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THE CASUAL FACTORS OF STUDENT'S POOR PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AWGU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research examined The Casual Factors of Student's Poor Performance in English Language in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State. Based on the identified problem, the study is designed to achieve the specific objectives Examine the extent to which qualification of teachers affect the performances of senior secondary school students in English language in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State. Examine the extent Mother tongue interference contribute to students' poor performance in English language in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State The research design used for this work descriptive survey design. Primary data was used to collect 423 Students from the secondary Schools in Awgu LGA in Enugu Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data. Based on the Data analysis, the researcher found that teachers' qualification in English language affect the performance of senior secondary school students in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu state, Mother tongue contribute to students' poor performance in English language. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that, Teachers should adopt more interactive teaching methods to engage students in English language learning. Parents should provide supportive home environments that encourage reading.

Keywords: The Casual Factors, Students' Poor Performance, English Language

Introduction

Education around the world faces formidable challenges that are tasking conventional strategies. Daniel cited in Amanala (2019), states that fresh approaches are needed to address persistent problems and provide students with an education appropriate to the needs of a modern, information-based economy. Now after more than two decades of unfulfilled promises to revolutionize the education in Nigeria, information and communication Technologies are finally able to offer opportunities to significantly improve in teaching and learning. In most African countries, however major impediment is the lack of equipment and qualified teachers. This problem is further exacerbated by increasing poverty and lack

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of funding for the teacher's salaries and most importantly students increase in population. All these can stand to militate against effective teaching of English in Nigerians secondary schools especially schools in Awgu local government Area Enugu. English language is not indigenous to Nigeria, due to the fact that Nigerians already have their own spoken language (mother tongue). Every Nigerian learning English language is usually faced with a complex language problem situation in his process of language development example mother tongue interference in pronouncing some words in English language. Besides having to master his own language and other indigenous languages, he needs to have a good command of English as an indispensable tool in his daily life in a changing World. Language is our greatest invention without it, trade, government, family life, religion and the art would either be impossible or different.

According to Harrison (2013), the human being is characterized by the ability to communicate with his fellow human being this chief characteristic by the ability to communicate with his fellow human being, this is what distinguished the humans from animals. The process of learning indigenous languages begins very early in life, right from time early, an adult attempt to communicate with a child by using all kinds of sounds to him and the child in turn begins to respond to the communication through imitation. The child proficiency in use of his mother tongue is accelerated by his constant exposure to the language. This communication is made possible in human beings by the use of two types of sensory stimulations, which are auditory and visual. Any normal human being with the normal human facilities possesses this type of sensory stimulations.

In education, it is used as a means of instruction in schools and it is introduced as a school subject in the first year in primary school up to the university level. School subjects like biology, history, government, mathematics and so on are taught in English. This means that the scientific knowledge of the world is through English language, thus, English language plays a vital role in our society. In our various homes, English is used as a common language to impact knowledge to younger ones. Gradually, the younger ones will develop fluent speech in English from their parents.

Literature Review

The English language, as one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, holds a significant place in global communication, education, and culture. Its evolution, function, and spread have been subjects of considerable scholarly debate over the years. English, having originated from Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain by Germanic invaders, has undergone substantial changes due to various cultural, historical, and social influences. Today, it serves not only as a native language for millions but also as a lingua franca in many parts of the world.

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The linguistic complexity of English can be traced back to its historical development. In its early form, known as Old English, the language was shaped by invasions from the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (Crystal, 2022). Later, the Norman Conquest in 1066 introduced a significant amount of French vocabulary, altering the grammatical and syntactic structure of the language (McCrum, 2019). Middle English, which emerged after the Norman invasion, reflects a hybrid of Germanic roots and French influence. By the time English reached the modern period, it had assimilated Latin, Greek, and other languages due to the Renaissance and colonial expansion, leading to the contemporary form of the language (Baugh & Cable, 2023).

One of the significant factors in the spread of English globally was the rise of the British Empire, which exported the language to colonies across Africa, Asia, and the Americas (Brutt-Griffler, 2022). With the decline of the British Empire, the role of English as a global language continued to grow, largely due to the United States' emergence as a global power in the 20th century. Today, English is the official or secondary language in numerous countries and a major medium of instruction, particularly in higher education.

Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important. Bossaert, Doumen, Buyse and Verschueren (2019) defines academic Performance as student's success in meeting short- or long-term goals in education in the big picture according to the authors, academic achievement means completing high school or earning a college degree. Lassiter (2015) looks at students' academic performance as referring to a students' strong performance in a given academic area. A student who earns good grades or awards in science has achieved in the academic field of science. He further stated that education associations and schools monitor the overall level of student academic performance to decide what, if any challenges, need to be made in the educational system. Academic performance is the focal point of every educational institution, irrespective of level and location, because the major index for appraising progress of educational institution is the students' performance, and the education curriculum of the society. The term 'academic performance' has been described as the scholastic standing of a student at a given moment. It refers to how an individual is able to demonstrate his or her intellectual abilities. This scholastic standing could be explained as the grades obtained in a course or groups of courses taken (Asaolu, 2019). Thus, in predicting academic performance, the use of grades in examinations and reported that grades could serve as prediction measures and criterion measures (Adeyemi, 2022). According to Ward, (2019), academic achievement or performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. It is commonly measured through examinations. However, there is no general

agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important – procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts. Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important.

The factors contributing to poor academic performance in English language education are complex and multifaceted. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that involves improving socio-economic conditions, enhancing teacher training, understanding student needs, providing adequate school resources, encouraging parental involvement, and supporting students' psychological well-being. By recognizing and addressing these factors, educators and policymakers can create a more equitable and effective educational environment that fosters better academic outcomes in English language learning.

Statement of the Problem

There is a wide spread feeling that the standard of English language is posing a great problem especially specialized teachers of English language. The students find it difficult to see English language as a medium of expression in many social gatherings or in their academic purpose. They make a lot of grammatical mistakes when speaking or writing English language. The shortage of specialist teachers in the educational system cannot be over-emphasized. The successful implementation of the curriculum in each of the school subject which depends to a large extent on availability of specialist teachers in English has led to unemployment of graduates from other discipline such a mass communication to teach English language in some secondary schools. Lack of sufficient instructional materials generally hinder the teaching and learning of English language as a subject in senior secondary school. This fact cannot be over- emphasized, as instructional materials are the only way open to teaching of English language to support verbal illustration to sustain the student's interest for a considerable length of that. It was also observed that the major causes of student's poor performance in school are their inability to read effectively, guess work of the correct form of a word or sentence could be the reason of mispronunciation, which in turn is largely, due to the attitude of the learns towards reading. Mother tongue interference is another issue faced in teaching and learning of English language in senior secondary schools. These manifest in form of error maybe due to many issues like, wrong pronunciations of 'R' words as L words and CH words as SH words due to the mother tongue have affected their pronunciations of some words. It is on the strength of the above that the researcher deems it necessary to find out the factors associated with Students poor academic performance in English language in Awgu local government Area of Enugu state.

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Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the casual factors of student's poor performance in English language in Awgu local government Area of Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which qualification of teachers affect the performances of senior secondary school students in English language in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State.
2. Examine the extent Mother tongue interference contribute to students' poor performance in English language in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State

Research Questions

The following research questions are used for this research work.

1. To what extent does teachers' qualification in English language affect the performance of senior secondary school students in in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State?
2. To what extent does Mother tongue interference contribute to students' poor performance in English language in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu State?

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is appropriate for this study because it allows for the efficient collection of data on the Casual Factors of Students poor academic performance in English language in Agwu local Government Area of Enugu state. The target population for this study consists 423 Students from the secondary Schools in Awgu LGA in Enugu. Information of the number of students was obtained from the academic and statistic unit, Ministry of Education, Enugu State. The sample size for this study was 200 students from the ten selected secondary schools in Awgu LGA of Enugu state. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Identifying the Casual Factors of Students Poor Academic Performance in English Language". It contained three sections; which comprised items relating to the research questions. The validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of three experts from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from measurement and evaluation from faculty of Education of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents through direct contact by the researcher. Two research assistants were employed by the researcher for the collection of the questionnaires. The respondents were given time to respond and the researcher return on agreed date for retrieval. This process enabled the researcher to achieve a very high response rate as 179 of the questionnaires were filled appropriately. The researcher discarded the 21 wrongly filled. Data collected in the study were analyzed using mean score to answer the research question. The cut-off point is determined by finding the average of nominal values thus 4+3+2+1-10/4=2.5. The decision rule was that any weighted mean score from 2.50 and

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above was taken as respondents' agreement to the high extent while weighted mean scores below 2.50 was taken as their disagreement to the low extent.

Results

Research question one: To what extent does teachers' qualification in English language affect the performance of senior secondary school students in Awgu L.G.A of Enugu state?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Responses on The Extent Teachers' Qualification in English Language Affect the Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Awgu L.G.A Of Enugu State

S/N	ITEMS	(x)	Decisions
1.	My English teacher holds a degree or higher qualification in English Language.	3.16	High Extent
2.	The higher the qualification of my English teacher, the better I understand English lessons.	2.01	Low Extent
3.	Teachers with advanced qualifications in English provide clearer explanations of complex English topics.	2.02	Low Extent
4.	My English teacher's qualifications have a direct impact on my overall performance in English.	2.27	Low Extent
5.	My English teacher has experienced teaching English language at the secondary school level	2.89	High Extent
	Grand mean	**2.47**	**Low Extent**

Results

from table 1 shows that item 1 and was indicated at high extent, while items 2 to 4 was at low extent. With a grand mean of 2.47 which is below the criterion of 2.5 indicates that teachers' qualification in English language affect the performance of senior secondary school students in Enugu south L.G.A of Enugu state at a low extent.

Research question two: To what extent does Mother tongue contribute to students' poor performance in English language?

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Responses on The Extent Mother Tongue Contribute to Students Poor Performance in English Language

S/N	ITEMS	Mean (x)	Decision
6	I often mispronounce English words due to the influence of my native language.	2.10	Low Extent
7	I tend to directly translate words from my mother tongue into English.	3.40	High Extent
8	The sentence structure of my mother tongue affects how I form sentences in English.	2.20	Low Extent
9	I find it hard to understand English idiomatic expressions due to differences in cultural references.	2.11	Low Extent
10	I confuse English consonant clusters with those in their mother tongue	2.22	Low Extent
	Grand mean	**2.41**	**Low Extent**

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Results in Table 2 show that one item has mean rating of 3.70 which mean that they are at high extent, while four items have a mean rating of 2.10 to 2.22 which mean they at low extent. However, with a grand mean of 2.41, it shows that Mother tongue contribute to students' poor performance in English language at low extent.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study indicate that teachers' qualifications in English language have a low extent of impact on students' performance in Enugu South L.G.A. While it is acknowledged that qualified teachers possess the necessary expertise to teach effectively, it seems that the influence of their qualifications alone does not strongly determine student outcomes in this area. This finding is supported by a study conducted by Adeyemi (2020), which suggests that teacher qualifications alone do not significantly impact student achievement in English language, as other factors such as teaching methods and learning resources play more critical roles. Additionally, Babajide and Bolaji (2022) highlighted that while a teacher's certification is important, the methods and instructional materials they employ have a greater influence on learners' performance. The study also reveals that the contribution of students' mother tongue to their poor performance in English language is low. This implies that while language interference might affect learning, it is not a major barrier to achieving proficiency in English. Studies such as those by Olagbaju and Akanmu (2022) found that the influence of the mother tongue is often overstated and that with adequate exposure to English, students can overcome language interference

Conclusion

In conclusion, the factors contributing to students' poor performance in English language in Awgu Local Government Area of Enugu State are multifaceted and interrelated. These include inadequate teaching resources, poorly trained teachers, large class sizes, and insufficient engagement in practical language activities. Additionally, socio-economic challenges, lack of parental involvement, and students' poor attitude toward the subject further exacerbate the issue. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach involving improved teacher training, provision of learning materials, smaller class sizes, and greater community support to enhance students' learning outcomes in English language.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Teachers should adopt more interactive teaching methods to engage students in English language learning.
2. Parents should provide supportive home environments that encourage reading.

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