



## The Actual and Expected English Language Needs of Teacher Trainees on English Teaching Methodology.

Dr. (Mrs) J.I. Ndukwe

English Department Federal University of Education, Zaria.

Received 04 August, 2015; Accepted 10 September, 2015 © The author(s) 2015. Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)

**ABSTRACT:-** *The crux of this paper is that English language programmes that will address the adverse learning forms at all levels of Education, must be based on relevant approaches, methods and learner-friendly techniques. This paper investigates the needs of teacher trainees in order to fill the gap between the actual and the expected English language needs in the area of teaching methodology. It examines the adequacy or otherwise of the minimum standard used to train English language teacher trainees. Students from the North-West Geographical zone were used as a case study to determine what the teacher trainees need to perform effectively. The study employed opinion scale on questionnaires on experts and NCE students to elicit respondents views on what should constitute the expected language skills needs on teaching methodology of the English teachers trainees which they considered important, available and well taught in the minimum standards. The trainees were also observed on practical teaching using observation checklist to rate their performance in classrooms practices. A total of four hundred and fifty (450) students were used for the study and descriptive statistics was the major statistical tool used to analyse the data. The study revealed among other things that deficit needs were observed in the actual minimum standards of these trainees in the area of English language teaching methods. The study recommends a merger of the gaps discovered to the actual need*

### I. INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at aspects of adverse language teaching situations that cut across all levels of education. At all these levels, English language programmes that will address the adverse learning experiences must be based on relevant approaches, methods and learner-friendly techniques. Practitioners often use the four (4) terms: approach, method, procedure and technique interchangeably. However, there are fine distinctions in their use, especially in second language teaching situations. According to Olaofe (2013), approach refers to theories behind the nature and concept of language teaching and learning. Method is the practical realisation of an approach. This includes various procedures and techniques to use in language teaching. Procedure on the other hand, is an ordered sequence of techniques often described in terms of first thing to do, second or third steps to follows in teaching (op cit). A technique suggests sequential actions, activities and tactics used during teaching.

Streven (1978 and 1980) observed that an approach means a commitment to a particular point of view or an ideology. Thus, according to him, it refers to the attitude to relevant linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, pedagogical theories on which language teaching-learning is based. This refers to a set of assumptions about the nature of language and language learning. Approaches are based on models of learning a language, that is, the thinking and explanation behind certain methodological choices, views on learning and the role of a teacher. Thus, it is possible to have the teacher-centred approach as opposed to the learner or learning-centred approach (Olaofe, 2013). The most current learning-centred approach is called activity-language learning which stresses participatory, cooperative, collaborative and interactive learning strategies. Some other easily recognised approaches in teaching are: democratic/authoritarian, mentalistic/behavioural, serialist/holistic and structural/functional approaches. The relationships between the various choices are complex and a subject of vehement debate (Brumfit and Rossener, 1982).

An approach may not be an overriding factor in adverse English language teaching situations with a large number of inexperienced teachers as are common in our local environment. Such teachers are controlled by the local teaching-learning tradition, practices of the teachers already in the field; the existing materials and syllabuses. Added is the way a teacher was taught when in school and the concrete social and political environment within which the school is located. All these usually determine the teaching approach adopted by

the teacher in the adverse situations. It is common, these days, to see four (4) major approaches to language teaching in operation in our classrooms

- Structural approach which treats language as a system of structurally related elements for coding meaning as in the use of grammar.
- The functional approach sees language as a vehicle to express or accomplish language functions such as inviting, requesting, rejecting, promising, etc.
- The interactive approach views language as a vehicle for creating, maintaining and sustaining social relations through communication exchanges, conversations, etc.
- The constructivist approach is based on the simple principle that teachers cannot give or transmit knowledge to learners; they can only facilitate learning by getting learners to explore knowledge and draw their own conclusions. Teachers support or scaffold learning, for instance by breaking a task into a sequence of smaller tasks which students can manage. They also support active learning and construction of knowledge rather than instruction.

## II. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING METHODS

Adverse situations are characterised by teacher-centred approach, authoritarian teaching viewpoint, largely based on structural language teaching and far less learner and learning-centred in orientation. To minimise these situations, effort must be geared towards shifting emphasis on teacher-centred, authoritarian and structural grammar translation tradition, to learner and learning-centred functional language approach (Olaofe, 2013).

To achieve this shift in methodology, this paper investigates the research question: What are the gaps in the Actual and Expected English Language skills of teacher trainees in English language teaching as expressed by the students and the English Experts in the language skills of Teaching methodology.

A teaching method is a plan for presenting language materials to be learnt based on a selected approach. It is translating an approach into an instructional system based on the objectives of language learning, content to be learnt, types of tasks, etc. The table below shows the relationship between an approach and a method.

Approach	Examples of methods that go with the approach
<b>Structural approach</b>	Grammar-translation method, audio-lingual method
<b>Functional approach</b>	Oral method, functional-notional method, situational language teaching
<b>Interactive approach</b>	Direct method, communicative language teaching, language immersion, silent way, suggestopedia, natural approach, total physical response, reading, method, etc.
<b>Constructivist approach</b>	Scaffolding, task-based, teacher support and mentoring

**Hypothesis 3f:** There is No significant Difference between NCE III Students and English Experts' Responses on Importance, Availability and How Well Taught in the Area of Teaching Methodology.

The results of the analyses of the hypothesis above are presented in Table 2a.

**Table 2a:** Sample Statistics Test of Students Responses on Importance, Availability and How Well Taught were the English Language Teaching Methods in Relation to the Actual and Expected NCE English Language Needs.

Respondents	Variable Description	N	Mean	S.D	S.E.	t.calculated	Df	t-critical	Sig
Students	Methodology (important)	350	35.6800	4.41739	0.23612	151.110	349	1.96	0.000
	Methodology (availability)	350	34.9971	2.37405	0.12690	275.789	349	1.96	0.000
	Methodology (How well Taught)	350	26.5829	5.07567	0.27131	97.981	349	1.96	0.000

Table 2a revealed that the calculated 't' on importance, availability and how well taught of teaching methodology were 151.110, 275.789 and 97.981 respectively and all the three (3) calculated values were each greater than the 't' critical value of 1.96 and df 349. This result by implication indicated that students

considered the skill of English methodology to be important, available and well taught in the actual programme in operation. But the result of class observation was on the contrary. As a result, null hypothesis six (6) was rejected and the alternative accepted; i.e. there was significant gap-difference between the actual needs and the expected needs of the NCE English minimum, standards with regards to teaching methodology skills.

### III. AREAS OF DEFICIT NEEDS REVEALED FROM STUDENTS' RESPONSES WITH REGARDS TO TEACHING METHODS

With regard to teaching methodology, the students were of the view that the following skills were important, sufficiently available and well taught in the actual programme in operation. These skills include pragmatic approach, sociolinguistic approach, psycholinguistic approach, storytelling, structural approach to mention just a few. However, the teaching observation result did not confirm the translation of this knowledge into practical teaching. In fact majority of the teachers observed performed very poorly as their result revealed. As a result, all the skills listed under teaching methodology were considered as deficit need area for effective preparation of NCE teacher trainees. Table 2b presents the ranked arrangement of the skills with the critical deficit needs starred.

**Table 2b: Ranked Arrangement of the Gaps (Deficit Needs) in Teaching Methods.**

S/N	Variable Description	Frequency (%)
1.	Use of demonstration	57.1*
2.	Discussion web	55.7*
3.	Concept mapping	54.3*
4.	Debate	52.4*
5.	Anticipatory guide	52.3*
6.	KWL + KLU	50*
7.	Storytelling	44.3*
8.	Use of Venn diagram	44.3*
9.	Picture walk	43.7*

**Key:** <60 - - - Gap (or deficit need); Gap +\* ----critical need

Table 2b revealed that all the activities, apart from acrostic strategy and jumbled up/rendering were ranked as critical need areas in the NCE III actual programme. The analyses of the response of the experts are presented in table 3.

**Analyses of the Responses of English Language Experts regarding Gaps between Actual Needs and Expected Needs of the NCE III English Language students in the Four Language Skills, Grammatical Structure and Teaching Methodology.**

**Research Question:** What are the Gaps in the Actual and Expected English Language Needs of NCE Students as Expressed by the English Experts in the Language Skills?

**Hypothesis:** There is No significant Gap-difference in the Experts' Responses on the Language Skills with regard to the Actual and Expected Needs of NCE English Students.

Table 3 presents the summary of mean scores on importance, availability and how well taught in teaching methodology in the actual minimum standards in operation.

**Table 3: One-sample t-Tests on Experts Responses on Importance, Availability and How Well Taught in the Area of Teaching Methods.**

Respondents	Variable Description	N	Means	S.D	S.E.	t.calculated	Df	t-critical	Sig
Experts	Methodology (important)	69	40.3333	1.77123	.21323	189.153	68	1.96	0.000
Experts	Methodology (availability)	69	35.2029	4.42779	.53304	66.041	68	1.96	0.000
Experts	Methodology (How well Taught)	69	30.9130	5.34333	.64326	48.057	68	1.96	0.000

The table above, revealed that the t-calculated values for importance (189.153), availability (66.041) and how well taught (48.057) were each greater than the t-critical value of 1.96 and df 68 and at 0.05 level of significance. These values indicated that significant difference existed between the actual needs and the expected needs in the NCE English language minimum standards in the area of English Language teaching methodology. Their total mean values, 40.3333 for importance, 35.2029 for availability, and 30.9130 for how well taught equally depicted significant difference as each was greater than the critical mean value of 3.841. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted, i.e. there is significant difference between the actual and the expected needs in the area of teaching methodology.

**Table 4:** Independent t-test Difference between NCE III Students and English Experts Responses on the Importance, Availability and How Well Taught of the Skills of Language Teaching Methodology.

Variable Description	Respondents Status	N	Mean	S.D	S.E.	T.calculated	Df	t-critical	Sig
Teaching (important)	Students	350	35.6800	4.41739	.23612	8.608	417	1.96	.000
	Experts	69	40.3333	1.77123	.21323				
Teaching (availability)	Students	350	34.9971	2.37405	.12690	.555	417	1.96	.000
	Experts	69	35.2029	4.42779	.53304	.			
Teaching (How well Taught)	Students	350	26.5829	5.07567	.27131	6.420	417	1.96	.007
	Experts	69	30.9130	5.34333	.64326				

Table 4 showed that the calculated t value on teaching methodology (8.608) for both students and experts at 417 on importance was greater than the critical value of t 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This result implied that both groups of respondents' subscribed to the fact that a significant difference actually existed.

With regard to availability of teaching methods in the actual programme, the calculated value for students and experts was .555 at 417 df. The calculated value was less than the critical value of 1.96 and as such, the null hypothesis was retained, i.e. there was no significant difference in the responses of the students and the experts on teaching methodology in relation to the actual needs and the expected needs in the NCE curriculum in the area of availability.

In the same vein, the t-calculated for students and experts (6.420) on how well taught was more than the t-critical of 1.96. This result implied that both respondents submitted that there was significant difference in the area of how well taught were the teaching methodology skills. Apart from the above, the calculated mean values for importance i.e 35.6800 for students and 40.3333 for experts, 34.9971 for students and 35.2029 for experts on availability and 26.5829 for students and 30.9130 for experts on how well taught were each, greater than the critical mean values of 3.841. These results again go to buttress the submission already posited by both respondents that significant difference existed especially with regards to importance and how well taught were language teaching methods in the actual programme.

#### IV. SUMMARIES

This section summarises all the findings in this study. They are in respect of the research question and the hypothesis advanced earlier on. For ease of reference, the language skills were classified and referred to under general function items (language skills used on a general bases), specific function items (language skills geared towards specific functions), and ICT-Based items (language skills that involved the use of technology in application). Areas of gaps are starred.

- The area of teaching methodology expressed deficit needs as shown in table 3. The areas of needs prioritised as critical needs include activities like anticipatory guide, use of venn diagram, debate, discussion web, concept mapping, kwl/klu, and picture walk (under specific function skills); moderate needs are sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, integrative and exploratory approaches (under general function skills); use of demonstration, storytelling and acrostic strategy were equally revealed as moderate needs under the specific function items. These are presented on table 4.

**Table 4: Areas of Gaps Identified from students' and Experts' Responses on Teaching Methodology.**

S/No	Variables Description	Frequency
1	Structural approach	0*
2	Exploratory approach	0*
3	Integrative approach	0*
4	Sociolinguistic approach	0*
5	Psycholinguistic approach	0*
6	Pragmatic approach	0*
7	Acrostic strategy	0*
8	Anticipatory guide	0*
9	Use of Venn diagram	0*
10	Debates	0*
11	Picture walk	0*
12	Vocabulary web	0*
13	Concept mapping	0*
14	Discussion web	0*
15	List-pair-share	0*
16	Kwl-klu	0*

**Key: <60=Gap;<60+= Critical need**

Table 3 showed that all the listed methodology skills i.e. activities and approaches were ranked as not sufficiently available in the programme and were not sufficiently well taught. They were rated as critical gaps in the study programme.

The summary is presented on table 5 via semantic analyses.

**Table 5: Summary of the result via Semantic Analysis**

	General function items							
	Traditional approach	+	+	+	+	+	+	
	Structural approach	+	+	+	+	-	+	
	Sociolinguistic approach	+	+	+	+	-	-	*
	psycholinguistic approach	+	+	+	+	-	-	*
<b>T</b>	Integrative approach	+	+	+	+	-	-	*
<b>E</b>	Exploratory approach	+	-	+	+	-	-	*
<b>A</b>								
<b>C</b>	Specific function items							
<b>H</b>	Matching games	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>I</b>	Jumbled up reordering	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>N</b>	Use of demonstration	+	-	-	+	+	+	*
<b>G</b>	Story telling	+	+	-	+	+	+	*
	Acrostic strategy	+	-	+	+	-	-	*
<b>M</b>	Anticipatory guide	-	-	-	+	-	-	**
<b>E</b>	Use of venn diagram	+	+	-	+	-	-	**
<b>T</b>	Debate	-	-	-	+	-	-	**
<b>H</b>	Discussion web	-	-	-	+	-	-	**
<b>O</b>	Concept mapping	-	+	-	+	-	-	**
<b>D</b>	List-pair-share	+	+	+	+	-	-	*
<b>S</b>	Kwl-klu	-	-	-	+	-	-	**
	Picture-walk	-	-	+	+	-	-	**
	Vocabulary web	-	+	+	+	-	-	

**Key**

- = It is not important

It is not sufficiently available

It is not sufficiently well taught

+ = It is important

It is sufficiently available

It is sufficiently well taught

\* = deficit need (gap)

\*\* = a critical deficit need (critical gap)

Table 5 presents the summary of the responses of both the students and the experts in all language skills investigated via semantic analyses. The skills were further classified according to their functional characteristics i.e. general, specific and ICT-Based skills. In all, most of the skills were revealed as either critical need areas or moderate need areas in the three function items.

## V. CONCLUSION

With the recommended writing and creative needs, this paper has accomplished its objectives, thus bringing the paper to its logical conclusion. The contention has been that to be adequate and indeed to be able to take account of relevant factors crucial to English Language Teaching (ELT) in primary schools, NCE Primary Language Arts (PELA) course for specialists in primary English Language Teaching (ELT) need be based on sound principles of curriculum design and reflect tested and modern views of the nature of language, L<sub>2</sub> learning and instructional programme development. Such a course design process must ensure full involvement of all interested parties, that is, the trainees, the language experts and the employers.

The tasks of L<sub>2</sub> English teachers in relation to primary school level have greatly increased to include not only mere knowledge of language forms but also of pedagogical skills and communicative skills of using L<sub>2</sub>. Consequently, L<sub>2</sub> teacher's scope is equally enlarged to encompass provision of adequately enriched learning situations that permit learners to accomplish the language learning challenges successfully. The provision of a standard training course as provided in this paper is not only desirable but a must for Primary English as Second Language (ESL) teachers to be able to meet the new and increasing demands of teaching English in primary schools.

By the logical and objective steps taken to arrive at the present PELA course, a high internal validity for efficiency has been enshrined in the course. However, like any other innovations, it is assumed that a healthy implementation environment will be provided to allow for full realisation of the potentials of the course. Logistical and administrative variables which are normal constraints upon the implementation of a new course such as proposed here have already been detailed out. They should be recognised and effectively controlled in the operation of this course. It should be mentioned again at this point that this humanistic course design approach makes it possible for users (including trainees, trainers and employers) to be confident of the relevance and appropriateness of the resultant course package.

Finally, the present course has not been tested. This is the next logical stage in course design. This stage is outside the scope of this paper. It is therefore an area for further research as earlier indicated. This presenter will be interested in the outcome of the extension of this study in this direction.

### Recommendation

The outcome of the paper has far-reaching implications for stakeholders in the education industry. Such implications are as follow:

#### The Teacher and the Students and the Classroom

After the design of a syllabus or curriculum as has been recommended in this paper, the operational level of implementation is where the teacher and the students (trainees) interact. This is where the findings of this study have implications for the teachers and the students (trainees). The implementation of the expected needs based on the language skills and sub-skills gathered from these research findings would definitely make the teachers and the trainees in the field more effective in the discharge of their duties. It has been presented earlier on in the discussion that the actual need exemplified in the NCE minimum standards in use presently, was originally made for the JSS level of education. Up till today, the focus has not changed in spite of the various review exercises carried out. It has been argued that such reviews were flawed and were not done based on needs assessment procedure, involving all the reliable stakeholders. Consequently, the minimum standards have been depicted in this paper as lacking (deficient) in content. As a result, the expected need, an outcome of this study, has updated the existing minimum standards in use as to sufficiently equip the teachers and the learners effectively. More so, the content of the modified curriculum are geared towards the needs of NCE teacher trainees in preparation for English language teaching in primary schools. In addition, the new curriculum (expected needs) harnessed and included ICT-based skills in teaching/learning; it also made provisions for pedagogical activities and methods gathered from current literature. This would move the teachers away from the traditional and mechanical systems of teaching the linguistics component of the audio lingual and cognitive code learning approach (structural approach). With these provisions, the teachers' work is

made easier, more focused and more effective. The trainees would imbibe the culture of being communicatively competent in orientation by utilizing all the interactional potentials offered in pragmatic approach, sociolinguistic approach, psycholinguistic approach, and enjoy the dividends of information technology inherent in ICT facilities. For the primary school children, the outcome of this study would help them have a more efficient teacher; who would train them better and thereby have improved standard which will make positive impact in the nation's development. This is because all the required basic skills and rudiments they need to lay a solid foundation in the teaching and learning of English language for academic growth and for teaching at the primary schools are given to them; instead of assuming that they already known when the trainees do not know. That way, deficiencies in English at various levels of education i.e. first leaving school certificate and O'level would be tackled and teaching/learning standard would improve.

### **Implication for Minimum Standards Reviewer**

In order to make the NCE minimum standard relevant to the needs of the trainees, oriented towards primary levels of education, the content of the minimum standards (curriculum) must be handled effectively. The implication of this for curriculum review or modification is a shift from the present minimum standards in use, to a product and process oriented minimum standards. This implies a departure from itemization of linguistic items as we have it in the actual minimum standards, to a syllabus as used in the Bangalore project (see Johnson, 1982). Example is setting a goal, and setting out ways (process) of attaining such a goal. The underlined assumption of this type of syllabus as put forward by Prabhu (1982) in Brumfit (1984), Krashen and Terrel (1983), is that "form is best learnt when the learner's attention is on meaning" and that "language is best taught when it is used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning". The same argument was put forward by Breen (1983) for greater concern with the capacity for communication with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives. Therefore, since the minimum standards is for NCE English trainees, geared towards primary English needs, content that would further develop language acquisition devices (LAD) of the young learners is all that is required to be able to engage in meaningful communication. The resultant expected needs from this is an example of a departure from just itemization of linguistics features for study. The reviewers should borrow from the proposed curriculum to give a product and process oriented syllabus, especially geared towards the needs of primary English needs that the NCE English trainees need to be effective, in the discharge of their duties. Some of the items recommended are consistent with the current trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) and are ICT-based too. Like the recommended curriculum, reviewers should aim at a curriculum that is activity based and learner-centered.

### **Textbook Writers, Language Teaching Materials Developers and Developers of Materials on Methodology.**

The findings of the study equally have implications for text-book and other language teaching materials developers and the methods of implementation of the NCE minimum standards. The available text-books presently in the markets for these group of learners are mostly designed to instruct the students in the general methodology (mostly traditional and structural in approach) of handling the language skills. There should be a reorientation and a shift from "course" to "resource" book production (See Lake and Stokes, 1983). Methods to be used should include sociolinguistic in approach, psycho linguistic in approach and pragmatism. The presentation of the content must involve a lot of interaction, co-operation and collaboration amongst the learners and the teachers. Learning should be communicatively purposeful. The learners should brainstorm, list-pair and share, share, use KWL/KLU, (what I know, what I want to know and what I have learnt/what I know, what I have learnt and what I have unlearned), and so on. The material must focus on both message and the channel. In other words, the interactants will have to be concerned with what they have to say and how they are going to say it. The communication stimulated by the task in the materials must be negotiated rather than predetermined. These will be a similitude of a real life situation. This implies that the task may not exert rigid control over the language to be used but allow the speakers to make adaptation in content and expression and in the light of feedback they receive. In other words, there is likely to be considerable varieties of form used. These provisions have been made as the recommended NCE English curriculum on listening and speaking skills. The content of this document should inform, be made available, and be a guideline for English textbook writers, books on language teaching methods and other teaching material developers for NCE English trainees.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Breen, M.P. (1984). Process Syllabuses for the Language classroom. In Brumfit, C.J. (ed).
- [2]. Brumfit, C. & R. Rossner (1982). The decision pyramid and teacher training for E.L.T. *English Teaching Journal*, 36/4
- [3]. Brumfit, C.J. (1984). The Limits of Language syllabus in Read, J.A.S. (ed). *Trends in Language Syllabus Design*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
- [4]. Olaofe, I.A. (2013). *Teaching English in second language adverse situations. A solution-based approach*. Zaria, Kaduna: Yahaya Ventures, General Printers and Publishers.
- [5]. Strevens (1980). *Teaching English as an international language*. Pergamon: Newbury House.
- [6]. Strevens, S. (1978). *New Orientations in the teaching of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition).