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Challenges of Teaching English Language as a Second Language in Sierra Leon

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Abstract

Purpose: English language is not the Language of anyone and no one owns proprietary right over English language not even Britain neither America. The Language has today gained global relevance and it is by far the most widely used Language in the world. The teaching and learning of English are important in Sierra Leone due to its status. English in Sierra Leone is a Second language and it is our official language. It is the Language of the Government, Parliament and the Court. It is the Language that is used in our schools, colleges and universities. It is the Language of instruction in academic institutions. It is a compulsory discipline for secondary education in Sierra Leone. It is compulsory in the first- and second-year levels of tertiary education according to the Tertiary Education Commission policy in the Country. However, the standard of teaching English in Sierra Leone has fallen drastically and the need to examine the challenges of teaching English language as a second language is eminent.

Materials and Methods: The Research adopted a mixed method. The use of this

methodology plays out in maintaining the validity and reliability of the Research.

Findings: The Research shows that the lack of teaching proficiency by the teachers is the most relevant challenge that faces the teaching of English in Sierra Leone. This was seconded by lack of structured department and thereafter the negligence of the Government of Sierra Leone.

Implications to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Research recommends that the Government should encourage citizens to study and master the Discipline at tertiary levels through the provision of scholarships and other facilities. Besides, the Government and other stakeholders in education need to invest in the teaching of English language through professional training, provision of learning materials amongst others.

Keywords: *English language, Teaching, Challenges, Education, Second language.*

INTRODUCTION

English language holds a special status in Sierra Leone. The language becomes inseparable and unavoidable in Sierra Leone Educational system. To learn a second language, a physical, intellectual and emotional involvement is needed to successfully send and interpret linguistic messages. English has become the global language and it is needed by almost everyone. Regardless of your profession, English is needed for research, academic and professional advancement. English is needed by scientists and doctors to help them excel in the international stage and to position one in the world. The need for learning English language as a second language has come to stay if one wants to do best in their professional career. Like Sierra Leone, learning English as a second language has assumed significant in almost all countries as people with English language skills are being sought after.

Foreign Language teaching is as old as the beginning of the Roman Empire when the Romans studied Greek as their second language. After the Romans invited Greek tutors to teach the language, Europe began to learn another foreign language and thought of teaching methods. In Europe the first concern of language teaching was with the teaching of Latin. The history of language teaching methods began with Grammar teaching of Latin and Greek, and then the method was improved with the introduction of translation in teaching the languages which was popularly known as the Grammar Translation Method (GMT). The GMT ignores authentic spoken communication and social contexts of the language. This method was widely used for centuries before the method was replaced by the Direct Method, which emphasized on the mastery of the target language for communication. Finally, the second half of the twentieth century has given new language teaching methods, namely: Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), the Silent Way, the Community Language Learning (CLL), the Total Physical Response (TPR), Suggestopedia, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and some others.

Of the 4, 000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used. As a mother tongue, it ranks second only to Chinese which is effectively six mutually unintelligible dialects little used outside China. English has grown to its present status as the major world language. English is the global language because it has today achieved a genuinely global status with a special role that is recognized in every country. Countries decide to give it a special place within their communities, even though they may have few (or no) mother-tongue speakers. As a global language, English is considered to be an international link language. It is popular and widely used in the world. It is given to us in Sierra Leone as a historical heritage of British Empire. We should use it for our development and for us to compete with the rest of the world.

It is arguable that native speakers of English can no longer make strong propriety claims to the language which they now share with most of the developed world. The Cairo Egyptian Gazette declared 'English is not the property of Capitalist Americans, but of all the world', and perhaps the assertion may be made even more convincingly in Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Ghana. Bereft of former overtones of political domination, English now exist in its own right in a number of world varieties. English is so widely used and different varieties of English have developed. There are now varieties such as American English, Australian English, Canadian English, New Zealand English and West Africa English. We also have Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, and Sierra Leonean English et al. The expression "Englishes" is now appropriate to refer to the different varieties. Each region has its own English, unique in issues of pronunciation, vocabulary and sometimes even structure.

In a Second language situation, English is the language of the mass media: newspapers, radio and television are largely English media. English is also the language of official institutions-

of law courts, local and central government – and of education. It is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations. Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement and the successful user of the appropriate variety of English identifies himself as a successful, integrated member of the language community. In Sierra Leone, the aim of an English language teacher is to ‘teach pupils to achieve communicability while at the same time preserving the unique features of the brand of English spoken in this part of the world. We are not interested in making our pupils or students into Black English men. We are concern or want them to speak English in the way the educated West Africa would speak.

English arrived in Sierra Leone in 1700 during the discovering of the colony by the Portuguese Sailor; Pedro Da Centra. The nation was colonized by Britain and the language of the colonial administration was English Language. English plays a key role in our educational system and national life. The British introduced English in our educational life. It is the official language and its holds central position in the curriculum of our educational system, as well as being the medium of instruction and the prime requirement from one level to another. English helped the growth of nationalism which ultimately freed Sierra Leone from foreign fetters. English is rich in literature and culture. It served as a great unifying force in Sierra Leone’s freedom struggle. It is a link language. It has greatly contributed to the advancement of learning. It is a language of trade and industry and it is full of knowledge and information.

Kachru (1985) posited that the users of English are divided into three circles. They are the ‘inner’ circles which represents the native speakers; the ‘outer’ circles of second – language speakers (Sierra Leone, Malaysia et al); the ‘expanding circles’ representing people learning English as a foreign language.

Graddol (2006) says that there is no single way of teaching English, no single way of learning it, no single motive for doing so, no single syllabus, no single way of assessing proficiency and indeed, no single variety of English which provides the target of language. Therefore, there is a wide range of diversity in the ways in which English is taught and learned around the world. When English is taught, the teacher should be aware of the situation and condition of the learners as well as the reasons in learning it. The English learning teaching in one country even in one area will be different from that in other areas, and it makes sense since the characteristics of the learners also varies greatly in different areas.

To end, the two common methods in English learning teaching are the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) and the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL). EFL approach positions the learner as an outsider, as a foreigner; one who struggles to attain acceptance by the target community and the skills focused are speaking and listening. In ESL, English is often a language of home. Learners are started from younger age, and they learn all skills. Here English is a major language of commerce and education, a language that students often hear outside the walls of their classroom. Thus, In Sierra Leone, English is treated as a Second Language.

Statement of Problem

Simasiku (2016) cited in Haufiku et al (2022) avers that teaching English as a second language has been and is still a complex task among English language teachers worldwide. Selim and Tasneem (2016) cited in Haufiku et al (2022) concurred that teaching English as a second language becomes more difficult and challenging to the teachers when it is done in areas where there is little background knowledge of English as a language. In most instances like in Sierra Leone, the English language teachers are non- native English speakers and the learners also are non-native English speakers. Thus, English language teachers in Sierra Leone are faced with

numerous teaching challenges inside and outside the classroom and most of the challenges are contextual (Mundy 2008 cited in Haufiku et al 2022).

In Sierra Leone, a high percentage of the secondary and college-leavers leave the precincts of the secondary classes and colleges as completely ignorant of English Usage. It is clear that the environment and other factors do not provide enough opportunity to the learners to communicate in English fluently. With all the years spent to teach English language in our schools and universities, it has still been estimated that students have less competence over the usage of English. They still struggle on how to use the commonest structures of English. Kumar (2019) says a teacher's target is to 'prepare' his students for the examination and not to make his pupils and students competent in the use of the language they are learning. So, the student is nervous only about his success in the examination and the teacher's sole problem is to see that the pass percentage does not go down. They hunt for shadows rather than substance. They care more for diplomas than knowledge. It is not knowledge that they ask for but short-cuts to knowledge, so that they can outwit the examiner in (Kumar, 2019). This is ostensibly a typical case in Sierra Leone where Majority graduates struggle to write good and constructive English. This is because they lack the required competence needed of the Language to communicate and write good English. In Sierra Leone teachers of English are themselves unaware about the aim of English. The aimlessness and the limited knowledge of our teachers in the language can be viewed as one of the compounding problems hindering the progress in English language teaching in Sierra Leone.

English language teachers in Sierra Leone are effectively constrained on the appropriate methods to adopt in teaching English and this has compounded the Problems. Because of majority of untrained and unqualified teachers of English constituting the majority, inappropriate methods of teaching offer a constant threat to the overall progress of English language teaching in Sierra Leone. Motivation is also a problem in Sierra Leone for teaching English. In Sierra Leone most students are demotivated because of incompetent teachers of English, the indifferent attitude of English teachers, Lack of supporting staff and the required materials.

The way English is taught in our schools and universities is vastly responsible for the failure of English in Sierra Leone. The policy makers in Sierra Leone should not forget that English is not our mother tongue and as a nation we should accept that the standard of its teaching as a second language has fallen vastly and that is why it is extremely necessary to know the challenges faced in teaching English as a second language in Sierra Leone.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

English Language teaching and learning is pertinent in Sierra Leone. This is due to the status of the language in our country. Besides, the importance of the language is due to globalization, international cooperation and the growing demand for English proficiency in various professional field. However, the process of teaching English language as a second language is not without challenges in Sierra Leone. Several theoretical perspectives can be used to understand the challenges encountered in teaching English as a second language in Sierra Leone.

Sociocultural Theory, as proposed by Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of social interaction, cultural context and language development. In Sierra Leone Second language learning, sociocultural theory can help explain how the cultural and social norms of the country impact English language teaching and learning. Teachers may face challenges related to the need to

bridge the gap between the students' native language and English as well as difficulties in integrating cultural relevant content into their English lessons. CLT is a widely recognized approach to language teaching that emphasizes communication and interaction as the primary means of learning a language. Teachers may encounter obstacles in implementing CLT due to limited resources, large class sizes, and a traditional focus on grammar-based instruction. The theoretical framework can help identify the discrepancies between the communicative approach and the prevailing teaching practices (Naziro, et al 2023).

Other Related Literature

Crowded class. According to Emery (2012), one of the most often mentioned problems encountered by English teachers is that "overcrowded classes and the effect of such condition can have on teaching and learning" (p. 4). Nurkamto (2003) also lists one of the challenges in teaching English that is the size of the classroom. Likewise, Baker and Westrup (2000) state several problems of teaching large classes, such as "desks and chairs are fixed or difficult to move; students sit close together in rows; little space for the teacher and students to move in the classroom; walls between classrooms are thin, and noise will disturb other classes" (p. 2). Consequently, it is necessary that teaching and learning process requires comfortable and enjoyable atmosphere, otherwise, teachers might be in failure to fulfill students' need and achieve learning goals.

Hasan (2016) states that one of the most challenging tasks students encountered is mastering vocabulary. Maruyama (1996) as cited in Hoa and Mai (2016) point the reason why students lack vocabulary, i.e. "students believed that they did not need to know words because they were not common, even rarely used in their daily lives, therefore, they have no motivation to learn the words" (p. 155). Consequently, students in English as a foreign language context are limited by their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the target language and have to struggle to comprehend the content (Chung, 2016).

Teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging duty in the places where English has inadequate exposure. Lack of English exposure also serves less opportunity for students to use English. Khan (2011) argues that the lack of English purposes demotivates students to practice and understand English due to students' insufficient background knowledge of English.

Moreover, it gets more difficult for teachers to encourage students to be enthusiastic in using English due to the lack of English exposure (Khan, 2011).

Another challenge in English language teaching is the issue of resources. Garton et al (2014) states that "in some countries, such as South Korea and Malaysia, text books are set; in Singapore and China, teachers can select from government-approved books, yet, it is a matter that in many countries appropriate books are either not available or not used in the classroom" (p. 740). Furthermore, Ajibola (2010) argues that "the inadequacy of resources also constitutes a trial to the English teaching and the larger number of students is the large number of sources is needed" (p. 97). In addition, lack of facilities and equipment hinder teachers to embody an effective teaching process (Fatiloro, 2015; Nurkamto, 2003).

Pande (2013) puts forward that "language could only be understood by practicing all the four skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing" (p. 417). Hence, the availability of teaching aids holds vital role and needs to be provided as soon as possible, otherwise teachers will not be able to teach effectively. In other words, to get students familiar with English and to provide them sufficient with exposure of target language, the amount of learning resources are in dire need.

Mukattash (1983) categorized English teaching challenges that are encountered into two: first, most inaccuracies done regarding the pronunciation, morphology, syntax, and spelling; second, most of students have problems in expressing themselves when using English. The first issue is also strengthened by Khan (2011) that “specific problem connected to pronunciation, stress, and intonation become problem for students” (p. 72). As a consequence, these linguistic problems are found in all language skills, which make students demotivated in practicing a target language. Another issue regarding linguistic problem is first language or mother tongue interference. Both teachers and students frequently talk using their mother-tongue language which unconsciously affects their English performance (Fatiloro, 2015). Additionally, Pande (2013) describes when teacher and students speak in their mother-tongue, they sometimes use English words in the midst of the sentences and disremember that every language varies in stress, intonation, and pronunciation.

Pande (2013) asserts that “it is a common misinterpretation among students that English is the most difficult of all subjects” (p. 416). Similarly, Fatiloro (2015) states that the challenging difficulty in teaching English as a foreign language is meeting students’ awful attitude in practicing English. For instance, students can be fearful to speak in front of their classmates, particularly when it comes to the presence of a competitive student in the classroom. Another example is related to students who enroll in English courses outside schools. According to Khajloo (2013), these students have higher academic level than others and when they “listen to repetitive low-level content for them, they find it unattractive and boring” (p. 57). Such psychological issues can affect students’ motivation and learning attitude toward English language.

There are numerous methods of language teaching that can be implemented. Fatiloro (2015) argues that “in handling English teaching problems, teachers must use a variety of methods for teaching English language” (p. 29). In addition, Pande (2013) also believes that through applying various methods, particularly in matching the method and teaching topic, it will help teachers to establish an effective teaching process. Additionally, applying various techniques in language teaching should be taken into account because it will enable teachers to create suitable condition for students in learning English as well as help students to deal with their learning challenges (Holenšinská, 2006). Therefore, students can be helped in their language learning when teachers understand what best teaching methods or technique meet the need of students.

English teaching will not achieve its objectives if the teaching tools are not backed up. Hence, “special effort should be made to ensure that teachers get proper teaching facilities, including space, books, and teaching aids” (Pande, 2013, p. 419). It is necessary to “confront facilitation of teaching tools as to empower teaching and learning English” (Fatiloro, 2015, p. 29). Thus, teaching a language needs equipment, particularly for those who teach in the milieu where English exposure is limited.

Reily, 1988, cited in Setiyadi (2020) maintains that there are at least six types of language syllabus. The difference is shown basically on the criteria for grading and sequencing the units of second language classroom activity. There are options in the units to be adopted. Units can be based on an analysis of the language to be learned, in terms of grammatical structures or lexical items. Units may be based on an analysis of the components of skilled behavior in the second language. The following are the six types that are commonly implemented in the language learning:

- (a) A structural syllabus. The content of the language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures of the language being taught. Examples include nouns, verbs, adjectives, statements, questions, subordinate clauses, and so on.
- (b) A notional / functional syllabus. The content of the language teaching is a collection of the functions or the notions that are performed when the language is used. A notional syllabus may cover functions of the language such as greeting, apologizing, requesting and informing and it may include the notions of language such as age, colour, comparison and time.
- (c) A situational syllabus. The content of language teaching is a collection of imaginary situations where the language is used. A situational syllabus may include at restaurant, at school, meeting a new neighbor and seeing a doctor.
- (d) A skill-based syllabus. The content of the language teaching is a collection of specific skills in using the target language. Examples of skills in using the target language may include reading for the main idea, writing good paragraphs, and listing for the main idea.
- (e) A task-based syllabus. The content of the language teaching includes a series of purposeful tasks that language learners need to perform; tasks are defined as activities that are needed when using the target language. Examples of a task-based syllabus may include applying for a job ordering food via the telephone and getting housing information over the telephone.
- (f) A content-based syllabus. A content-based syllabus in language teaching is actually not a language syllabus. The primary purpose of instruction is to teach some subjects or information using the target language. The subject is primary and language learning occurs automatically while language learners are studying the subject. An example of a content-based syllabus is a science class that is taught in the target language.

The language teacher in teaching English as a second language has a vital role. The methods applied in teaching English are mostly dependent on the effective role of the Language teacher. Cited in Setiyade (2020), Richards and Rodgers (2001), some methods of language teaching are totally dependent on the teacher as a source of knowledge and direction; others see the teacher's roles as catalyst, consultant, guide and model for learning. The teacher role determines the role of language learners automatically. When a language teacher is very dominant, language learners will be less dominant, language learners will be less dominant in learning teaching interaction. Language learners will be more active in learning when a language teacher can be less silent in the classroom. The role relationship of language learner and teacher are many and varied from one method to another. Some methods suggest that they should be in an equal position but in some other methods the role of the language teacher is regarded as the primary source of skills and knowledge in language learning, Setiyade (2020). Setiyade (2020) discussed the roles of the language teacher in language teaching and are implemented in different methods. Below are the six roles:

- (a) Language teacher functions as an organizer in the classroom. The teacher maintains discipline to the extent that an effective learning atmosphere is established. It can be done by involving the learners more actively in the classroom activities that demand inter-student communication and co-operation efforts.
- (b) Language teacher functions as a counselor. The teacher role is to respond the learner's problems nonjudgmentally and help the learners to reach what they want to learn.
- (c) Language teacher functions as a motivator; the language teacher gives praise and encouragement for positive efforts by the learners. It can be done by giving positive feedback on returned assignments.

- (d) Language teacher functions as an observer. The teacher shows the errors that the learners have produced and let the learners work on the correction.
- (e) Language teacher functions as a model for producing correct expressions and judges whether the learners' contributions to the learning process and their efforts are relevant and correct.
- (f) Language teacher functions as a source of knowledge and direction. The teacher establishes a position of dominance over the learners in selecting the materials to learn and also how to acquire them.

Steeves, (1969) identifies the qualities of a Good English teacher. He said the teacher should like to teach and he should enjoy being with adults of different cultural backgrounds. He should have a thorough understanding of the English language, literature, composition, and history. He should be aware of the changes constantly occurring in English and should be sensitive to word usage. In addition, the teacher of adults should be aware of the values and interests of each age group. The teacher of English as a second language need not be fluent in another language, but he should find helpful a knowledge of the characteristics of the language spoken by his students. Some consider this knowledge essential, for it reveals the difficulties students have in learning English. The teacher of English has the responsibility of speaking only English to the Class.

Johnson and Paulston cited in Setiyade 2020, suggest five possible learners' roles that can make language learners more autonomous. Following are the roles of language learners which are suggested by advocates of different methods.

- (a) Learners plan their own learning program and thus ultimately assume responsibility for what they do in the classroom.
- (b) Learners monitor and evaluate their own progress.
- (c) Learners are members of a group and learn by interacting with others.
- (d) Learners tutor other learners.
- (e) Learners learn from the teacher, from other students, and from other teaching sources.

Maackey (1975:108-124) cited in Setiyade (2020) suggests that there are three main influences that determine the learning of English as a second language namely linguistic, social and psycho logical influences. The three influences may make the teaching of English as a second language or as a foreign language different. The Linguistic states that in learning a target language, it may depend on how the target language differs from the mother tongue and how much the mother tongue interferences with the target language. The Social factors state the contact that makes differences in learning a target language like home, community, occupation, school, religious meeting, reading et al. Psychological Process focuses on the differences of learners which include age, intelligence, aptitude, motivation, attitude, personality and cognitive styles.

Broughton et al (1988) maintains that there is no hindrance to the growth and spread of English Language. The language is a major vehicle of debate in the United Nations and the Language of Command in NATO. It is an official language in international aviation. It is therefore little doubt that English is a very important language.

Osho (2021) in his article the Challenges of Teaching and Learning English in Present day English he says that the Teacher Grasp of the Subject and also inadequate methodology is a serious challenge in the teaching and learning of English in Sierra Leone. He said the focus on teaching and learning English should be not on the formative years of the child but on the teachers who teach these children. A teacher who teaches the language must have a complete grasp of the language himself. He said that attention should be given to pre service education

and training for English language teachers. He said that motivation and teacher integrity have their shares in the discourse. Osho further states that the problems cannot be laid entirely on the doorstep of the teachers of English and the institutions which train them but there is an almost embarrassing lack of support for the teaching of English from the political class.

Schneider (2003;2007 cited in Bangura 2015:30) refers to both the indispensability of English and the role it is playing in displacing many of the world's languages with regards to the current global spread of the language and its 'transnational functions' and 'extra linguistic roles':

On the one hand, English is the world's leading language, the main vehicle of international communication, and in that role, it is an essential, indeed an indispensable tool for international economy, diplomacy, sciences, the media and also individual interactions across language boundaries. On the other hand, it has been damned as a 'killer language', responsible for the extinction of innumerable indigenous languages, dialects, and cultures around the globe (Schneider 2003:233 cited in Bangura 2015:31).

English language is therefore seen as a vital international means of communication on the one hand and a 'killer language' on the other hand.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Creswell (2014) defines research design as types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research design. The Study used the mixed methods research design to explore the teaching challenges faced by English language teachers in Sierra Leone. This method is appropriate because it increases the validity and reliability of the study. Simple random sampling of respondents was used to make sure that there was no bias in the selection of respondents during the study.

Population

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define population as the total number of people, organization, subjects or occurrences with well - defined characteristic from which a sample is drawn. The Study population consisted of 60 English language teachers currently teaching at both Tertiary and Senior Secondary levels in Sierra Leone. These categories that were chosen by the researcher are believed to be key to help in the research. The researcher sought their permission to approach them through appropriate channels.

Sample and Sampling Method

The study sample consisted of 60 participants (English language teachers) and these were selected using the purposive sampling technique. All 60 participants completed the interview and discussion. The 60 participants were selected at random by the researcher from a pool of English language teachers in Sierra Leone. The researcher met with the participants and they were interviewed and frank discussion was held on the topic of research.

Inclusion Criteria

De Vos et al. (2011) explained that purposive sampling of research participants must be done according to a pre-determined criterion that suits the research focus. Thus, the inclusion criterion for this study was that a participant should be currently teaching English Second Language as a discipline in a secondary school, a college or a University in Sierra Leone. And all those who took part in the Research were selected regardless of their years of experience.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher obtained data from the study population by using a structured research interview and discussion that were derived from the targeted population through appropriate channel that allowed the study population to easily give their perspective on the subject of research. Collection of the data lasted for some months. This was because the researcher wanted a thorough and comprehensive research that cuts across all regions in Sierra Leone.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The research used surveyed interviews, focus group discussion guide, and observation guide as instruments for collecting the data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) concurred with Morgan (2014) that a research instrument is a tool used to collect data related to one's subject of investigation.

Instruments of Data Collection

The data that was used for this study was obtained from different sources. This ranges from personal interviews, group discussions, observations and library search. However, field study involved schedules of interviews was applied in obtaining, reinforcing and cross checking obtained data of this Research. The data that was generated for the study comprised of secondary (desk survey) and primary sources (field survey).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical tools to discover useful information. Data analysis in mixed methods research design involves analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data using appropriate methods respectively.

Thus, the study employed the thematic analysis method by Creswell (2014) in analyzing qualitative data. This involves transcribing the focus group discussions, as well as scanning, sorting, and arranging the data based on emerging themes. On the other hand, the quantitative data were analyzed.

Procedures of Data Collection

The study data collection was accomplished by preparing structured interview question. Accordingly, structured interview was made with other relevant respondents.

In the discussion questions note taking was used during the discussion because video recording was not allowed by other respondents. During the discussion, the researcher was not only interested in what would be said rather; the way the respondents will say it was also noted. After the interview question, a summary of the key points was re-written by the researcher in order to change unorganized sentences into brief statements to incorporate main sense and what was said or observed during the discussion.

Validity and Reliability

Validity means ability of the research method to find accurate reality. If the research is said to be valid then it really means that what was intended to be measured has been measured accurately. Validity is quite important if the researcher is doing in- depth studies on individuals, small groups or situations. If the researcher knows that his research is valid then he can be confident on the findings that really show some uniqueness in the issue being studied. If the research lacks validity, then it means that there was lack of truth in the findings. (Churton & Brown 2010, 211).

Reliability means to measure consistency in producing similar results on different but comparable occasions. If research is said to be reliable that means it is replicated, similar or

identical results will be shown. If researcher knows that her research is reliable then there is less risk of their taking a chance pattern or trend exhibited by her sample and using it to make assumptions about the population as whole. (Churton & Brown 2010, 209).

The validity of this research was calculated by the interviews and the discussions with participants on the subject of the research. The required results to conclude the research was found through the interview and the response of the respondents. The study includes interviews, group discussions, observation and desk. Hence, the research was said to be valid.

The reliability of the research was said to have been proven if the researcher pre-tests the research instruments. In this research, interview questions were discussed with and sent to another renowned researcher who is a third party to check the reliability before the final work was ready for the respondents. The reason for the pre-test was to check that the information was appropriate for the research or not. In order to make the research more reliable the empirical study was combined with theoretical study. Hence, the research will be said to be reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This Section of the Research briefly discusses and assesses the findings of the survey results and interpretation of the analysis of the findings. The study bases on three separate sources, i.e., the observation, and structured interview and the qualitative methods.

Demographic Findings

Sex

No. of Respondents: 60

Sex Frequency Percentage

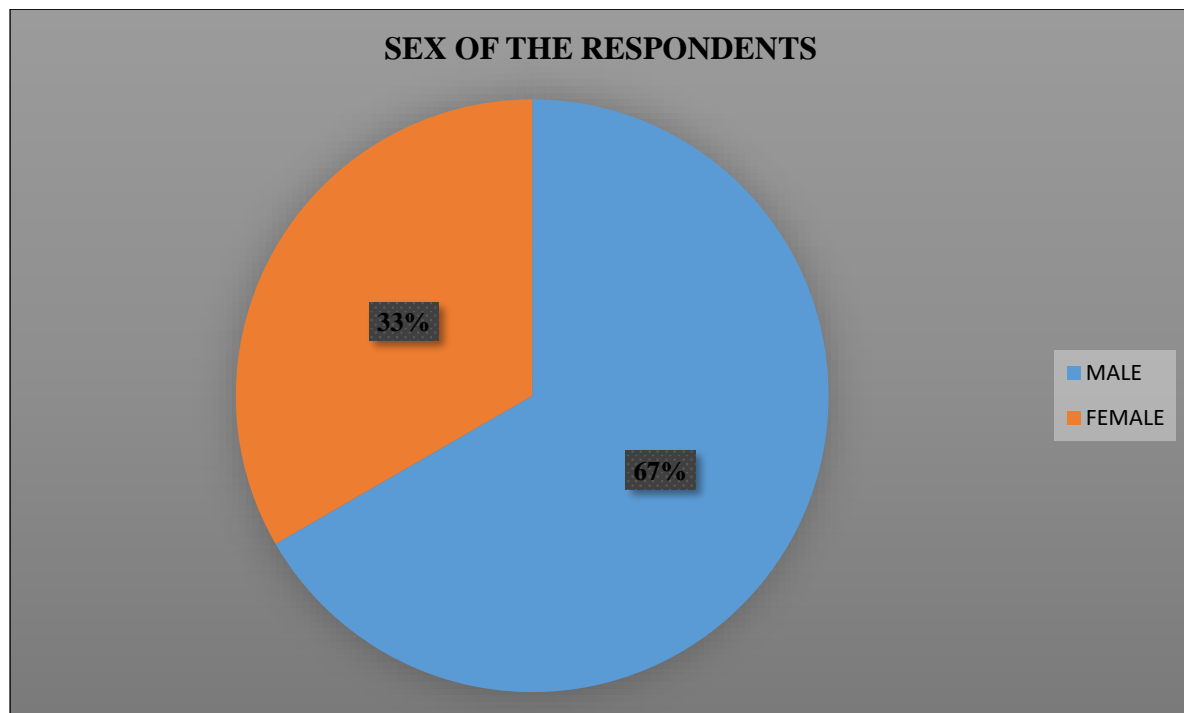


Figure 1: Sex of the Respondents

The Figure above shows that 40 respondents representing forty seven percent (67%) of the total respondents are male, while 20 respondents representing 33- three percent are female.

Level of the Respondents

No. of Respondent: 60

Level group Frequency Percentage

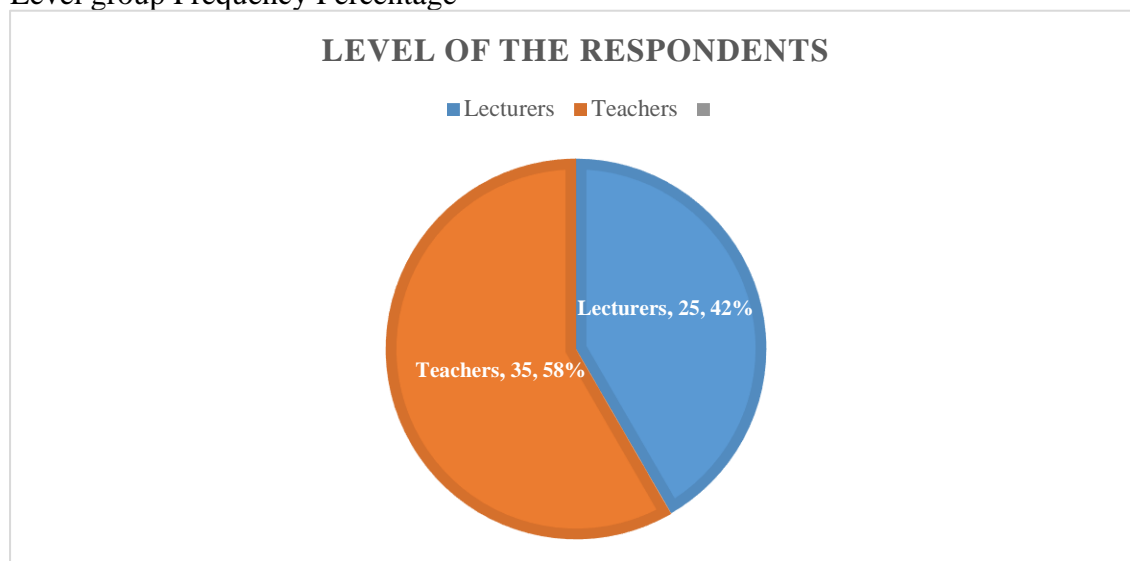


Figure 2: Level of the Respondents Level Group

The Figure above indicates that 25 respondents of the participants were Lecturers at the tertiary education that are made of colleges and universities lecturers across the Country while 35 respondents of the participants were teachers of Senior Secondary education across the Country.

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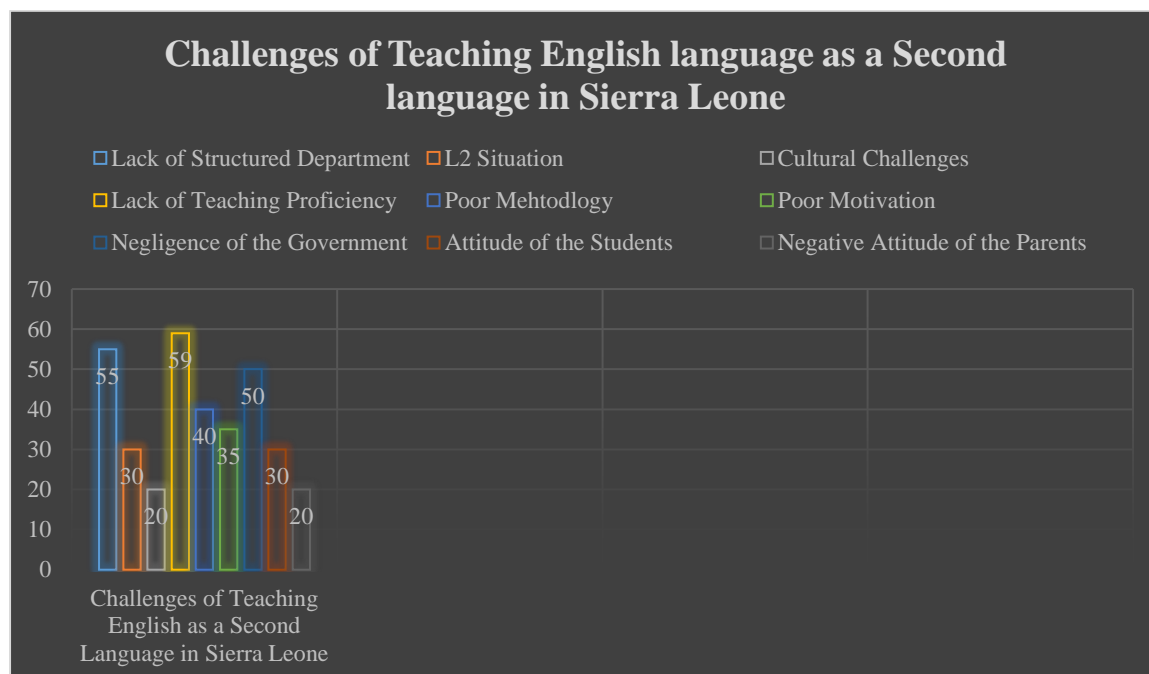


Figure 3: Challenges of Teaching English Language as a Second Language in Sierra Leone.

The Figure above shows the challenges that are confronted in teaching English as a second language in Sierra Leone. The research shows that there are nine challenges in teaching English language and they would be explained thoroughly below one after the other.

Lack of Structured Department

The research shows that 55 interviewees state that learning institutions lack a structured department responsible for the teaching of the language in Sierra Leone. A structured department is expected to be manned by competent personnel with the required team and required materials. The participants state that in the English departments in Sierra Leone, there is little or no proper coordination among teachers of the language in the tertiary schools, colleges and universities. The participants also state that the departments lack the required materials to aid the teaching of the language. These gravely affect the learning of the language thereby undermining the proficiency of it among learners and users.

L2 Situation

The research shows 30 participants state that L2 situation is another challenge in the teaching of English in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is a multi-lingua state with over sixteen local languages. Most of the speakers and the learners of English in Sierra Leone have their mother-tongue. The L1 is different to English. Sierra Leone is an English Based pidgin country which is affecting the learning of the Language. Both learners and teachers are disturbed by their L1. The L1 frequently interferes with the L2 thereby creating challenges in the learning of the Language.

Cultural Challenges

The research shows that 20 participants state that cultural challenge is a challenge that is affecting the learning of the Language in Sierra Leone. English is brought to Sierra Leone through colonialism. It is the language of our colonial master and it is originally not us. Sierra Leone and Britain have their cultural differences so English language is not concern about the cultural differences which is affecting the learning of language in Sierra Leone. The weather situation in Sierra Leone and Britain is completely different and fail to consider the Sierra Leone context. The language is tailored to suit the British weather situation and thereby ignoring the Sierra Leone weather situation context. No effort is made by experts of the language in Sierra Leone to contextualize the materials presented to the students to tailor same in their Sierra Leone context. This is undermining the practicality of the learning of the language.

Lack of Teaching Proficiency

The research shows that 59 participants (all Participants) state that lack of teaching competency and proficiency is a serious challenge in the teaching of English language in Sierra Leone. There is an aphorism which says that you cannot give what you don't have. You cannot give competence when you don't have competence. All the participants emphasize that most of the teachers of the language lack the required competence to teach the language at a particular level. Most of the teachers of the language did not study the language in the universities or colleges. They lack the required skills to teach the language. Those who are qualified to teach the language are in shortage of training experiences thereby making it difficult for personal growth and development in the language.

Poor Methodology

The research shows that 40 participants state that poor methodology is a challenge in the teaching of the Language. English language is a specialized discipline which requires specialized methodology. One can have general methodology in teaching but if it lacks the methodology of teaching English language, they will not achieve its objective. Therefore, teachers of this language should follow its required methodology of teaching the language. The

researcher realizes that in fact teachers of this language in Sierra Leone adopt teacher- centered approached which is not necessarily impactful to the learners. Importantly, the teachers are focused on grammar rather than communication and the use of the language. It shows again that reading methodology which is a methodology of teaching the language is sparsely used. Besides, it shows again that there is no growth pattern in teaching and learning of the language in Sierra Leone. Growth pattern is when there is no clear indication of what is to be learnt in primary schools, secondary, senior secondary, colleges and tertiary. Some of the topics discusses in senior secondary schools are discussed verbatim in the colleges and universities with no modifications thereby making the learning process boring.

Poor Motivation

The research shows that 35 of the participants state that the teachers of the language are poorly motivated. Language learning goes with motivation. In learning a second language or foreign language, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether the learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it and how long he perseveres. Motivation is critical theory in language learning. It is also vital in organizational development. When a teacher is not motivated, it leads to poor delivery and little and no attention will be dedicated in the teaching of the language thereby affecting the learners understanding and the learning of the language.

Negligence of the Government

The research shows that 50 participants state that the government is negligence in aiding the learning of the language in Sierra Leone. English language in Sierra Leone is unarguably the most important language as it is our official language pursuant to Act No. 6 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. It is the Language of Parliament. The President addresses parliament in English. And for one to be elected as a parliament he must have proficiency in the language. This is a show of the relevance of the language in Sierra Leone. It is the language that is used in the executive arm in cabinet meetings. It is the language of the Court pursuant to Section 78 of the Court Act of 1965. With all these, there is absolutely nothing being done by the government of Sierra Leone to aid in the learning of the language. The learning of English language should go without adequate materials and appropriate policies. The government of Sierra Leone both present and past have shown no political will in aiding the learning of the language. Recently, the Government of His Excellency Rtd. Brigadier Maada Bio has adopted a policy of removing English language from the compulsory subjects in our curriculum failing to consider the vitality of the language in the international stage and the national level. Removing the language from the compulsory subjects is a clear manifestation of the negligence of the government in the learning of the language. Before now, adequate teaching materials are not provided thereby undermining the effective learning of the language.

Attitudes of the Students

The research shows that 30 of the participants state that the negative attitude of the students is also challenges. Students lack the necessary concentration to learning the language. Students' low concentration causes a challenge in comprehending knowledge transferred by the teachers. Some students are always busy with social media and phones even when lectures or the teaching of the language is in progress. Additionally, most of the students of this age in Sierra Leone are really not disciplined thereby affecting the learning of the language. Many of the students of the language lack the interest in learning the language. Some of these students have intentionally removed English language from their study timetable stating that the language cannot be studied. Moreover, some of the students have reading phobia. Students only care on passing marks. They do not care language as a tool of communication.

Negatives Attitudes of the Parents

The research shows that 20 of the participants state that the negative attitude of the teachers is a challenge in the teaching of English language in Sierra Leone. Some of the parents pay little attention to their children by leaving them on a frolic of their business. Reading and learning materials are not provided to the students. They are not supervised and monitored. This is greatly affecting the learning of English language in Sierra Leone.

CONCLUSION

This research has highlighted a wide range of issues faced in teaching English in Sierra Leone. This study shows that the teachers were challenged by their lack of a well-structured Department of English in our learning institutions, L2 situation, cultural challenges, lack of teaching proficiency, poor methodology, poor motivation, and negligence of the government, attitude of the students and the negative attitude of the parents.

Through the research, it shows that the greatest of all the challenges with respect to teaching English language in Sierra Leone is the lack of teaching proficiency with participants of 59 stating same out of sixty (60) participants of the sample. It is seconded by the lack of a well-structured Department of English language in our learning institution in Sierra Leone. Next to it is the negligence of the Government of Sierra Leone in aiding the teaching of the Language in the Country. Fifty participants of the sample underscore the lack of political will to teach and learn the language in Sierra Leone.

The research has heralded for and investment in aiding the teaching of English language in Sierra Leone by stakeholders of education by providing teaching materials in our learning institutions through the Department of English and the facilitation of professional training for English language teachers. Besides, the Government and stakeholders should promulgate laws and policies on who should teach the language and its usage in our learning institutions based on qualifications. Further, teachers of the language are to be motivated and citizens are to be encouraged to study and master English language in our tertiary institutions through the provision of scholarships to those who want to pursue it at the tertiary level.

It becomes apparent that without any further delay, we need to use a comprehensive and integrated approach involving all stakeholders including policy makers, educationists, academicians, administrators and teachers. We need to conduct seminars and debates over the issue of deteriorating health of English language and implement prioritized and systematic strategies in order to counter the current state of English teaching in Sierra Leone. This study will serve as an important tool of discussion of some of the aspects of problems of teaching English as a second language. This study is expected to serve a handy and portable bouquet of knowledge highlighting the predicaments of teaching English in Sierra Leone.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Research recommends that Educational Management authorities should have a structured Department for teaching English in any institution. The department of English should be well furnished with books and learning materials that will aid the learning process. English language teachers should have access to library to access books and free internet should be provided to all English language teachers whenever they are in the school premises. English teachers should receive proper teaching facilities space and teaching aid.

The Research recommends that Government and school management authorities should invest in the professional training of teachers.

The Research also recommends that the government of Sierra Leone should promulgate a national policy on who should teach English language in any learning institution based on qualifications.

The Research also recommends that the Government of Sierra Leone should also promulgate a national policy on English language usage in our learning institution that will aid effective learning of the language in Sierra Leone.

The Research also recommends that the Government and stakeholders in Education should invest in providing learning materials in the learning of the language like refreshers aid, reading materials, internet service et al.

The Research recommends that English language teachers in Sierra Leone should be motivated. Motivation increases organizational performance.

The Research also recommends that both the Government of Sierra Leone and stakeholders should encourage citizens to study and master English language at their tertiary institutions. Grants and scholarships should be provided for those who want to study and master the language in our tertiary institutions.

The Research also recommends that stakeholders of education should invest in company teaching.

The Research also recommends that both parents and students should own the learning of the language. They should note equally that they have duties to ensure smooth learning process and must take responsibility to dispense same.

The Research also recommends that teachers of English language should adopt or apply different teaching methods in teaching the Language. There is no one way of teaching the language but different methods.

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