

# PROBLEMS WHICH MAR THE TEACHING OF ORAL ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA

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***Abstract**--The challenges that Nigeria face in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers cannot be overemphasized. The purpose of this study was to investigate some of the challenges associated with teachers and teaching in English as well as identifying strategies that can be implemented to improve the working conditions of teachers as well as teaching in school in Nigeria. The study surveyed the problems of teaching Oral English in some selected secondary schools within Biu Local Government Area of Borno State. The sample size is 50 comprising of 8 secondary schools. A survey research design was adapted for the investigation. The research instruments include teaching staff questionnaires using the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result of the finding reveals that there are problems in teaching Oral English in Biu secondary schools. Mother tongue interference, lack of experience and use of outdated textbooks were major factors to the teaching of Oral English. The schools or even the teachers should acquire up-to-date textbooks also, teachers be sent on in-service training and students are encouraged to communicate in English within and outside the classroom, so as to reduce the problems of mass failure in English Language Examination and other relevant examinations.*

***Keyword**--Oral, Language, English, Students, Biu.*

## I INTRODUCTION

Education is a key investment in any country as it plays a crucial role to sustainable human and economic development. Thus, investment in education is widely recognized as a means of supplying the critical human capital required for sustained economic, social and technological development of a nation. It is therefore important that nations invest heavily in education to ensure that the young, whether in rural or urban community, are equipped with knowledge, skills and competence to enable them to contribute meaningfully to national development (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011).

Teaching Oral English has been considered by many people, more especially teachers, as a simple or trivial activity consisting of having the students repeat after the teacher. While for others, Oral English has been confused with phonetics which deal with physics, physiology and linguistics; and with all readily available publication(s) on the subject Oral English teaching it is still hard to convince most of our present day teachers that it could be taught to pupils or learners without tears (difficulties).

However, nowadays if the teaching of Oral English is discredited, it is because the skills of teaching is not known or known but ignored simply because of its complexity. As a result of this, the student has become incapable of dealing with phonetic principle without being able to use them more appropriately as required. And the teachers who already know or have been aware of the problems of teaching

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Moreover, words that cause problems when it comes to pronunciation are mostly those borrowed from French and other classical language of the world. Such words comprise largely of the learned as well as the more formal level of vocabulary. And the major problem here is the placement of stresses occupied with changes resulting in the pronunciation of the sounds be it consonant or vowel sounds, the most affected area in terms of pronunciation is secondary school. The way the pupils pronounce the English Words is pathetic and this problem is becoming worse.

It is therefore, in view of this that, this work is taken up to identify problems associated with the teaching of Oral English in Secondary schools.

In conducting this research, interview and observation will be utilized as a source through which data will be collected in each school visited among the selected ones. The information gathered from these sources is going to be presented and analyzed.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Ascertain problems in teaching oral English in North Eastern Nigeria.
2. Evaluate the availability and experience of teachers teaching oral English in the study area.
3. Evaluate the Interference of mother Tongue (MT) on Oral English leaching.

## **II STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

For the past ten years, the North -Eastern region of Nigeria has had terrible crises with its educational system either being permanently or temporarily obstructed by insurgency. Infrastructure, teachers, students, in fact, anything education is considered a serious crime. Schools were closed whenever it is considered unsafe for learning, teachers hide or were forced to flee to save Zones, this situation further brought set back to the North Eastern region which even before the insurgency is considered “educationally less developed”.

With the recent change of governance in Nigeria and a return to seventy percent normalcy, education is back on its feet and schools have or are being re-constructed where they were destroyed and students are back to school.

It is with these factors in mind that the study was conducted to ascertain factors that mar the teaching of oral English in north eastern Nigeria.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis formulated for the investigation was as follows:

H<sub>O</sub>: There is no problem in teaching Oral English in Secondary Schools in North Eastern Nigeria.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is problem in teaching oral English in secondary schools in North Eastern Nigeria.

## **III METHODOLOGY**

### ***Design of the Study***

A survey research was conducted and fifty (50) questionnaire were distributed to teachers of English in secondary schools in north eastern Nigeria. The result and responses of the groups would be analyzed and the design involves the following:

**Population Sample**

The area of study has been limited to Biu Local Government Area; Eight (8) Secondary Schools were selected and used for the sampling. The sample was done at random. The selected schools were:

1. Government Day Secondary School Guyuk, Adamawa state.
2. Government Secondary School Damboa, Borno state.
3. Government Senior Science Secondary School,
4. Government Girls’ Secondary Shaffa, Borno state.
5. Government Girls’ Secondary School, Mirnga, Borno state
6. Government Secondary school,
7. UBE Kamuya, yobe state.
8. UBE Debiro Borno state.

**Instrumentation**

This analysis was conducted based on only eight (8) Secondary School as the research population and majority from Borno because it is the most affected in the north east.

The questionnaires were the instrument for data collection, the data was divided into two sections (1) and (2) Section 1 consists of background information, school, age, qualification experience, gender, marital status and occupation. While section (2) consists of the selected item intended for the research study.

The respondents are expected to tick the appropriate answer that best suits their opinions i.e. Agree, Disagree or Undecided.

Procedure for data collection, the researcher used Direct Delivery Techniques (DDT) to distribute the questionnaires randomly to staff members in each school.

**IV DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

**Table 1:** Shows questions and responses of respondents

S/No	Questions	Response		
		Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
1	There is a problem with the teaching of Oral English.	45	05	-
2	There are qualified teachers teaching Oral English.	27	13	10

3	Teaching Oral English requires a knowledge of the speech sounds	30	19	01
4	Government contributes to problems in teaching of Oral English due to inadequate teaching facilities.	36	14	-
5	Some teachers are forced to teach English where are inadequate teachers of English.	21	20	09
6	There are spelling and pronunciation problem	30	20	-
7	The attitudes of teachers being forced to teach English encouraging	40	05	05
8	Students require the practices of spelling pronunciation	40	05	05
9	The interference of mother tongue affects your oral performance	43	06	01
10	40 minutes is enough for Oral English lesson	28	20	02
11	Oral English teaching is difficult	34	06	12
12	You cannot pronounce English words correctly.	36	10	04

Table 1: shows question and responses of the respondents. The question was selected based on similar responses represented as “Agreed”, “disagreed” and “Undecided” and grouped according to their frequency.

One way of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in analyzing the data. Where the ratio in respect of the hypothesis was significant and computed to determine which group would show significant difference.



The education system has not made physical facilities like textbooks available to most of the schools for adequate drills this observation agrees with that of Adesina (1997) who suggested for evaluation standard was on examination of facilities available at various schools most of the books are outdated.

Most of the teachers have poor reading culture, in addition to being inexperienced, they lack basic skills required to teach oral English to the students. Badejo (1997) posits that, the products of our education system largely are semi-illiterates both in character and learning, lack of believe in the dignity of labour and hard work, poor reading culture etc.

## VII CONCLUSION

The ability to know English language depends to a large extent, on availability to have safe schools for effective learning to take place also, the ability to pronounce English words and sentences correctly. Oral English teaching being part of the English language has contributions towards the development of good speakers of the English language through various activities involved lack of experience of the teachers or the poor reading habits makes Oral English teaching and learning a difficulty.

### *Strategies for Dealing with the challenges*

Teachers and quality teaching are critical factors to the development of any educational system. Any socio-economic strategy, aimed at improving schools and human development must of necessity, emphasize the advancement and working conditions of teachers (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011). As part of this study teacher and school heads were asked to identify strategies that can be implemented to counter the challenges raised in this research. The participants identified the following strategies as crucial to the provision of quality English in secondary school. Security was their top priority followed by, improving the working conditions of teachers, it is significant to consider the need for effective teaching of Oral English in secondary schools in the north eastern part of Nigeria. This can be attained by training the already employed teachers. Through courses, seminars or in-service training to gather their education. Relevant textbooks be bought by school administrators for the teachers also, assignment and drills be given marked promptly by the teachers. Pronunciation drills be given to students with difficulty also, students be encouraged to communicate in English to improve their oral competence.

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