

**CHALLENGES OF TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN RURAL  
AREAS USING IKPOBA-OKHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF  
EDO STATE ASA CASE STUDY**

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**BENIN CITY**

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AREAS USING IKPOBA-OKHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF  
EDO STATE AS A CASE STUDY**

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## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this research project was carried out by Maryjane Joyce NWAGBARA with the EDU1903332 matriculation number. Being a research work submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Bachelor Degree of Arts (B.A.) (Ed.) in English and Literature, University of Benin. Benin City.

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to God Almighty.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The researcher is immensely and forever grateful to God Almighty for His love and mercy, and most importantly, for always coming through at the darkest moment.

She wants to thank her project supervisor, Mrs Veronica Uzamere Edobor who overlooked her flaws and still showered her motherly love towards the researcher.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study investigated challenges of teaching English language in rural areas using Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study. The design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method.

Four (4) research questions were raised for the study. The population of this study consisted of all the secondary school teachers in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. A total of sixty (60) teachers were purposively selected as the sample size from eight (8) secondary schools in the LGA. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The research instrument used was validated/ by experts in the Department of Educational Foundations. Data collected from the survey were statistically analyzed. After analysis, results were displayed on tables showing frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations of responses, including the decisions made.

Based on the findings, it was discovered mother tongue interference affects rural students' pronunciation of certain English words and comprehension of English language; there is not enough provision of school facilities for the/ adequate teaching and learning of English Language in rural areas, etc.

Some recommendations were made afterwards. It was recommended that students should be made aware of the differences in the phonological, orthographical, vocabulary and grammatical patterns in English and their mother tongue; government should provide adequate, spacious classes with adequate equipment and school facilities in order to meet the needs of the learners and their aspiration, etc.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

English language in Nigeria is deeply rooted with the colonial period. The first ones, who were able to share the language among Nigerian natives, were the Christians. The Old types of English, which were spoken on the African continents had its own special norms. In fact, some of them are in use today this type of English was called "coaster or patua" English (pidgin or broken English) which was a more adaptable English variant as a quick and easy means of communication. Nigeria has 371 ethnic groups, over 500 languages and English being the only official language which is there for use as a means of communication due to the disparities of our native languages. According to Bamgbose (2011) on the importance of English language in Nigeria he emphasized that, of all the heritage left behind in Nigeria by the British at the end of the colonial administration, probably known is more important than the English language.

The English language has had a significant impact on Nigeria's development both positive and negative. One of the positive impacts is that it is the official language of Nigeria and when spoken and understood across the country. This has facilitated communication and commerce between different ethnic and linguistic groups within the country and has helped to unify the country. The negative impact of English language is the negation of indigenous languages.

This research is centered on the challenges of teaching English language in rural areas, using Ikpoba-Okha local government secondary schools as a case study. Lack of skilled and trained teachers in the field of English language is one of the major challenges, in the teaching of English language in Ikpoba-Okha Local government secondary schools of Bdo State.

This challenge has resulted in the poor performance of students in the rural areas as a teacher's teaching and not skilled and trained, so as to pass across relevant information in their simple form to the students. The lack of modern technology enjoyed by students in Urbana areas which tools in rural areas are deprived of this also another challenge facing the teaching of English language in Ikpoba-Okha Local government area.

This problem can be viewed as they are no facilities such as projectors, sound labs etc.

Mother tongue interference is another challenge facing the teaching of English language in Ikpoba-Okha Local government area. This mother tongue interference has therefore posed as a challenge as most children in rural areas communicate lately in their mother tongue which is commonly spoken in their locality. Other issues such as family background, teaching aids, approaches to teaching and lack of materials will be discussed in chapter two of this research under the review of related literature.

In formal education, the national policy of education (N.P.E) section states that, from the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as subject. All subjects except the students' mother tongues are taught in English language. English language is a lingua Franca of Nigeria is therefore the language of instruction in schools and as such, it is of utmost importance that one acquires the basic rudimentary skills of reading and writing effectively in the language.

English language has a crucial role to play in effective vocational education because textbooks and technical manuals used for these programs are mainly written in English language. In our society, those who have a good command of English are revered. Also, eloquence of English language is seen as a passport to admission into prestigious clubs in the country. On this note, it is apparent to say that English language as a means of communication has come to stay.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teaching English in rural areas faces significant challenges, including limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and a lack of English language exposure. Despite the importance of English language proficiency in today's globalized world, rural students often struggle to achieve adequate

English skills, hindering their academic and career prospects. Current research highlights the need for effective strategies to address these challenges, yet there is a scarcity of research specifically focused on the unique context of rural English language teaching. This study aims to investigate the specific challenges faced by English teachers in rural areas, explore the impact of these challenges on student learning outcomes, and

identify effective strategies and resources to support English language teaching in these contexts.

This statement of problem:

1. Identifies the specific challenges faced by English teachers in rural areas.
2. Highlights the significance of addressing these challenges.
3. Clarifies the research gap and need for further investigation.
4. Sets the stage for the research questions and objectives

### **Research Questions**

These are questions which a research project sets to answer. This process requires data collection. The methodology used in answering the questions will also be identified. The research questions for this research project are as follows:

1. Does mother tongue interference affect the teaching of English language?
2. Do secondary schools in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State have adequate teaching facilities and aids for an effective teaching of English language?
3. What is the attitude of the students towards the learning of English language in rural?
4. Are the English teacher-student ratios adequate?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to identify the challenges associated with the teaching of English language in rural areas of Ikpoba-Okha Local government secondary schools amongst which are:

1. Mother tongue interference
2. Students' environment
3. Lack of modern technological facilities
4. Lack of skilled teacher

Having identified the challenges, useful suggestions would be offered as how these challenges could be solved and improved upon.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study is to be carried out in kpoba-Okha Local government area of Edo State: it will critically examine the challenges of teaching English language in rural areas.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

Geographic constraints: the rural location may make it difficult for the researcher to access some very remote areas as well as conducting field work.

Limited Technology Integration: such as computers and Internet may restrict the use of digital resource and innovative teaching methods. accessing and

Cultural and Social Factors: these factors are likely to influence respondents' willingness to share information or participate.

Language Barrier: the predominant use of pidgin and native languages may pose a difficulty in understanding and communication for the researcher who primarily speaks English.

## **Significance of the Study**

When one considers the fact that effective teaching of English language is as important in secondary schools located in rural areas, irrespective of location, the subject should be well thought. Thus, attempts have been made to find out the challenges of teaching English language in rural areas.

The significance of this study is that it will help teachers, students, government, agencies, parents and educational planners in identifying the challenges associated in the teaching of English and efforts would be made to solve these challenges and improve teaching and learning, not only in this selected area of Edo State, but in Nigeria as a whole. The information gained by the researcher in carrying out this study will enable her contribute to the solving of some educational problem in the future.

## **Definition of Terms**

A. Rural Areas: A geographical region located outside cities and towns and sometimes lack basic amenities, with low population density.

B. Teaching: it is a way of giving lessons in a class to a learner. It is the

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Summary of Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents the review of related literature under the following sub-headings:

- Impartation of knowledge to a learner in a class.
- The Issue of Unavailability of Qualified Teachers
- Mother Tongue Interference
- The issue of Teaching Aids
- Lack of Motivation
- Students Environment and Family Background
- Language Policy and the Position of English Language in Nigeria
- Solutions to the Challenges of Teaching English Language in Rural Areas

#### The Issue of Unavailability of Qualified Teachers

Teachers play essential roles in the educational system. The impact of teachers on students should not be underrated. This, schools and other educational institutions should consider the qualification, training and experience of prospective teachers during their recruitment exercise. The effect of unqualified teachers can lead to unprecedented disruption in the academic performance of students persistent and critical low self-esteem and decreased motivation for self-development.

According to Akinsolu (2010), the unavailability of qualified teachers determines the performance of students in schools. A qualified teacher, is a teacher who is equipped with all

necessary teaching qualifications, training and experience required to pass knowledge to pupils. The teacher is an important figure in the teaching and learning process of English language as his role cannot be substituted. Most schools in rural areas have teachers who are just high School leavers with little or no teaching experience or qualification. This is probably because most qualified teachers are unwilling to stay in rural areas due to poor remuneration and lack of access to professional opportunities, and the responsibility to take on multiple duties.

These factors affect their decisions to work or stay in rural areas, and it induced the poor academic performance of pupils in rural areas, thereby compounding the low self-esteem they have by the time they interact with other pupils in urban areas. Adeniyi (2016), says "Nothing can influence character largely by what you are, a teacher of a subject should first possess a full and exact knowledge of the subject he/she wants to teach" A lot research has shown that there is a positive or significant relationship between teachers' qualifications and students' academic performance. Most unqualified teachers lack the competence to deliver quality teaching to their pupils, such teachers have not been trained in employing 21st century skills in teaching.

These observations have demonstrated the cause of students' poor academic performance in rural areas of Ikhoba-Okha local government area of Edo state.

A study done by Adeyemi (2013) in Nigeria reveals that the quality of Education for a teacher is directly related to the quality of instruction in the classroom. It is a fact that the academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence and skills of teaching and commitment of the teacher have effective impact on the learning process of the students. (National Education Policy Nigeria, 1998- 2010). Quality improvement in education depends upon proper training of teachers. Teaching is an art. It can be refined by training and practice. The availability of competent teachers is central in the construction of the educational system.

Esffective teachers produce better performing students. Van den Bergh and Roos (2014) maintained that professional development of teachers can be effective and sustainable, if certain conditions are met (Curwood 2014). Besides the analysis of Van den Bergh and Roos (2014) suggested that the implementation of educational reforms, including reforms associated with technology integration and literacy education, is often dependent upon teachers' skills, values, and cultural models. While hiring of qualified teachers is encouraged for improvement of

academic performance, theories from the study of Firestone (2014) caution that policies to remove ineffective teachers should not reduce autonomy or trust among effective teachers and that evaluations should provide teachers with useful feedback and policy makers with information on the conditions that facilitates good teaching.

English language has acquired the status of a global language keeping in view the growing need and importance of English language in every walk of life. Most of the official correspondence and documentations takes place in English language. A good training is necessary to help a teacher develop his interest and ability for teaching. Qualified English language teachers should be employed. Such teachers should study the needs of their students and prepare their lessons to suit their needs. The teacher should draw up his/her syllabus bearing in mind the abilities and needs of his/her students. A qualified English language teacher should be linguistically alert and should know how language functions, knowing the psychology of a second language learning student in order to do effective teaching of the subject.

These are reasons he or she must be qualified to do the job.

### **Mother Tongue Interference**

The concept "interference" in second language acquisition refers to the influence of one language or variety on another in the speech of bilinguals. Interference is due to unfamiliarity with the second language, as such language structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the second language (English language) and that where their structures differ, it becomes difficult for the English language user. Interference can be conscious or unconscious. In the former, speakers may guess when producing speech or text in English language because they have not learned or have forgotten its proper usage. A close observation suggests that a mother tongue must not necessarily be the language of the parents of the child. This may suggest why D'Souza (2012) sees mother tongue as language that a child learns from childhood and not necessarily the language of the parents of such a child.

According to Odewumi (2011), the mother tongue is the language which the child can communicate ideas and feeling with ease. In his work, Odewumi (2011) seems to support the

National Policy on Education that calls for the use of mother tongue or language of immediate community. Krashen (2014), asserts that children learn English language much more effectively if they continue to develop their proficiency in their mother tongue. This follows

that mother tongue is not entirely a negative phenomenon in the learning process.

Sutra, (2010) sees mother tongue as a language that shapes a child's understanding of the world. Though taught without aids like blackboard, teachers, timetable, classroom and curriculum and so on, children tend to be 100% good users of their mother tongue and can carry out their daily activities. These suggests that mother tongue becomes a habit which is deeply embedded in a learner which also implies that he or she may sometimes, inevitably transfer some of the traits of the mother tongue into the English language.

Onwubiko (2011) sees the influence of mother tongue on English language as a result of some ethnic groups over indulgence in their primitive cultures in addition to a misguided passion to create impression that they cherish their rich cultural heritage. The sad thing is that grow to have their mindset conditioned in such manner. Okoye (2012) also stressed that mother tongue constraint has in every possible assessment, endangered a staggering and persistent decline in the quality of English language spoken in Africa. And this is why in all levels of schools in Nigeria, many Learners have so much difficulty with their communication skills in English language such that they cannot function effectively in the academic use of English language.

From the foregoing so far, the importance of the topic, mother tongue interference in the teaching of English language cannot be overemphasized. Language is said to be universal, so these issues are not peculiar to Nigerian context. It is therefore necessary, to tackle the issue of interference to bring a free flow from mother tongue to the learning and teaching of English language among children. Errors may occur due to the fact that some of the English sounds are not found in their mother tongue. It has rightly been observed that in the first language learning, the learner is highly motivated and is surrounded by a conducive linguistics environment, the kind that the second language lacks. This implies that though language teaching and learning are generally difficult, second language teaching and learning has greater problems which results in the greater number of errors in performance of secondary school language users (Adeyomi and Adetunde, 2017).

Onike (2009) posited that interference is a psycho-linguistic concept which is a reality in language teaching and learning. Errors in second language learning are partly attributable to interference. Theorists of interference believe that acquisition of the first language usually affects performance in subsequent language acquired. In other words, interference is a term which refers to a situation whereby two different languages overlap. Interference is either positive or negative transfer of the linguistic knowledge of a language into performance in the other. Negative transfer pertains to difficulties in using the target language which are mainly attributed to mother tongue interference.

However, it is an indisputable statement of fact that the complex and multiple of languages spoken in Africa have to a great extent influence their use of English language. Alabi (2012), says that no matter how people tried to speak English language, it cannot be the same as the native speakers will speak it because the variety of English language used in Nigeria has been indigenized to suit Nigerian environment. The use of mother tongue is very common in schools in rural areas because these schools are located in villages where their local dialect is their only means of communication. As soon as the students leave the restriction of the classroom, they usually revert to their mother tongue. One of the constant challenges of the school teacher is the limited opportunity his pupils have of using English language. After school hours, most of students go home where they hardly speak English language. Even outside the classroom, and during break period students communicate among themselves with their mother tongue and therefore, finds taught in English language.

### **The Issue of Teaching Aids difficult to understand**

Teaching Aids are also known as instructional materials. As the name implies, Teaching aids are materials which assist teachers to make a lesson explicit to the learners. They are those materials or resources used in any teaching exercise to promote greater understanding of the learning process. National Teachers Institution (NTI 2013) describes instructional materials as all the resources a teacher uses to help his/herself explain or evaluate the topic, content or subject to the learner so that the learner is able to fully comprehend the topic, content or subject. Yusuf (2012), views instructional materials as those things that the teacher uses to enhance students

learning such as books, charts, audio-visual aids, resource person and so on. The influence of instructional materials in promoting students' academic performance in teaching and learning in educational development is indisputable. The teaching of English language in secondary schools needs to be properly handled. The materials used by teachers to teach and drive home their subject points at the secondary School level of our educational system is incontrovertibly a Paramount issue in practical interaction and successful transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the learners.

Instructional materials includes both Visuals and Audio-visuals such as pictures, flashcards, posters, charts, tape recorder, radio, video, television, computers among others. English language is an important and fundamental subject that must be credited by students before gaining admission into any tertiary institution. The importance and technicality of this subject makes it necessary that relevant instructional materials should be used to teach it to the learners. The teaching of English language without the use of instructional materials, may certainly result in poor academic achievement. Qualified English language teacher no matter how well trained, will be unable to put his ideas into practice if the school setting lacks the equipment and materials necessary for him to translate his competence into reality.

Obioha (2016) and Ogunleye (2012) reported that there were inadequate resources (Teaching aids inclusive) for teaching in most secondary schools in Nigeria. They further stated that the available ones are not usually in good conditions. There is the need therefore, for improvisation. There are no facilities or equipment for language teaching and learning. For instance, many schools in the rural areas are ill-equipped with facilities like libraries, language laboratories, audio-visual aids. Unavailability of these infrastructure and changes in curriculum by the Government, can also cause the poor performance in English language.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is defined as the process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. There are three major components to motivation and they are: activation, persistence, and intensity. Activation involves the decision to initiate a behaviour, such as enrolling in an education class. Persistence is the continued efforts towards a goal even though obstacles may

exist, such as taking more education courses in order to earn a degree, although, it requires a significant investment of time, energy and resources. While intensity can be seen in the concentration and vigor that goes into pursuing a goal. For example, one student might coast by without much effort, another student will study regularly, participate in discussions and take advantage of research opportunities outside the class. The same can be said of teachers in schools.

Different types of motivation are frequently described as being either Intrinsic or Extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation arises from within an individual. It is characterized as that which comes from within the individual and it inspires action even when there is no perceived reward. Intrinsic motivation come naturally from within the individual without any reinforcement. It is the desire to be to be effective and to perform well for its own sake, it is manifested in behaviours such as play exploration and challenge seeking. Intrinsically motivated students participate in educational activities because they are eager to expand their knowledge and as a result, improve their quality of life. The source of intrinsic motivation might be found within the learner or in the demands of the activity at hand. For instance, students who enjoy reading do so for intrinsic reasons, they find reading enjoyable and desire to do it even when there is no reward associated with it.

Extrinsic motivation is the term for behaviour that is motivated by benefits from outside sources, such as cash, fame, accolades and grades. Unlike intrinsic motivation which comes from within the person, extrinsic motivation comes from outside the person. Extrinsic motivation arises when a person is driven to act in a certain way or engage in a certain activity in order to obtain rewards or avoid punishment. The behaviour is driven by a desire to benefit from a positive outcome or prevent a negative one, the person act in a certain way not because they love it or find it rewarding, but rather in order to obtain something positive in exchange to stay away from something negative. According to Edigin (2011), extrinsic motivation refers to force which exist outside the individual as well as factors controlled by the people themselves.

Motivation in education can have several effects on how students learn and their behaviour towards subjects' matter. Ormord (2003), every educator needs to be concerned about motivation. It is a quality that students, teachers, parents and members of the community must have if education system is to prepare young people adequately for the challenges and demands of the society. These different groups of people produce and use motivation in very different ways.

Parents must be driven to monitor their children's academic progress, instructors must be motivated to guarantee that every part of their schools keeps becoming better, and students' must be motivated for learning to take place.

Motivating students to learn and making them see the benefits of acquiring English language as a second language aside their first language which is the mother tongue, is necessary because most students in rural areas see no need in learning English language due to them being able to communicate effectively among themselves with their local dialect. Evaluating students academic achievement is another way of motivating them to better. This method is used by teachers to achieve a variety of purpose and will not doubt necessitate effective use of the method. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that teachers evaluate the use of this teaching method.

### **Students Environment and Family Background**

A child's environment interferes with his language learning. It is because outside the school, the child is faced with various languages quite different from English language. According to Oduwaye (2011), learning environment refers to the context in which learning takes place. It is the surrounding circumstances which affects learning. An environment in which learning occurs can be wide as particular society and may be viewed as an educational institution. A learning environment is the condition and influence which a learner comes in contact with, resulting in a series of complex interaction and ensuring a permanent change in behaviour. This implies that an individual's acquisition of skills, knowledge and competence would cur under certain conditions and influences (Nwadiani, 2006). In view of Obanya (2007), education does not occur in vacuum. It grows in a socio-political economic environment and there can be no education without a society. Thus, a society provides a macro environment in which a school is located and from which it draws it resources. Within the school, there is also a macro environment which influences the operation and the extent to which educational objectives can be achieved.

Therefore, the development of an individual, through knowledge and skills acquisition in schools, could be influenced positively or negativity by the socio-political and economic condition of the environment. This is probably why Akutue (2010), stated that "A good learning environment has

the advantage of fostering desirable behaviour and attitude, developing problem solving, smile and creative thought, encouraging students' interrelationships and fostering centered methods.

In the options of Cohem (2016), learning environment is the quality and character of school life. It is based on patterns of school, life experiences and reflect norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationship, teachings, learning, leadership practices and organization structures. A sustainable, conducive school environment fosters a child's development and learning necessary for a productive, contributing and a satisfying life in a democratic society. Learning environment promotes students learning. Conducive learning environment powerfully affects motivation to learn. For example, activities like community service learning, students value and engagement can enhance learning environment by providing students with opportunities to participate in the learning process and construct their own knowledge of social and government system.

The relative social class of a student also affect his/her academic achievement. Students from low socio-economic background who attend poorly funded schools, like those in rural areas, most times do not perform as well as students from higher social classes. Eanom (2015), students' motivation for learning is also regarded as one of the most critical determinants, which contributes to the success and quality of any learning outcome. Ducason and Achilles (2008), describes teachers and the physical environment as the two major tools that can bring about new outcomes in teaching and learning process.

Family plays the most important role in children's development and education. Parental involvement in children's learning is a key in improving children's academic attainment and achievements, as well as their overall behaviour and attendance. The role of parents during a child's earliest years is the single biggest influence on their development. According to David (2011), the role of family on children is very much influential. He described that, changes roles of family have great impact on children's development and education. Families where there is no strong foundation of love, children there learn about family bonding and mutual trust. Family background also helps in developing children's mental and intellectual strength.

Family background is very important to grow the sense of learning in learners as they are greatly influenced by it. Parent's positive attitude, education and awareness according to individual requirements and needs provides constant encouragement and support for the learners. A learner

whose family members are habituated to use English language at home, feels encouraged to learn English language which facilitates learning process.

### **Language Policy and the Position of English language in Nigeria**

Language does not only serve as a medium of instruction in the school, it also exists as a subject taught through language. In addition, some fraction of population is made up of other languages that are nevertheless able to speak at least one of the major languages as an additional language. The next in number and importance to the three major languages are about ten main languages that serve as the principal languages of some states. Such languages include Edo, Kanuri, Ibibio, Efik, Tiv, Ijaw, Fulfulde, Urhobo, Nupe, and Igala. (Bamgbose, 2018). It can be noted that English language has come to stay in Nigeria as the official language and has even taken the place of the national languages which necessitate the importance of a driving policy to enhance teaching and learning of English language. English language is the medium of instruction after the first three years of primary school straight into the tertiary institution. It is taught as a subject as well as using the language to teach all other school subjects. The three national languages are also taught according to regions in the junior secondary school, at the senior secondary schools, students are expected to study one of the major languages as an elective, while at the Tertiary level however, students have the choice of studying any of the languages as a major (NPE, 2013).

The introduction of English language was a product of Evangelical Expediency, in which missionaries passed the language baton to Colonial Administrators until English language became the official language of the country. It is noted that even after political independence from the colonial masters, English language still occupies pride of place in Nigeria, especially in the formal school system. The fact that Nigeria is a multilingual country with many local languages stated above, with the Constitution and National Policy on Education laying emphasis on three major Nigerian languages, the importance of English language in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized being the official language (Oluwole, 2018).

Amuseghan (2017) summed up the place of English language that for most learners, English language is a second language. It becomes expedient to provide conducive environment for them at each educational level to make a way of improvement in the four skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing. To determine the success or otherwise of the aims, goals, objectives, methods and materials of English curriculum, a study of the mass accumulation of the four skills as well as different levels (phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, Lexis and semantics) is an evitable task. Most ESL curriculum reforms over the years have sought to balance between linguistic competence and communicative competence. Contrary to this expectation, communicative competence is lacking in most Nigerian school children.

The importance of English language acquisition as a stepping stone for proficiency in other school subjects cannot be overemphasized. The knowledge is important for educational, economical and national development (Oluwole, 2018). The importance has further been emphasized because, through the use of English language, improving communication among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria can be ensured.

### **Solutions to the Challenges of Teaching English language in Rural Areas**

Generally, secondary schools in Nigeria are far behind in offering multiple pathways to the teaching and learning of English language as a second language. The effect of this is that, secondary School students who find their at into the universities are already at disadvantages, dues to poor background and preparation in language education.

There is a gainsaying fact that provision of adequate and qualified number of teachers in rural areas would go a long way in salvaging the already deplorable situation. Constant training and re-training programs and conference will help sharpen up teachers' ability. It helps them to be up to date with the ever-changing nature and structures of the English language. It is important for teachers of English language to be well grounded on the problem of language interference. This is because their knowledge on this will help them develop themselves to use the language above it, and also show the areas of strength and weaknesses of the students in the language such that they would commit themselves more to solving the problems.

Debates and impromptu speeches should be organized by teachers to improve students speaking skills. There is an urgent need for leaders in the local government area to complement the ever-decreasing attention of the Federal government towards these schools. The local government can embark on the provision of conducive structures for the schools. The state government on its part can give scholarships to students and teachers in the department of English language as a way of motivation to encourage the development of learning and adequate teaching of English language in rural areas. Stimulation of students' interest in the learning of English language in khoba-Okha Local Government Area is very imperative. School debates and quiz competitions should be enshrined in the school curriculum. This will enhance their development of super communication skills.

Adequate provision of teaching Aids/instructional materials. There should be adequate supply of good and effective teaching aids like computers, audio and video taped, good and functional libraries and language laboratories by the government to facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools. With the total absence of modern instructional technology in the classrooms, students only listen to their teachers' rhetoric. They are left to conceptualize the message of the lesson according to capacity of their poorly developed brains and ideas.

### **Summary of Review of Related Literature**

This chapter reviewed the following subtopics in the review of related literature: The issue of unavailability of qualified teachers, mother tongue interference, the issue of teaching aids, lack of motivation, students environment and family background, language policy and the position of English language in Nigeria. However, this chapter explores some possible solutions to the challenges of teaching English language in rural areas of Ikhoba-Okha local government. Employing adequate qualified teachers accompanied with a rich- constant training programs which would be aimed at sharpening up the skills and abilities of the teachers. It was also noted in this study, that for effective teaching and learning to take place, the government should intervene in school affairs by building structures and providing instructional materials and facilities in secondary schools in Ikhoba-okha local government area. area,

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the methods and procedures that the researcher employed in carrying out this study. They are as follow:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Research Instrument
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Validity of Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Research Design

#### **Method of Data Analysis**

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design involves observing and collecting data on a given topic without manipulating variables. This design is considered suitable for this study as it helped to collect data which helped investigate the challenges of teaching English Language in rural areas using Ikpoba- Okha Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study.

#### **Population of the Study**

The population for the study comprised of all English Language teachers in the eighteen (18) public secondary schools in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size was made up of sixty (60) English Language selected with the aid of the purposive sampling technique from eight (8) junior and senior secondary schools in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. Teachers

### **Research Instrument**

This study utilized a well-structured and objective questionnaire called the "Challenges of Teaching English Language in Rural Areas Questionnaire" (CTELRAQ). The questionnaire was structured in two sections: Section A and Section B. The first section collected the demographic data of the teachers, while the second section elicited information about the challenges of teaching English Language in rural areas using Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study. The responses were rated on a modified Likert 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

### **Validity of Instrument**

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, the instrument was submitted to the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, who reviewed it for clarity, relevance to the research objectives, and appropriate coverage of the intended content. Their feedback ensured the instrument accurately measured the desired information. Following revisions, corrections and approval, the instrument was ready for data collection.

### **Method of Data Collection**

In collecting data for this research, the researcher administered the instrument for this study to all the sampled respondents. The questionnaire consisted of the questions related to the study only. Upon answering the questionnaires, the researcher retrieved all the copies from the respondents

and proceeded for data analysis.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Data collected from the research questions was analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation) in order to present the data meaningfully.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of data using the statistical procedures discussed earlier in chapter three. The analysis of the data is presented in three sections. The first section deals with the presentation of respondents' demographic data, the second section deals with the presentation of results and the third section presents the discussion of findings.

**Table 1: Respondent's Gender**

Gender		Frequency	Percent
Valid	MALE	23	38.3
	FEMALE	37	61.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 1 shows demographic data of the respondents based on gender. Out of the 60 respondents that were sampled, 23 of them were males who make up 38.3% of the sample size, while 37 were females, making the rest 61.7% of 100.0

**Table 2:** Respondents' Teaching Qualification

<b>Teacher's Qualification</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>NCE</b>	13	21.7
	<b>B. A. Ed.</b>	20	33.3
	<b>B. Ed.</b>	27	45.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows demographic data of the respondents based on their teaching qualification. Out of the 60 respondents that were sampled, 13 (21.7%) of them were NCE holders, 20 (33.3%) were B. A. (Ed.) holders, while the 42

**Research Question One:** Does mother tongue interference affect the

**Table 3:** Mean and standard deviation On whether mother tongue interference affects the teaching of English Language in rural areas

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.	Decision
1.	The mother tongue interferes with students' pronunciation of certain English words.	28	15	12	5	3.10	1.003	Agree
2.	Students in rural areas speak their mother tongue in class for easy understanding.	18	17	10	15	2.63	1.164	Disagree
3	Mother tongue interference affects students' learning motivation.	25	10	15	10	2.83	1.152	Disagree
4.	Mother tongue affects students' comprehension of English language.	27	16	10	7	3.05	1.048	Agree

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024*

*Note: N = 60. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. Weighted average =  $11.61/4 = 2.9$*

Table 3 shows the data collected from the survey on whether mother tongue interference affects the teaching of English Language in rural areas. Items 1 understanding. and 4 on the table of the respective mean scores 3.10 and 3.05 were agreed on by the respondents. That is, they believe that the mother tongue interferes with students' pronunciation of certain English words and it affects students' comprehension of English language. However, as revealed on the table in items 2 (M= 2.63) and 3 (M= 2.83), the respondents do not think students in rural areas speak their

mother tongue in class for easy understanding and that mother tongue does not affect their learning motivation. The least mean on the table is on item 2, while the highest mean score on the table is on item 1. The weighted average of the table is 2.9, which is higher than 2.5. Hence, the overall mean or weighted average of the table indicates that mother tongue interference affects the teaching of English Language in rural areas.

**Research Question Two:** Do secondary schools in rural areas have adequate teaching facilities/aids for an effective teaching of English Language?

**Table 4:** Mean and standard deviation on whether secondary schools in rural areas have adequate teaching facilities/aids for an effective teaching of 9. English Language Schools in rural areas are 30 neglected by the government.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.	Decision
5.	Schools in rural areas are neglected by the government.	30	18	10	2	3.27	.861	Agree
6.	There is no provision of adequate teaching facilities/aids by the government.	27	18	10	5	3.2	.976	Agree
7.	Students do not have the recommended textbooks for learning.	17	19	14	10	2.72	1.059	Disagree
8.	There is no provision of phonetic laboratory for the teaching of oral English in rural areas.	35	25	0	0	3.58	.497	Agree
9.	The classrooms are not well equipped enough to facilitate the teaching of English language in rural areas.	32	10	10	8	3.10	1.115	Disagree

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024*

*Note: N = 60. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. Weighted average =  $15.79/5 = 3.2$*

Table 4 shows the data collected from the survey on whether secondary schools in rural areas have adequate teaching facilities/aids for an effective teaching of English Language. Majority of the respondents agreed on items 5, 6 and 8 of the respective mean scores 3.27, 3.2 and 3.58. By

implication, the respondents opine that schols in rural areas are neglected by the government, there is no provision of adequate teaching facilities/aids by the government, and that there is no provision of phonetic laboratory for the teaching of oral English in rural areas. On the other hand, they disagreed on items 7 and 9 on the table. The least mean on the table is on item 7 (M-2.72), while the highest mean score on the table is on item 8 (M-3.58). The weighted average of the table is 3.2, which is higher than 2.5. Hence, the overall mean or weighted average of the table indicates that secondary schools in rural areas do not have adequate teaching facilities/aids for an effective teaching of English Language.

**Research Question Three:** What is the attitude of students towards the learning of English language in rural areas?

**Table 5:** Mean and standard deviation on the attitude of students towards the learning of English language in rural areas

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.	Decision
10.	Students in rural areas are not willing to learn English language.	28	17	5	10	3.05	1.111	Disagree
11.	Students in rural areas need to be motivated to learn English language as a second language.	30	18	7	5	3.22	.958	Agree

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024*

*Note: N = 60. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. Weighted average =  $6.27/2 = 3.14$*

Table 5 shows that item 10 (M=3.05) was disagreed on by the respondents. Thus, they disagree with the notion that students in rural areas are not willing to learn English language. They however agreed on the notion on item 11 (M=3.22) which state that students in rural areas need to be motivated to learn English language as a second language. The least mean on the table is on item 10, while the highest mean score on the table is on item 11. The weighted average of the table is 3.14, which is higher than 2.5. Hence, the overall mean or weighted average of the table indicates the attitude of students towards the learning of English language in rural areas.

**Research Question Four:** Are the English language teacher-student ratio adequate?

**Table 6: Mean and Standard deviation on whether the English Language teacher-student ratios are adequate**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. D.	Decision
12.	I manage 10 to 30 students in my class.	5	5	12	38	1.62	.958	Disagree
13.	I manage 30 to 50 students in my class.	17	10	13	20	2.40	1.224	Agree
14.	I manage 50 to 70 students in my class.	20	13	17	10	2.72	1.106	Agree
15.	I manage 70 and above students in my class.	29	18	6	7	3.15	1.022	Agree

*Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024*

Table 6 shows the data collected on the survey carried out on the English language teacher-student ratios in the classroom. The respondents agreed on items 13, 14 and 15 of the respective mean scores 2.40, 2.72 and 3.15. Majority of the respondents manage large classroom sizes ranging from 30 to 50 students, 50 to 70 and 70 and above. Only few of the respondents manage small classroom size. The least mean on the table is on item 12 (M=1.62), while the highest mean score on the table is on item 15 (M=3.15). The weighted average of the table is 2.2, which is less than 2.5. Hence, the overall mean or weighted average of the table indicates that the English language teacher-student ratios are not adequate.

## Discussion of Findings

The findings from this survey are similar to Amon (2019) and Oyewole (2017). First, it is clear from the study's main findings that mother tongue interference affects ESL learners. The impact of mother tongue interference on students' pronunciation and language comprehension of English is demonstrated by the first research question. The results in Table 1 demonstrate this, demonstrating how students' mother tongues affect their ability to speak and understand English. This is consistent with the findings of Sharman's 1957 report, which stated that no language could replace a person's native tongue and that no educational system could afford to ignore a person's native tongue without endangering a child's mental development. Regarding the provision of educational facilities, the second research question highlights the difficulties that rural areas face. According to the study, there are not enough educational facilities available in rural areas for English language instruction and learning. This is consistent with the findings of (Halik & Nusrath, 2020), who pointed out that equal access to learning resources and facilities, similar to those provided to urban or town Senools, is important to support English language learning and close the achievement and literacy gaps between rural and urban areas. To improve learning and learning in rural settings, Endriyati et al. (2019) recommended that rural schools submit a request for appropriate school facilities and equipment to the local education department. In order to create more engaging and productive English lessons, a variety of teaching aids and resources, including ICT and visual aids, should be used in English classrooms (Khalid, 2017).

Additionally, the survey's results highlight the problem of rural students' unfavorable attitudes toward learning English. This has grown to be a worrying issue that makes teaching them English extremely difficult. Rural students have low English quality because they believe that English is a trivial, dull, challenging, and difficult subject in school. As a result, they are not motivated or interested in learning the language (Febriana et al., 2018; Cheng et al., 2016; Halik & Nusrath, 2020). The results of this study indicate that it is important for English language instructors to inspire their students in any way that makes learning the language engaging for them. An additional issue that has been discovered to have a detrimental effect on students' motivation to learn English is an unhealthy student-teacher relationship. According to Cheng et al. (2016), students who experience anxiety during their English language acquisition do so because they fear their English language teachers.

The results of the last research question (table 6) indicate that there are insufficient English language teachers to students in rural areas. Around 30 to 50, 50 to 70, and more students make up the majority of the teachers' large class sizes. Few respondents are able to manage small class sizes. This is not in line with the 1:30 teacher-student ratio recommended. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommend 1:30; 1:35 teacher-pupil/student ratio for primary and secondary schools respectively. This will facilitate effective communication between the teacher and the students. Aziz, Swanto, and Azhar (2019) found that students' learning has been demotivated by the challenging learning environment in rural schools. which includes packed classrooms.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study investigated the challenges of teaching English Language in rural areas using Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study. To achieve the purpose of the study, four (4) research questions were raised to guide the study. A questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was face validated to determine appropriateness, clarity and suitability of the items. The questionnaires were distributed to sixty (60) secondary school teachers in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. An analysis of data was done using frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

#### Findings

The following is a summary of findings from the study:

- That mother tongue interference affects rural students' pronunciation of certain English words and comprehension of English language.
- That there is not enough provision of school facilities for the adequate teaching and learning of English Language in rural areas.
- That the issue of rural students negative attitudes towards English Language learning is a major challenge in teaching English to them.
- That the English language teacher-student ratios in rural areas are inadequate. Hence, this poses as a challenging factor for the teaching and learning of English language in rural areas. This also affects the students' motivation in their learning.

## **Conclusion**

The study investigated the challenges of teaching English Language in rural areas using Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State as a case study. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that mother tongue interference affects rural students' pronunciation of certain English words and comprehension of English language in kpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. It was also concluded that there is not enough provision of school facilities for the adequate teaching and learning of English Language in rural areas and that students' attitude of students towards the learning of English language in rural areas is poor. Lastly, the researcher concluded that the extent large class size affects the quality of teaching and assessment of students' learning in public secondary schools in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made: The phonological, orthographical, vocabulary, and grammatical distinctions between English and the students' native tongue should be explained to them.

- To satisfy the needs of the students and their aspirations, the government should provide large, suitable classrooms with sufficient supplies and school facilities.
- It is important to provide positive reinforcement to students so they will feel motivated to learn and communicate in English.
- In order to help students develop strong communication skills, teachers should devise interactive teaching strategies that allow students to engage with one another in the language.

As required by the national education policy, the proper ratio of one teacher to every 35 students is hereby encouraged. This will make it easier and less challenging for teachers to provide effective teaching and maintain proper classroom management.

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