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KIDNAPPING AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABAKALIKI EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the Kidnapping and English Language Teaching: Problems and Prospects among Senior Secondary School Students in Abakaliki Education zone. Two specific purposes and two research questions guided the study. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The Population of the study comprised 207 Secondary schools English Language Teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone. The whole population was used as the sample size for the study because the sample size is manageable. The instrument for the study was a researcher developed questionnaire tagged "Kidnapping and English Language Teaching: Problems and Prospects among Senior Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (KELTPPSSSQ). The instrument was face validated by three experts with a reliability index of 0.85. The data collected for the study were analyzed using mean(x) and standard deviation (SD) to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the high hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that: difficult for English language students to focus on English language instruction, missing of essential English language lessons, diminishing of students motivation to learn English, decline in English language proficiency and the hindering of implementation of comprehensive language teaching strategies are ways kidnapping affect English Language Teaching and that the incorporate difference's themes on kidnapping in comprehension passage, employing of different sentential examples on English grammar that add safety measures on avoiding issues on kidnapping and bringing in writing on different topics on essay writing on kidnapping and precautionary measures are the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. Based on the findings the study recommended that: Government should provide adequate instructional materials and provide adequate security for the protection of lives and properties and also come up with a proactive information gathering system so as get relevant information that would help in nipping security breach in the bud.

Keyword: Kidnapping, English Language, Teaching, Problems, Prospects, Senior Secondary School Students

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Introduction

English language as a subject refers to the study and exploration of the English language itself. It involves learning about its grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, writing skills, reading comprehension, and communication skills in both oral and written forms (Andrews, 2020). English language as a subject focus on developing students' abilities to effectively use and understand the English language in various contexts, such as personal, academic, and professional settings. It also includes the study of literature, literary analysis, and critical thinking skills related to English literature. The subject aims to enhance students' language proficiency, communication skills, and overall understanding and appreciation of the English language (Ajibola, 2021). The English language is a widely spoken language that originated in England and is now used as a global lingua franca. It is the official language of several countries and is often used second language by many individuals worldwide. English is a West Germanic language, belonging to the Indo-European language family. It has a complex history and has been influenced by various languages, such as Latin, French, and German.

As a result, it has a vast vocabulary and diverse grammar rules. English is known for its flexibility and adaptability, allowing it to evolve and incorporate new words and expressions from different cultures and fields. It is constantly changing and has many regional variations, such as British English, American English, Australian English, and others. The English language is used in various domains, including education, business, science, technology, entertainment, and diplomacy. It serves as a common means of communication among people of different nationalities and backgrounds. Language skills in English encompass reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Proficiency in the English language can open up a wide range of opportunities, such as better job prospects, access to higher education, and the ability to communicate with a global community.

The teaching and learning of English language since the colonial era until about the mid-1980s were greatly characterized by understanding and competence, both at the levels of academic performance and communication. This was perhaps due to the importance attached to the language as one for official transactions and a tool for functioning beyond one's immediate environment. It also proved instrumental in getting a good job at the time. Additionally, English was mastered by its users in the mass media, government administration and even in social interactions. This was the time when even primary school leavers could communicate clearly in the language, and secondary school graduates could perform well with their writing skill. Sadly, the last years have witnessed a turnaround in the quality of English language teaching and learning due to the incessant increase in kidnapping and the situation has worsened so much that the failure rate of the English language in secondary school examinations has become disturbing.

Kidnapping is the act of seizing and detaining or carrying away of person by unlawful force for ransom Uzorma and Nwanegbu-Ben

(2020). The implication is that kidnapping involves the unlawful seizure and carrying away of individuals. Kidnapping cases usually involve a wide range of people, ranging from facility workers, foreign nationals, school children, school staff, individuals up to Royal fathers and business men. Within the context of this study, kidnapping is conceptualized as the seizing, carrying away and detention of school children by unauthorized person for any reason. The issue of kidnapping however gained its early prominence in England when kids were abducted, hence the name kidnap (Hearst, 2018). The word kidnapping thereby culminated from the phrase "kid nabbing" and was first recorded in the year 1673. In fact, over the years, it has taken different forms with regard to the reason or reasons for carrying out such action by perpetrators.

In Nigeria, there is the growing concern over the rising incidents of kidnapping in schools and other locations in the country. According to Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2021), Nigeria records over 1000 cases of kidnapping annually. Shuaibu, Salleh and Shehu (2019) reported the kidnapping of 250 female students from Government Secondary School, Chibok, Bornu State by Boko Haram Insurgents in 2014. At the moment, only 151 of the girls have been released, while 125 still remain in captivity. In another incidents, 3 students, 3 female supervisors, 1 female cook and a female Zurkish teacher were kidnapped from Nigeria at Tulip International College, Isheri, Ogun state in January, 2017 (Odumbo, Shittu, Akinyemi and Momoh, 2017). The kidnappers were alleged to have demanded a total ransom of N1.2billion for the release of the victims. According to Nwachukwu (2019), kidnapping takes place anytime and anywhere, in the schools, in the hospitals and even at home. The truth is that a lot of people are idle and cannot find a sustainable means of livelihood. Job creation should be adequately attended to ensure that many people are gainfully employed. The get-rich-quick syndrome has pervaded the Nigerian society including Ebonyi where many of the youths have taken to kidnapping as a means of livelihood linking to sit at home syndrome (Uzodinma, 2020).

Kidnapping of secondary school children has negative effects on the students, parents, schools, teachers and the general community. Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2021) noted that irrespective of the type and motive of any kidnapping, the psychological and financial effects are always traumatic. As regards the kidnapping of school children in particular, the authors remarked that lack of contacts between children and their parents are always agonizing to both the children and their families (Abdulkabiri, 2017).

In further consideration of negative effects of kidnapping school children Odumbo, (2020), cited examples from some states, Nigeria, where many parents stopped their children from attending schools in Abakaliki Education Zone, where kidnapping and site at home are rampant. This has led to the abandonment of many schools and their facilities, creating wastages in the utilization of educational resources. The problem of resource wastages in education is further complicated by kidnapping. This is because, kidnapping among other factors lead to high

dropout rates in schools. Some of the students and teachers discontinue studies due to threats or fear of being kidnapped. Research are replete with social cost effects of dropping out of school, incorporating increased social crimes, unemployment and high illiteracy rate (Maton & Moore, 2019).

The causes or responsible factors for persistence of kidnapping of students in secondary schools in Ebonyi state could be attributed to be related to school-related factors, government, economic, corruption, insecurity and societal or social cultural related factors. School and students related factors are alleged to be some of the factors responsible for persistence of kidnapping. Due to the wave of kidnapping today in Ebonyi state, many issues are perceived to surround the persistent occurrences of kidnapping. For these perceived reasons, it is difficult to stop kidnapping in Ebonyi state and Nigeria in general because, even some law enforcement agents equally connive with the kidnappers and have their own share of the ill-gotten money of ransom payments from the kidnappers.

The problem of unemployment is one of such reasons why kidnapping in Nigeria is often associated with youth unemployment (Inyang, 2019). He used the widely acknowledged adage, which says that "an idle man is the devil's workshop" to present the situation of unemployment in Nigeria. He noted that there are uncountable able-bodied men and women in Nigeria roaming the streets in search of non-existing job (Nwachukwu, 2019). These idle young persons out of frustration together with mounting responsibilities, venture into criminal activities of which kidnapping is one of them. However, he further acknowledged that, a graduate who is unable to secure a job is psychologically bereft of other means of survival. Such situation could lead to the development of negative attitude towards society and attribute his failure to that society, hence they take to crime to make both ends meet.

The issue of kidnapping in Nigeria can pose additional challenges for students in learning the English language. Some of these challenges include: Instances of kidnapping can disrupt the regular academic routines of students, causing interruptions in their learning process. Schools may close temporarily or implement strict se curity measures, which can affect consistent attendance and learning opportunities.

The presence of kidnapping incidents can create fear and anxiety among students and their families. These feelings can hinder students' ability to concentrate, participate actively in the classroom, and engage in language learning activities (Nwachukwu, 2019). In areas affected by kidnapping, access to quality education may be compromised. Schools may have to shut down or operate with limited resources, affecting the overall quality of instruction and students' language learning opportunities and families who are directly affected by kidnapping incidents may be forced to relocate, leading to the displacement of students. Such disruptions can result in a loss of continuity in their language learning process and limited access to educational res ources.

The prospects of teaching and learning the English language in secondary school are quite promising. English is a globally recognized language, and its proficiency has become essential in various job sectors (Isu, 2021). Students and parents are aware of the importance of English skills for future academic and career opportunities, leading to a high demand for English language instruction. English language teaching materials, textbooks, online resources, and language learning apps are widely accessible, making it easier for teachers to design engaging and effective lessons that cater to different learning styles. Many would-be investors have also stayed away for fears of being kidnapped (Okoro, 2022). Apart from the above observable evidence, many more problems which are associated with the problem of kidnapping will be unraveled during the cause of this research. This study further intends to examine the problems and prospect of Kidnapping in the teaching of English Language among senior secondary school students in Abakaliki education Zones. This is necessary because despite measures meant to curb it, kidnapping still prevails and it is on the increase in recent times in Ebonyi State.

Statement of the problem

Kidnapping has become endemic in Nigeria. It is fast becoming a lucrative alternative to armed robbery offence. The gravity of kidnapping is so intense that it has virtually affected most persons in our society. Apart from the loss of lives and many a times, huge loss of money or material resources, these criminal activities have negative implications on the economy of the affected states and Nigeria in general. Anytime one is kidnapped for financial ransom, the affected families pay through their noses in order to free their loved ones from the devil-may-care (cheerful and reckless) captors, thereby dragging such families at times into economic hardship and gloom. In recent times, has been in the news because of wanton cases of armed robbery and kidnapping, especially the kidnapping of secondary school students and pupils in the state. The recurring cases of kidnapping and its attendant consequences in Ebonyi state is capable of crippling the socio-economic lives of the indigenes and non-indigenes, to the point that foreign investors would be skeptical to come and invest in Nigeria, especially in Ebonyi State where lives have become Brutish for the citizenry. Again investors' fear of the unknown due to the incidences of kidnapping in the state is capable of denying the state of the juicy investments by the foreign countries.

Teachers' irregularities in schools due to their apprehension of being kidnapped, thereby leading to students' poor academic performance has remained the devastating issue facing academic sector and they have sustained kidnapping. This is worrisome. This ugly development is worrisome and portends a danger signal which is capable of throwing the Nigeria society and Ebonyi State in particular into chaos and oblivion, the alarming and devastating crime rate of kidnapping in Ebonyi and Nigeria in general is pathetic and fearful trends that have led to the present study and thus ask: what are the problems and prospect of kidnapping in the teaching of English?

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Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the Kidnapping and English Language Teaching: Problems and Prospects among senior secondary school students in Abakaliki education Zones. The specific objectives of the study include: ascertain whether

1. Identify the problems of teaching of English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State
2. Explore the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping.

Research questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the problems of teaching of English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State?
2. What are the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping?

Research Method

The design of this study was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive surveys, according to Nworgu (2006) are studies, which are aimed at collecting data, and describing them in a systematic manner, the characteristic features or facts. Therefore, this design was considered relevant to the present study because the study involves the collection of data from English Language teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone. This study was carried out in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The geographical area of the study comprises four Local Government Areas: Abakaliki LGA, Ebonyi LGA, Izzi LGA, and Ohaukwu LGAs. Abakaliki Education Zone has 71 public secondary schools (Abakaliki Education zone planning and statistics 2013). Abakaliki Education Zone is bound with Cross River State in the East, in the West by Ishielu Local Government, in the North is bounded with Benue State and in the South by Ezza North Local Government Area. Ebonyi State is one of the states created in October 1st 1996**.** The people of Ebonyi State are mainly farmers with a good number of traders and civil servants. The people of the state are mainly Igbos by their cultural background. The education zone is made up of many schools; nursery, primary, secondary and higher institutions. The inhabitants of the zone are trader, farmers, businessmen and women as well as career civil servants. The Population of the study comprised 207 Secondary schools English Language Teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone. The breakdown has 104 male English Language teachers and 103 female English Language in the seventy-one (71) secondary schools in Abakaliki Education Zone (Source: Secondary Education Board Ebonyi State 2020). The sample size for this study comprised all the 207 senior secondary school English Language teachers in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. The whole population was used as the sample size for the study because the sample size is manageable. The instrument for the study was a researcher developed questionnaire tagged "Kidnapping

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and English Language Teaching: Problems and Prospects among Senior Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (KELTPPSSSQ). The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.85. The internal consistency of each subscale of the instrument was computed separately. The questionnaire was divided into two sections (A & B). The structured questionnaire was based on four (4) points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) with their nominal values attached as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was face validated by three experts, two in the Department of Arts and Social Science Education, and one in Science Education all from Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Research questions 1-3 were answered on individual item basis using mean and standard deviation. A mean (x) of 2.50 was the cut off point for the study. The mean cut off point was derived by the addition of nominal values and dividing the sum by the number of scale options. Thus 4+3+2+1 =10/4 =2.50. The decision rule was that any mean value from 2.50 and above was used to interpret the item as agreed by the respondents while any mean value less than 2.50 was used to interpret the item as disagreed. The t-test of difference between means of independent variables was utilized for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance on individual item basis. Any null hypothesis with calculated t-value greater than the critical table value was not rejected while the one with calculated t-value less than the critical (table) value was upheld.

Research Question One: What are the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping?

Table 1: Mean ratings of the respondents on the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	N	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
1.	In relation with kidnapping, it create limited access to quality English teaching that leads to poor teaching	200	252	216	58	36	2.81	Agree
2.	Disrupt regular teaching of English language as it create an atmosphere of insecurity	200	288	174	72	34	2.84	Agree
3.	It impairs students' cognitive and emotional well being	200	232	240	80	22	2.87	Agree
4.	Frequent school closure due to kidnapping affect the planned curriculum for English language	200	260	213	78	25	2.88	Agree
5.	It creates limited resources for language instruction	200	292	174	90	24	2.90	Agree
		=					**2.86**	**Agree**

The result presented in Table 1 showed the mean ratings of teachers on the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Items 1,2,3,4, and 5 with mean scores of 2.81, 2.84, 2.87, 2.88 and 2.90 respectively and with a grand mean of 2.86 showed that kidnapping it create limited access to quality English teaching that leads poor teaching, disrupt regular teaching of English language as it create an atmosphere of insecurity, it impairs students' cognitive and emotional well-being, frequent school closure due to

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kidnapping affect the planned curriculum for English language and creation of limited resources for language instruction are the problems of teaching of English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. This is because from the Table 1, all the items obtained a mean value that is above 2.50, which is the cut – off point.

Research Question 2: What are the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping?

Table 2: Mean ratings of the respondents on the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping

S/N	ITEMS STATEMENT	N	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{X}$	Decision
6	It can incorporate difference's themes on kidnapping in comprehension passage	200	352	216	40	20	3.14	Agree
7	It can employ different sentential examples on English grammar that add safety measures on avoiding issues on kidnapping	200	260	210	70	30	2.85	Agree
8	It can employ different plots and themes on different genres of literature creating awareness on kidnapping issues	200	240	240	80	20	2.90	Agree
9	It bring in writing on different topics on essay writing on kidnapping and precautionary measures	200	308	177	68	30	2.91	Agree
10	It can draw examples on registers of English on Issues of Kidnapping	200	320	180	60	30	2.95	Agree
	Grand Means	**=**					**2.95**	**Agree**

The result presented in Table 2 showed the mean ratings of the respondents on the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. Items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 with mean scores of 3.14, 2.85, 2.90, 2.91 and 2.95 respectively showed the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. This is because from the table, all the items obtained a mean value that is above 2.50, which is the cut – off point and recorded a grand mean of 2.95. This indicates that, it can incorporate difference's themes on kidnapping in comprehension passage, it can employ different sentential examples on English grammar that add safety measures on avoiding issues on kidnapping, it can employ different plots and themes on different genres of literature creating awareness on kidnapping issues, it bring in writing on different topics on essay writing on kidnapping and precautionary measures and it can draw examples on registers of English on issues of Kidnapping.

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Research Hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in mean rating of female and male teachers on the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping. Summary of results were shown on Table 3.

Table 3: t-test of difference in the mean ratings of female and male teachers on the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping

Items	Category of respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Alpha	t-cv	Decision
1	Male	104	3.55	0.57	1.23	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.45	0.60				
2	Male	104	3.37	0.68	1.01	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.28	0.63				
3	Male	104	3.15	0.63	0.01	0.05	1.96	Sign.
	Female	103	3.15	0.66				
4	Male	104	2.72	0.76	0.38	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	2.67	0.78				
5	Male	104	3.38	0.74	0.40	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	2.90	0.77				
	Average				**1.58**		**1.96**	**Not Sign.**

Summary of result presented in Table 3 indicates that there is no significant difference in mean rating of female and male teachers on the problems of teaching English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping. This is because the t-calculated value is lower than the t-critical value, which is 0.41 as against 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in mean ratings of female and male teachers on the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. Summary of results were shown in Table 4.

Table 4: t-test of difference in the mean ratings of female and male teachers on the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping

Items	Category of respondents	N	Mean	SD	t-cal	Alpha	t-cv	Decision
7	Male	104	3.30	0.79	0.25	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.33	0.71				
8	Male	104	3.32	0.67	0.05	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.32	0.64				
9	Male	104	3.52	0.59	0.92	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.45	0.67				
10	Male	104	3.40	0.58	0.43	0.05	1.96	Not Sign.
	Female	103	3.43	0.74				
	Average				**0.78**		**1.96**	**Not Sign**.

Summary of result presented in Table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference in mean ratings of female and male teachers on the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. This is because the t-calculated value is lower than the t-critical value, which is 1.32 as against 1.96. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld.

Discussion of Findings

In table One, the result revealed that limited access to quality English teaching, frequent school closure, disruption of regular and limited resources are problems of teaching of English in relation to kidnapping. This was based on the statement items in which the respondents agreed that: kidnapping it create limited access to quality English teaching, disrupt regular teaching of English language as it create an atmosphere of insecurity, Trauma associate with kidnapping impair students cognitive and emotional well-being, frequent school closure due to kidnapping affect the planned curriculum for English language and creation of limited resources for language instruction are the problems of teaching of English in senior secondary school in relation to kidnapping in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

The finding agreed with Shannon (2018) who observed that students and teachers may struggle to focus on learning due to the constant fear of potential kidnappings, leading to decreased motivation, concentration, and overall academic performance. Kidnappings can result in the closure or relocation of schools, particularly in regions with higher kidnapping rates. This limits students' access to quality education, including English language instruction.

The result presented in Table 2 showed that using of English language teaching to incorporate lessons on digital literacy, internet safety to address online threats related to kidnapping, discussion of activities that raise awareness about the issues of kidnapping, English language teaching contribution in creating a safer environment that actively opposes kidnapping are the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping. This indicates that, it can incorporate difference's themes on kidnapping in comprehension passage, it can employ different sentential examples on English grammar that add safety measures on avoiding issues on kidnapping, it can employ different plots and themes on different genres of literature creating awareness on kidnapping issues. The finding agreed with Isu (202) views, that English language teaching incorporate lessons, discussions, and activities that raise awareness about the issues of kidnapping, emphasizing the importance of personal safety and security. By discussing real-life scenarios and engaging students in critical thinking exercises, educators can empower students with knowledge and strategies to mitigate the risks associated with kidnapping.

Conclusion

The study concluded that poverty due to unemployment, religious extremist groups, lack of economic transparency, poor

governance, corruption, political thug and Personal vendettas or revenge plots are the causes of kidnapping. Limited access to quality English teaching, frequent school closure, disruption of regular and limited resources are problems of teaching of English in relation to kidnapping and that difficulty for English language students to focus on English language instruction, the implementation of comprehensive language teaching strategies, the decline in English language proficiency, missing out on essential English language lessons basically the effect of kidnapping in the teaching of English language to students in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study, the followings are recommended:

1. Based on the problems associated with kidnapping, secondary school principals in Ebonyi State who have fallen victims of kidnapping should be counseled and encouraged to learn from their past experience in order to take their personal security and that of his students serious.
2. With relation to the prospects of using English language teaching to address the issue of kidnapping, Ebonyi State Government should provide adequate instructional materials and provide adequate security for the protection of lives and properties and also come up with a proactive information gathering system so as get relevant information that would help in nipping security breach in the bud.

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