

Preservice Teachers' Perception of the Use of English Lecturers' Subject mastery and Teaching skills in Two Colleges of Education in Oyo State

Fatimah A. Ayankajo

Abstract

The study investigated pre-service teachers' perception of the effectiveness of their Use of English lecturers at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (special), Oyo, with respect to their subject mastery and teaching skill. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A total number of 314 pre-service teachers participated in the study from two purposively selected colleges of education in Oyo State. The instruments used were lecturers' subject mastery ($r=0.82$) and teaching skill ($r=0.86$) scales. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that the pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery as above average (2.97), but their teaching skill was low (2.26). It was recommended that colleges of education management boards should devise means of monitoring and ensuring effective teaching of Use of English by designated lecturers. Professional development needs of Use of English lecturers should be catered for by colleges of education management and other concerned stakeholders to boost their subject mastery and teaching skill.

Key words: Pre-service Teachers, Subject mastery, Teaching skill, Use of English of English

Introduction

English language plays significant roles in Nigeria Educational System. Advancements in almost every discipline necessitate proficiency in English language. This language is taught in nearly every country either as a first language (L1), as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) and people are motivated to learn it for different reasons. In Nigeria, English language is a second language (ESL) and it is taught at upper basic and senior secondary school levels as a compulsory subject. At higher institutions, apart from being the medium of instruction for most of the courses, English is taught as General English at all levels irrespective of students' course combination.

Agboola (2009) posited that while students at the secondary school level need English language as one of the subjects to be passed at credit level to enable them to secure admission into the tertiary institutions, students in universities, polytechnics and colleges of education also need English language in all they have to do and they have to register for, and pass Use of English (UOE) courses before they can graduate irrespective of their course of study. The importance of Use of English at tertiary institutions also premise on the fact that students need to do more independent studies on their own. Writing of essays and making good notes from textbooks essentially depend on a good knowledge of English language which a student has. At the end of the course, a student has to write a project, which has to be written in English language. And since English language is

the medium of instruction from primary four to the tertiary level, a student has to be proficient in it both orally and literally.

The foundational problem of poor performance in English language from primary and secondary to the tertiary institutions, especially the Colleges of Education, made the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) feels a need to introduce the General English/Use of English (UOE) among other General Studies courses into teacher training curriculum. This was to help students who are being trained as middle manpower in teacher education and primarily expected to acquire sound communicative skills as classroom practitioners. The Use of English (UOE) in colleges of education, as in the other tertiary institutions, is therefore a kind of remedy to poor English usage and it is expected to serve as an intervention strategy to aid students in both communicative competence and written form of English in order to facilitate their tasks in English and their areas of specialization (Agboola, 2009). Considering the objectives of the inclusion of Use of English (UOE) in the tertiary education, Onuukaogu (1994) posited that Use of English (UOE) is a compulsory skills course for Nigerian undergraduates. Its genesis is informed by the need to cater for the short and long term communication needs of Nigerian undergraduates since Nigerian Education system has English language as its medium of instruction. It is assumed by the originators of the programme that since Nigerian undergraduates are not native speakers of

English, they may not have the native speaker-like intuitive use of and or competence in English which they need for optimal and maximal learning in the tertiary institutions.

National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Minimum Standards for General Education stipulates the objectives of teaching General English as follows:

- i. a proficiency in the use of the English language for effective communication to enhance the study of other subjects and to promote professional competence;
- ii. the communicative competence needed for successful living in the tertiary institution environment. That is, the communicative competence he would need as an undergraduate to communicate with all the members, academic and non-academic, of his community;
- iii. the communicative competence he needs for receiving and giving information in his general and specialist field of learning; and
- iv. the communicative competence he needs on the completion of his studies to successfully and effectively perform his chosen career. (NCCE, 2013)

Still on the aims and objective of the inclusion of Use of English (UOE) in tertiary education in Nigeria, Afolayan (1984) and Agboola (2009) in their studies submitted that two broad aims underlie the need for Use of English (UOE). First it is to remedy the poor English language skills with which students from Nigerian secondary schools enter tertiary institutions. The second objective of the Use of English (UOE) curriculum is to enable the students to acquire a near native speaker-like intuitive use of and competence in English so that they can sufficiently cope with the language demands of learning in an English-medium tertiary institution. Thus, the Use of English (UOE) curriculum is expected to equip the students with the communication and study skills for both his specialist field and general education in the tertiary institution.

On the need for the Use of English (UOE) course in the Nigerian tertiary institutions, Banjo (1990) pointed out that in some countries, like United

State of America, Europe and the like, where English is the mother tongue, some need is felt to administer a Use of English (UOE) course, called Freshman English as a kind of linguistic booster for the task ahead. He therefore argued that in English as a second language situation like ours, the need is all the more urgent to assist students master this all important language. Banjo (1990) further added that the Use of English (UOE) course is relevant to tertiary institution students because every discipline has its own distinctive registers which may not have been adequately explored at the secondary school level.

As the Use of English (UOE) course is given a pride of place in Nigeria tertiary education system by the federal government, one would expect that all Nigerian graduates from any of the tertiary institutions, especially Colleges of Education where teacher-students communication in English language is germane, would be well grounded in their use of English. Unfortunately, revelations from the available studies (Afolayan 1984; Agboola, 2012;) show that some of the students who made a pass or credit grade in English language at the secondary level, find it difficult to perform well in oral and written communication in English in tertiary institutions and that invariably affect their performance in other courses. Malums (2009) also registers his concern that most of the language problems facing students at the tertiary level originated from the primary and secondary level and it is expected to be addressed with the Use of English (UOE) programme. But that has not been the case. This concern is also expressed by Agboola (2009) that students' exposure to all the English language skills – listening, speaking, reading writing, and even study skills through the Use of English (UOE) courses should help them in studying better. She, however, submitted that that is not so for now.

As compulsory as the subject is for graduation in higher institutions, reports have shown that pre-service teachers are deficient in it as revealed in their performance. The level of performance of the pre-service teachers in the Use of English has been found to be largely unsatisfactory. This is further attested to by results obtained in examinations in the Use of English in a colleges. The summary of final year pre-service teachers' result in the Use of English between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016 academic sessions in one of the colleges presented in table 1.1 attests to this:

Table 1.1: STATISTICS OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN GSE 321 (USE OF ENGLISH), FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION OYO (2011-2016)

S/N	SESSION	TOTAL REGISTERED	TOTAL PASSES	%	TOTAL FAILURE	%
1	2011/2012	2662	2050	77.01	612	22.99
2	2012/2013	2555	2026	79.30	529	20.70
3	2013/2014	2578	1867	72.42	711	27.58
4	2014/2015	2420	1940	80.17	480	19.83
5	2015/2016	2662	2303	86.51	359	13.49

Source: Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Certificate, Verification, and Statistics Unit (2017)

The pre-service teachers' achievement in the Use of English as shown in Table 1.1 covers the whole schools in FCE(s) Oyo. In 2011/2012 academic session, result revealed that out of 2662 students that registered and sat for the GSE321 examination, 2050 (77.01%) students passed while 612 (22.99%) failed the examination. While 2555 students registered for, and attempted the GSE321 examination in 2012/2013 academic session, 2026 of them, representing 79.30%, passed the examination and 529 (20.70%) failed. Also in 2013/2014 academic session, result revealed that out of 2578 students that registered for, and attempted the Use of English examination, 72.42% (1867) of the total students passed the examination while 27.58% (711) of the candidates failed the examination. 480 (19.83%) students failed the Use of English paper in 2014/2015 academic session, while 1940 (80.17%) candidates passed the examination out of the 2420 students that registered and sat for the examination. Result also revealed that out of 2662 students that registered and sat for the GSE321 examination, 2303 (86.51%) students passed while 359 (22.99%) students failed the examination. The statistics of the Use of English results presented above show that in the five (5) academic sessions covered by the results, an average of 15% of the final year pre-service teachers failed GSE321 (Use of English) examination which is part of the requirement for graduation. Invariably, therefore, owing to failure in the Use of English, students who failed to graduate from FCE(s) amounted to 612 (22.99%) in 2011/2012 academic session, 529 (20.70%) in 2012/2013 academic session, 711 (27.58%) in 2013/2014 academic session, 480 (19.83%) in

2014/2015 academic session, and 359 (13.49%) in 2015/2016 academic session. From the analysis of this table, it shows that pre-service teachers' performance in Use of English courses is poor and if this trend continues it means that the objective of including use of English in college of education curriculum is not being achieved. Meanwhile to be able to achieve this objective, the quality of the teacher matters and this leads to the question of teacher effectiveness in the teaching and learning of use of English in colleges of education.

Effective teaching is a term synonymous with teacher effectiveness. Teaching effectiveness has been accepted as a multidimensional construct since it measures a variety of different aspects of teaching such as; subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and the like (Onyeachu, 1996). Afe (2003) defined effective teaching as the type of teaching characterized by the exhibition of intellectual, social and emotional stability, love for children and positive disposition towards the teaching profession and ability to inspire good qualities in students. It was also defined by Vogt (1984) as the ability of instruction to inspire students of different abilities while incorporating instructional objectives and assessing the effective learning mode of the students.

According to Evans (2006), teaching effectiveness is a measure of the extent of realization of the instructional objectives. It is a net growth in intellectual aptitude and skills as measured by students' achievements. Omoifo and Urevbu (2007) see effective teaching as the use of clearly formulated objectives by the teacher, illustrated instruction that will enable students to acquire desired knowledge

content, apply the knowledge to classroom and other related problem, think and take independent decision and the use of effective evaluation technique by the teacher. Rohwer (2001) on his own defines teacher's effectiveness as the extent to which the teacher analysis the task at hand, assess the learners, plans his lessons, instructs the learners and evaluate the extent of success of his lessons. Akomolefe (2010) identified the characteristics of effective teaching to include: attention on students achievement, quality teaching responsive to students learning processes, effective and efficient learning opportunities, pedagogical practices that create cohesive learning communities, effective links between school and cultural context of the school, multiple tasks to support learning cycles, aligned curriculum goal effectively, pedagogy scaffolds feedback on students' task engagement among others.

Darling-Hammond (2010) defined an effective teacher as one who is intellectually challenging, motivating students, setting high standards and encourages self-initiating learning. Adegbile (2008) described an effective teacher as efficient, reliable and courteously equipped with professionalism, creative in imagination, bustling ingenuity and depth of experience necessary for optimal performance and the achievement of goals. He further maintained that the teacher as a good manager of instruction should be able to utilize appropriate techniques to gain and maintain the attention of students. An effective teacher should be able to display requisite pedagogical insight and professional qualities and utilize same to guide the teaching/learning process to the point of achieving stated educational objectives. In the words of Stronge, Ward and Grant (2011) effective teachers are very important for students learning. They however submitted that teachers' effectiveness is difficult to define since there has not been a consensus agreement on what measured quality teacher. However, it is possible to measure some teachers' attribute like interaction with student, teaching strategy, motivation, pedagogical content knowledge and classroom management through qualitative research approach. These teachers' attributes could act in a long way to determine teachers' effectiveness.

Stronge, Ward and Grant (2011) avers that an effective language teacher should be principled, knowledgeable and skillful; his/her professional needs must change over time and develop during his/her teaching and he/she must be personally

committed to his/her professional development. Vadilio (1999) argues that effective language teachers should have a profound competence in the target language and a set of personal qualities such as sensitivity, tolerance and warmth. Meanwhile for the purpose of this study, the teacher effectiveness variables of interest are subject mastery, pedagogical content knowledge, teaching skills, and classroom management skill.

Fennema and Frank (1992) agreed that teacher's knowledge of the subject matter is an indicator of teachers' teaching effectiveness. Also, Kimberly (2009) stated that teachers must be knowledgeable in their area of study. This was corroborated in Fakeye (2012) as he posited that in truth, if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes right out the window. Hence, effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teachers' subject matter competence which Mullens (1993) regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning. Anderson (1991) opined that the teacher must possess the knowledge and skills needed to attain the goal of teaching English language and must be able to use that knowledge and skills if the goals are to be achieved. It has been established that there is a high correlation between what teachers know and what they teach. Thus, the ability to teach effectively depends on the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter. Teachers are handicapped if they are unfamiliar with the body of knowledge taught and teachers' characteristics is subject specific. Adediwura and Bada (2007) stated in their study that nobody could teach what he does not understand or know. They went further to state that they (teachers) must thoroughly understand the content of what they teach. A teacher whose understanding of topic is thorough uses clearer language, their discourse is more connected, and they provide better explanations than those whose background is weaker. The way the students perceive the teaching in terms of their (teachers') knowledge of content of subject matter may significantly affect the students' academic performance. Because of this, the teacher should therefore master the subject matter before teaching commences. Huckstep, Rowland, and Thwaites (2003) in their finding on importance of mathematics teachers' knowledge of subject contents, affirm that effective teaching that can lead to better achievement by the students and provide a positive attitude depends on teachers' confidence and in-depth knowledge of the subject matter.

The lecturers' teaching skill is also one of the variables of interest in the functionality of Use of English (UOE) programme in Colleges of Education. In Okonkwo and Okpara (1991), it was stated that competent teaching is a compound of four elements, namely: a broad, general and liberal education, a sound knowledge of the subject matter, a sound pedagogy and educational literature and a sound reflective practical experience. In accordance with the above, Eggen (2001) pointed out that in selecting teaching strategies, the teachers of Use of English (UOE) have a role to play because the teachers themselves are one of the most important factors influencing the questions on how to teach. Kagan (1992) noted that how one teaches depends, to a large extent, on how he/she is. The learning objectives that are selected, the strategies that are employed to teach the objectives and the way that relates to students all depend on what we bring to the classroom as human beings.

On the choice of strategies as a major variable affecting effective teaching of Use of English (UOE) in Colleges of Education, Banks (2001) posited that students and the topics to be taught must be considered. The reason for this, in the words of Bank (2001), is that different subjects have different objective likewise different student with different background. So the right strategy has to be chosen for the right subject to realize its objectives. The essence of this is that combination of strategies and not a single one might be needed to teach a particular subject in order to meet the needs of different students with diverse background. From the foregoing, it is imperative, therefore, that strategies being employed by Colleges of Education lecturers in teaching Use of English (UOE) as well as realizing its objectives be investigated with a view to enhancing and improving the programme as a whole.

Meanwhile, studies have been carried out on the teaching of Use of English (UOE) in tertiary institutions. For instance, Onukaogu (1994) researched into how the teacher had been a factor in the Use of English (UOE) programme in a Nigerian University. Jibowo (1997) also evaluated the Use of English (UOE) programme at the university level using the performance of graduates in comprehension and note-taking academic tasks. Olasheinde (2001) evaluated the English component of the General Studies (GNS) curriculum in Nigerian Polytechnics with emphasis on the

National Diploma (ND). Also, the study of Agbooola (2009) centered on the evaluation of the Use of English (UOE) programme in Polytechnics in Southwestern Nigeria. However, none of the studies available to the researcher has investigated pre-service teachers' perception of their Use of English Lecturers with respect to their subject mastery and teaching skills in colleges of education in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) introduced the General English/Use of English (UOE) among other General Studies courses into teacher training curriculum to equip pre-service teachers with the skills of language and communication that will be useful for them in their academic and teaching practices. For this objective to be achieved, Use of English teachers' effectiveness is very important. Also, for teaching-learning activities to go on well, students must have a positive perception of their teachers in the areas of their classroom practices. However, available reports have shown that a significant percentage of colleges of education students found it challenging to pass Use of English Courses which has contributed to some of them not graduating in time.

In an attempt to improve students' performance in Use of English courses, studies have been carried out on the teaching of Use of English (UOE) in tertiary institutions. Available studies on the Use of English (UOE) programme in tertiary institutions have focused on the evaluation of the lecturers' classroom practices, as well as students and content factors in relation to effective teaching of Use of English (UOE) courses but students' perception of the effectiveness of their Use of English (UOE) lecturers at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (special), Oyo has not been substantially addressed in any study. Therefore this study investigated pre-service teachers' perception of their Use of English lecturers subject mastery and teaching skill at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo both in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following questions:

1. What is the perception of Pre-service teachers

of subject mastery of their Use of English lecturers?

2. What is the perception of Pre-service teachers of subject mastery of their Use of English lecturers?

Scope of the Study

This study investigated the Pre-service teachers' perception of their Use of English (UOE) lecturers subject mastery and teaching skill. The study covered 200 level pre-service teachers from two Colleges of Education in Oyo State namely, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (special), Oyo.

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study have revealed pre-service teachers' perception of Use of English lecturers' subject mastery and teaching skill. It will also provide a valuable evaluation feedback to the Colleges of Education Management on the criterion to be used for promotion of lecturers. Finally, findings from this study will add to the pool of studies being carried out to improve the teaching and learning of English language in general and the Use of English teaching at Colleges of Education in part ular.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. The population of the study comprised all pre-service teachers in Oyo State Colleges of Education. Two colleges of education situated in Oyo Township namely: Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, were purposively selected for the study. These colleges were selected because they are public and they have been in existence for a long time. All 200 level pre-service teachers in the two selected Colleges of Education participated in the study. In all, a total of 314 pre-service teachers participated in the study. The instrument used for data collection for this study were lecturers' Subject Mastery ($r=0.82$) and Teaching Skill ($r=0.86$). The researcher with the assistance of two other research assistants observed the Use of English lecturers while teaching and measured their subject mastery and teaching skill in the process of lesson delivery. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and standard deviation

Results

Research question 1: What is the perception of pre-service teachers of their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery?

Table 1: Perception of Pre-Service Teachers of their Use of English Lecturers' subject mastery
N=314

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.
	Subject Mastery						
1.	The Use of English lecturer has a good knowledge of the concepts taught.	139 44.3%	121 38.5%	34 10.8%	20 6.4%	3.21	.875
2.	The Use of English lecturer often demonstrates mastery of the concepts taught.	109 34.7%	168 53.5%	32 10.2%	5 1.6%	3.21	.685
3.	The Use of English lecturer does use relevant examples and illustrations.	67 21.3%	113 36.0%	73 23.2%	61 19.4%	2.59	1.030
4.	The Use of English lecturer explains concepts and terms very clearly.	91 29.0%	88 28.0%	80 25.5%	55 17.5%	2.68	1.072
5.	The Use of English lecturer often uses facts with evidence to make the lesson more understandable.	121 38.5%	146 46.5%	22 7.0%	25 8.0%	3.16	.867
Weighted Mean = 2.97							

Table one revealed the perception of pre-service teachers of the subject mastery of their Use of English lecturers **the Use of English lecturer:** mastery of the concepts taught (3.21), use facts with evidence to make the lesson more understandable (3.16), make some concepts clearer and memorable (2.91), knowledge of the course (2.67). The weighted

mean is 2.97 which indicates that the teachers have above average mastery of the course they teach.

Research question 2: What is the perception of pre-service teachers of their Use of English lecturers

Table 1: Perception of Pre-Service Teachers of their Use of English Lecturers' Teaching Skill

	Teaching Skills						
1.	The Use of English lecturer often makes use of relevant and appropriate teaching aids while explaining some concepts.	51 16.2 %	67 21.3 %	93 29.6 %	103 32.8 %	2.21	1.073
2.	The Use of English lecturer uses appropriate techniques to make students actively engaged in the lesson.	71 22.6 %	75 23.9 %	96 30.6 %	72 22.9 %	2.46	1.078
3.	Students are often made to participate actively during lesson by the Use of English lecturer.	41 13.1 %	102 32.5 %	138 43.9 %	33 10.5 %	2.48	.850
4.	The Use of English lecturer often factors learners' ability into classroom activities.	51 16.2 %	67 21.3 %	114 36.3 %	82 26.1 %	2.28	1.025
5.	The Use of English lecturer has good communication skills which often aids our understanding of the lessons.	60 19.1 %	89 28.3 %	122 38.9 %	43 13.7 %	2.53	.953
Weighted Mean = 2.39							
Cumulative Weighted Mean = 2.26							

Table 2 reveals that the Use of English lecturer often makes use of relevant instances and personal experiences while teaching (2.61), The Use of English lecturer does use relevant examples and illustrations (2.59), The Use of English lecturer has good communication skills which often aids our understanding of the lessons (2.53), Students are often made to participate actively during lesson by the Use of English lecturer (2.48), The Use of English lecturer uses appropriate techniques to make students actively engaged in the lesson (2.46), The Use of English lecturer makes the classroom educative and entertaining (2.36), The Use of English lecturer often factors learners' ability into classroom activities (2.28), The Use of English lecturer often makes use of relevant and appropriate teaching aids while explaining some concepts (2.21), The Use of English lecturer puts up confidence and positive attitudes in the classroom (2.18), The Use of English lecturer often makes the classroom interactive (2.13). The weighted mean of 2.26 confirms that the teaching skill rating of the Use of English lecturers is low.

Discussion of Findings

Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of their Use of English Lecturers' Subject mastery

Findings from the study revealed that pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers subject mastery as above average. This might not be unconnected with the fact that Use of English lecturers in Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education

(special), Oyo are qualified as many of them have relevant higher degrees in addition to their first degree qualifications. Also, they are professional teachers having minimum of NCE in Education. This finding corroborates that of Agboola (2004) who found that Use of English lecturers at Polytechnics in South West Nigeria have sound subject mastery in the teaching of Use of English. This finding affirms Fakeye (2012) where it was posited that in truth, if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes right out the window.

Pre-Service Teachers' Perception of their Use of English Lecturers' Teaching Skill

Findings revealed that pre-service teachers' perception of the teaching skills of their Use of English lecturers was low. This might not be unconnected with the fact that Use of English lecturers are not exposed to research studies on modern and effective teaching techniques and strategies and that General Studies classroom are usually overcrowded with ineffective means of teacher-students' communication. This finding on the level of Use of English lecturers' teaching skills is in line with the study of Lasisi (2017) who found that English language teachers in selected secondary schools in Oyo Township are not utilising the teaching strategies and techniques they were aware of in teaching different aspects of English language.

Summary of Findings

The study investigated pre-service teachers'

perception of the effectiveness of their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery and teaching skill at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that:

The pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery as being above average. The pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers' teaching skill as below average.

Conclusion

This study investigated pre-service teachers' perception of the effectiveness of their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery and teaching skill at Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo and Federal College of Education (special), Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria. Findings from this study revealed that pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers' subject mastery as being above average. It was revealed also that pre-service teachers perceived their Use of English lecturers' teaching

skill as low. It can be concluded from the study, therefore, that pre-service teachers' perception of the effectiveness of their Use of English lecturers could serve as a positive feedback mechanism to the lecturers and the College Management.

Recommendations

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

1. Colleges of education management should device means of monitoring and ensuring effective teaching of Use of English by designated lecturers.
2. Professional development needs of Use of English lecturers should be catered for by Colleges of education management and other concerned stakeholders.
3. Seminars and academic conferences aimed at boosting subject mastery and teaching skill.