

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE.****Kabiru Idris Musa****Department of Language and Communication, School of General Studies  
Education, Jigawa State College of Education Gumel.****07061051454****kabiruidris727@gmail.com*****Abstract***

*The study of English language in Nigeria is realistically machinery for effective teacher education. This paper discusses the concept of language, language education, quality assurance and the role of English language education for delivery upliftment in teacher education. This paper also highlights some challenges to quality assurance and also suggests some ways of salvaging the issues and challenges.*

**Introduction**

English language education could be traced to the 16th century when indigenes at the coastal borders came into contact with British settlers. The formal teaching of English dates back to the 19th century when the missionaries established schools purposely to train indigenes how to interpret English speech and read the Bible with average proficiency. Therefore, English language education covers the formal teaching and learning of English in schools across all levels of education.

The role and the quality of English language education in the educational system and in national development in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The national policy on education (2004 revised edition) has recognized the value of language in education. It through language that ideas are exchanged, beliefs, shared, social interaction enhanced, national cohesion fostered and culture preserved. "English language has a dominant position in all official transactions, higher education, science and technology, the media, the legislature and the judiciary" (Bamgbose, 1991:11). For quality assurance to be achieved, English language teaching must aim at helping in creating the necessary enabling environment that will stimulate, challenge and involve him socially, physically and intellectually in the art of learning.

**The Concept of Language**

English language (specifically) in the formal education system plays dual roles. It is a subject as any other subject in the school curriculum like health science, geography, physics, commerce etc. Secondly, it serves as a medium of instruction for all subjects in the school curricular including itself.

According to Hassan (2006) "language is a tool for public mobilization for sustainable socio-political and economic development" Barber (1964) sees language as "a signaling system using vocal sounds as its material". It is there for "a human instrument of expression through sounds as released by the vocal chords". (Quirk, 1962). Edward Sapir also define language as purely human and non instinctive method of communicating idea, emotions, desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. Generally, language can simply be

defined as a system of sounds and words used by humans to express their thoughts and feelings. Noam Chomsky has emphasized the role of syntax as a characteristic of any language. It is therefore pervasive in all aspects of our lives and accordingly, everyone holds very specific ideas about language from what constitutes its usage to how members of a given speech community are identified. Hassan (2006) defines language as "a tool or instrument for relating ideas, inter-relationship, building and building among humans". The above definitions assets that language is the principal means by which human beings interact socially and otherwise. Therefore, language plays a great role in human society and thus affects ways of life.

### **Language Education**

The concept refers to the study of the approved language to be used as a medium of instruction or language of the education system at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. This paper is restricted to English language as the major language approved by the government to be used as a medium of instruction.

### **Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance in this paper refers to how well education system could and should be expected to perform. In English language education, it refers to the goal of training theoretically sound and functional English language teachers for optimum knowledge impartation in a fast globalizing world.

### **The Role of English Language For Quality Assurance**

In multilingual nation like Nigeria, English language is the common language which makes the country United it provides a link among our local communities linguistics and socio-cultural backgrounds. The study of this language constitutes a means of attaining quality teacher education. English language is no doubt the chief language of education and commerce. Most of our transactions within and outside Nigeria are done in English language. It equally serves as the language of politics and administration and in fact the language of government. One may find it difficult to fit effectively in the civil service or any other commercial venture in the country if one cannot speaks, write or read English language proficiency at a certain level of proficiency

English language is the most vital subject in the school curriculum since it is a tool through which concepts, information, skills and values in other subjects are transmitted (Bloom, 1981). No doubt, this makes it study a means of attaining quality in teacher education.

### **Challenges of Quality Assurance**

The position of quality in education is of paramount importance globally. Haladu (2011) identifies some factors that influence the quality of education. Some of the factors include shortage and low quality of teachers, inadequate relevant text materials, poor funding, enrollment and overcrowded class, overloaded curriculum content, teacher/pupil ratio infrastructural facilities, the socio economic status of parents, policy implementation and the language of education, this paper examines a few of these factors.



**Poor Quality Teachers**

The factors of poor or low quality is an impediment to assurance of the standards in education is the poor or low quality teachers available for the teaching of language. Awobuluyi (1991) opines:

Nearly all such teachers are L2 speakers. Few L2 speakers who were themselves taught by other L2 speakers who in their turn, had learnt the language necessarily imperfectly from other L2 speakers of English in the nation's school to have had a good command of the written and spoken forms of the language.....that they could impart with confidence to their pupils.

The shortage or inadequacy of the relevant text materials is another factor besetting the effective or quality teaching and learning of the English in schools. In most cases learners depends on teacher's notes and dictations in the class. Some of the approved text materials are either inadequate to go round all students or are theoretically overload with concepts that have no direct bearing to the effective use of language (English) in everyday life. The situation and policy analysis (SAPA) survey as reported by Yaloye (1996) shows that 77% of pupils in primary schools has no text books at all while 30% had no writing material.

**Heavy Curricular Content**

This is another militating against quality language education. This factor has an adverse effects on the attainment of competence in language use because over-burdening the students with so many skills at a time is detrimental to proper understanding of those skills taught.

**Overcrowded Classrooms**

Another serious impediment to English language education is high population and entertainment size. This an adverse effects on the performance of students. For example from the physical survey I have carried out in some school Jigawa metropolis like government college Birnin Kudu, Government science secondary school Lautai, Kila Kudu special primary school, Government day Junior Secondary school Sara, I have noticed that in almost all the classrooms physically seen have less than 130 students/pupils per class. The number is grossly higher for a single teacher to handle and conduct a successful lesson. The condition under this cases will not be accommodative for an effective teaching and learning.

**Inadequate Funding**

Poor or inadequate funding in the school system is equally another factor that affect quality assurance in the study of English language in schools. School managers/head are faced with the problem of inadequate funding for day to day running of their respective schools. The nature of funding in our schools has a serious negative effect on the desired quality of education to be assured.

The situation presented above and many more others have created so many challenges that negate quality assurance for an effective English teacher education.

### **Way Forward**

For the English language education to be effective and its quality assured, this paper suggest as follows:

Creativity should be encouraged one the part of the language teachers. This will curb the problem of insufficient or lack of materials. This encouragement should be through grants, soft loans, subsidies etc. to embark on vast writing and production in all the aspects of English language. Such as in the area of speech work, basic grammar, essay writing etc.

To have confidence in teaching, learning and usage of English language the education curricular should be less burdensome so that much effort should be placed on exercises. The structure of the curriculum should be reviewed to reduce the subject load.

Though the population is vast and rapidly growing in the society, government should as a matter of priority and as a matter of urgency, improve the number of infrastructure facilities by massively renovating existing structures and as well as construct new ones.

Head of schools should be adequately funded to enable them purchase abundantly all the necessary instructional materials) facilities. The value of education should be re-emphasizing to all stakeholders on the need to increase funding to schools for the sake of quality assurance of the education of their children.

Professionalism in teaching should be encouraged. Teachers of English language should be encouraged and highly motivated to embrace and respect the profession. The motivation should be by way of special allowance and full in service training so that they may develop interest in the subject and as well have quality assurance in terms of the teaching/learning process.

### **Conclusion**

This paper made conceptual clarification of language, language education and quality assurance. It discussed the role of English language for quality assurance as well as the challenges. Suggestions were proffered to overcome the enumerated challenges towards a sustainable quality assurance in English language education.

### **References**

- Awobuluyi, O. (1991). "Language education in Nigeria: theory, policy and practice" in Fafunwa foundation internet journal of education. 17
- Bamgbose, A. (1991) Language and the nation. Edinburgh: University Press.
- Bloom, A.H. (1981). The Language shaping of thought. New Jersey: Prentice Hall inc.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education. Lagos: NEEDC.
- Galadi, D.H. (2011). "The quality of English Language Education in Nigeria challenges and the way forward" in Bayajidda Multi disciplinary Journal of Education. 1 (1) 31-37.

- Hassan, S.O (2006). "Language for Reconstruction and Empowerment in Nigerian society. A Paper Presented at the School of Education National Conference, Federal College of Education, Zaria. 27th-31st May.
- Yoloye, E.A (1996). "Vision and Mission of Education in Nigeria. Matters Arising and the challenges of the 21st Century". A keynote address Delivered at the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) Annual Conference. 21st-25th July.