agreed, 13 (21.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed that the objectives were clearly stated (item 5.) 1 (1.7%) strongly agreed, 4 (6.7%) agreed, 35 (58.3%) disagreed and 20 (33.3%) strongly disagreed that the objectives aid not cover the language skills (item 6). Out of the 60 English teachers 19 (31.7%) strongly agreed, 34 (56.7%) agreed, 7 (11.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed that the terminal objectives were relevant (item 14).

#### **Content Items**

Table 2: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers' Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Content Items

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
7	10	16.7	43	71.7	6	10.0	-	0	60	100
8	-	0.0	12	20.0	43	71.7	5	8.3	60	100
9	14	23.3	42	70.0	4	6.7	-	0	60	100
10	-	0.0	8	13.3	42	70.0	10	16.7	60	100
11	11	18.3	36	60.0	13	21.7	-	0	60	100
12	-	0.0	15	25.0	32	53.3	13	21.7	60	100
13	11	18.3	35	58.3	14	23.3	-	0	60	100

Responding to the statement that the items were capable of developing further skills and competence acquired at the JSS level (item 7), out of 60 English teachers, 10 (16.7%) strongly agreed, 43 (71.7%) agreed, 6 (10%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed and 5 (8.3%) strongly disagreed that the language items would not be covered within the time specified for them (item 8). Out of the 60 English teachers 14 (23.3%) of them strongly agreed, 43 (70%) agreed, 4 (6.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement (item 9) that the language item adequately covered the four language skills.

Responding to the statement that the language items did not adequately cover the teaching of the grammatical structures, spoken English, writing and comprehension (item 10) on English teacher strongly agreed, (13.3%) agreed, 42 (70%) disagreed and 10 (16.7%) strongly disagreed. When responding to the statement (item 11) that language items could encourage the learners attain not a more linguistic competence but more of communicative competence, 11 (18.3%). Out of 60 English teachers strongly agreed, 36 (60%) agreed, 13 (21.7%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed with the statement in item 12 which said that the content items were not up-to-date. The results in the table (17) revealed that the responses of English teachers to items 13 showed that 11 (18.3%) strongly agreed, 35 (58.3%) agreed, 14 (23.3%) disagreed and none strongly disagreed that the content items were appropriate to the level and age of the learners.

## **Instructional Materials**

Table 3: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers' Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Instructional Materials.

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
14	7	11.7	16	26.7	21	35.0	16	26.7	60	100
15	19	31.7	15	25.0	18	30.0	8	13.3	60	100
16	26	43.3	23	38.3	9	15.0	2	3.3	60	100
17	-	0.0	4	6.7	9	15.0	47	78.3	60	100
18	17	28.3	34	56.7	8	13.3	1	1.7	60	100
19	-	0.0	5	8.3	41	68.3	14	23.3	60	100
20	1	1.7	30	50.0	18	30.0	11	18.3	60	100
21	3	5.0	24	40.0	29	45.0	6	10.0	60	100

Out of the 60 English teachers that responded to the questionnaire, 7 (11.7%) strongly agreed, 16 (26.7) agreed, 21(35%) disagreed and 16 (26.7%) strongly disagreed that most of the teaching aids recommended were available (item 14). Equally too, 19 (31.7%) strongly agreed, 15 25% agreed, 18 (30%) disagreed and 8 (13.3%) strongly disagreed that the aids were not adequately provided (item 15). However, 26 (43.3%) strongly agreed, 23 (38.3%) agreed, 9 (15%) disagreed and 2 (3.3%) strongly disagreed that the teaching aids were appropriate to the students (items 16). No English teacher strongly agreed that the aids could not be easily used by teachers without been trained, 9 (15%) disagreed and 47 (78.3%) strongly disagreed (17). Equally too, of the 60 English teachers, 17 (28.3%) strongly disagreed, 34 (56.7%) agreed, 8 (13.3%) disagreed and only 1 (1.7%) strongly disagreed that the teaching also were relevant to the teaching learning of the language items (item 18).

However, none strongly agreed. 5 (8.3%) agreed, 41 (68.3%) disagreed and 14 (23.3%) strongly disagreed that the aids could not be used to arouse and sustain students' interest (item 19). Only 1 (1.7%) of the 60 English teachers strongly agreed that English teachers made effort to make and or improvise some teaching aids (item 20) while 30 (50%) of them agreed. 18 (30%) disagreed and 11 (18.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. English teachers "do not make efforts to take students to some place of interest to talk and write about during language lessons" (items 21) 3 (5%) of them strongly agreed, 24 (40%) of them strongly disagreed.

## **Modes of Evaluation**

Table 4: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers' Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Modes of Evaluation.

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
22	6	26.7	21	35.0	16	26.7	7	11.7	60	100
23	1	1.7	10	16.7	31	51.7	18	30.0	60	100
24	15	25.0	30	50.0	11	18.3	4	6.7	60	100
25	6	10.0	19	31.7	23	38.3	12	20.0	60	100
26	7	11.6	8	13.3	34	56.7	17	20.3	60	100
27	-	0.0	5	8.3	41	68.3	14	23.3	60	100
28	1	1.7	30	50.0	18	30.0	11	18.3	60	100
29	3	5.0	24	40.0	27	45.0	6	10.0	60	100

Of the 60 English teachers that were used as respondents 16 (26.7%) strongly agreed, 21 (35%) agreed, 16 (26.7%) disagreed and 7 (11.7%) strongly disagreed that the continuous assessment by teachers should be encouraged (item 22). However, I (1.7%) of them strongly agreed and 10 (16.7%) agreed that WAEC alone should handle the SSS end-of course English language examination (item 23) while 31 (51.7%) disagreed and 18 (30%) strongly disagreed with the statement. While 15 (25%) of them strongly agree and 30 (50%) agreed that continuous assessment methods could permit unnecessary and uncontrollable favouratism (item 24), 11 (18.3%) of them disagreed with the statement. Of the 60 English teachers 6 (10%) strongly agreed, 19 (31.7%) agreed, 23 (38.3%) disagreed and 12 (20%) of them strongly disagreed that continuous assessment was not regularly conducted by teachers as required by the system (item 25). English teachers' responses to the statement that tests used for continuous assessment by teachers could be administered and printed at minimal cost showed that 7 (11.6%) of them strongly agreed, 8 (13.3%) of them agreed, 34 (56.7%) disagreed and 17 (28.3%) of them strongly disagreed with the statement (item 26). While 41 (68.3%) of the 60 English teachers disagreed and 14 (23.3%) strongly disagreed, none strongly agreed and 5 (8.3%) agreed that English teachers did not require training to enable them implement continuous assessment more effectively (item 27). Of the 60 English teachers 1 (1.7%) strongly agreed, 30 (50%) agreed, 18 (30%) disagreed and 11 (18.3%) strongly disagreed that instruments used for continuous assessment were found to be valid, reliable, objective and standardize (item 29). Out of 60 teachers, 3 (5.0%) strongly agreed, 24 (40.0%) agreed, 27 (45.0%) disagreed and 6(10.0%) strongly disagreed that the students are assed by teachers in each of the four language skills through the continuous assessment method.

## **Instructional Personnel**

Table 5: Frequency and Percentages for 60 English Teachers' Perception of the New SSS English Language Curriculum Instructional Personnel

Item No.	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total No.	Total %
30	3	5.0	14	23.3	30	50.0	13	21.7	60	100
31	18	30.0	31	51.7	10	16.7	1	1.7	60	100
32	4	6.7	11	18.3	30	50.0	15	25.0	60	100
33	12	20.0	23	38.3	19	51.7	6	10.0	60	100

While 3 (5%) of English teachers strongly agreed and 14 (23.3%) agreed that only English teachers who specialized in English teaching were teaching in their schools (items 30), 30 (50%) disagreed and 13 (21.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The view that English teachers were not adequately available in schools (item 31) was strongly agreed with by 18 (30%) of teachers, agreed with by 31 (51.7%) of teachers, while 10 (16.7%) of them disagreed and 1 (1.7%) strongly disagreed with it. Of the 60 English teachers, 4(6.7%) of them strongly agreed, 11 (18.3%) agreed, 30 (50%) of them disagreed and 15 (25%) strongly disagreed that English teachers did not require training in aspects of English so as to be more effective in teaching this curriculum (item 32). While 12 (20%) strongly agreed and 23 (38.3%) agreed that there was need to organize seminars, refresher courses, and in-service training for teachers on this curriculum, 19 (31.7%) disagreed and 6 (12%) of them strongly disagreed with the view (item 33).

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Items 14-21 in table 1 elicited teachers' responses on how they perceive the curriculum objectives. They opined that the curriculum objectives were assessable, comprehensive, achievable, clearly stated and relevant to the needs of the students. The results indicated that their perception of the curriculum objective was favourable. This finding is in consonance with that of Ameyeu (1988), Yesemin (2008), and Adin-Surki (2014) but contrary to that of Ghezala et. al. (2014) who reported that the college teachers did not find the curriculum useful.

Equally too, the teachers perceived the curriculum content items as comprehensive in covering both four language and grammatical skills, covers both linguistic and communicative competencies. They also found the content items to be up-to-date and appropriate to the level of the learners but opined that teachers cannot cover them within the specified time. In all, the teachers have a favourable rating of the curriculum expect that the allocated for its coverage is inadequate. This finding is in consonance with that of Ameyeu (1988), Yesemin (2008), and Adin-Surki (2014) but contrary to that of Ghezala et. al. (2014) who reported that the college teachers did not find the curriculum useful.

On instructional materials recommended for use in the curriculum, teachers opined that though they are found to be relevant, interest-arousing and sustaining, they are neither provided nor available. Teachers accepted they improvise many of such materials. This finding is in consonance with that of Ameyeu (1988) and Yesemin (2008) but contrary to that of Ghezala et. al. (2014) who reported that the college teachers did not find the curriculum useful. The situation where the recommended materials are not provided and they are not available for procurement is dangerous and constitute serious impediment to curriculum implementation by teachers.

Teachers supported the use of the recommended modes of evaluation through continuous assessment. Though they also found the instrument to be valid, reliable, objective and standardized, they opined that it may be expensive to reproduce and teachers may be bias in conducting it. Teachers did not however, favour the system that West AFRICAN Examination Council (WAEC) alone should be the final examining body of the students' learning outcome of this curriculum. This finding is in consonance with that of Ameyeu (1988) but contrary to that of Ghezala et. al. (2014) who reported that the college teachers did not find the curriculum useful.

Teachers opined that English teachers were not adequately available and that is why nonspecialist English teachers are still found in schools teaching English language. Teachers also agreed that they required training in enhancing their effectiveness in implementing the new curriculum. To them, this can be done though seminars, workshops, refresher courses and inservice training. This finding is in consonance with that of Ameyeu (1988) and Yesemin (2008), It will be ideal to note that the curriculum implantation is endangered when the teachers felt they were inadequate preparation and in number to implement the curriculum.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of this research, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1. Teachers perceived the curriculum objectives to be favourable and rated so.
- 2. Curriculum items cannot be covered within the time frame,
- 3. The recommended instructional materials and teaching/learning aids were neither provided nor available for procurement,
- 4. Teachers may be bias in the use in continuous assessment conduct and the recommended modes of evaluation could be expensive to produce,
- 5. Professional English teachers were inadequate in number and in preparation to implement the new curriculum,
- 6. The available teachers should be encouraged to attend both in-service or on- the- job training on full- time or part - time bases and workshops to make them better qualified and prepared to teach the new English curriculum.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Curriculum items should be streamed to ensure its coverage within the specified
- 2. State Ministries of Education should adequately make available the necessary instructional materials and teaching/learning aids.
- 3. Test banks should be established in our SSS and a number of standardised and validated test should be made available in senior secondary schools for retrieval for use in continuous assessment.
- 4. Mass recruitment of professional English teachers especially of University graduates, to teach the SSS curriculum;
- 5. The available teachers should be encouraged to attend both in-service or on- the- job training on full- time or part - time bases and workshops to make them better qualified and prepared to teach the new English curriculum.

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