

**ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS TOWARDS TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN
ENGLISH AT JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL OF JOS NORTH
L.G.A PLATEAU STATE**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of literature in English at the junior secondary school level. A sample of 50 junior secondary schools drawn from Jos North, Plateau State was used. The data were collected by the researcher using developed and validated instrument (interview and observation). The result shows that there are qualified teachers handling the subject. However, despite the capability and the interest of the teachers, their attitudes are negative toward the subject. Some of the factors that contributed to the negative attitude of the teachers towards the subject include inadequate periods for the subject, lack of enough motivation for the literature teachers, poor library facilities and infrastructure, limited commitment of teachers, lack of appropriate teaching aids and inability to get the literature syllabus on time, methods employed by the literature teachers as well as environmental factor. On the bases of these findings recommendations were made as to what teachers, parents, government, management and students could do to reduce the negative attitude of teachers towards teaching of literature-in-English to its bearest minimum.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of teacher's attitude towards teaching of literature-in-English at Junior Secondary School level is of great importance to learning. According to Oyetunde and Chinwe (1999) a brilliant performance in Literature in English must have been borne out of a good and positive attitude. English in the junior Secondary School is an integrated subject (Literature and Language) as it is the practice with other subjects like Social Studies, Integrated Science and Business Studies.

A report from Educational Resource Center Jos (2008) indicates that Students' performance in the Junior Secondary Certificate Examination JSCE English paper in plateau State was considerably low. This was attributed to both the students and their teachers. This necessitated Plateau State Ministry of Education to make Literature to be 40% English examination.

The senior secondary West African Examination Council WAEC and National Examination Council NECO syllabuses make provisions for the teaching of literature as an examinable subject in the final year of Secondary School in Nigeria. It is obligatory for people who want to study English Language, Mass Communication and Law to have a good grade in Literature-in-English so as to be proficient in

English Language. Due to poor background at the junior level, many students find it difficult to offer Literature-in-English as a subject in senior Classes and even most of those that offer it perform poorly (Sale, 2006).

Oyetunde and Chinwe (1999) Observed that Literature is poorly taught in Nigerian Schools. Oyetunde noted that the typical approach to Literature teaching in school in Nigeria is that the teacher comes to the Class, announce the text or pages of the text to be read, he/she then reads aloud or asks a good reader to read, stops the reading at intervals to explain some new words or occasionally asks question to determine students' understanding of the portion that has been read. Owing to this background therefore the researcher seeks to find out whether the problem of teachers' attitudes toward the teaching of the subject matter Literature- in English.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The teacher needs a good understanding of what literature is and what it means to study literature or to have a literature experience if he/she is to teach it effectively, he/she also needs to encourage active and creative learning rather than rote-learning and dependent study. But the attitude of the teachers toward teaching of literature is not encouraging. The basic approach to literature teaching in many schools is reading aloud in class. That is apart from reading and answering questions by students are not engaged in other activities. According to Uwaifo as cited by Oyeturde and Chinwe (1999) Students are neither encouraged enough to talk nor think for themselves. The act of individual response to the work of art is almost absent. The poor performance of students in the Junior Secondary School Certificate JSCE English is attributable to the lack of reading and preparing the literature texts by both the students and their teachers(E.R.C Jos 2008).

Oyetunde and Chinwe (1999) further noted that literature is poorly taught in Nigerian schools and most students at the junior level cannot read literature materials effectively and do not have the ability to understand, apply and reproduce what they are taught from their lessons. according to Sale (2006) the persistent massive failure in West African Examinations Council WAEC and National Examination Council NECO Literature in English examinations have revealed a myriad of problems which seems to defied solutions, one of the factors revealed in that study is that most Secondary schools in Nigeria have stopped preparing their students on Literature-in-English they mainly concentrate on English language.

Based on the above reasons therefore this study investigated the attitude of teachers toward teaching of literature at the junior Secondary School in Jos North Local Government of Plateau State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to find out the attitudes of teachers towards teaching of Literature-in-English at Junior Secondary School in Jos North Local Government of plateau State.

The following are the secondary Objectives

1. To find out the factors that motivate the interest of teachers in teaching Literature-in-English
2. Identify the problems teachers encounter in teaching of Literature-in-English and how they affect their attitude to the subject matter.

3. To investigate the attitudes of teachers that influence their students in learning Literature-in-English.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are :

1. What are the factors that motivate teachers to develop interest in the teaching of Literature-in-English?
2. How do the problems that teachers encounter in teaching of Literature affect their attitude toward the subject matter?
3. How does teachers' attitude influence students in learning Literature- in English?

METHODOLOGY

Survey method is used for this study. This method involves collection of data about a target population from a sample generalizing the finding obtained from the analysis to the entire population (Jen, 2002).

The population for the study comprised of all the Junior Secondary Schools in Jos North Local Government in addition to all the literature teachers of Junior Secondary Schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The targeted sample was drawn randomly from selected Junior Secondary Schools (Government and private) in the study area.

Simple random Sampling method was applied to select fifty (50) Junior Secondary Schools (Government and private) in Jos North Local Government Area in addition to forty-five teachers of Literature-in-English. The Schools in the Study area was Obtained from the Jos North Area, Directorate of Education, Ministry of Education, Jos.

The instrument used for data collection in this study is interview Schedule and Observational Checklist which was constructed by the researcher.

The researcher used simple percentage and reporting technique to analyze and present the data collected.

The research was conducted in 2009/2010 session; the researcher visited the area of the study (Schools) during first term and second term. It took the researcher about six month to carry out the research.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

After a thorough task carried out in the selected Schools, the investigator came out with the following major findings which are based strictly on the outcome of the data presented and analyzed.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What are the factors that motivate interest in the teaching of literature-in-English? It was discovered that literature teachers are not motivated by any means. 42(93.3%) of the respondents are of the view that there is no any incentive for the teachers. They also confirmed that there is no any workshop, seminar or in-Service provided for the teachers. Only 3(6.7%) of the respondents opined that there are some incentives.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

How do problems that teachers encounter in teaching of Literature- English

affect their attitude toward the subject matter?

It was found out that literature teachers encountered serious problems. All the respondent, 45(100%) of them that were interviewed agreed that there are problems facing the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English and the problems make them to exhibit negative attitude towards teaching the subject matter.

RESEARCH QUESTION3

How does teacher's attitude influence their students in learning Literature-in-English? Out of the 45 teachers interviewed 30(66.7%) of the respondents were of the view that teachers attitude have great influence on their students. Only 15 (33.3%) of the respondents, disagreed with this view. The researcher observed that literature teachers are not reading literary text at break, free periods or leisure time.

GENERAL OBSERVATION

The result revealed that despite the capability and the interest of the teachers on the Subject, their attitude toward the Subject is negative. The researcher discovered that only one period is allotted to the literature per week. 30 (60%) of schools visited testified to that fact. It was also observed that teachers are not taking time to prepare their lessons very well. The researcher observed that the typical method of teaching literature in about 40(80%) of Schools visited were reading page to page round the Class which in the ideal situation should not be like that.

The result also revealed that the environment played an important role in the teaching and learning of literature. 38 (84.4%) of the respondents agreed that environment influence learning of literature, while 7(15.6%) of them disagreed.

The researcher observed that the environment (School and home) for learning literature was not conducive about 30 (60%) of the Schools visited were congested and lack seats in addition to the poor seating arrangement. The researcher also observed that the environment (home) does not encourage reading. With the advancement of technology most students are more interested on television, listening to music, handsets and internet navigation rather than reading literary texts. It was also discovered that there were no much libraries where students can go and read literary texts.

The observation made in respect of how teachers of Literature-in-English respect of how teachers of literature – in English and how the environment affects its learning have influence on teachers attitude to the subject.

CONCLUSION

The study took a cursory examination of the attitude of teachers toward teaching of literature in English at the junior secondary school level in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The Study therefore had identified that the attitude of teachers towards the teaching of literature-in-English at the Junior Secondary School level is negative. Thus, the researcher recommends that teachers attitude towards the teaching and learning of literature need to be improved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this study, the researcher puts forward the following recommendations:

1. Literature teachers should be professionally trained teachers while supervisors and inspectors of school should be employed on qualification as subject specialists and not political appointment base on nepotism and ethnicism.
2. Literature should be taught independently as a subject on its own. Hence there should be literature teachers in every school so as to reduce the workload on the teacher of English.
3. Every literature teacher should handle a manageable class of 30- 40 students. This is because the teacher needs to individualize his method when the need arises.
4. If uniform is a prerequisite for admission into any school then text books especially recommended literature texts should be checked at the gate of every School?
5. Condition of service should be made attractive to increase productivity and size of commitment to duty of teachers.
6. Literature teachers should regularly be sponsored to attend in-service training and workshop in order to update their knowledge in the field.

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