

Factors Responsible Non-Utilisation of Research in English Language Teaching: The Perspectives of English Language Teachers in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the perception of English language teachers on the factors responsible for non-utilisation of research findings that would have initiated positive changes in English language learners. 200 English language teachers were involved in the study and forty school administrators sampled through purposive sampling. Two hundred and thirty-two teachers participated in the study. The research instruments used for the study was a questionnaire of four-point Likert scale ($r=0.81$). Three research questions were answered. Findings revealed that teachers did not utilize research. It was also found that gender and teaching experience had no significant relationship with teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that there should be a link between classroom teaching and learning and research findings in the nation's ivory tower; and that a section of the Ministry of Education be responsible for such link.

Keywords: Non-utilisation of research, English Language teaching, Perception, Factors

Introduction

English language which is Nigeria's lingua franca is not only very important in commerce and administration, it is also important in classroom teaching and learning as it forms the core of most classroom communication and interactions. The facts that most communication is done in English language as it the lingua franca of the Country and most external examinations are conducted in the same language make it very important for stakeholders to look for avenue of encouraging maximum performance of learners in the subject. For the singular fact that almost all school subjects are conducted in English makes the language occupy a more important place in school teaching and learning. For a positive learning outcome in learners and an overall improvement in education as it is the major key to most of other school subjects. It is also the medium through which students express their opinion on issues relating to learners' comprehension of what is being taught at school that thus assist that to measure their level of coping with classroom teaching and learning most of the time. The essence of research is to bring an overall improvement in learners' performance in school. The extent to which such improvement is encourages depends on the amount of research findings that are utilized in classroom teaching and learning as the essence of such research is overall improvement in school academic activities

A lot of efforts have been made in the past to improve the quality of teaching and learning of English and scale up students' learning outcomes. It is found in several research efforts of scholars. Studies

are therefore carried out from time to time on English language like other school subjects as well as on methods and strategies in an attempt to bring general improvement in school teaching and learning. These include Ralph (2016) who among other examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning strategies. Stephenson (2015) examined the role of Meta cognition in second language teaching and learning. While William (2017) carried out a study on an intervention for helping elementary students to reduce test anxiety. Samuel (2012) focused on enhancing the emotional, social, and academic learning with heart rhythm coherence feedback. And Aggarawal (2012) carried out a study on the influence of home environment on children; scholastic achievement. The essence of these studies and many more is to bring a general improvement on learners' learning outcome and so address the outcry of the public on falling standard of Nigerian education.

Despite all these attempts, it seems there has not been much noticeable improvement in students' performance in English as a second language as well as other school subjects in the country. This is noticeable in the fact that there is no correspondent positive change in learners' performance in external examinations. This fact was attested to by Anderson (2016:32) when he said, there have been hues and cries concerning the poor performance of students at the secondary school and colleges of education level several years after these studies in which some of the postgraduate students have reported that they had used strategies that could facilitate better students' performance in those subjects and courses. He went

on to assert that these hues and cries reflect the poor students' achievement that has become the order of the day in primary and secondary schools around us because the methods or strategies experimented upon and which they claimed had led to improve students' gain or achievement in specific subject matter of the researchers are not being actively used by secondary school teachers and some lectures in Colleges of Education due to reasons that are not clear. The fact remains that the interventions tested through research findings through the use of learning strategies and pedagogical methods hardly find their ways to English language teachers that operate in primary and secondary schools. The gap therefore created remains how can the result of these studies be maximally utilized by classroom teachers who are supposed to be a link between the studies and the school setting. Therefore, not until the result of the studies are appropriately utilized by classroom teachers can any meaningful result be expected and the present hues and cries about fall in the standard of education become a thing of the past. As the ability to converse fluently in English is a measure of one's education.

The problem of most of these researches is found in the fact that their results hardly go beyond the four walls of the universities and other institutions where they are carried out. This is because the methods and or strategies experimented upon and which they claimed has led to their improved students' academic achievement in specific subject matter of the researchers are not being actively used by secondary school teachers where such research findings can make much impact. In most cases, the result of such studies does not go beyond the presentation by the postgraduate students at post field seminars. The positive changes that would have been the result of the continuous researches have therefore become a mirage, far from being real. In spite of their research findings which indicate the possible effectiveness of such strategies and methods, the non-application of such to real classroom practices create a wide gap between the studies and school academic achievement.

The apathy that English language teachers have to research findings is traceable to a combination of factors such as: non-awareness of the existence of such findings, school administrators' non supports as well as government's inability to disseminate research findings appropriately to teachers and so there is no means of encouraging them to develop interest in utilising them in their classroom practice. Researchers over the years have called for ways and

means of bridging the gap between research in the universities and actual practices in education (Ogundare, 2006, Ojo 2010 and Ayodabo, 2011). It is not an over statement that thousands of studies go on within the four walls of universities every year but their results are hardly utilised in teachers' classroom practices. Indeed Baldin (2013) summarized that there are well over 800 published research findings in the education setting in the country that are needed to be addressed to meet the challenges of the 21st century teaching and learning. The fact, however remains that despite the efforts of these researchers in terms of time and cost, there is hardly anything to show forth for their efforts as the result of their findings are not utilised in the classroom.

There is the fact that teachers are mostly unaware of research findings, let alone of using them. The essence of most of these research findings is to improve teaching and learning with an overall goal of general improvement in learners' performance as well as in the nation's education. Events over the years as a classroom teacher is a pointer to the fact that not much has been achieved in the bid to ring about general improvement in learners' performance in schools through the studies and research findings. In line with similar studies, Osuala (2004), Ajayi (2002), Awotunde (2014) confirmed that concerted efforts must be made to link research findings in the Nigerian education system with curriculum implementation in the classroom setting if meaningful improvement is expected in Nigeria's education. Only effective utilisation of the results of research findings at the appropriate levels of Nigerian education will encourage positive changes in the education of the country. The present outcry by stakeholders of rapid fall in the standard of Nigerian education can only be properly addressed through a prompt recourse to the utilisation of the findings of researches. As Anderson (2016) concludes that the present situation of teachers' non utilisation of research findings cannot be allowed to remain unchallenged, if meaningful positive impact is to be effected on learners' learning outcome. Teachers will need to make use of research findings in their classroom practices to effect clear cut changes in the attitude and academic achievement of students. It is not enough to seek for alternative methods and strategies through which learning can be improved as found in studies and research alone only when teachers utilise them in their classroom teaching and learning can meaningful achievement be made and the goal of carrying out such research achieved.

It is a common observation that utilisation of

research findings is generally not of high priority within the secondary school education level especially in Africa (Adedoyin, 2015). However, there is a growing awareness among educationists that only through a strong union between research findings and other educational institutions could the results of such findings be meaningful. The need to acquire knowledge that will encourage a general improvement of the school system calls for a need to earnest the findings of researches in the universities setting in school where teaching and learning as well as curriculum implementation take place. The quality of teaching and learning in the course of curriculum improvement sustained through proper link between research findings will be harmoniously utilised. Therefore, classroom teachers that are in charge of curriculum implementation in schools should have firsthand information about current research findings to improve their classroom teaching and learning and as well utilise them appropriately. It is not out of place to express the fact that teachers themselves have an important role to play in conducting and evaluating research. In fact, Ellis (2013) emphasized the need for teachers to be well grounded in research in view of the constant changes in the world in terms of knowledge that is not static and pedagogy that change from time to time.

Ajala (2013) outlines these benefits inherent in classroom teachers making use of research findings. It assists teachers to reflect more deeply. It encourages a wide perspective. It forms a valuable source of professional development. It provides insights to the most effective teaching strategies that can be adopted to improve teaching. It provides a framework to develop teaching strategy. It gives teachers confidence to implement new approaches. It provides new and innovative ideas to inform teaching and learning. At the receiving end, it is also beneficial to the learners that it assists the teacher to create more varied or innovative lessons. Learners find lessons more interesting and engaging when learning strategies and pedagogical methods are experimented on. It encourages in learners improved attitude and attainment. Appropriate utilisation of research findings is also beneficial on the school culture in that it creates and contributes to an ethos of continuous learning, enquiry and improvement within school. It leads to a culture of innovation, open mindedness and risk taking among staff. It contributes to a culture of positive interaction. It encourages schools to become more outward looking and seek opportunities to create external partnership with people and institution beyond the four walls of the school.

As novel as research findings would have been in the overall development of education in Nigeria, reports have shown that English language teachers hardly utilise them in their classroom implementation of the curriculum. Freeman (2013) came up with some explanations of the refusal of most teachers in adopting research findings to their teaching in the classroom. Among other, he identified the following: the risk associated with experimentation, lack of knowledge of where to go and find research evidence as many do not have access to academic journals. Research is not taken as a priority by many teachers. At times, there is the lack of subject specific research. Gap of most researches or conflict between research and what is actually on ground in schools that often lead to confusion. Skepticism of some teachers about academic research. Cost of assessing research findings at times constitutes a problem as it is costly. Lack of maturation in making use of research findings as the required knowledge and skills required for proper utilisation may not be found in most teachers. Poor remuneration of teachers in the country causes low morale that is not likely to encourage utilising research findings that may be challenging and will require extra efforts.

Statement of the problem

Different researches have been carried out on improving the performance of students in different school subjects including English language in Nigerian tertiary institutions. However, there is no clear-cut indication of outstanding improvement of students in terms of their academic achievement and attitude to English language. The question is what could have been the reasons for this. Previous studies focused largely on teachers awareness of research findings without adequate attention to factors responsible for non-utilisation of research. This study, therefore, sought the perception of English language teachers in Ibadan on the factors responsible for non-utilisation of research findings that would have improved English language classroom practices.

Research questions

1. What is teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as second language?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' gender and perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as a second language?

3. What is the relationship between teachers' years of teaching experience and perception of factors for non utilisation of research findings in English as a second language?

40 school administrators. Forty English language teachers were selected from each of the five (5) education zones to which the local government area is divided.

The research instruments used for the study was a questionnaire of four-point Likert scale type ($r=0.81$). The data collected for this study were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation. The oral interview was appropriately recorded and transcribed for content analysis.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of *ex post facto* type. The study population comprised all English language teachers teaching English language in public secondary schools in Akoko North West, Nigeria. The respondents were 200 English Language teachers and

Results

Research Question 1: What is English language teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as second language?

Table 1: Teachers' Perception of factors for non-utilisation of Research Findings

S/N	Item	SD %	D %	A %	SA %	X Mean	SD
1	Teachers feel inadequate to make use of research findings due to their limited knowledge of research activities	32 16.0	41 20.5	102 51.0	25 12.5	2.60	.90
2	Teachers often believe that literature reports conflicts with research findings	43 21.5	49 24.5	82 41.0	26 13.0	2.46	.97
3	They have enough authority to implement research findings during teaching	66 33.0	49 24.5	55 27.5	30 15.0	2.25	1.07
4	Teachers do not feel adequately obliged to use research findings	59 29.5	57 28.5	61 30.5	23 11.5	2.24	1.00
5	Unwillingness on the part of teachers to make use of research findings	21 10.5	13 6.5	79 39.5	87 43.5	3.16	.95
6	School facilities inadequate for implementation of most research findings	49 24.5	45 22.5	82 41.0	24 12.0	2.40	.98
7	There is insufficient time in the school time table to appropriately accommodate most research findings	25 12.5	14 7.0	96 48.0	65 32.5	3.01	.95
8	Most teachers are unwilling to try new ideas based on research findings	38 19.0	65 32.5	51 25.5	46 23.0	2.53	1.05
9	No clear-cut idea of research findings helping to improve teachers; teaching skills	36 18.0	18 9.0	78 39.0	68 34.0	2.89	1.07
10	Most research findings have no direct relevance to teachers; classroom practice	66 33.0	42 21.0	64 32.0	28 14.0	2.27	1.07
11	Teachers lack adequate knowledge of using research findings in their classroom practices	66 33.0	83 41.5	29 14.5	22 11.0	2.03	.96
12	Teachers perceive that research reports are not pipes in line for teachers use in the classroom	51 25.5	31 15.5	88 44.0	30 15.0	2.45	1.03

Table 1 above on English language teachers' perception of the causes of non-utilization of research findings revealed that there were series of factors that are responsible. There is the general unwillingness on the part of most English language teachers to adopt and utilize the result of research findings. The fact that there is no sufficient time in the school time table has the highest responses of 3.01. They also perceived that most English language teachers had no clear cut idea of such research findings with a mean score of 2.89. And that most English language teachers felt that they do not have sufficient

knowledge to effectively utilise the result of research findings. Most teachers the study revealed are scare of changes and so are more willing to stick to their old methods than adapting any research findings with a mean score of 2.53. Others have moderate positive responses.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as a second language and teachers' gender?

Table 2: PPMC showing relationship between Teachers' perceptions of factors for non-utilisation of Research Findings in English language and Teachers' Gender

Variable	Mean	Std dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Perception of factors for non-utilisation	75.3750	14.7786	200	.183*	.000	Sig
Gender	01.4500	0.50				

*Sig at .05 level

Table .2 showed that there was a positive significant relationship between Teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as a second language and teachers' gender (r = 0.18).

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between teachers' perception of factors for non utilisation of research findings in English as a second language and teachers' years of experience?

Table 3: PPMC showing significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as a second language and teachers' years of experience.

Variable	Mean	Std dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Perception of factors for non-utilisation	75.3750	14.7786	200	.011*	.877	N.S
Years of experience	7.5100	20.9021				

Table 3 showed that there was no significant relationship between teachers' perception of factors for non-utilisation of research findings in English as second language and teachers' years of experience.

Discussion of Findings

Teachers often believe that literature reports at times conflicts with research findings. Sometimes, what teachers read in literature are in conflict with what they come across in research findings. Teachers do not feel they have enough authority to implement research findings during teaching. It is the belief of many teachers that there are some technicalities that make them unable to successfully implements research findings. Unwillingness on the part of teachers to make use of research findings. The study revealed that some teachers are hooked to their old styles and so are very adamant to changes often put forward through research findings. School facilities are inadequate for the implementation of most research findings. Most public schools and some private schools are not well equipped with facilities

that will encourage the implementation and utilisation of research findings. There is insufficient time in the school timetable to appropriately accommodate most research findings. Most school's timetables appropriate forty minutes or one hour for the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom at that level of Nigerian education.

Most research findings have no direct relevance to teachers' classroom practices. The study revealed that most teachers that are familiar with research findings do not see any direct link between some of the research findings and their classroom practices. The study revealed that teachers perceive that research reports are not published in time for teachers' use in the classroom. Most research reports are most times not prompt enough to meet the need of classroom teachers.

The study revealed that there was significant positive relationship between teachers' gender and their perception of non utilisation of research findings. The study revealed that there was significant relationship between teachers' teaching experience and their perception of factors for non utilisation of research findings. These findings agree with those of Baldwin (2013), Awotunde (2014), Ajayi, (2015) and Anderson (2017) who in separate studies reported that teachers claimed that lack of fund and inadequate time on the time-table prevented teachers from utilizing research.

Recommendations

Teachers should be encouraged to utilise research findings by school administrators creating enabling environment for maximally utilising research findings. School timetable too needs to be adjusted to support teachers' utilisation of research findings. It is also recommended that language teachers should have access to research findings through government setting aside certain amount for each teacher to purchase publications where research findings are reported. In-service training should be encouraged in teachers to get them aware of current research findings as well as their values to classroom teaching and learning. The technical aspects of research findings should be adequately addressed in term of technical languages and statistics that are often involved in reporting research findings. As such, research findings should be reported using ordinary day language so that teachers will be able to comprehend and utilise such with little or no problem. It also recommended that all teachers are supplied with mini computers with internet facilities. Internet facilities centres should be established in each school where teachers are assisted to carry out e-learning and have first-hand contact with the latest research findings. Above all, it is recommended that teachers that are found involved in the utilisation of research finding with positive results on learners' learning outcome should be appropriately identified and compensated to encourage others that involve in non-utilisation of research.

Conclusion

The study showed that 85% of teachers involved in the study agreed with a number of factors that combine to explain teachers' perception of their non-utilisation of research findings in English as a second language. These findings also showed that gender is a strong factor in using research findings in improving classroom teaching and learning in

English as a second language. Also teachers' teaching experience is not a strong factor to determine non-utilisation of research findings. It could be concluded from the study that for teachers to positively utilise the results of research findings, those factors identified as the brain behind their non-utilisation need to be addressed and reduced to the barest minimum.

Recommendation

There should be a link between classroom teaching and learning and research findings in the nation's ivory tower, and that a section of the Ministry of Education be responsible for such link.

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