

Teacher Variables In Employing Innovative Teaching Methods In Igbo Language In Secondary Schools: Implication For Inclusion

Stella Obioma Chineke

&

Leonard Tochukwu Ugwuanyi

Abstract

The study sought to find out Igbo Language teacher's extent of awareness using innovative teaching methods and its challenges to special educators. The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. 159 Igbo Language teachers comprising 56 males and 103 females constitute the population. There was no sampling because the population was manageable. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that generally, Igbo language teachers are not aware of the innovative teaching methods. Gender and qualifications of teachers influenced the use of innovative teaching methods. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Bachelors Degree in Education/Igbo should be the minimum qualification for secondary school Igbo Language teachers.

Key words: Gender, hearing impairment, innovative teaching, language and training.

Introduction

Language is a veritable tool in the hands of man. It is a formalized code used by a group of people to communicate ideas, feelings and thoughts with one another in a particular society. Awobuluyi (1998) and Agbedo (2007) report that there are about 400 languages in Nigeria, and this makes communication to become problematic due to language barrier. The need for mutual understanding in such a multilingual society like Nigeria necessitates the teaching of some indigenous languages in the school system to reduce suspicion and misunderstanding which are common among people with different linguistic background. It is against this backdrop that the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (2004:10) states that:

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of promoting social interaction and national cohesion; and preserving culture. Thus, every child shall learn the language of the immediate environment. Furthermore, in the interest of national unity, it is expected that every child shall be required to learn one of the three Nigerian languages: Hausa, Igbo or Yoruba.

To actualize the above stated intention in secondary education, FRN (2004) further proposes that two Nigerian languages (alongside with English) should be learnt as core subjects in junior secondary schools while in the senior secondary, the study of one

Nigerian language is made compulsory. By implication, Igbo Language, among the estimated 400 languages in Nigeria becomes a core subject in Nigerian secondary schools. In spite of this recognition accorded to Igbo Language as a core subject and as a means of fostering unity, the language, like every other language in Nigeria, is faced with a number of challenges ranging from linguistic interference, inadequate instructional resources, large language class, and poor teaching methods (Offorma, 2009). Literature has shown that the chief among these militating factors against effective language teaching and learning is the poor teaching method. Hence, teaching a well selected subject content with good instructional resources and evaluation procedures cannot yield a reasonable result if the teaching method is faulty (Offorma, 2009). This confirms the idea of Nwadike (1992), who opines that students' poor performance in Igbo language is mainly due to teachers' use of lecture method which according to him, is not fascinating to the learners. The continuous pointing of accusing fingers at poor method of teaching as a major contributing factor to students' poor performance in Igbo Language has attracted the interest of some researchers, (Omeje, 1998; Umo, 2001; Omeje, 2009 and Chineke, 2013). These studies centered on finding out the efficacy of some innovative teaching methods in order to improve on learners' performance in Igbo Language. The results of their findings showed that students recorded a huge success in Igbo Language as a result of the use of innovative teaching methods. Other scholars like Akabogu (2002), Ene (2002), Uzoegwu (2004), Igbokwe (2006) and Marjid (2010) carried out their studies on the effectiveness of different types of innovative methods, in the teaching of English language and they all yielded positive results. This means that the innovative methods are likely going to be more efficacious if applied in the teaching and learning of Igbo language.

Innovative teaching methods are methods of teaching that are activity based and learner centered that are introduced to facilitate learning and increase students' participation in the class. According to Igbokwe (2006), these methods such as communicative (CM), collaborative (COLM), cloze (CIM), cooperative method (COM), etc aim at revolutionizing teaching and learning, through the use of different teaching strategies that lay emphasis on the learners and how they learn a language other than on the teacher and how he teaches. Using these methods would give the Igbo language teacher the opportunity to carry all the learners in the classroom along, including those with language problems such as those with hearing impairment (that is, impairment that occurs either due to accident or disease). Hearing impairment according to Okeke (2001) is a disability that can affect the effective functioning of total personality, no matter the period of onset. Total personality here implies a person's social, physical, psychological and mental abilities. Since this category of students have special ways of learning a language, teaching methods that give the learners opportunity to engage in various communicative activities would likely encourage their active participation in the classroom. Ugwuanyi (2001) informs that teachers should master the skills of using different modalities and strategies to teach students effectively especially now that inclusion takes the centre stage of learning in the nation's educational system.

Inclusion, according to Ozoji (2010) demands that all learners should be taught in the same classroom. This calls for changes and modification in content and method with a common vision to cover all learners in the regular classroom. For example, Rlekehold (1993) opines that the use of total communication method which involves signs, demonstration, lip reading and gestures would put the teacher in the right track of carrying all the learners along, irrespective of their peculiarities. However, the

employability of these methods is possible only if the Igbo language teachers are aware of their existence hence, the justification for this study.

Again, the inability of Igbo Language teachers to use the innovative teaching methods could have some bearing on gender difference. Gender can be referred to as the cultural constructs and social positions that members of the society attach to being male or female. Macionis and Gerber (2005) see gender as a dimension of social group which forms how people act and think about themselves and how they interact with others. Ngwu and Okwo (2008) postulate that female teachers seem to be inferior to their male counterparts in the discharge of their duties, especially when it calls for serious cognitive and physical activities. They further opine that it may not be uncommon to observe female teachers avoiding assignments that require serious mental and physical activities. This type of behaviour can affect the teachers' use of innovative teaching methods which are more demanding than the traditional lecture method.

Another important factor that can affect teachers' use of innovative teaching methods is the level of training. Aguokogbuo (1994) noted that a good teacher training programme is the one that seeks to assist the teacher to develop in person, provide him with the necessary skills and professional ability to become an effective teacher. Mkpa (1987) asserts that there can be no meaningful formal education in the absence of a well trained teacher. Ali (1990) agrees with the above assertion when he states that professional quality is crucial in determining the effectiveness of teachers in doing their work. It is only a teacher who has received adequate training in a subject area that would know various available methods for teaching such a subject, and equally use them appropriately. In affirmation, Nwadike (2002) reports that there are not enough trained teachers to teach Igbo language. Qualification of teachers may therefore affect their employability of innovative teaching methods. Awobuluyi (1998) in view of the same thought informs that the success of an educational system therefore is determined primarily by the quality of its teachers. And by logical attention, the Federal Republic of Nigeria in her National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) adds that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. That is why Agbaero (2002) stresses that the quality of personnel that operate a system largely determines the extent to which the set goals are achieved. Based on the foregoing, the qualification of Igbo language teachers will likely determine their awareness and extent of employability of innovative teaching methods. Therefore, this research aimed at assessing Igbo language teachers' awareness and extent of employability of innovative teaching methods.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent are Igbo language teachers aware of the innovative teaching methods?
2. To what extent do male and female Igbo language teachers employ the innovative teaching methods?
3. To what extent do Igbo language teachers with different qualifications employ the innovative teaching methods?

Two null hypotheses raised were also tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between gender of Igbo language teachers and how often they employ the innovative teaching methods.
2. There is no significant difference between Igbo language teachers' qualification and how often they employ the innovative teaching methods.

Method

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State. The entire 159 Igbo language teachers comprising 56 males and 103 females made up the population. There was no sampling because the population was small and manageable.

The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Awareness and Utilization of Innovative Questionnaire [AUIQ], which was developed by the researchers through review of available literature. The AUIQ contains two sections A and B. Section A sought information on the personal data of the respondents. Section B was made up of 14 items which sought to measure level of awareness and how often teachers employ the listed methods. The response formats were: Highly Aware [HA] 4, Aware [A] 3, Less Aware [LA] 2, and Unaware [UA] 1; Very Often (VO) 4, Often (O) 3, Seldom (S) 2 and Never (N) 1 respectively. The instrument was face validated by two experts, one in Igbo Language and the other in Measurement and Evaluation both in the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

The data collected were analyzed using Mean to answer research questions, while z-test statistics and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used to test the hypotheses. The mean rating was based on a modified 4 point rating scale. The criterion mean of 2.50 and above were accepted while those below 2.50 were rejected.

Results

Research question 1:

To what extent are Igbo Language teachers aware of the innovative teaching methods?

Tables 1and 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of Igbo Language teachers' awareness of the innovative teaching methods.

Qualifi.	No.	1.CM Mean SD	2.COM Mean SD	3.CIM Mean SD	4.GDM Mean SD	5.CONM Mean SD	6.PHM Mean SD	7.DLM Mean SD
NCE	127	1.38 0.63	2.87 0.64	1.14 0.66	2.11 0.78	1.89 0.77	2.06 0.81	2.70 0.88
B.Ed/B.A	24	2.57 0.58	3.18 0.50	1.63 0.49	3.32 0.83	2.38 0.72	2.55 0.61	2.81 0.78
M.Ed/M.A	8	3.00 0.53	3.98 0.52	3.38 0.52	3.80 0.93	2.48 0.83	3.38 0.74	3.38 0.74

Qualifi.	No	8.CAL L Mean SD	9.P M Mean SD	10.COL M Mean SD	11.G M Mean SD	12.S M Mean SD	13.TC M Mean SD	14.TBLT M Mean SD	Gran d Tota l Mean SD
NCE	12	2.68	1.10	2.16	3.00	2.15	1.86	1.72	2.47
	7	0.87	0.72	0.61	0.69	0.81	0.85	0.88	0.41
B.E	24	3.13	2.51	2.33	3.25	2.17	2.08	2.38	2.66
D/B.A		0.74	0.66	0.56	0.85	0.79	0.65	0.58	0.35
M.Ed/M	8	3.80	3.58	2.38	3.80	2.90	2.44	3.25	3.50
.A		0.53	0.83	0.52	1.07	0.93	0.76	0.71	0.41

Key: CM= Communicative method, COM=Cooperative method, CIM=Cloze instructional method, GDM=Guided discovery method, COSM=Constructivist method, PHM=Phonovisual method, DLM=Discussion learning method, CALL=Computer assisted language learning, PM=Project method, COLM=Collaborative method, GM=Games method, Simulation method, TCM=Total communication method, TBLTM=Task-based language teaching method.

Results presented in tables 1 and 2 indicate that NCE holders who constitute majority of the respondents are aware of only items number 2, 7, 8 and 11. Teachers with B. Ed/ M.A are aware of items number 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14 while teachers with M. Ed/ M.A who are only eight in number are aware of all the methods except for items number 5, 10 and 13. Since the mean score of NCE teachers which is 2.47 is below the criterion mean, it is rejected. The first degree teachers have mean of 2.66 while MEd teachers have mean of 3.50. Though both mean scores are accepted but the extent to which teachers with Masters Degree are aware of the innovative methods is greater than that of the degree teachers.

Research Question 2:

To what extent do male and female Igbo language teachers employ the innovative teaching methods?

Tables 3 and 4: Mean rating of male and female Igbo Language teachers' use of innovative teaching methods.

Gender	No.	1.CM Mean SD	2.COM Mean SD	3.CIM Mean SD	4.GDM Mean SD	5.CONM Mean SD	6.PHM Mean SD	7.DLM Mean SD
M	56	2.70 0.81	2.71 0.82	2.88 0.79	2.73 0.67	2.71 0.78	2.84 0.71	2.79 0.76
F	103	3.12 0.83	3.02 0.82	3.04 0.90	3.00 0.89	3.01 0.88	2.87 0.84	2.84 0.96

Gender	No.	8.CAL L Mean SD	9.P M Mean SD	10.COL M Mean SD	11.G M Mean SD	12.S M Mean SD	13.TC M Mean SD	14.TBLT M Mean SD	Grand Total Mean SD
M	56	2.71 0.80	2.86 0.82	3.20 0.55	3.14 0.55	3.11 0.56	3.07 0.60	2.88 0.76	2.88 0.48
F	103	2.98 0.94	3.12 0.91	3.22 0.80	3.20 0.72	3.04 0.70	3.17 0.73	2.99 0.76	3.04 0.49

From the result presented in Tables 3 and 4, both male and female Igbo language teachers use all the innovative methods in teaching Igbo language. This is because the mean rating of all the items 15 to 28 are above 2.50. The grand mean for male is 2.88 while that of female is 3.04. This shows that females employ these methods more than males.

Research Question 3:

To what extent do Igbo language teachers with different qualifications employ the innovative teaching methods?

Tables 5 and 6: extent to which Igbo language teachers with different qualifications employ the innovative teaching methods.

Qualifi.	No.	1.CM Mean SD	2.COM Mean SD	3.CIM Mean SD	4.GDM Mean SD	5.CONM Mean SD	6.PHM Mean SD	7.DLM Mean SD
NCE	127	2.46 0.77	2.73 0.82	2.16 0.84	2.47 0.81	2.14 0.82	1.45 0.78	2.56 0.78
B.Ed/B.A	24	2.55 0.94	2.97 0.82	2.73 0.85	2.67 0.70	2.85 0.79	2.25 0.74	2.94 0.59
M.Ed/M.A	8	3.38 1.06	3.13 1.13	3.00 1.20	2.75 0.89	3.00 1.07	2.50 1.07	3.25 0.71

Qualifi.	No	8.CAL L	9.P M	10.COL M	11.G M	12.S M	13.TC M	14.TBLT M	Grand Total Mean SD
NCE	127	2.45 0.76	2.11 0.81	2.24 0.82	2.44 0.82	2.18 0.86	2.33 0.83	2.08 0.74	2.38 0.54
B.Ed/B.A	24	2.58 0.58	2.25 0.74	2.30 0.77	2.57 0.64	2.49 0.79	2.54 0.62	2.29 0.69	2.65 0.36
M.Ed/M.A	8	3.50 0.76	3.13 0.99	2.38 0.92	2.88 0.83	2.75 0.89	3.00 0.53	2.88 0.64	3.17 0.52

Tables 5 and 6 portray that NCE holders utilize only items number 30 and 35 out of the 14 items, B.Ed/B.A holders utilize items number 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39 and 41 while M.Ed/M.A holders utilize all except for item number 38. That means that NCE teachers are the least in the utilization of these methods because their mean is 2.38. They are followed by B.Ed/B.A teachers that have mean of 2.65. M.Ed/ M.A teachers have the mean of 3.17. This indicates that the extent to which Masters Degree holders utilize these methods is most.

Hypotheses

A corresponding hypothesis that answers research question two is H₀₁.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between gender of Igbo Language teachers and how often they employ the innovative teaching methods.

Table 7: T-test analysis of male and female Igbo language teachers' employability of innovative teaching methods.

Gender	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	56	2.88	.48			
Female	103	3.04	.49	157	-2.03	.14

The result in the above Table 7 shows that the probability value associated with the calculated value of 't' (-2.03) is 0.14. Since the probability value of 0.14 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, gender is not a significant factor in the utilization of innovative teaching methods.

A corresponding hypothesis that also further addresses the research question three is H_{02} . H_{02} . There is no significant difference between Igbo language teachers' qualification and how often they employ the innovative teaching methods.

Table 8: ANOVA of the mean of degree and NCE Igbo Language teachers.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.98	2	1.49	5.60	.004
Within Groups	41.44	156	.27		
Total	44.41	158			

Table 8 above reveals that the probability value of 0.004 is less than the calculated 'f' value of 5.60 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected because qualification is a significant factor in the utilization of the innovative teaching methods.

Discussion

Findings in tables 1 and 2 show that majority of the Igbo Language teachers are not aware of most of the innovative teaching methods. The reason for this ignorance could be that these methods were not popular when those teachers were still in school. Onderi and Croll (2008) observe that teachers require constant training through in-service, to enable them update their knowledge and enhance their performance, as well as that of the learners.

The results in Tables 3 and 4 reveal that both male and female Igbo language teachers utilize the innovative methods almost at the same level. However, the grand mean for male is 2.88 while that of female is 3.04. This shows that females employ these methods more than males though the difference is not significant. The discrepancy between the mean rating of male and female teachers negates what Ngwu and Okwo (2008) earlier noted, that female teachers tend to shy away from works that require serious cognitive and physical exercise.

The results in Tables 5 and 6 prove that qualification is a significant factor in the use of innovative teaching methods. Majority of the teachers, who are NCE holders and have only obtained the basic certificate for teaching in Nigeria are the least in the utilization of the innovative methods. The B,Ed/B.A and M.Ed/M.A holders use the innovative teaching methods more because they have the knowledge in both in content and in methodology. This suggests why their level of awareness of the innovative methods is very high. The report of Ngwu and Okwo (2008) on the importance of teachers' qualification agrees with the findings of the study. They noted that students learn more from graduate teachers than from those with NCE. In agreement, Agusiobo (2002) and Agbaero (2002) posit that the quality of education in any society is determined by the quality of the teachers and the effectiveness of their teaching methods.

Table 7 indicates that there is no significant difference in the male and female utilization of the innovative teaching methods, while table 8 shows that qualification is a significant factor because teachers with higher qualification utilize the methods more than their counterparts with lower qualification. This finding reveals why Adekola (2008) emphasized the need to employ only graduate teachers in order to improve secondary education.

Implication for Inclusion

The findings of this study indicate that innovative teaching methods are very effective in teaching Igbo language. Learning language has been a big problem for persons with hearing impairment. Many of them do not perceive spoken language much and also have limited linguistic output. This shows that there is the need to include total communication language teaching trainees in various institutions where teachers are trained. This would assist teacher trainees to come out better equipped to handle these students with hearing impairment effectively in their classrooms.

Conclusion

From results of this study, the researchers arrived at a conclusion that the Igbo Language teachers who are mostly NCE holders do not have adequate knowledge of the innovative teaching methods and as such, use them less. The results have also shown that while gender is not a significant factor, qualification influences Igbo Language teachers' utilization of the innovative teaching methods.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this research, it was recommended that Bachelors Degree in Education/Igbo should be the minimum qualification for Igbo Language teachers in secondary schools. Government and school authorities should organize regular training programmes for Igbo Language teachers to keep on intimating them with novel ideas and practices in the profession, taking cognizance of teacher variables like gender and qualification. This would help them to keep abreast with new trends in the field of teaching and language teaching in particular. Again, the institutions that train Igbo language teachers should include the total communication method in their curriculum to enable the teachers cope with learners with hearing impairment, especially now that inclusive education is gaining ground in Nigeria.

References

- Adekola, B. O. (2008). English teachers' competence and quality teaching in secondary schools in Ogun State. *Journal of curriculum studies*, 15(2), 7-12.
- Agbaero, N. N. (2002). *Brain drain: Implication re-engeoing teacher educationist* 1 (1) 14-26.
- Agbedo, C. U. (2007). *Problems of Multilingual nations: The Nigerian prospective*. Nsukka ACE resources Konsult.
- Agoukogbuo, P. (1994). Models of teaching, In: Offorma, G.C. (ed). *Curriculum Implementation and planning*. Onitsha: Uni-world educational publishers [Nig.] Ltd.
- Agusiobo, N.N. (2002). Problem of teaching Profession in Nigeria: implication for the 21st century. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education, JOWICE* (PP 218-222).

- Akabogu, J. U. (2002). "Effect of secondary school students' exposure to contextual clues on achievement in reading comprehension." Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Ali, A. (1990). *Current curriculum development, implementation and Evaluation: status, Analysis and criticism*. Keynote address at the 19th Annual conference of curriculum organization of Nigeria: Imo State University.
- Awobuluyi, O. (1998). *Language education: Theory, policy and practice*. Retrieved April 2012, from <http://fafunwafoundation.tripod.com/fafunwafoundation/id8.html>.
- Chineke, S. O. (2013). Mmetuta usoro nkuzi mgbado ukwu n'oru n'ihe nkweta n'ule umuakwukwo sinio sekondiri n'omumu edemede Igbo n'okpuru ochichi Nsuka. Masters Project, Department of Arts Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Ene, F. N. (2002). Administering teacher education for sustainable development in Nigeria Eastern COASU, *Journal of teacher education* 1. 19-23.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2004). *National policy on education*. Lagos: NERDC press.
- Igbokwe, U. L. (2006). Assessment of metacognitive Skills students adopt in essay writing. *International Journal of Arts and technology education* 5(1) 1-14.
- Macionis, J. J. & Gerber, L. M. (2005). *Sociology*. USA: Pearson prentice hall inc..
- Majid, H. A. J. (2010). "Task-based teaching of micro-skills in an EAP situation." Thesis of Shahid Chamran University of Ahraz, Iran.
- Mkpa, A.M. (1987). *Curriculum development and implementation*. Owerri: Totan publishers Ltd.
- Ngwu, R.U. and Okwo, F.A. [2008]. Teacher variables in the implementation of the Affective domain in the continuous assessment of secondary school students in Enugu State. *International Journal of Art and technology education* 7 (1) 1-10.
- Nwadike, I. U. (1992). *Nka na Usoro Nkuzi Igbo*. Nsukka: Ifunanya publishers.
- Nwadike, I. U. (2002). *Igbo language in education: A historical study*. Obosi: Pacific Publishers.
- Offorma, G. C. (2009). *Curriculum across languages*. UNN: Senate Ceremonials Committee.
- Okeke, B. A. (2001). *Essentials of special education*. nsukka: Afro-Orbis Publishers.
- Omeje, M. O. (1998). "Effect of project method on secondary schools' achievement in written composition in Igbo Language." Unpublished M.Ed Thesis, UNN.
- Omeje, M. O. (2009). "Effect of communicative method on students' achievement and interest in Igbo letter writing." Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, UNN.

- Onderi, H and Crloo, P. (2008). *In-service Training needs of head teachers and teachers*. Retrieved, April, 2012, from <http://www.tandf.co.uk./journals>.
- Ozaji, E. D. (2010). Effect of concept mapping strategy and gender on students' cognitive development and performance in Integrated Science. A Ph.D Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Riekeholf, L. L. (1993). *The illustrated guide to mastery of sign language and the manual alphabet*. Washington DC: Springfield Gospel Publishing House.
- Ugwuanyi, L. T. (2001). Communication and therapeutic programmes for children with hearing impairment. In P. O. Ebigbo (Ed) *Rehabilitation of Children with mental and hearing disabilities in Nigeria*. Enugu: Chimex Enterorises, 260-271.
- Umo, U.C. (2001). "Effect of Games on the achievement and interest of Junior Secondary school students in Igbo Grammar." Unpublished Ph.D Thesis.
- Uzoegwu, P.N. (2004). "The effect of cooperative learning method on students' achievement in English essay writing." Unpublished P. HD. Thesis, UNN.