

Lecturers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Revised English Language Nigeria Certificate in Education Curriculum

Oris Oritsebemigho Tom-Lawyer

School of Language, Literature and International Studies,

University of Central Lancashire, Preston. United Kingdom.

* E-mail of the corresponding author: ootom-lawyer@uclan.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper examines the perceptions of English language lecturers from three colleges of education on the factors that inhibit the implementation process of the revised English Language Nigeria Certificate Education Curriculum. The study which is underpinned by the CIPP Evaluation model is part of a larger study on the evaluation of the curriculum. The Nigeria Certificate in Education is the minimum qualification for teaching in Nigeria (National Policy Brief, 2005). The concern for the quality of teachers in Nigeria is crucial as the Nigerian government recognized the problem of inadequate training of teachers at the NCE level in 2010 and proposed to obliterate the colleges of education and phase out the Nigeria Certificate in Education (The Nigerian Voice Online, 2010).

The recent review of the Nigeria Certificate in Education is a laudable feat; however, the effective implementation of the provisions of the revised curriculum may be a source of apprehension (Tom-Lawyer, 2014) as there are factors that limit its implementation. Therefore, this paper views the perspectives of the lecturers on the factors that impede the implementation process of the curriculum and proposes measures to enhance its implementation.

The study adopted a mixed study approach, within the framework of the CIPP model while utilizing a case study. The sample comprised twenty lecturers from three colleges of education in the country drawn through purposive sampling. The instruments used were questionnaires, interviews, field notes and observation checklists and documentary analysis. The methods of analysis were descriptive/ inferential and thematic content analysis.

The findings showed that the views of the lecturers on the implementation of the curriculum were that in-service training was not available for lecturers; the abilities of the students influenced their teaching. It recommends among other things, an immediate review of the admission policy and an extensive involvement of the lecturers in the future review of the curriculum.

Keywords: Teacher preparation, English standards and Curriculum implementation.

1. Introduction

The Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) is the minimum qualification for teaching in Nigeria (National Policy Brief, 2005). The recent review of the NCE Minimum Standards documents is a laudable feat that will enhance uniform practice in all the colleges (NCE Curriculum Implementation Framework, 2012).

The cause of the abysmal performance of Nigerian students in English language has been attributed to a number of factors, which are multi-dimensional ((Ayodele, 1998; West African Examination Council, 1999; Adenuga, 2002; Adekola, 2012; Ajayi, 2012; Asikhia, 2012 & Ajayi & Osalusi, 2013). The present focus on the adequate preparation and training of English language teachers (Fakeye, 2012 & Nta, Oden, Egbe & Ebuta, 2012) is gaining currency. The determination of the ineffective implementation of the NCE English Language Curriculum as the cause of the poor performance of Nigerian students in external English language examinations is what this paper seeks to highlight (Tom-Lawyer, 2014).

The implementation of the curriculum documents is to a great extent dependent on the lecturers (Frick, 2007), who are expected to translate policies into practice in the classrooms. Therefore, their perceptions on the implementation of the curriculum need examination as scholars have identified factors that influence curriculum innovations (Chang, 2011; Fullan, 2001; Karavas- Doukas, 1995; Owston, 2007; White et al., 1991; cited in Orafi, 2013), factors that influence ELT curriculum innovations (Orafi, 2013) and factors that influence curriculum implementation in Nigeria (Ogar & Aniefiok, 2012; Emeh, Isangadi, Asuquo, Agba & Ogaboh (2011). The focus of this study is on teacher related factors that impede the effective implementation of the revised curriculum.

2.1 English Standards in Schools

The teaching and learning of English may be the greatest endeavour in the world, when considered in terms of the population of the students and teachers, the hours expended and the geographical dispersion (Common

wealth Conference 1961, cited in Ogunsiji, 2010). English Language is a major language that cuts across all levels of education in Nigeria. It is the first official language and its significance cannot be over emphasized as the transition from one level of education to the other demands a possession of the knowledge of the language.

The origin of English in Nigeria is traceable to colonialism in the mid nineteenth century (Omodiaogbe, 1992). Its use as a medium of education is the consequence of the 1882 Education Code. The language was taught at the first elementary school established by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in Badagry (Tomori, 1981, cited in Aloba, 2010). It possesses the status of being the language of commerce, judiciary, education, government, medium of instruction and a lingua franca 'by default' (Obadare, 2011, p.10). It is the foundation of the schooling system in Nigeria (Jegede 1990, cited in Obadare, 2011).

According to Obadare (2011) English is used for the following purposes in Nigeria:

- a. A stepping stone for the acquisition of higher education in Nigeria (Jegede, 1990).
- b. An intermediary in Nigeria's multilingual setting
- c. A passport for educational attainment and employment (Adegbija, 1994).

At the primary level, Akere (1995) noted that students are deficient in the possession of the four language skills. The same situation exists at the secondary level as Mohammed (1995) asserts that most entrants into the secondary schools have little or lack the knowledge of the language. The teaching and learning of English is plagued with many challenges at the secondary level (Kolawole, 1998). An evidence of the challenges confronting the teaching of the language in Nigeria is the rate of failure in external English examinations, which is high as well as the students' inability to communicate effectively in the language (Ajibola, 2010). Research has shown that the achievement level of learners at the senior secondary level in Nigeria over the past sixty years has been very low as not much learning has been achieved (Ayodele 1988; Bamidele 1988; Lambo 1989; Bamidele 1990; Jowith 1991, Bamgbose et al 1995; Babatunde 2001 & 2002; Dadzie & Awonusi, 2004 and JINESA from 2005-2010 cited in Babatunde, 2012).

For years, there has been a drop in the performance of students in the language and this has been of concern to both public and private bodies, as can be seen in the remark of Obanya (1982), who commenting on the performance of students in the language declares that despite the fact that emphasis has been placed on English; publicly and officially, schools do not seem to be turning out enough students, who possess competence in the language; students have not been performing satisfactorily in external exams and their communication in the language is below the standard that will be considered sound by other users of the language.

It has been noted by Akeredolu- Ala (2007), that since 1980, the decline in the standard of English has been observed among Nigerians generally; and particularly, students. This corroborates the point of Akere (1993, cited in Awonusi 2004; Obadare 2011, p. 15) that 'there is evidence everywhere that the standard of English expression is very poor and students lack the proper knowledge of the communicative tasks at the various levels of education'. Research has revealed that academics such as Mvungi (1982 & Osbiston, 1980 cited in Wilson, 2012) have contended that a corollary of the lack of mastery of English would be underachievement in academic subjects.

It has been pointed out by Babatunde (2012) that the incompetence of Nigerian students in English language is a reflection of the mass failure of students in WAEC/NECO SSS examination in English. This also inadvertently affects the achievement rate of students in other subjects, where English is used as a medium of instruction. He further claims that the teaching/learning of the language is deficient because it has not been able to satisfy the communicative and developmental needs of Nigerians.

Apart from the incompetence of English Language teachers which this study highlights; other factors associated with the teachers of the language are the insufficient number of English language teachers in the senior secondary school, the low incentives in terms of training and professional/intellectual development of the teachers (Babatunde, 2012). In addition, Olorunfemi (2010), Olaofe (2004) and Alaku (2000) cited in Abiola, 2013) have credited poor achievement in English language to the attitude of teachers, their teaching mode, classroom administration, certification, motivation and so on.

The problem is not limited to secondary schools as Adejare (1995, p. 173) states that 'university entrants are so linguistically defective that many would not have acquired secondary certificate in English two decades ago. But they come in good grades and no thanks to JAMB [Joint Admissions Matriculation Board]; they are literally foisted in the university'.

The attitudes and deficiencies of colleges of education students in the use of English were noted by Obadare (2011)

- The flaws of the students are very obvious in their usage of the language
- The students' preference for the use of their dialects instead of English as a result of their inadequacies in the language.
- The possession of certificates that show 'good' scores in English, (due to emphasis on paper qualification) without competence in the language.

- Student teachers make grammatical blunders during teaching practice, while standing out to teach pupils.
- The attitudes of the students show a poor reading culture (as a result of their poor background) and their incompetency in the language which initiates their preference for the use of their dialects instead of English.

The afore-mentioned attitudes and deficiencies depict the quality of English language teachers at the NCE level in the country. Failure in education has been associated with linguistic failure (Baldeh, 1990). Proficiency in English is required for a person to be regarded as an educated Nigerian for Banjo (1989, p. 3) states that ‘an educated man is one who has had at least a secondary education and any Nigerian, who speaks no English cannot be regarded as being educated’.

English language teaching and learning quality in schools has engendered a decline in English standard in the country. In addition, other factors are the scanty supply of teaching materials, lack of teachers; insufficient in-service training for teachers; incompetent curriculum for schools and the indifference of the learners to the subject (Azubike, 2007) as well as inadequacy of instructional resources (Ekpo, Udosen & Afangideh, 2007, Olaniyan & Obadara, 2008; cited in Agbatogun, 2013).

2.2 Teacher Preparation

The importance of a teacher in any educational setting cannot be overemphasized as they are the pivot on which the system hinges. It has been inferred that ‘quality teacher preparation is one grounded in a sophisticated knowledge of the curriculum and how best it is taught’ (Ramsey, 2000; cited in Kitta & Fussy, 2013, p. 30), this concurs with two essentials of teacher preparation, which are ‘teacher knowledge of the subject to be taught, and knowledge and skill in how to teach that subject’ (NCATE, 2006, p. 4). Therefore, subject content knowledge and the skill in imparting such knowledge are imperative.

Research has shown that the prerequisites for effective teaching are an in-depth knowledge of subject matter and application of the understanding of teaching/learning principles to motivate students’ achievement. (NCATE, 2006). In addition, subject matter knowledge alone has been proposed as inadequate. The emphasis on the adequate training of teachers in developed countries has been associated with their higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; cited in NCATE, 2006).

The declining standard of education in Nigeria has been partially attributed to the teachers in the system. A number of factors attributable to teachers are ‘incessant strike, poor methods of teaching, teachers’ inability to cover syllabus and teachers’ lack of resourcefulness in teaching’ (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2010; cited in Ajayi & Osalusi, 2013, p.2). The focus on the adequacy of the preparation of English language teachers needs a crucial consideration for the remediation of the problems in the educational sector.

In addition to teacher related factors, other drawbacks of the educational system in the country are: ‘policies’ instability, poor implementation of policies, inadequate funding, limited access to schools, inadequate infrastructural facilities, improper planning and implementation, corruption, rising population, unemployment (and) wastage’ (Adeyemi & Ige, 2002; Ajayi & Shofoyeke, 2003; Okebukola, 2002; Saint, Hartnett & Strassner, 2003; Obanya, 2004; Ige, 2011; Ibeh, 2009; cited in Ige, 2012, p. 381).

Teachers in Nigeria are trained formally in tertiary institutions such as universities and colleges of education. They undergo initial training and subsequently, continuous training (in-service training) for their professional development. In this context teacher preparation refers to pre-service training received by teachers for operation in their field.

The adequate preparation of teachers will impact positively on students and the educational sector; on the contrary, the negative impact would be their low quality and ineffectiveness. Therefore, the adequate preparation of teachers is crucial for the achievement of educational goals. At the college of education level, teacher education is administered by federal, state and private institutions with regulation by the National Commission for Colleges of Education. Research abounds on related factors of teacher preparation at the college of education level in the country and myriads of solutions have been proffered for improvement at this level (Dada, n.d; Faniran & Olatunji, 2011 & Ebisine, 2014).

In addition, research has evidenced that the inadequate preparation and training of English language teachers in the country is a factor associated with the low achievement of students in external English language examinations (Osunde & Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, 2013). The most crucial of the problems associated with English language teaching in the country being teacher quality; this stated succinctly is that the inadequate preparation of the teachers of the language has impacted negatively on the teaching of the language (Omoniyi, 2012). Therefore, the adequacy of their preparation cannot be compromised.

It has been asserted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2006, p. 3) that the major findings from research on the preparation of teachers are:

- ‘Teacher preparation helps candidates develop the knowledge and skill
- Well prepared teachers are more likely to remain in teaching

- Well prepared teachers produce higher student achievement
- Leading industrialized nations invest heavily in pre-service preparation'

It is axiomatic that for colleges of education in Nigeria to produce teachers, who possess knowledge and classroom skills, that would remain in the teaching profession and influence students' performance in English language positively; the collaborative efforts of all educational stakeholders in the country will be required. Teachers who are well prepared produce quality students. Hence, the adequate preparation of teachers in colleges of education is imperative. Some benefits of teacher preparation are reduction in teachers' attrition rate and high student achievement (Ingersoll, 2003; cited in NCATE, 2006).

A number of teacher preparation related factors at the college of education level are the status of the teaching profession, underfunding by government, the non-provision of infrastructure in the colleges, admission of poor quality entrants, teaching methods, lack of ICT in the learning process, the curriculum and competency of the lecturers (Tom-Lawyer, 2014).

The issue of underfunding in colleges of education needs elaboration as research has shown that budgetary allocation to education by the Nigerian government has continued to dwindle over the years (Dike, 2002; Emeh et al., 2011). For the colleges to attain maximum efficiency and adequately prepare teachers, the government must be willing to invest heavily in education.

Therefore, as proposed for the United States by Darling-Hammond (2011), the preparation, recruitment and retention of NCE teachers in Nigeria should be systematically organised. The quality of entrants into the colleges should be reviewed and induction training should be provided by employers.

2.3 A Synopsis of Curriculum Implementation

The successful implementation of a curriculum to a large extent is determined by teachers. Curriculum implementation is a well-researched subject that requires the collaborative efforts of all educational stakeholders to ensure its effectiveness. It is necessary to note that implementation is actualized, when there is effective translation of policies into practice (Okebukola, 2004).

There have been failures in curriculum innovations due to ineffective implementation (Karavas-Donkas, 1995; Gorsuch, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2004; cited in Orafi, 2013). Research has evidenced that the rate of success of educational innovations is about 20% (Parish & Arrends, 1983; cited in Lemjinda, 2007). The difficulties of implementation were discovered in the late sixties and early seventies (Kanter, 1983; McLaughlin, 1998; Sarason, 1971; cited in Alan & Wong, 2011).

The change process model was also proposed by Fullan (1982, 2001; cited in Alan & Wong, 2012). Two categories of change are organizational and pedagogical (Brown & McIntyre, 1978; cited in Alan and Wong, 2012) and the revised English language Nigeria Certificate in Education Curriculum is both an organisational and a pedagogical change.

Studies have identified teacher related factors that hinder curriculum implementation (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Cheung & Wong, 2011; Duke, 2004, Fullan, 2001; cited in Alan & Wong, 2012). It has been pointed out that teachers may be deficient in curriculum policy implementation due to a number of factors such as 'their entrenched beliefs, negative attitudes, inappropriate or inadequate skills and knowledge and lack of available resources at the local levels' as they may recognize change and innovation but refuse to implement it (Wang, 2006, p. 28). This demonstrates why their involvement in curriculum development is important.

The factors that affect curriculum implementation at the college of education level in Nigeria may be categorized as internal and external; the external being the factors beyond the limits of the classroom and the internal being classroom related factors (Wang, 2006). The following factors have been identified as impediments to the implementation of teacher education in Nigeria; they are the teacher education curriculum, teacher preparation and recruitment, underfunding, globalization and inadequate knowledge of ICT (Ogar & Effiong, 2012). It is pertinent to note that all these factors have been highlighted in this study

3.0 Research Question

1. What are lecturers' perceptions of the implementation of the English language curriculum?

3.1 Findings:

This evaluation examined the views of the lecturers on the teaching and learning process, the factors that hinder the implementation of the curriculum and suggestions on its improvement. The data was analysed with a view to identifying the factors that hinder the implementation of the curriculum. The factors are:

3.2 Students' Ability

Table 3.0 English Abilities of the Students

| | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative Per cent |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Uncertain | 2 | 10.0 | 15.0 |
| Agree | 9 | 45.0 | 60.0 |
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 40.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 | |

n=20

In response to Q20, most of the lecturers (45% & 40%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the abilities of the students influence their teaching. This is contrary to the English standard given by the students as shown in table 4.1:

Table 3.1 Standard of English

| | Frequency | Per cent | Cumulative Per cent |
|---------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| A1 | 1 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| B2 | 10 | 16.7 | 18.6 |
| B3 | 11 | 18.3 | 37.3 |
| C4 | 13 | 21.7 | 59.3 |
| C5 | 14 | 23.3 | 83.1 |
| C6 | 10 | 16.7 | 100.0 |
| Missing | 1 | 1.7 | |
| Total | 60 | 100.0 | |

n=60

The table shows the standard of English of the students who completed the questionnaire on the courses embodying the four language skills. It indicates that the least grade (16.7%) attained by the students in English is C6. This confirms that they are quite good in English.

3.3 Professional Development

Table 3.2 In-Service Training

| | Frequency | Per cent | C % |
|---|-----------|----------|-------|
| 21. In-service teacher training is not available for me in my college | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 9 | 45.0 | 45.0 |
| disagree | 4 | 20.0 | 65.0 |
| uncertain | 4 | 20.0 | 85.0 |
| agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| Strongly agree | 0 | 0.0 | |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 22. I would like to learn more about computer assisted teaching | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| uncertain | 1 | 5.0 | 10.0 |
| agree | 7 | 35.0 | 45.0 |
| strongly agree | 11 | 55.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |

n=20

The majority of the lecturers (45%, 20% & 50%) do not agree that in-service training is available in the colleges and 35% & 55% have shown their desire for training on computer assisted teaching.

3.4 Teaching Resources

Table 3.3 Teaching Resources

| | Frequency | Per cent | C % |
|---|-----------|----------|-------|
| 15. I have audio –visual resources to use in my language class | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 35.0 | 35.0 |
| disagree | 4 | 20.0 | 55.0 |
| uncertain | 2 | 10.0 | 65.0 |
| agree | 6 | 30.0 | 95.0 |
| strongly agree | 1 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 19.I employ teaching aids and learning resources for teaching language | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| disagree | 3 | 15.0 | 15.0 |
| uncertain | 6 | 30.0 | 45.0 |
| agree | 8 | 40.0 | 85.0 |
| strongly agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 20.Online materials are well integrated into my teaching | | | |
| strongly disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| disagree | 8 | 40.0 | 45.0 |
| uncertain | 2 | 10.0 | 55.0 |
| agree | 5 | 25.0 | 80.0 |
| strongly agree | 4 | 20.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |

n=20

From the data, though the lecturers 40% and 15% agreed and strongly agreed that they employ teaching aids and learning resources for teaching language, they (35% and 20%) strongly disagreed and disagreed that they have audio-visual resources in their language classes and that online materials are well integrated into their teaching.

3.5 Methodology

Table 3.4 Methodology

| Mode/Frequency | Always | Frequently | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | Missing |
|----------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|---------|----------|
| lecture | 5(25.0%) | 9(45.0%) | --- | --- | --- | 6(30.0%) |
| tutorial | ---- | 1(5.0) | 11 (55.0%) | 1(5.0%) | 1(5.0%) | 6(30.0%) |
| project | --- | --- | 6(30%) | 3(15.0%) | 4(6.7%) | 6(30.0%) |
| discussion | 10(50.0%) | 6(30.0%) | 3(15.0%) | --- | --- | 1(5.0%) |
| other | ---- | ---- | --- | --- | --- | ---- |

The table shows that the lecturers 50.0% and 30.0% use the discussion method. This is contrary to the method perceived by the students. The lecturers 55% and 20% also suggested the discussion method as the most effective teaching method. The data (55%) reveals that tutorials are sometimes used by the lecturers. The interviews indicate that they also proposed the lecture method as the least effective and the combination of methods as the most effective

3.6 Instruction Process

Table 3.5 Class Activities

| | Frequency | Per cent | C % |
|---|-----------|----------|-------|
| Students participate actively in class activities | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| disagree | 0 | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| uncertain | 4 | 20.0 | 20.0 |
| agree | 11 | 55.0 | 75.0 |
| Strongly agree | 5 | 25.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| I find it hard to get students involved in group work or pair activities | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 6 | 30.0 | 30.0 |
| disagree | 8 | 40.0 | 70.0 |
| uncertain | 4 | 20.0 | 90.0 |
| agree | 1 | 5.0 | 95.0 |
| strongly agree | 1 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.5 shows that the lecturers 55% and 25% agreed and strongly agreed that students participate in class and 30% & 40% strongly disagreed and disagreed that they find it hard to get students to participate in pair work or group work.

3.7 The New Revised NCE Curriculum

Table 3.6 Orientation on the New Curriculum

| | Frequency | Per cent | C % |
|---|-----------|----------|-------|
| 12. We had training sessions for orientation on the new revised NCE Curriculum | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 7 | 35.0 | 45.0 |
| disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 50.0 |
| uncertain | 1 | 5.0 | 55.0 |
| agree | 6 | 30.0 | 85.0 |
| strongly agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| missing | 2 | 10.0 | |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 13. I am familiar with the new revised NCE Curriculum | | | |
| strongly disagree | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| disagree | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| uncertain | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| agree | 9 | 45.0 | 50.0 |
| strongly agree | 10 | 50.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 14. I feel the NCE Minimum Standards is a clearly written document | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| disagree | 0 | 00.0 | 00.0 |
| uncertain | 2 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| agree | 9 | 45.0 | 55.0 |
| strongly agree | 9 | 45.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |

n=20 (This shows that 20 participants completed the questionnaire)

The table shows that the lecturers (30% & 15%) agreed and strongly agreed that they had no training sessions to orientate them on the implementation of the curriculum. However, 45% and 50% agreed and strongly agreed that they are familiar with the new curriculum while 45% & 45% agreed and strongly agreed that it is clearly written.

3.8 Evaluation and Quality Assurance

Table 3.7 Evaluation of Lecturers

| | Frequency | Per cent | C % |
|--|-----------|----------|-------|
| 26. My students evaluate me anonymously | | | |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| uncertain | 5 | 25.0 | 30.0 |
| agree | 11 | 55.0 | 85.0 |
| strongly agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 27. The Directorate for Internal Assurance Quality monitors my teaching regularly | | | |
| strongly disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| disagree | 1 | 5.0 | 10.0 |
| uncertain | 8 | 40.0 | 50.0 |
| agree | 7 | 35.0 | 85.0 |
| strongly agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| 29. Course accommodation is maintained (no constant room changes) | | | |
| strongly disagree | 5 | 25.0 | 25.0 |
| disagree | 3 | 15.0 | 40.0 |
| uncertain | 3 | 15.0 | 55.0 |
| agree | 6 | 30.0 | 85.0 |
| strongly agree | 3 | 15.0 | 100.0 |
| total | 20 | 100.0 | |

n=20 (This shows that 20 participants completed the questionnaire)

It is apparent from the table that the lecturers (55% & 15%) agreed and strongly agreed that the students evaluate them anonymously. However, half (10% & 40%) do not agree that they are monitored by the directorate for internal quality assurance. In addition, the lecturers (40% & 15%) do not agree and are uncertain respectively that course accommodation is maintained.

3.9 Lecturers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Curriculum

The data shows that the views of the lecturers on the implementation of the curriculum are that in-service training is not available for lecturers; the abilities of the students influence the teaching of the lecturers; more technological knowledge of computer assisted teaching is needed, training sessions were not held for orientation on the new curriculum; audio-visual resources are not available in classes; online materials are not well integrated into teaching and the Directorate for Internal Assurance Quality does not monitor teaching regularly.

The challenges encountered by the lecturers during the implementation of the curriculum were highlighted in the open ended responses. They are funds; large classes, irregular supply of electricity and lack of technological facilities; overloading of courses; non-consultation with lecturers during the design of the curriculum; availability of the curriculum to lecturers; lack of expertise in the use of language lab equipment and merging of courses, which has led to insufficient treatment of topics.

The lecturers gave the following suggestions for the improvement of the curriculum:

- i. There should be a balance between Language and Literature courses
- ii. There should be a review of the curriculum to accommodate 300 level teaching practice exercises.
- iii. There should be more innovations to enhance the teaching and learning process
- iv. There should be regular assessment of the units of course contents
- vi. There should be total adherence to the dictates of the curriculum

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Research Question: What are Lecturers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Curriculum?

4.1.1 Students' Abilities:

The research question demonstrates that the lecturers unanimously agreed that the abilities of the students influence their teaching. This assertion can be viewed in terms of student quality. The assertion is also contrary to the English standard given by the students; who indicated that they are good in English language. The lecturers' view concurs with earlier research that have maintained that the ordinary level examination results of candidates admitted into Nigerian tertiary institutions do not depict the proficiencies of the students in the language (Anyadiegwu, 2012). This perception of the lecturers also verifies the views of Liberman (1956; Akinbote, 2000 cited in Akinbote, 2007) that the admission of these poor quality of candidates has had a

negative effect on the teaching profession. Furthermore, majority of entrants into the colleges are the academically poor students (Obaitan, Oshkoya, Adegbile, & Folorunso, 2014). Moreover, it has been noted by Cahander (1962 & George 1963; cited in Afe, 2006, p. 10) that 'recruiting candidates of high potentials will make possible the production of effective and adaptive teachers'. Hence, the necessity of competent candidates cannot be over-emphasized.

4.1.2 Professional Training:

The lecturers indicated that there is lack of in-service training in the colleges; this finding corroborates an earlier study by Bandele and Faremi (2012) that identified the non-availability of in-service training as one of the factors that affect curriculum implementation. This is also in accord with the study of Eme-Uche (2006), who stated that teachers are not often sponsored for in-service training. Furthermore, Moja (2000) contends that there should be a review of 'in-service education'... as extensive training programmes should substitute 'the highly centralised training workshops' that have teachers as participants (p.28).

The assertion by the lecturers that in-service training is lacking in their schools also violates the National policy on Education (2004, section 8) which states that in-service training will contain the inadequacies of teacher education. Therefore, as recommended by the policy document, the effectiveness of initial teacher training cannot preclude deficiencies in teacher education.

The lecturers' desire to be professionally skilled in the use of the ICT corresponds with the view of Ololube (2006; cited in Adedeji, 2011) that teachers lack technology skills for teaching in classes and that some lecturers are awaiting college authorities to implement computer training programmes (Adedeji, 2011). The excerpts from the interviews below also validate this point. The lecturers were asked the type of training, they would recommend for lecturers:

'I like to see lecturers get to find the wealth that is in technological advancement. They shouldn't see those things as a waste of time because virtually, everything they are looking for is on the internet'. **Interviewee 3-Tai Solarin College of Education.**

'Well, if there was any professional training that would make me a better teacher, I would be happy to have. Apart from that, it is an ICT age of technology, every basic training, I wish we were encouraged not only to have personal computers but also receive more intensive training on the computers'. **Interviewee 3- College of Education, Akamkpa.**

The merits of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on teachers are: teaching / learning quality is maintained and improved (Croft, 2000; Harland & Kinder, 1997; Harirri, 2000 cited in Goodall Day, Lindsay, Mujis & Harris 2005). Its impact on the curriculum, teaching strategies, commitment of teachers and interactions with students is positive (Talbert & Maclaughlin 1994; cited in Goodall Day, Lindsay, Mujis & Harris, 2005). Furthermore, there would be an improvement in the knowledge and skills of qualified teachers (Nkapodia & Urien, 2011).

4.1.3 Integration of ICT:

It is apparent from the data that the lecturers do not use audio-visual resources in their language classes as well as integrate online materials into their teaching; this corresponds with the data given by the students. The Minimum Standards recommend learning materials of various formats, with the effective use of technological mediums (Curriculum Implementation Framework, 2012). It can be contended that this stipulation is an illustration of improper planning by the policy makers. Policy implementation difficulty has been linked to the planning stage, which follows policy formulation as effective implementation of policies requires good planning that encompasses the consideration of factors such as 'planning environment, social environment, political environment and financial and statistical problems' (Okoroma, 2006, p.248).

4.1.4 Methodology:

The proposal by the lecturers that the eclectic method is most effective is appropriate as Apel and Camozzi (1996, Jarvis 1995; Stephens 1996; cited in Badu-Nyarko & Torto 2014) have pointed out that the eclectic method (combination of methods) improves the learning of students.

Again, the discussion method, which encourages interaction between the student and the teacher, was also recommended as most effective since it encourages participation in learning as students also research on the topics taught by lecturers (Ganyaupfu, 2013). The excerpts of the interview below show the recommendations of the lecturers on the most effective method;

'I would have a blend of the discussion and the lecture and any of the things that give the students exposure'. **Interviewee 4**

‘The eclectic method’. Interviewee 9.

The view of the lecturers that the lecture method is the least effective concurs with Jarvis (1995 cited in Nyarko & Torto, 2014) that the lecture method does not facilitate the thinking of students and attitude change.

The data shows that the lecturers sometimes utilize tutorials though the new curriculum (Curriculum Implementation Framework, 2012) stipulates that it is mandatory for Literature and English courses. The extent to which this can be achieved is plausible. However, it is pertinent to note that an overcrowded classroom is one of the issues plaguing curriculum implementation in the country (Olusola & Rotimi, 2012).

4.1.5 Orientation on the New Curriculum:

The data shows that the lecturers indicated that they had no training sessions for orientation on the implementation of the curriculum. This is an indication that the curriculum may not be productively implemented as Van Horn & Van Metor (1977; cited in Okoroma, 2006) have posited that one of the probable reasons for the futile implementation of programmes is the process of communication- this signifies that the implementers of the programme must be knowledgeable on the modalities necessary for implementation and this must be transmitted through a communication network; otherwise, there would be inconsistencies in the requirements for implementation. This point was corroborated by Orafi, (2008, p. 29), when he asserted that ‘teachers should not be left alone to find ways of implementing an innovation’. Moreover, Careless (1999; cited in Orafi, 2008, p. 327-33) contends that:

Teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods. If teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behaviour and the desired change may not take place. Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by problems in innovation and eventually turn against it.

Therefore, teachers need to acquire the skills for the implementation of an innovation, for successful implementation, however; short briefings may not ensure the success of an innovation (Adey & Hewit, 2004; cited in Orafi, 2008).

4.1.6 Non-Involvement of Lecturers in Curriculum Development Process:

The lecturers also remarked that they were not consulted during the design of the curriculum: this agrees with (Olorundare & Akande, 2011; cited in Dambatta, 2013, p. 3) that the curriculum was revised without the contributions of a significant number of the lecturers from colleges of education; it was ‘therefore concluded that the curriculum was hastily reviewed and installed in colleges of education...’ and Carl (2005), who investigated the extent of teachers’ participation in the curriculum development process, concluded that teachers should participate in the process as this would promote the incorporation of teachers’ expertise early enough and erode the problem of unlawful imposition of the curriculum on them.

4.1.7 Lack of Monitoring by Internal Assurance Quality Unit:

The responses from the questionnaires demonstrate that teachers do not concur that they are monitored by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. The Implementation Framework (2012) prescribes the monitoring of quality assurance of all the colleges at two levels. They are at the internal and external levels and the different institutions are expected to monitor teaching at the internal level. However, the finding of the data shows that the Minimum Standard is not enforced in this regard. This correlates with the study of Asiyai (2011) that less attention is given to effective teaching by the academics.

4.1.8 Funding:

Open-ended responses point out that lecturers identified funding as one of their challenges in the implementation of the curriculum. This confirms earlier studies that have identified the problem of insufficient funding in the colleges and teacher education (Ajelayemi, n.d; Akindutire & Ekundayo 2012); the implication of this is inadequate provision of infrastructure in the schools (Ebisine, 2014). Inadequate funding has been categorised as an economic limitation to the implementation of the NCE courses; the subsequent effects of this factor are: ill equipped libraries, laboratories, inconducive learning milieu, poor classroom facilities amongst others (Eme-Uche, 2006). In addition, an analytical team of educationists and economists have asserted that ‘budgetary allocations to education’ facilitate implementation (Abagi, 2000; cited in Syomwene, 2013, p. 83). This shows the necessity of funds in curriculum implementation.

Similarly, Okoroma (2006) has noted that major policies of education in Nigeria are problematic at the process of implementation due to budgetary problems by lawmakers, the disbursement of funds by government and the non-effective utilization of complete coffers by management of educational institutions. This view was supported by Agehnta (1984; cited in Okoroma, 2006, p. 255), who stated that ‘the money available is never carefully used. The money the government votes for the running of the schools... does not get to the schools and

the little wasted by those whose responsibility it was to manage the schools'. This gives an insight into the state of funds in the schools. In addition, Asiyai (2011) identified the impediments to educational policy implementation as inadequate funding by government and misappropriation of funds by implementation representatives.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has investigated the perceptions of the lecturers of colleges of education on the implementation of the revised English language Nigeria Certificate in Education Curriculum. The findings show that the views of the lecturers on the implementation of the curriculum are that in-service training is not available for lecturers; the abilities of the students influence their teaching, more technological knowledge of computer assisted teaching is needed, training sessions were not held for orientation on the new curriculum; audio-visual resources are not available in classes; online materials are not well integrated into teaching and the Directorate for Internal Assurance Quality does not monitor teaching regularly.

Arising from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be an immediate review of the admission criteria into the colleges. The present policy requires 'four credit passes in four subjects, including English language at not more than two sittings' (Nigeria Certificate in Education Minimum Standards, 2012, p. 21). An admission of four credits at a sitting is recommended. This will attract students of quality though it may lead to a reduction in the number of applicants into the schools, the merits outweigh the demerits.
2. The subsequent review of the curriculum should be conducted at the local, state and national levels of the country; this should be extensive involving most of the lecturers. In other words, representatives of lecturers should constitute the local level, representatives from the category of the heads of departments and deans of schools should constitute the state level, while the national level should comprise the provosts
3. The government should set up a mechanism for the judicious disbursement of financial aid from different agencies to the colleges
4. The practical listening skills and speech work aspect of the course outline should be reviewed immediately as the lecturers have complained that it is abstract. The curriculum should stipulate the pedagogy for the development of the four language skills, with emphasis on communicative competence.
5. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should tighten measures at enforcing the provisions of the curriculum. The agency should monitor the quality of the teaching and learning process in the colleges. The teaching of English language in the colleges requires effective teaching and learning. As a regulatory body, the objectives of the curriculum can only be achieved, if the body enforces the stipulations of the curriculum. The commission is responsible for the adequacy of the preparation of English language teachers. It should also ensure the uniformity- of quality in all the schools.

6. Future Research

Future research on this study would be a critical analysis of the course contents of the English language Nigeria Certificate in Education Curriculum and a review of the admission policy into colleges of education in Nigeria.

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