An Examination of Effective Teaching of English Language as an Antidote to Academic Failure among Nigerian Youths
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Abstract
The thrust of this paper is to probe the veracity of the claim that effective teaching of the English language could be a potent panacea for academic failure among Nigerian youths. Various English Language teaching strategies as well as what makes a person a great teacher are discussed. Similarly, imaginativeness and innovativeness, among others, are seen as attributes of an effective English studies teacher. Based on the literature reviewed, it was concluded that English is an important subject and a medium of instruction in Nigerian schools from the primary to the tertiary level and as such it must be taught using effective methods. It is also suggested that teaching should be geared towards students' ability to communicate effectively and interpret questions which will help them to learn meaningfully in the content areas leading to a reduction in the perennial mass failure in public examinations.

Keywords: Examination Effective Teaching, English Language, Educational Failure, Nigerian Youth Innovativeness.

Introduction
Education can be defined as the process of cultivating academic and vocational competencies, social skills as well as moral and ethical values for the attainment of the mentally, physically, socially and spiritually developed a personality that can cope with the peculiarities of the world around us. It is a life-long process of learning that teaches

one how to live, where to live, who and what to live with, and how one can apply one`s knowledge for the betterment of society.

Formal education is the "classroom-based" type of education. It is received under the auspices of an educational institution. Informal education, on the contrary, is not classroom-based. It is the learning achieved at home, church, community-based organisations and other social gatherings (UNESCO, 2011). Though both the formal and informal types of education are important, it is formal education that is often considered standard. The formal education system of a nation serves as a yardstick to measure national growth and development. It is the index for measuring a country's achievements. A defective formal education system indicates an unstable national growth and an established formal education produces an enhanced and stable national growth spurt. Nigeria's education industry has three major stages, namely early childhood/primary, secondary and tertiary. For these three stages, it is a story dotted in failure consequent upon consistent manifestations of policy summersaults. Woeful academic performance is thus a permanent experience of most Nigerian students at all levels of education (Ohakamike-Obeka, 2016; Anlimachie, 2019).

Being that the youths are one of the greatest assets of a nation, it is so pitiable that the very youthful population of Nigeria is wallowing in a sorry state of illiteracy. A lot of secondary schools leavers are unconcerned about university education and the ones in the university are frustrated with the education system. Nigerian youths are taking to the streets and steps towards making quick money seems to be the best option; be it armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution or even street hypocritical begging (Owonikoko, 2020; Ibrahim & Ahmad, 2020).   Students are dropping out of school, the unemployment rate is skyrocketing and the glory of education is beginning to plummet.

Education should be the gateway to social mobility and a core tool in breaking the poverty cycle. Where there are difficulties with family life, where there is a lack of aspiration and where life skills are absent, schools should help children and young people plot a new course. Yet for too many primary and secondary school pupils in the most deprived areas, Nigeria's education system continues to fall far short of this.   Educational underachievement in these communities remains a national crisis. Among the prevalent factors responsible for this is the issue of the language of instruction which is the focus of this paper (Aina & Uleanya, 2020).

In 1977, an official document titled National Policy on Education was produced by the Federal Government of Nigeria. It was revised in 1981, 1998 and 2004 and 2013. This

document assigned different functions to the many Nigerian languages in the nation's education at various levels. The policy states that every child shall learn in the language of the immediate environment in the first three years while the English language shall be taught as a school subject. However, in the interest of national unity among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, every child shall be required to learn one of the three national languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba.) The provision of the NPE (2004), Section 4, Paragraph 19 (e) and (f) cited below confirms that the multilingual education policy is in existence:

> The medium of instruction in the primary school shall
> be the language of the environment for the first three years.
> During this period, English shall be taught as a subject.
> from the fourth year, English shall progressively be used
> as a medium of instruction and the language of the immediate
> environment and French shall be taught as a subject.

The policy makes it explicit that from the fourth year of basic education, the medium of instruction shall be the English language while the language of the immediate environment and French shall be taught as subjects. At the secondary school level, English shall be the language of instruction while the language of the immediate environment, one of the three major Nigerian languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) other than that of the immediate environment and French shall be taught as school subjects (Olagbaju, 2014.) The levels of Education in Nigeria are: Early childhood (pre-primary); Basic education (9 years) – comprising Primary and Junior Secondary Education; Senior Secondary Education (3 years); and Tertiary Education (Olagbaju 2014).

Many empirical studies indicate that English proficiency plays a crucial role in enhancing students' academic performance, especially for those students whose first language is not English (Adeniyi 2010). The socio-cultural and psychological adjustment of students might be influenced by their English proficiency, which might impact their academic success. For example, Yang, Noels, and Saumure (2006) highlighted the role of English self-confidence in the process of socio-cultural and psychological adjustment to an English-speaking academic environment. Further, Trice (2007) reported that weak English language skills were perceived as one of the reasons some students were isolated from other brilliant students. These findings indicate that English proficiency is indirectly associated with the academic performance of students through its impact on other factors in the socio-cultural and psychological dimensions.

Effective Teaching of English Language

The objectives of effective teaching as stated by Adegbile (2008) include assisting learners to conceptualise ideas, process thoughts and develop their potentials; contribute to thinking and creativity in the subject; nurture and sustain students' interest; suit the circumstance of teaching and learning; and suit the individual teacher's ability and interest.

The quality of any teaching programme cannot rise above the quality of her teachers (Nagovitsyn, Zamolotskikh, Potashova & Rybakova, 2019; Manning, Wong, Fleming & Garvis, 2019). Teaching is a highly individualised activity, and the student-teacher interaction is an intense human relationship that encompasses a broad range of personalities and behaviours (Okolie, 2014). Adegbile (2008) described an effective teacher as efficient, reliable and courteous, equipped with professionalism, creative in imagination, bustling ingenuity and depth of experience necessary for optimal performance and the achievement of educational goals. The teacher as a good manager of instruction should be able to utilize appropriate techniques to gain and maintain the attention of students.

It is not possible to guarantee a meaningful learning of English language without effective teachers to translate the laudable objectives of the English Language curriculum into the meaningful, exciting and fruitful practice in the classroom. The English language is taught through the school subject simply known as English Language and it also the medium of instruction at all levels. The effectiveness of the teacher of English Language will determine the conceptualisation of ideas by students that can enhance the development of their cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains which are of utmost importance in their general academic performance and contribution to national development (Adeniyi, 2011).

Considering the foregoing, the importance of effective teaching and learning of English language cannot be over emphasised. English language remain the pivot of education in Nigeria. It is the language of instruction from upper primary education through secondary, to tertiary education in Nigeria. It is the language through which all other subjects in the curriculum are taught. Not only is English Language a compulsory subject in secondary education, a credit pass in it is a compulsory condition for securing admission into Nigerian tertiary institutions. Competence in English is seen as an index of academic excellence. Thus, it is a yardstick for measuring learners' academic performance. More so, before any student can graduate from the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, they must pass the course "Use of English". From the foregoing, it is obvious that the English language is

the bedrock upon which education in Nigeria is hinged. Suffice it then to say that English is indispensable to education in Nigeria.

The benefits of education (acquired via English language) are enormous, and they include:
improved social relations;
better job opportunities;
higher family income;
higher productivity;
access to better health facility;
improved standard of living; and
ability to participate in the life of the community.

Beside these benefits, the English language has conferred on Nigerians other privileges that bear on human development as well as national development, both on the home front and on the global space. On the home front, the English language is essentially reg arded as a unifying factor. According to Olowoyeye and Afe (2005) English also serves as language of nationism concerned with political integration and efficiency. Likewise Deji-Afuye and Olowoyeye (2013) assert that English has dual potentials of being a curriculum subject and a medium of instruction in our schools. It has allowed Nigerians to co-exist peacefully despite their diversity (Osasona, 2019). It is this peaceful co-existence that engenders development either on individual or national basis. Considering the multilingual nature of the country, the communication crises that would have occurred among people from different linguistic backgrounds is removed by the use of English. It is possible for Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds, to study or work in any part of the country. The same goes for teachers/workers who could also choose to teach/work in any part of the country without fear of language barrier. English language has advanced Nigerians economically.

Effective Teaching of English Language: the Requirements
It is a well-known fact that students face some problems in the learning of English as a second language which often result in poor language and communicative performance. Given that English is the language of academic instruction in Nigeria, there is need for an effective teaching of the language to students.

In Nigeria where the English language is essentially a second language, effective teaching seeks to incorporate all tools and practices that assist the English language learner in an L2 multicultural classroom. Effective teaching in a second language (L2) setting seeks to

promote learning skills that will be of benefit to learners from diverse cultural backgrounds (Adeniyi 2011)

Learning is an active process and research works have shown that students are not able to learn much by only sitting in classes listening to teachers through rote-learning system. They should be able to talk about what they are learning, write about it and relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. Students need to make learning a part of them. In a teaching and learning process, the teacher is an indispensable tool. If the students are to be effective learners and users of the English language, the role of a teacher becomes imperative. His/her effective use of varying methods of teaching becomes a panacea to academic failure.

Skills for Efficient Teaching
Adeniyi (2011) identified the following as the basic skills required for effective teaching
    a) expert communication skills
    b) superior listening skills
    c) deep knowledge and passion for their subject - matters
    d) the ability to build caring relationships with students
    e) friendliness and approachability
    f) excellent preparation and organization skills
    g) strong work ethic
    h) community-building skills
    i) high expectations for all

An effective teacher of English should possess
1. imagination
2. innovativeness
3. interaction
4. independent thinking
5. interdependent Imagination

Imagination:
A teacher who is imaginative can do wonders in the English class. Their new ideas break monotony and make students take lively participation in the class. Thus, Albert Einstein says that imagination is more important than knowledge.

Human progress is possible only through education. Without imagination, education becomes a kind of intellectual recycling of the same knowledge passed from teacher to

students and back to teacher on the test day. Education should do more than simply transmitting information; it should develop skills such as imagination that evolve our knowledge and move us forward as a species (Richards & Rodgers, 2019)

Teachers who are imaginative can teach any language skill interestingly and effectively. They can develop students' creative self-expression. Teachers who are imaginative explore and create new things. Students enjoy being guided by imaginative teachers (Zengin, Başal & Yükselir, 2019).

Innovativeness

An innovative teacher dares to go off the track in order to be on the track. Students like teacher who are innovative. Innovativeness means:
   a) introducing changes and new ideas
   b) daring to be different and being unique
   c) going off the track in order to be on the track
   d) experimenting new things
   e) being fresh always

Interaction

A teacher who promotes interaction in the English class does justice to their profession by empowering learners and helping them develop their communication skills. They motivate their students, create opportunities for them to interact with one another through commutainment (communication through entertainment) activities such as role-plays, groups discussions, mock interviews, among others. Activity-based pedagogic strategies have been proved by research as exceptionally rewarding to learners (Fasanella, 2020)

Independent thinking

Independent thinking is the process of being able to think on your own, without someone else guiding you. "In a world where knowledge is doubling every few years and what once was a fact can become out of date quickly, equipping young people with the mental tools to succeed in such a world is vital." Teachers can help their students develop their independent thinking only if they themselves are independent. Independent thinking implies
   a) thinking on your own
   b) being critical of what you see and hear
   c) questioning information and irrational assumptions

An independent thinker helps students develop the desire and ability to think on their own. An independent thinker contributes a lot to the team. Language learning tasks should aim at developing students' thinking skills (Zou & Veloo, 2020).

Interdependence
Interdependence is essential for a successful person. Taking students from dependent stage to independent stage and then to interdependent stage is very important. Man is a social animal and interpersonal relationship is the key to success in today's competitive world. The one who knows how to relate with others can easily climb up the ladder of success. Those who are interdependent use positive language and win people. They are polite, pleasant, practical, persuasive and powerful.

A teacher of English who is imaginative, innovative, interactive, independent and interdependent can be successful in the field and can lead the students from dependent stage to independent stage and then to interdependent stage.

Principles of teaching English Language learners
Marchal (2018) identified the following as principles of teaching English language to second language learners:

1) Provide access to grade-level course content. This is essential as it gives English Language Learners (ELLs) the concepts and skills needed to master grade-level coursework, move up through the grades, and become fully proficient in English. "It is important to keep in mind," says August, "that many skills and types of knowledge transfer from students' first language to their second, and that ELLs may have already acquired core content in their first language."

2) Build on effective practices used with English-proficient students. Many best practices for regular-education classes also apply to ELLs, says August – for example, in the early grades, hearing the individual English sounds and phonemes within words; using letters and spelling patterns within words to decode the pronunciation; reading texts aloud with appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression; using various strategies to learn new words; thinking about the meaning of what is being read; and writing appropriately for the task and the audience.

3) Provide supports to help ELLs master core content and skills. These include visuals (pictures, diagrams, tables, concept maps, short videos, and graphic organizers to represent complex concepts and vocabulary) and verbal supports (glossaries, sentence and

paragraph frames, teacher-chosen words in context, and whole-class, small-group, and partner discussions focused on clarifying key ideas). It is also helpful to provide core content in the home language for some students.

4) Develop ELLs' academic language. Becoming proficient in the language used in school, in written communication, in public presentations, and in formal settings is crucial for English language learners. Academic language varies by subject area, with science especially challenging, and researchers have found that embedding instruction within the subject area is a promising technique.

5) Encourage peer-to-peer learning opportunities. "One of the key principles of instruction in a second language," says August, "is enabling students to interact via speaking, listening, reading, and writing with peers in their second language." Peer talk, in pairs or small groups, is most effective when it focuses on curriculum content. The Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) programme has proven to be an effective strategy.

6) Capitalize on students' home language, knowledge, and cultural assets. This might involve previewing and reviewing material in students' first language; connecting the concepts to students' prior knowledge and home and community experiences; giving first-language definitions of targeted vocabulary; drawing attention to cognates that provide a bridge between first and second languages; and providing opportunities for students to talk about the content during a lesson in their first language.

7) Screen students to find the root cause of language and literacy difficulties, monitor progress, and support ELLs who are falling behind. "Historically, ELLs have been both over-identified and under-identified as having a disability," says August. Both are problematic, and the key is accurate assessment, timely intervention when there are problems, and educator training. It's essential to distinguish between language-learning challenges and a genuine disability. August lists the literacy skills that are vital in the early grades, and stresses that teachers need to use good assessments to monitor each child's progress and understand how to use assessment data in following up with students (McKown, 2019; McMaster, Lembke, Shin, Poch, Smith, Jung, Allen, & Wagner, 2020; Zulaiha, Mulyono, & Ambarsari, 2020).

Effective Teaching and Learning Strategies
Learning strategy is a set of skills that learners use to obtain information in the classroom. The reason some teachers have several unsuccessful students in their class is because they often fail to apply appropriate learning strategy to the task at hand. English language as a

medium of instruction in Nigeria has affected students' academic performance greatly because the language is not indigenous to the students. Students who have problems in communication skills may likely not do well academically (Carlo, 2012; Aina, 2013). Research works have also shown that academic performances in sciences are positively related to students' proficiency in English language (Sandilos, Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, & Merritt, 2020)

There are numerous methods of teaching language to students. Among these methods are Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Humanistic Method (HM), Structural Approach (SA), Total-Physical Response (TR), The Silent Way (SW) and Communicative Language Method (CLM). This is just to mention a few but this paper would address the need to apply the Communicative Language Method to the teaching of English language effectively to students.

Communicative Language Method
Communicative Language Method (CLM) is an applies a set of principles about teaching that emphasise interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of study. The goal of language education is the ability to communicate effectively in the target language. This method also focuses on the teacher as a facilitator rather than an instructor (Ameyaw, 1986; Toro, Camacho-Minuche, Pinza-Tapia, & Paredes, 2019)

Communicative Language Teaching started in the 70s and became prominent as it proposes an alternative to the ubiquitous system-oriented approaches such as Audio-lingual and Grammar-Translated methods. This simply means that instead of focusing on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary (Grammar-linguistic competence), the Communicative Language Teaching Method aims at developing the learners' competence to communicate in the target language (Communicative competence) with an enhanced focus on real-life situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2019).

Ameyaw (1986) points to the fact that the change brought about by Communicative Language Teaching Method has over the years had a huge impact on classroom materials, course books, teaching techniques and the teacher's role in the classroom. He also emphasises the importance of the inclusion of the teaching of the four language skills in the practice of Communicative method. Nalcomson (1993) also emphasises the importance of the effective knowledge and use of the four language skills which is vital for students to perform real-life goals, in other words, improving the functional-notional syllabus like introducing oneself, ordering for food at the restaurant, making a hotel reservation,

apologising and responding to apologies, making predictions about the future and making a complaint, among others.

In a Communicative approach, learners are at the centre of instruction. This means that the teacher's role has changed when compared to previous methodologies. The teacher is seen as a facilitator in the learning process, and responsibilities in the classroom are simpler. There are various activities that can be used in a communicative approach lesson (Dos Santos, 2020). Examples are role-plays (Jambi, 2020), information-gap activities, jigsaw activities and open-ended discussion and debate. Others are project-based learning which include task-based, content-based, Dogme ELT and Humanistic activities (Thormbury, 2000).

Today, the dominant technique in teaching English language should be CLT as the goal of language education is the ability to communicate in the target language. CLT enables learners to share their own views on topics and use their communicative resource to convey ideas, make points, and agree and disagree with others. Debates are rich resources in this all-important language teaching method (Carlo, 2012).

Conclusion and Closing Remarks
Teacher of English Language should note that as effective as CLT seems to be, its classroom use is not without some challenges. The use would not be flawless because students are already familiar with the passive way of learning other subjects. This is because a lot of information need to be covered with not enough time. Another challenge is that teachers and students globally are used to a fixed syllabus and adoption of course-book when learning. In most situations, teachers not need to depend on fixed syllabus to teach when using the CLT.

Teachers' constant training and fresher's courses are important to keep teachers abreast of current issues and development in a given teaching method. This approach does not support the perfection of a course-book for the training of English language, as there are always lapses in the cultural relevance of topics presented. More so that language itself is not static, therefore, the teachers of language should not be static.

Literacy in English language is very important to all round human development in Nigeria. For students to perform excellently well in all their school subjects, a more functional approach should be adopted for the effective teaching and learning of English language in our schools.

Teachers are the hub of the educational system. As such, the importance of teachers, the application of pedagogical knowledge into classroom oriented plan of actions constitute most essential fabric upon which the success of the school, its administration and the entire education system rest upon (Okolocha & Onyeneke, 2013). Therefore, teachers should possess a good mastery of the subject matter, have a map to follow in terms of well-prepared lesson, grab the students' attention through effective class control mechanism, recognize student attention span, plan activity for the students by allowing them participate actively in the teaching and learning process. To this end, Ademola (2007) stated that an educational system with low quality teachers will produce students with poor inspiration and aspiration.

Thus, English Language teachers have to be well prepared for their job through pre-and in-service training. This sound training should at the end help the teachers in the implementation of the curriculum as they engage in effective teaching, for pleasant and meaningful understanding of students in order to achieve set objectives in the classroom. In order to promote the effectiveness of English Language teachers, it is important to produce high quality teachers. These teachers should maintain approved lesson period, utilise visual aids, voice, eye contacts and body movement as a way of stimulating the students, summarise lessons and evaluate lessons using all sort of techniques.

English Language teachers-in-training should be made to realise that the quality of classroom interactions with students have a vital role to play in their effectiveness as teachers. Oyekan (2000) stated that teachers also rely on classroom interactions with the students to gauge the effectiveness, level and pace of their instruction. Okolocha & Onyeneke (2013) posited that the success of Nigeria's educational system, especially at the secondary school level depends upon a number of factors: the government, the society, students, the teachers', and the quality of teaching, devotion and effectiveness of the teachers. English language teachers' effectiveness can be viewed on the ability of the teacher to employ appropriate techniques and strategies to impart in the learners' knowledge, skills and competencies required for bringing about desired positive learning outcomes. Teacher effectiveness is a teacher's ability to produce desired results measured in terms of how well the teacher is able to maximise learning in the students (Diamond, 2004).

Recommendations
Teaching should be geared towards the students' ability to communicate effectively. Their ability to understand and interpret questions in other subjects will help them to give correct interpretations which will subsequently result in good performance.

In view of the above, therefore, this writer recommends that

- a. Students should be motivated to acquire confidence whenever they make mistakes in language classroom and be encouraged to speak the language in all circumstances;
- b. Teachers of English Language should equip themselves with well-packaged courses;
- c. Curriculum designers should think of the learners' needs and a commensurate teaching method;
- d. Educational institutions should ensure that more qualified English Language teachers are employed;
- e. Language laboratories should be made more functional from primary school level;
- f. There should be proper counselling that students should take the English Language very seriously irrespective of their preferred specialist courses; and
- g. Future researchers need to continue to determine the pedagogical practices of learningm and teaching and the same time, evaluate and inspect the English teachers' qualifications and knowledge before allowing them to teach.

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