

STUDENTS APPROACH TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NSIT UBIUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

The study examined the students approach towards learning English language in junior secondary schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area. In order to carry out this study, two specified research objectives were drawn from which null hypotheses were formulated and used for the study. The research design for this study is an Expost Facto design. The population of the study consisted of all the senior secondary school II students in public secondary schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in the 2019/2020 school year. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 630 respondents out of the population. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The instrument was validated by research experts and English Language majors. Crombach Alpha reliability technique was used for testing the reliability of the instrument and reliability index of .72 was realized, hence the instrument was regard as being reliable. Data from 630 completed questionnaires was subjected to Independent t-test analysis. The findings showed and concluded that there is significant students approaches towards learning English language in junior secondary schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area is statistically significant. the study also recommended that teacher educators have a responsibility to produce for the nation very high quality teachers by admitting good candidates to their programmes, while the government and training institution must endeavour to provide the necessary facilities and environment conducive for the production of competent and conscientious teachers.

Keywords: Students; Approach; Learning; Teaching; English Language; Performance etc.

Introduction

The attitudes of students towards concept like teaching and learning are related to the kind of environment in which they find themselves. Several studies support the view that the factor most likely to affect positively students' attitudes towards the teaching and learning of concepts is an open classroom climate - an environment whose signifying features are teacher respect for students' ideas and teacher use of democratic leadership behaviours (Angell, 1992; Avery et al., 1993; Ochoa, 1991). The beneficial effects of an open classroom climate are cited by virtually every researcher and reviewer who looked at the relationship between educational practices and student results (Goodlad, 1986; Ross & Bondy, 1993; Newman 1989; Harmood & Hahn, 1990).

In second language situation, the attainment of reading comprehension attainment has remained the ultimate desire of any students, parents and society at large, for the realization

of educational goals. Students' level of reading comprehension is the pivot to all other subjects, as it directly affected student attainment in the entire academic process. Therefore, it becomes pertinent that students acquire reading skills for comprehension from literal, inferential and evaluative levels. However, the problem of low reading comprehension has led to poor academic attainment, which has resulted in failure, frustration and drop out from schools. Consequently, it has led to examination malpractice which had bedeviled the entire education system. Despite all measures to reverse the situation, the recent 2010/2011 results released by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) have left more to be desired.

Moreover, the basic factor has remained that students cannot comprehend the concepts they read to the point of recall and application. Thus, students' level and type of understanding of texts varies. This is dependent on the students' independent reading level and their background or experience that interplays with the coded message in any text (Oyetunde, 2002). Hence, level of comprehension has to do with the students' level of reasoning and meaningful interpretation of written symbols during the reading process. During reading comprehension, the readers' ability to read and recognize the form and supporting points of an argument; to grasp details; to recast using their own senses, complex ideas presented in a given text is very important.

By implication, literal comprehension is technically a basic form of reading comprehension involving understanding those facts and descriptions that are explicitly stated, not alluded to or inferred in the text. Students need to develop this comprehension skill because it creates a grasp of literal information and establishes a foundation for the assimilation of more complex reading skills. To support this view, Goff (2010) asserts that literal comprehension is a process that involves reading to understand the surface meaning or identifying information explicitly stated within a passage. It could also be referred to as 'thinking within the text'. Nevertheless, at this level of reading comprehension, students' ability to identify exact meaning of vocabulary used in the passage (reading for exact meaning at the word and sentence level), read for information (understanding the central point the author is trying to get across) as well as their ability to give a paraphrase or summary of what they understand from the text, among other factors that come to play.

In line with this view, Onukaogu (2003) asserts that reading occurs during interplay of visual and non-visual elements which are grammatical constituents of the written text and background or experience of the reader. This also includes the understanding of language as used in the text, reading skills and the reader's familiarity with concepts presented in the text. Comprehension according to Ngwoke (2006) implies showing understanding of a reading text. The pattern of comprehension of a reading text is evident in the readers' ability to respond correctly to the issues raised in the text in question form. Based on the foregoing, reading and comprehension are inseparable as students can never be interested in reading what they cannot understand. In this regard, reading and comprehension have come to operate as one concept due to their synonymous relationship. Therefore, comprehension as a by-product of reading does not occur in the absence of reading neither is reading meaningful without understanding (Ngwoke, 2007).

To develop an effective comprehension, the students' need to be given intensive training on study skills, most scholars consider it mainly as one of the intervention of reducing poor

study habits (Abdullahi, 2008). According to Ogbodo (2010) effective study habits refers to a situation in which a learner studies regularly to achieve maximum success in his/her school work. Howell (as cited in Abdullahi, 2008) noted that working with children in grades four to eight was able to demonstrate that a year of intensive emphasis on work study skills produced reasonable improvement in achievement. The interest on study skills has also caught the attention of Ranson (as cited in Abdullahi, 2008) who reported that a group of students who spent between ten to fifteen hours in a study skills clinic had a significantly higher grade point average than an equated group of students who had not made use of the clinic. Otto and smith (as cited in Abdullahi, 2008) stated that reading comprehension require more than a simple way of study skills. Rather they require careful and developed study habits as well. Skills focus on specific behaviours required for study type reading. On the other hand, habits focus on ability and inclination to apply the skills. This simply signifies that successful academic achievers typically have arrays of study skills well cultivated which help them to develop effective study habits. Hoston (as cited in Abdullahi ,2008) mentioned that there is a great need to teach comprehension skills to student as majority of them have ineffective comprehension habits and this has put the students in the position of developing poor study habits. He further stated that there is no formal teaching of study skills which has also attributed to the students developing poor study habits.

Due to the fact that they had developed poor study habits, they usually opt and solely depend on frantic cramming during examination. This is not a good standard to develop in the field of studying because the understanding has not been established. Denga (1983) noted after carrying out a study that majority of the students expressed a need for developing effective study habits, choosing the right subject combination and passing examinations. This study has actually brought an awareness to authorities concerned in issues of students' successful performance as it pinpoint the necessity for training students on the use of study approaches in other to tackle the issue of poor study habits (Abdullahi,2008). According to Adegbiya (1987) studentship is a lifelong career.

Therefore, studying and learning are process that continues throughout life time. He therefore saw the development of effective study habits as basic requirement for any individual who wants to maintain a well-informed state of mind for students' success in any academic and development Endeavour. Ozigi (as cited in Abdullahi, 2008) expressed that most secondary school students in northern Nigeria did not receive any formal instruction in study techniques. Never the less, some students put much effort on reading preferred subjects and depend on their lecture notes as source of information. Ogbodo (2002) explained that teaching students study skills and approaches was genuinely necessitated-by dramatic short fall and downturn in students' performance which cut across tiers of institutions of learning, resulting in massive failures, carryover deficiencies and related problem.

Bandura's Social (Observational) Learning Theory (1997)

Bandura Social Learning Theory (1997) emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of students. Bandura (1997) stated that "learning would be exceedingly laborious not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effect of their own actions to inform them on what to do. Fortunately, most skills acquisitions are learned observationally through modeling; and observing other person. This form an idea of how new skills are acquired, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action. Social learning theory, therefore, explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental

influence. The component factors underlying observational learning are: attention, retention, motor reproduction and motivation.

Attention, including modeled events (distinctiveness affective, valence, complexity, prevalence, functional values) and observer characteristics (sensory capacity, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement), Retention, including symbolic, coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal, Motor Reproduction; including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, accuracy of feedback; and Motivation, including external, vicarious and self-reinforcement (Bandura, 1997:29).

To this end, Social Learning Theory encompasses attention, memory and motivation which it spans both cognitive and behavioural framework. It depends largely on the individual attitudes and behaviours. The theory has been applied extensively to the understanding of aggression and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behavior modification (Bandura, 1997: 31). It is also the theoretical foundation for the technique of behaviour modeling, which is widely used in training programmes. In recent years Bandura, has focused his work on the concept of self-efficacy in a variety of contexts. He says social learning incorporates principle of behaviourism as well as social cognitivism. That is, the individual is motivated to engage in behaviour whose outcome is valued, in that which they feel capable of performing effectively. For instance, if a child should learn how to speak English, he or she has to be motivated to play around peers who speak English always and from there the child imbibes some knowledge of English but where he or she depends solely on what the teacher teaches in school without interacting with others, the learning outcome would be less than 1.

There are two sets of expectancies. The first, action-outcome-reflects the degree to which individual believes that an action will lead to a particular outcome, such as that of smoking, will cause cancer or stopping smoking to avoid cancer. The second is self-efficacy, reflects the individual's belief that one can cope with most things life throws at one. Such beliefs moderate a variety of behaviours. Although such beliefs are dependent on a particular decision. Behaviour specific efficacy beliefs are frequently more powerful determinants of behavior. Therefore, social learning involves a combination of watching, thinking and trying. The theory is related to the present study based on the fact that, it seeks to explain how social learning incorporates principle of behaviourism as well as social cognitivism to enhance students academic outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The following are the objectives served as basis for this study.

1. To examine the influence of students' interest towards learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State
2. To examine the level of students' comprehension of learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance

1. There is no significant influence of students' interest towards learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State
2. There is no significant the level of students' comprehension of learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

A survey design was used for this study. This approach was considered most appropriate because it helped the researcher to describe, examine, record, analyze and interpret the variables that were found in the study. It is also useful because of the relatively large population from which the information was collected.

Area of the Study

Nsit Ubium local government area was chosen as a study area for this study. It is one of the local government areas of Akwa Ibom State. Nsit Ubium LGA is located on latitude 0627°North and longitude 07 56⁰ East. According to the 2006 census figures, the population of the entire Nsit Ubium is 354,906. Majority of these people live and do business in Nsit Ubium town (Effiong-Ukpong, 1992).

Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all the senior secondary school II students in public secondary schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in the 2019/2020 school year.

Sample and sampling Technique

Krajcie and Morgan, (1970) sample frame was used to sample 630 Secondary School students for the study. This was made of male and female.

Instrumentation

The instrument used by the researcher for this study was a research questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to obtain data on the independent and dependent variables. Section A of the research instrument focused on the personal data of the respondents while section B measured the constructs of independent and dependent variable.

Validation of the Research Instrument

The research instrument was validated by research experts and English Language majors. The purpose was to ensure that items on the questionnaire were properly worded to meet the respondents' level of understanding and it comprehensively covered the research objectives.

Reliability of the Instrument

The researcher adopted Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis to determine the reliability of the instruments. In the trial testing, a total of 20 students who were not part of the main study were randomly selected from the secondary schools in the study area, and

the instruments administered on them. The data collected were analyzed and the result of the showed 0.72 reliability coefficient. This indicated that the instrument was reliable for use Jeremy and Grein, (2005).

Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered to the sampled students after obtaining permission from the school principals on presentation of a letter of introduction. The teachers in the selected schools assisted the researcher in the distribution and collection of completed copies of the questionnaire on the spot method. This method was adopted by the researcher to ensure that time was judiciously utilized and to avoid missing copies of the questionnaire. At the end, all the copies distributed were collected for analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical technique such as descriptive statistics for research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlational analysis was used to test the null hypothesis.

Data Presentation and Analyses

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of students' interest on learning of English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

TABLE 1: Independent t-test analysis of influence of students' interest on learning of English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Variable	N	\bar{X}	SD	t_{cal}	t_{crit}
High Interest	418	43.67	22.34	8.98	1.96
Low Interest	212	27.97	19.82		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 628; N= 630

Table 1 presents the obtained t-value as 8.98. The mean value of students with high interest was greater than those with low interest (27.97) at 0.05 level of significant with 628 degree of freedom. This result indicates that students with interest performed than students with low interest in learning of English language in Junior Secondary Schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. Hence, null hypothesis one which assumed no significant difference was rejected.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant influence of students' comprehension of English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

TABLE 2: Independent t-test analysis of influence of students comprehension of English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State

Variables	N	X	SD	T _{cal}	T _{crit}
English language	421	33.3	21.94	5.69	1.96
Other studies	209	19.21	22.10		

*Significant at 0.05 level; df= 628; N= 630

Table 2 presents the mean value of 33.3 in respect of students comprehension of English language. This value was greater than their mean value of 19.21 in other subjects at 0.05 level of significant with 628 degree of freedom. This result means that the influence of students' comprehension of English language in Junior Secondary Schools in Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State was statistically significant. Hence, null hypothesis two which assumed no significant difference was rejected.

Findings

Based on the data analysis of the study, the following finding was highlighted

There is significant influence of students' interest on their learning English language in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

There is significant influence of students' comprehension of English language substance on their learning the subject in Junior Secondary Schools of Nsit Ubium Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion drawn in this study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

The teacher educators have a responsibility to produce for the nation very high quality teachers by admitting good candidates to their programmes, while the government and training institution must endeavour to provide the necessary facilities and environment conducive for the production of competent and conscientious teachers.

Teachers should endeavour to upgrade their level of teaching by making use of relevant and appropriate teaching materials that will help transmit knowledge more meaningfully to the learner.

Government at all tiers through State Secondary Education Board should embark on training and retraining programmes for teachers to enhance their teaching strategies and this we know, will foster students' academic outcomes in English languages.

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