

IDENTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIES DESIRABLE FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILL OF SPEAKING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SCIENCE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

BY

Chikobi, P. C. (Ph.D.)¹ Eukora, E. A. (Ph.D.)², Umezinwa, R. N. (M.Ed.)³ & Chukwuma, M.U. (B.Sc.Ed)⁴

¹ Department of Biology ² Department of Integrated Science ³ Department of Curriculum & Instruction ⁴ Department of Biology, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe.

Abstract

The study was a descriptive survey of perception carried out in Anambra state of Nigeria. It investigated the academic and pedagogical competencies required of secondary school English language teachers for effective instruction on 'speaking' skill. All the 259 senior English language teachers of all the 259 secondary schools under management of the Anambra state post-primary schools service commission (PPSSC), Awka were used for the study. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire of 4 –point rating scale, face – validated through consultation with 3 veteran educational researchers. It was pilot-test by spilt half technique for reliability and internal consistency (homogeneity). Values of 0.89 and 0.88 were obtained respectively for Pearson's product moment coefficient of reliability (r) and Cronbach alpha (α). One (1) research question was answered, using arithmetic mean (X). Results show that all ten competencies studied are desirable for the teachers. Implications of the findings include need for emphasizing the competencies of speaking in the training of English language teachers. The laying of such emphasis is recommended.

Background of the Study

English language is a compulsory subject for the junior secondary school certificate examination (JSSCE) and the senior secondary school certificate examination (SSCE). A credit in it at the SSCE is a requisite for admission into many tertiary institutions for various courses, especially in the arts, social sciences and professional sciences courses such as medicine and engineering. A pass is tolerated, however, in some institutions in a few disciplines, such as philosophy, combined social sciences and courses in natural sciences (e.g. zoology, botany, physics and chemistry).

Language is of paramount importance to mankind. It is man's most basic tool of communication without which it would be difficult for people to live together, think, act and share ideas together. Language makes it easy for man to engage in social interaction and conversation, to transfer ideas, thought and feelings through speech and writing as well as

through print. On the basis of language, man creates socio-ethnic communication and it is probable that only man, the Homo sapiens has language. There are many languages in the world and some of them are of global popularity. English is one of such remarkably popular languages. The importance of English languages as a school subject and a lingua franca in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized. There is hardly a secondary school in the country that does not have at least one English languages teacher, who however may or may not be professionally qualified. In schools where non-specialist English language teachers are appointed, they are considered by the managements to be competent enough for the task. In many cases however, English language teachers in secondary schools are professionals with various qualifications. Such qualifications are the Nigeria certificate in education (NCE), Bachelor of Arts in education (BA. ED), bachelor of education (B.ED), and Bachelor of art (BA) with post ógraduate diploma in education (PGDE). In addition to the availability of various cadres of seemingly competent English language teachers in the secondary schools in Nigeria, there are abundant curricular materials in the country for effective teaching and learning of language. The subject is also allotted high teaching load in the schools. It is generally given as many as four or five lesson periods per week with intensive and extensive exercises. All these desirable situations notwithstanding, it does not appear that students' use of English language in country is satisfactory, following frequent mistakes many of them often make in the skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading. The basic causes of these mistakes are that English is a second language in Nigeria. Also classes in most schools are too large for proper teaching and learning, especially as concerns alien languages that require consistent practice. Effective use of, and good achievement in English language demands good knowledge of and ability to use its different skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading. The speaking skill is the focus of this study, which was intended to identify the requisite competencies for effective teaching of the skill alongside the implications for science. Consequent upon that, the problem and research question is:

What competencies are desirable for effective teaching of English language skill of speaking in secondary schools, and what the implications for science?

Method

The research design was survey. Area of study was Anambra state of Nigeria. An entire population of 259 senior English language teachers in all the 259 secondary schools under management of post-primary schools service commission (PPSSC), were used as respondents (subjects). Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire of 2 sections and 15 items built on 4 ó point rating scale, and pilot - - tested in Enugu on 10 (5 male and 5 female) secondary school English language teachers. Administration of instrument was carried out by the researchers and by hand, without loss of a copy. One research question was answered using arithmetic mean (\bar{X}). Items with \bar{X} values of 2.50 and above were given positive interpretation, being accepted as desirable. Items with \bar{X} values of less than 2.50 were interpreted negatively, being rejected as undesirable. Pilot ó test of instrument employed split ó half technique with calculation of Pearson's product moment coefficient of reliability (r) which gave a value of 0.88 for test of internal consistency (homogeneity)

The rating scale was follows: highly desirable = 4 points, desirable = 3 points, undesirable = 2 points, highly undesirable = 1 point. The 4- point rating scale was adopted from work of Chikobi (1997).

Table 1: The Desirable Competencies

RO	SN	COMPETENCIES	X	De
1	3	Knowledge of, and ability to correctly use words, which are normally associated with buying and selling.	4.00	A
2	2	Knowledge of, and ability to talk about school experiences, situations and activities using the appropriate words.	3.42	A
3	7	Knowledge of, and ability to express a past event in the past form.	3.25	A
4	6	Knowledge of, and ability to express present events in the present form.	3.25	A
5	5	Knowledge of, and ability to recognize and use correctly vocabulary items related to some specific occupations.	3.10	A
6	1	Knowledge of and ability to use the appropriate words in talking about relationships and describing experiences in the home.	3.07	A
7	9	Knowledge of, and ability to express a point of view of time in the past, present continuous and the future forms	3.92	A
8	4	knowledge of, and ability to discuss transport and traveling using the appropriate words	3.90	A
9	8	Knowledge of, and ability to express correctly events that will take place in the future using the future tense.	2.75	A
10	10	Knowledge of, and ability to express correctly the duration of events.	.62	A

Results

Table 1: The Desirable competencies

Key

Ro = rank order of competency

SN = serial number of competency as in questionnaire

X= arithmetic mean of respondentsøratings.

De: = decision

A/R =accepted/rejected

Table shows that all 10 c competencies investigated are perceived desirable by secondary school English language teachers for effective instruction on the speaking skill. The competency item of SN 3 ranks highest in desirability, while competency item of SN 10 ranks least.

Implications for Science

English is the language of academics in Nigeria. It is the nation's Lingua Franca and language of school instruction from senior primary classes to the university. The importance of English language competencies for teaching and learning of science can, therefore, not be over emphasized. It is the language of communication between the science teacher and the student. It is the language of communication among the student discussion classes. It is the language of the textbooks. It is the language of the test items in both teacher made tests and the external examinations. It is the language of student's answer questions. Competencies in one skill of the language facilitate acquisition of competencies in the other skills to make for wholesome knowledge of and ability to use the language. Hence, the implications of the speaking skill competencies for sciences is on uncontroversial.

Discussion

It was found out that the entire ten academic and pedagogical competencies investigated are desirable for effective teaching of English language skill of speaking in secondary schools. This finding is not surprising. This is because each of the competencies helps teachers of English language to deliver their subject matter on the skill property to the students.

The ten academic and pedagogical competencies are likely to remain so desirable in the future because they are remarkable instruments of good teaching of the language skill of speaking. Hence. Although the society is developing more and in items of educational technology and learning experiences, these ten academic and pedagogical competencies will continue to hold their places in the teaching learning process as being desirable of the secondary school English language teachers for the effective teaching of the speaking skill.

Grawford (1977) realized that teacher competency is a major ingredient of teaching effectiveness and that the competence of the teacher can be inferred from his/her knowledge of subject- matter and instructional methods. Several studies of teacher competency have been done. For example Onyike (1976); Chikobi (1997); Chikobi, Ezennia, Anyamene and Ezumezu (2000 and 2001).

A basic education implication of the findings of this study is needed to emphasize the identified competencies in the training of English language teachers, and the laying of such emphasis is recommended. A fundamental limitation was the use of only questionnaire as instrument for data collection, but the researchers considered it adequate. Replication of the investigation in different skills from time to time, and from place to place using different approaches is suggested for further studies.

Accordingly, sound development of competencies of skill of speaking by secondary school students through the teachers' sound acquisition of the competencies desirable for the effective teaching of the skill is recommended.

The conclusion of the study is that these competencies desirable for effective teaching of the English language skill of speaking in secondary schools have implications for science by facilitating the teaching-learning process in the discipline. Acquisition of the desirable competencies by the teachers is accordingly necessary.

References

- Chikobi, P. C. (1997). The Professional Competencies of Secondary School Biology Teachers. Doctorate Dissertation at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- Chikobi, P. C. Ezennia. S.E., Anyameme, A.E., and Ezumezu, M.U. (2000). Pre-Service Training Proficiencies of Biology Teachers in Nigerian Secondary Schools. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5 (1) 85 -898
- Chikobi, P. C. Ezennia. S.E., Anyameme, A.E., and Ezumezu, M.U. (2000). Pre-Service Training Deficiencies of Biology Teachers in Nigerian Secondary Schools. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 7 (1) 72 -76
- Grawford, H.R. (1977). Special Methods of Teaching: Lecture Note at Iowa State University, U.S.A.
- Onyike, I. O. (1976). Competencies Desirable for Secondary School Science Teachers in Nigeria, with Implications for Teacher Education. Doctoral Dissertation at Teachers College Columbia University, U.S.A.