

ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER FACTOR AND TIME ALLOCATION IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed teacher factor and time allocation in the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the qualifications of teachers teaching Literature-in-English, the methods used by the teachers in teaching Literature-in-English and the duration of teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools in Ekiti State. The study adopted a descriptive research design of a survey type. The population for the study consisted of 1035 Literature-in-English teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State. A total of 100 respondents were selected as sample for the study using a multistage sampling procedure. The research instrument used for the study was a self-constructed questionnaire. The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by expert judgement, while the reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha reliability method and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The findings of the study revealed that teachers teaching Literature-in-English in Ekiti State Public Secondary Schools have the qualification to teach the subject. However, the duration used to teach the subject is inadequate. It was recommended that curriculum planners, government and school administrators should revise timetables to include double periods for Literature-in-English, which will allow for comprehensive lessons.

Keywords: Literature-in-English, Time Allocation, Teacher Qualification, Method of Teaching

Introduction

Literature in its widest sense may be defined as writing or the study of books valued as works of art. This has some degree of emphasis on style or some imaginative quality in its form. It not only gives training in the style of writing and expression, but also trains the imaginative sense. It has been observed that the study of literature involves not merely a body of knowledge but also various attitudes towards knowledge; receptivity, alertness, curiosity, intelligent appraisal and above all, willingness may require sustained efforts to enter into the experience which the writer has tried to express. Literature is not just a general abstraction but a phenomenon which includes several

different concepts. We talk of it as a sort of international cultural currency comprised of words reproduced in books, poetry, short stories, drama, manuscripts, even pamphlets, distinct from science or engineering. In other words, three major genres of literature are drama, poetry and prose.

Literature-in-English is the study of written works, including drama, poetry, and prose, valued for their artistic and cultural significance. In the context of secondary education, particularly in regions like Nigeria, it encompasses texts from African, British, and global traditions, fostering critical thinking, cultural awareness, and language proficiency. According to Olaniyan (2019), Literature-in-English is

more encompassing because it embodies literature of different people around the world, which is relayed in English Language. The subject not only enhances students' understanding of human experiences and societal issues but also develops essential communication and analytical skills, making it a cornerstone of the humanities curriculum. In Ekiti State, Nigeria, it is a key subject for students pursuing tertiary studies in fields like law and theatre arts, requiring a credit pass in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

However, it has been observed that students' performance in literature in English is not encouraging. Despite its importance, student's performance in the subject remains a cause for concern. In 2023, approximately 65% of SSCE candidates in Ekiti State failed to achieve a credit pass in Literature-in-English, a statistic that mirrors national trends (National Examination Council, 2023). Even though a credit pass in the subject is a prerequisite to study some Arts related courses in the tertiary institution, such as law, English Language, theatre and Arts among others. For instance, in 2023, about 65% of the students who sat for the subject in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination did not have a Credit in Literature-in English. Many factors could have contributed to the poor performance of the students in the subject. Researchers have looked into the reasons associated with the performance of the students in the subject, but it seems the performance of the students in the subject is not yet encouraging.

This poor performance is symptomatic of deeper systemic issues within the educational system, including unqualified teachers, outdated teaching methods, insufficient instructional time, and a lack of resources. These challenges are not isolated to Ekiti State but reflect broader difficulties in Nigeria's education

system, where Literature-in-English struggles to maintain its relevance amid shifting pedagogical priorities (Dahiru, 2020). Sheikhzadeh and Bejarzehi (2018) noted that the integration of literature into language teaching has often diluted its distinct value, leaving teachers ill-equipped to address its complexities. This study aims to assess these challenges in Ekiti State secondary schools, offering insights into their causes and proposing actionable solutions to improve teaching and learning outcomes.

To further portray and expose the negligence of literature teaching in Secondary Schools, Dahiru (2020) laments that the teaching of literature in our schools is badly neglected because of a vicious circle of educational experience, which could only be broken by well-trained and well-informed teachers of English. On the other hand, most teachers of English language are not adequately prepared to teach literature as a subject distinct from language. In essence, the study of literature, especially at the Junior Secondary level, is important towards the learning of English language and subsequent improvement in communication, acquisition of more vocabulary, oral English performance and addition of stylistic variations while speaking and writing.

It seems the actual reason why students fail in public examinations like NECO and WASCE in English and literature is the fact that the teaching of Literature-in-English has been neglected and ignored by teachers at the Secondary School Level. In most cases, they complain of lack of textbooks for the teachers and students' unwillingness to buy prescribed texts for themselves. As a result, literature which should complement English Language teaching is not taught effectively. Sheikhzadeh and Bejarzehi (2018) observed that the recent approaches to language teaching have ignored literature teaching. Moreover, literature approaches

are now subsumed under approaches to language learning, so these have negative effects on literature and language teaching and learning. Merging these two important subjects, therefore, confuses the teachers of both subjects as to the appropriate methodologies that can be used to encourage students to understand the subject when passing from Junior Secondary Schools to Senior Secondary School Level.

Statement of the Problem

Literature-in-English is crucial to students' learning of English Language because it improves communication skills, develops vocabulary and also improves the major language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Despite the importance of Literature-in-English in English language education, the performance of students in the subject in external examinations is not encouraging, for instance, in 2023, about 65% of the students who sat for Senior School Certificate Examination did not have credit pass in the subject.

Researchers and education stakeholders have worked on how to improve students' performance in the subject, especially by looking at student-factor, government factor, teacher-factor that could have contributed to the failure of the students in the subject but it seems the teacher factor, such as, qualification of teachers and teachers' method of teaching the subject have not been adequately explored. Also, there is the need to look into the adequacy of the time allocated to teach Literature-in-English in secondary schools. This study, therefore, assessed the qualification and methods of teaching employed by teachers in teaching and learning of the subject and, also, to know if the time allocated for the teaching and learning of the subject is adequate, since the subject requires extensive reading of books and its comprehensive understanding.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for this study.

1. How qualified are the teachers teaching Literature-in-English in Secondary Schools?
2. How effective are methods used to teach Literature in English by the teachers?
3. Is the time allocated to the teaching of Literature-in-English on the school's time table adequate?

Literature Review

Literature, as an important component of humanities, is a very popular subject which reflects human culture, knowledge and wisdom. Literature is an art, an art of language, more than just an entertainment, it has a very close relation with language and linguistics. As everybody knows, it is an important embodiment of the language in which it is presented. That's why it is endowed with a worthwhile role in language teaching, especially in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. In many countries today, literature has been taken as a compulsory subject, a component of modern liberal arts, which occupies a seat among school curriculums.

Literature in English encompasses the body of written works produced in the English language, including diverse genres like poetry, prose, and drama, originating from various English-speaking regions and time periods. It involves the study and analysis of these texts, often with a focus on their artistic merit, historical context, and cultural significance.

Literature is usually considered as the encyclopedia of a nation's civilization and culture; it reflects the psychological structure of the nation, spiritual pursuits, cultural customs, religion, history, economy, political system and other aspects of ideology from different facets. In literary works, readers can also learn and find

something about the society as it is the mirror directly or indirectly representing the society of the writer. It usually unfolds a panorama of the society by giving detailed and dramatized descriptions of the social life of the people and disclosing the contradictions and problems in the society. Therefore, literature is closely connected with social culture. Readers can experience the life of the people portrayed in a work. In other words, teachers can enable the learners to learn about culture in the relatively natural way by teaching literature.

The teaching of Literature has been a popular curriculum for English students in secondary schools in Nigeria and there has been much progress in this area. With the further push of the country's economic and cultural constructions, the central government takes education as one of the biggest concerns on the way to the grand goal of national revival, declaring that education is the first base on which Chinese socialist mansion rests and granting the priority to be strengthened. With this campaign, foreign language education is exalted at the same time to keep pace with the economic development, always at the center.

Literature is an essential component of English language teaching (ELT) and is widely acknowledged as a vital source of authentic content for language development (Kaowiwanakull, 2021). It offers various benefits to both students and teachers in acquiring English, such as providing rich language input for students to express themselves, motivating students to learn, catering to students with varying learning styles, and exposing students to creative writing and figurative language (Bist, 2018). Literature also serves as an example for its learners of how to effectively use both sentence structure and vocabulary, which are crucial for language learning (Kaowiwanakull, 2021).

The need of qualified teachers is paramount to teaching of English literature in Nigeria and it is the pillar for the success of students in the subject. Without excellent teachers, effective literature teaching will only be a mirage in the desert, therefore, it is a problem that needs immediate intervention. The second problem is the lack of appropriate and effective teaching materials which can meet the needs of different levels. Nowadays the text books, which are relatively old, and cannot cater for the new situations as well as the needs of the learners. These kinds of text books are too limited to satisfy learners of different levels and demands. It is necessary to compile a certain number of textbooks of different subjects, different genres and different language levels. Textbook construction is a link which cannot be neglected. It is another important factor which somewhat decides whether the teaching is successful or not (Brown, 2014).

The third problem is perhaps the fact that the English levels of learners are quite different, which will directly affect the organization and operation of the classroom teaching. Obviously, it will be difficult for teachers to operate their teaching plan and fulfill their pre-set objectives. In the native context, learners are almost of the same level and there is not such a problem as level difference. Moreover, teachers and others concerned are enthusiastically striving to deal with all the problems and there appears a good prospect in this field in China. There is also a demand for effective accessible approaches in literature teaching. At present, the course is operated mostly in the old ways, the traditional ways used in mother-tongue literature teaching.

Methods and Techniques for Teaching Literature-in-English

Teaching methods significantly shape the learning experience in Literature-in-English. Traditional approaches, such as

lectures and memorization of plot summaries, remain prevalent in Nigerian classrooms. While these methods may ensure coverage of the syllabus, they often fail to foster the analytical and creative skills that literature demands. Sheikhzadeh and Bejarzehi (2018) criticized the conflation of literature and language teaching, arguing that it obscures the subject's unique pedagogical requirements.

In contrast, modern methods such as multimedia presentations, group discussions, and project-based learning offer dynamic ways to engage students. However, the adoption of these strategies in Ekiti State is limited by resource shortages and teacher unfamiliarity, perpetuating reliance on less effective traditional methods.

Yahya (2017) emphasised that teachers have limited teaching method knowledge that forces them to rely on whatever approaches previously available. In a study by Tayib and Hassan (2020), majority of the respondents agree that teachers are responsible for the challenges in the teaching of literature due to their inappropriate teaching approach. Noraishah et al. (2015) reported that students are lacking in focus and co-operation in class during literature lesson due to teachers' weakness in giving good explanations and elaboration on the literature text.

One of the commonly practised traditional methods of literature teaching is teacher-centered learning where the teacher acts as the dominant figure in explaining and translating literary texts to the students without taking students' input (Yahya, 2017). Rochman (2018) also stated that teachers should act as facilitators to develop students' unique traits and potential by providing external guidance. Passive students' participation and teachers' function as sole-distributor of the input in learning process would only cater for instrumental purposes such as examinations. This creates an exam-

oriented classroom that is unable to incorporate interesting teaching methods to teach literature (Harwati & Mohamad Asyraf, 2019). There is a need to concentrate more on the teachers' involvement in teaching and learning of the literature component of English if teachers are the factor to the decline of certain subjects (Yahya, 2017).

Teacher's Qualifications and Literature-in-English

English literature is a crucial component of the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. It is a subject that requires teachers with adequate qualification in order for effective teaching and learning to take place. However, the quality of teaching is heavily influenced by teacher qualifications. Research has shown that teacher qualifications have a significant impact on student performance (Adeyemi, 2018). Teachers with higher qualifications tend to have better teaching skills and are more effective in the classroom (Ogunyemi, 2019).

Other studies worldwide affirm that subject-specific training enhances instructional effectiveness, particularly in disciplines like literature that require specialized knowledge and skills (Adeyemi, 2018). In Nigeria, however, a significant proportion of Literature-in-English teachers lack such qualifications. Dahiru (2020) found that in Borno and Yobe States, many teachers were assigned to the subject based on general English proficiency rather than expertise in literature, leading to superficial instruction.

Unqualified teachers often struggle to interpret complex texts, facilitate critical discussions, or connect literature to students' experiences. This gap undermines student engagement and academic success, these shows the need for targeted teacher recruitment and professional development.

Teachers are required to be competent in the teaching of English

literature because literature plays an important role in supporting students' language development, cultural understanding, and building their critical and analysis skills. However, one of the most identified challenges in the teaching of literature is teachers' incompetence. A study by Tayib and Hassan (2020) that was done on 15 English literature teachers in English Language Departments from Colleges of Education and Languages found that lack of establishing teachers hinders the process of teaching literature in the classrooms. Dahiru (2020) also reported that teachers are unqualified to teach literature. The participants in his study revealed that most available teachers in the private secondary schools are not competent as they did not specialise in English literature but in English Language teaching.

Paran (2008), as cited in Ukat and Hanita (2022), stated that despite the fact that some teachers may have taken literature courses in college, the majority are not familiar with the instructional strategies that enable increased use of literary elements in English-medium classrooms.

Time Allocation and Resource Availability

Effective literature instruction requires sufficient time to explore texts, discuss themes, and develop interpretations. In many Nigerian schools, including those in Ekiti State, Literature-in-English is allocated 45-minute periods which is barely enough to cover a single poem or chapter. This constraint limits opportunities for deep learning, forcing teachers to prioritize breadth over depth.

Compounding this issue is the scarcity of resources. Only 6-17% of students in Ekiti State have access to required textbooks, a situation mirrored in other regions like Ibadan. Without adequate materials, teachers resort to dictation and

summary, further diminishing the subject's richness. These twin challenges of time and resources create a vicious cycle of poor preparation and performance.

Ain Suraya and Norhanim (2021) in their study revealed that pre-service teachers considered 'having difficulty with the time allocation to teach literature' to be the most serious problem. Half of the respondents in the study by Tayib and Hassan (2020) agree that the allotted hours for teaching literature are not enough. In implementing interesting literature approaches, the arrangement and preparation of the lessons take a lot of time. Farhanah and Hadina (2022) believe that time constraints hinder the implementation of literature teaching approach in the classrooms. To counter the problem of time constraint in teaching literature, the best solution stated by Ain Suraya and Norhanim (2021) is that teachers are advised to have good time management as students' attention span is not long.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design of survey type. The population for this study comprised of 1035 Literature-in- English teachers in Ekiti State as obtained from the Department of Planning and Statistics, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Ado Ekiti. A total of One hundred (100) English Literature teachers were selected as sample for this study using multistage sampling procedure. First stage involved the selection of two senatorial districts from the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State. The second stage was the selection of one Local Government Area from each of the two Senatorial Districts, using simple random sampling technique. The third stage was the selection of two schools in the selected local government area by using simple random sampling technique. Stage four, twenty-five (25) students were selected from each of the selected schools to make

up the 100 participants that was used for this study.

A self-constructed instrument titled “Questionnaire on Teacher Factor and Time Allocation in the Teaching and Learning of Literature-in-English” was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections, Section A contains items on the socio-demographic variables of the respondents while section B contains items on teachers’ qualifications, methods of teaching and time allocation in teaching and learning of Literature-in-English. The respondents were asked to indicate how the items in questionnaire appears to them by ticking (✓) the appropriate point of the scale on a 4-point continuum: Strongly Agree, Agree,

Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Both face and content validity of the research instrument were ensured by examining the items in the questionnaire by experts’ judgement. In order to test the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and a reliability Coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Descriptive Statistics such as Frequency Count, Percentage and Mean were used to answer research questions raised for the study.

Results

Research Question 1: How qualified are the teachers teaching Literature-in-English in Secondary Schools?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the qualifications of teachers teaching Literature-in-English in Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	I have qualification for teaching Literature-in-English	60	60.00	40	40.00
2.	My qualification has assisted me in teaching Literature-in-English effectively	70	70.00	30	30.00
3.	I teach Literature-in-English because I am qualified to teach it	90	90.00	10	10.00
4.	Teaching Literature-in-English requires having a qualification to teach the subject	55	55.00	45	45.00
5.	Teachers without relevant qualifications should not teach Literature-in-English	94	94.00	6	6.00

Table 1 shows that descriptive analysis of the qualifications of teachers teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools. Teachers’ responses were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy interpretation. 94 (94.0%) of the respondents agreed that teachers without relevant qualification should not teach Literature-in-English. Also, 90 (90.0%) of them said that they teach Literature-in-English because they have the qualification to teach it. 70 (70.0%) of the respondents believed that their qualification has assisted them in teaching Literature-in-English

effectively. 60 (60.0%) of them said that they have qualification in English Literature. Also, 55 (55.0%) of them agreed that teaching Literature-in-English requires having a qualification in English Literature. It could be said from the above the above table that teachers teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools have the qualification to teach the subject.

Research Question 2: How effective are methods used to teach Literature-in-English in secondary schools?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of the effective method used in teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools.

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	I use different methods to teach my students Literature-in-English	70	70.00	30	30.00
2.	Literature-in-English students always find my lessons interesting because of the methods I use to teach the subject.	68	68.00	32	32.00
3.	The methods I use to teach my students Literature-in-English are effectively improving their performance.	85	85.00	15	15.00
4.	Effective teaching and learning of Literature-in-English requires innovating new methods of teaching	45	45.00	55	55.00
5.	My Literature-in-English students always have enthusiasm to attend my class.	84	84.00	16	16.00

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis of the effective method used in teaching Literature-in-English in secondary schools. Teachers' responses were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy interpretation. 85 (85.0%) of the respondents agreed that the methods they used to teach Literature-in-English effectively improve their performance. Also, 84 (84.0%) of the respondents agreed that their Literature-in-English students always have enthusiasm for attend classes.

68 (68.0%) of the respondents agreed that their students always find their lessons interesting because of the methods they employed to teach the subject. It could be said from the above table that methods used to teach Literature-in-English by the teachers are effective.

Research Question 3: Do the duration used to teach Literature-in-English in secondary schools' time table adequate?

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of the adequacy of the duration used to teach Literature-in-English in secondary schools

S/N	Items	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	Time allocated for teaching Literature-in-English in my school is adequate	26	26.00	74	74.00
2.	Forty-five minutes duration is not enough to teach a lesson in Literature-in-English	77	77.00	23	23.00
3.	Literature-in-English is difficult to teach within a very short period	65	65.00	35	35.00
4.	Double period should be assigned to teaching Literature-in-English	71	71.00	29	29.00
5.	Time allocated for teaching Literature-in-English should be adequate so as to have enough time for teaching the subject	66	66.00	34	34.00

Table 3 shows the descriptive analysis of the duration used to teach Literature in the school timetable. Teachers' responses were collapsed to agree and disagree for easy interpretation.

77 (77.0%) of the respondents believed that forty-five minutes duration is not enough to teach a topic in Literature. Also, 71 (71.0%) of them agreed that double period should be assigned to teaching Literature-in-English.

66 (66.0%) of the respondents agreed that the time allocated for teaching Literature should be adequate so as to have enough time for teaching the subject. Also, 65 (65.0%) of them believed Literature is difficult to teach within a very short period. It could be said from the above table that duration used to teach Literature in the school timetable is inadequate.

Discussion

The finding of the study revealed that teachers teaching literature in English in secondary schools have the qualification to teach the subject, this is in agreement with the findings of Brown (2014) who asserted that the need for qualified teachers is paramount to the teaching of English literature in Nigeria and it is the pillar for the success of students in the subject. Without excellent teachers, effective teaching of literature will only be a mirage in the desert. Also, Adeyemi, (2018) revealed that teacher qualifications have a significant impact on students' performance. Moreover, Dahiru (2020) in his study revealed that most available teachers in the private secondary schools are not competent as they did not specialise in English literature but in English Language teaching.

The finding of the study revealed that the methods used to teach Literature in English by the teachers are effective, this does not concur with the findings of Yahya (2017) who stated that one of the commonly practised traditional methods of teaching literature is teacher-centered learning where the teacher acts as the dominant figure in explaining and translating literary texts to the students without taking students' input (Yahya, 2017). In a study by Tayib and Hassan (2020), majority of the respondents agree that teachers are responsible for the challenges in the teaching of literature due to their inappropriate teaching approach. Moreover, Noraishah et al. (2015) reported

that students lacked focus and co-operation in class during literature lesson due to teachers' weakness in giving good explanations and elaboration on the literature text.

The finding also revealed that the duration used to teach Literature in the school timetable is inadequate. This is in line with the findings of Ain Suraya and Norhanim (2021) that pre-service teachers considered 'having difficulty with the time allocation to teach literature' to be the most serious problem. Also, a study by Tayib and Hassan (2020) agree that the allotted hours for teaching literature are not enough. Moreover, in implementing interesting literature approaches, the arrangement and preparation of the lessons take a lot of time.

Conclusion

This study revealed that Literature-in-English teachers in public secondary schools in Ekiti State have the qualification to teach the subject and they do employ methods of teaching that are effective. However, the time allotted for the teaching of Literature-in-English on secondary schools' timetable is very short and inadequate. It is, therefore, concluded that the time allotted for the teaching of Literature-in-English in public secondary schools in Ekiti State is not adequate for the comprehensive teaching and learning of the subject.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Curriculum planners, government and school administrators should revise the timetable to include double periods for the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English, this will allow for comprehensive lessons.
2. Government should always ensure that qualified teachers are appointed

to teach Literature-in-English in schools.

3. Teachers should continue to improve on their methods of teaching Literature-in-English for better performance of the students in the subject.

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