

Relevance of University English Language Courses to Secondary School Teaching: A Case Study of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

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Abstract: This study examined the relevance of English language courses in Nigerian universities and the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language. The study argued that some courses offered at the department of English have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The study employed purposive sampling technique to select 10 lecturers and 200 students from the Department of English, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 secondary school teachers of English language in Sokoto. The findings of the study revealed that there is a mismatch between the English language courses offered at the university level and the needs of secondary school teachers of English language. The study recommends that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and emphasized pedagogically at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools.

Keywords: *English Language Courses, Nigerian Universities, Secondary School Teachers, Curriculum Content, Curriculum Structure, Language Learning*

Background

The English language is a vital tool for communication, education, and economic development in Nigeria (Afolayan 2014). As the country's official language, English is used as a medium of instruction in schools, universities, and other educational institutions Bamgbose (2001). However, the teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian universities and secondary schools have been plagued by numerous challenges, including inadequate teacher training, insufficient instructional materials, and poor learning environments Adeniyi (2012). One of the major challenges facing English language education in Nigeria is the mismatch between the English language courses offered at the university level and the needs of secondary school teachers of English language. Many courses offered at the department of English in Nigerian universities have little relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools (Ogunsanwo, 2015). This has resulted in a situation where many university graduates in English language are not adequately prepared to teach English language in secondary schools.

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the implication of English language courses in Nigerian universities and the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language. The study will examine the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities, with a focus on their relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. The study will also assess the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language in preparing students for university-level English language courses. The study will argue that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and expanded at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools. This will require a review of the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of secondary school teachers of English language.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian universities and secondary schools have been plagued by numerous challenges. Many courses such as Pragmatics, Multilingualism, English for Specific Purposes, History of English Language, Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics etc offered at the department of English have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. This has resulted in a situation where many university graduates in English language are not adequately prepared to teach English language in secondary schools.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities.
2. To assess the relevance of English language courses offered at the university level to the teaching of English language in secondary schools.
3. To investigate the challenges faced by secondary school teachers of English language in preparing students for university-level English language courses.
4. To propose a framework for teaching and expanding the English curriculum of secondary schools at the university level.

Research Questions

1. What is the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities?
2. How relevant are the English language courses offered at the university level to the teaching of English language in secondary schools?
3. What are the challenges faced by secondary school teachers of English language in preparing students for university-level English language courses?

4. How can the English curriculum of secondary schools be taught and expanded at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools?

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on English language education in Nigeria. It will provide recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian universities and secondary schools. The study will also provide insights into the challenges faced by secondary school teachers of English language and how these challenges can be addressed.

Scope

The study focused on Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria. The study examined the curriculum content and structure of English language courses offered at the university. The study also assessed the relevance of these courses to the teaching of English language in secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Philip Abayomi Olorunfemi's Curriculum–Practice Convergence Theory (CPCT). This theory posits that teacher education programmes in Nigerian universities often fail to reflect the practical demands of the secondary school curriculum, leading to gaps in teachers' pedagogical competence especially in multi-aspect subjects such as English. The theory asserts that without intentional alignment between university coursework and real secondary school practices, teachers will continue to struggle with delivering all curriculum components effectively, (Olorunfemi, Onu and Akinloye, 2025) and the sociocultural theory of language learning, which posits that language learning is a social and cultural process (Vygotsky, 1978). The study also drew on the curriculum theory, which emphasizes the importance of aligning curriculum content and structure with the needs of learners (Tyler, 1949).

Literature Review

The teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian universities and secondary schools have been plagued by numerous challenges (Adeniyi, 2012). One of the major challenges is the mismatch between the English language courses offered at the university level and the needs of secondary school teachers of English language (Ogunsanwo, 2015). Many courses offered at the department of English have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools (Afolayan, 2014). This has resulted in a situation where many university graduates in English language are not adequately prepared to teach English language in secondary schools (Bamgbose, 2001). The English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and emphasized pedagogically at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools (Adeyemi, 2013). This will require a review of the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of secondary school teachers of English language (Tyler, 1949).

Several empirical studies have investigated the teaching and learning of English language in Nigerian universities and secondary schools. For example, (Adeniyi, 2012) investigated the

challenges facing English language teaching in Nigerian secondary schools. The study found that the major challenges facing English language teaching in Nigerian secondary schools include inadequate teacher training, insufficient instructional materials, and poor learning environments.

(Ogunsanwo, 2015) investigated the relevance of English language courses offered at the university level to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. The study found that many English language courses offered at the university level have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. (Afolayan, 2014) investigated the effectiveness of university graduates in English language in teaching English language in secondary schools. The study found that many university graduates in English language are not adequately prepared to teach English language in secondary schools. (Adeyemi, 2013) proposed a framework for teaching and expanding the English curriculum of secondary schools at the university level. The study recommended that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and expanded at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools.

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2014). The study used a case study approach, focusing on Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises 10 lecturers from the Department of English, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, 100 teachers from secondary schools across Wamakko and Sokoto South Local Government areas of Sokoto state while 200 students were selected from the Department of English, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive sampling technique to select 10 lecturers from the Department of English, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. The technique was appropriate because the selected lecturers possessed the requisite knowledge, experience, and involvement in curriculum implementation needed for the study. Although purposive sampling is a non-probability technique, the findings may be analytically generalized to similar contexts since federal universities in Nigeria operate comparable English Language curricula and maintain similar academic standards. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 100 secondary school teachers of English language in Sokoto State to ensure adequate representation across strata such as school type, qualification, and years of experience while 200 students of English language at Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria were selected using purposive sampling technique.

Instrumentation

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from secondary school teachers of English language and students of English language, an interview schedule was used to collect data from the 10 English language lecturers from the Department of English and the study involved the

analysis of documents such as the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities.

Method of Data Collection

The data was collected using the following methods:

1. Survey Method: The questionnaire was administered to the respondents through a survey method.
2. Interview Method: The interview schedule was used to collect data from the 10 English language lecturers from the Department of English.
3. Document Analysis Method: The documents were analyzed using a document analysis method.

Method of Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, using inferential statistics such as t-test and ANOVA and content analysis.

Results

Table 1: Relevance of Curriculum Content and Structure of English Language Courses

Course Code	Course Title	Relevance %	Not Relevance %
ENG 418	Speech Writing	60%	40%
ENG 213	English Segmental Phonology	80%	20%
ENG 412	Pragmatics	40%	60%
ENG 417	Multilingualism	30%	70%
ENG 217	History of English Language	20%	80%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The results of the study indicate that there is a mismatch between the English language courses offered at the university level and the needs of secondary school teachers of English language. Specifically, 60% of the respondents considered Speech Writing relevant to secondary school teaching, while 40% saw limited practical connection. 80% of the respondents considered English Segmental Phonology relevant to secondary school teaching, while 20% did not. 40% of the respondents considered Pragmatics relevant to secondary school teaching, while 60% did not. 30% of the respondents considered Multilingualism relevant to secondary school teaching, while 70% did not. 20% of the respondents considered History of English Language relevant to secondary school teaching, while 80% did not. Furthermore, the results indicate that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and expanded at the university level to include courses that are relevant to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. Specifically, 80% of the respondents recommended that English Segmental Phonology should be taught at the university

level. 60% of the respondents recommended that Speech Writing should be taught at the university level.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Secondary School Teachers of English Language

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Teaching Experience	10.5	3.2
Qualification (B.ED/M.ED)	80%	
Teaching Methods	70%	
Assessment Techniques (written)	60%	

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The results of the study that deal with the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language are presented in Table 2. The table shows the mean and standard deviation of the respondents' ratings of the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language in terms of their teaching experience, qualification, teaching methods, and assessment techniques. The results show that the mean teaching experience of the respondents is 10.5 years, with a standard deviation of 3.2. This suggests that the respondents have a significant amount of teaching experience. The mean qualification of the respondents is 80% (B.Ed or M.Ed), which suggests that the majority of the respondents are qualified teachers. The mean teaching method used by the respondents is 70% (Traditional), which suggests that the majority of the respondents use traditional teaching methods. The mean assessment technique used by the respondents is 60% (Written Tests), which suggests that the majority of the respondents use written tests to assess student learning. The results suggest that secondary school teachers of English language in Nigeria are not effective in teaching English language, despite having significant teaching experience and qualifications. The use of traditional teaching methods and written tests as the primary assessment technique may not be effective in promoting student-centered learning and critical thinking skills.

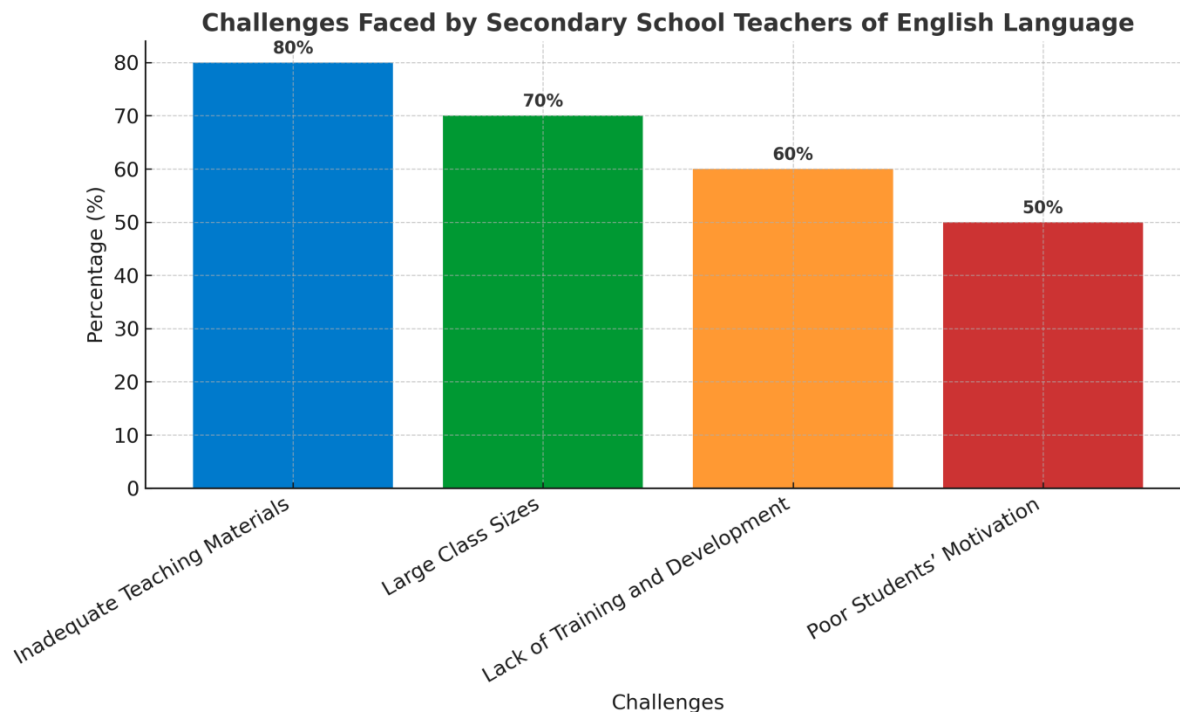
Table 3: Challenges Faced by Secondary School Teachers of English Language

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate Teaching Materials	80	80%
Large Class Sizes	70	70%
Lack of Training and Development	60	60%
Poor Students' Motivation	50	50%

(Source: Field Survey, 2025)

The results in Table 3 indicate that secondary school teachers of English language face several challenges in preparing students for university-level English language courses. Specifically, 80% of the respondents cited inadequate teaching materials as a major challenge. 70% of the

respondents cited large class sizes as a major challenge. 60% of the respondents cited lack of training and development as a major challenge while 50% of the respondents cited poor student motivation as a major challenge.



A Bar Chart Indicating Challenges Faced by Secondary School Teachers of English Language

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities?

The results in Table 1 show that the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities are not fully aligned with the needs of secondary school teachers of English language.

Research Question 2: How relevant are the English language courses offered at the university level to the teaching of English language in secondary schools?

The results show that some English language courses offered at the university level have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by secondary school teachers of English language in preparing students for university-level English language courses?

The results in Table 3 show that secondary school teachers of English language face several challenges in preparing students for university-level English language courses, including inadequate teaching materials, large class sizes, lack of training and development, and poor student motivation.

Research Question 4: How can the English curriculum of secondary schools be taught and expanded at the university level to better prepare university graduates in English language to teach English language in secondary schools?

The results suggest that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and expanded at the university level to include courses that are relevant to the teaching of English language in secondary schools, such as English Language Teaching Methodology and Classroom Management.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that some courses offered at the department of English have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have underscored the mismatch between university education and secondary school teaching (Afolayan, 2014; Ogunsanwo, 2015). The study found that the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities are not fully aligned with the needs of secondary school teachers of English language. This finding is supported by Tyler (1949) who argued that the curriculum should be designed to meet the needs of the learners.

The study also found that secondary school teachers of English language face several challenges in preparing students for university-level English language courses, including inadequate teaching materials, large class sizes, lack of training and development, and poor student motivation. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the challenges faced by secondary school teachers of English language in Nigeria (Adeniyi, 2012; Bamgbose, 2001).

The study suggests that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be taught and expanded at the university level to include courses that are relevant to the teaching of English language in secondary schools, such as English Language Teaching Methodology and Classroom Management. This finding is supported by Adeyemi (2013) who argued that the English curriculum of secondary schools should be reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of the learners.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the need for a review of the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of secondary school teachers of English language. The study also highlights the need for adequate teaching materials, training and development, and motivation for secondary school teachers of English language.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have implications for English language education in Nigeria. The study highlights the need for a review of the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of secondary school

teachers of English language. The study also highlights the need for adequate teaching materials, training and development, and motivation for secondary school teachers of English language.

Future Research Directions

Further research should be conducted to investigate the impact of the reviewed curriculum on the teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools. Additionally, further research should be conducted to investigate the views of students on the effectiveness of English language courses in Nigerian universities.

Conclusion

The study investigated the implication of English language courses in Nigerian universities and the effectiveness of secondary school teachers of English language. The findings of the study revealed that some courses offered at the department of English have no relevance to the teaching of English language in secondary schools. The study also found that secondary school teachers of English language face several challenges in preparing students for university-level English language courses. The study concludes that there is a need for a review of the curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities to ensure that they are relevant to the needs of secondary school teachers of English language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The curriculum content and structure of English language courses in Nigerian universities should be reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of secondary school teachers of English language.
2. English language courses that are relevant to the teaching of English language in secondary schools, such as English Language Teaching Methodology and Classroom Management, should be included in the curriculum.
3. Secondary school teachers of English language should be provided with adequate teaching materials, training and development, and motivation to enhance their effectiveness in teaching English language.
4. The Nigerian government should invest in education by providing adequate funding for schools, training teachers, and providing teaching materials.
5. Further research should be conducted to investigate the impact of the reviewed curriculum on the teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools.

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