

1 Teachers' Qualification and Subject Mastery as Predictors of
2 Achievement in English Language in Ibarapapa Division of Oyo
3 State

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7

8 **Abstract**

9 The study investigated the extent to which teachers ?qualification and subject mastery could
10 predict students? achievement in English language among senior secondary students in
11 Ibarapa Division of Oyo state. The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type
12 to provide answers to four research questions. The study covered twenty (20) senior secondary
13 schools randomly sampled. In each of the schools, a total number of fifty (50) senior secondary
14 II students were selected to participate in the study making a total of one thousand (1000)
15 S.S.II students in all. All the S.S. II English language teachers in the selected schools also
16 participated in the study. Subject Mastery($r=.74$) Questionnaire and English Language
17 Achievement Test($r=.72$) were used in data collection. Data collected were analyzed using
18 frequency counts and simple percentage. Multiple regression analysis was also used for data
19 analysis. All research questions were answered at 0.05 level of significance The findings of this
20 study showed that :Teachers? teaching qualification has a significant relative contribution to
21 students? academic achievement in English language ($? = 0.192$; $t = 5.756$; $P < 0.05$). Teachers? knowledge of subject mastery has significant relative contribution to
22 academic achievement of students in English language ($? = 0.116$; $t = 4.923$; $p < 0.05$). The
23 joint contributions of teachers? qualification and teachers? subject mastery to student?s
24 achievement in English is significant ($F(1,1252) = 10. 105$; $P < 0.05$) . The two variables in
25 this study: Teachers? teaching qualification ($? = 0.192$; $t = 5.756$; $P < 0.05$) and teachers?
26 subject mastery ($? = 0.116$; $t = 4.923$; $p < 0.05$) can predict student academic achievement in
27 English language: Based on these findings ,it is recommended that: Government should
28 organize seminars, workshops to foster teachers? mastery of the subject. Government should
29 also make sure that teachers employed possess the necessary teaching qua

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32 *Index terms*— Teaching Qualification, Subject-Mastery, Predictors, Achievement, English Language.

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2 INTRODUCTION

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53 also make sure that teachers employed possess the necessary teaching qualifications to teach English language
54 content knowledge necessary for teaching English language.

55 2 INTRODUCTION

56 The function of the English language for educational advancement is the most important of all its functions. It
57 is taught at almost all levels of Author : Phd Department Of Teacher Education University Of Ibadan, Ibadan
58 Nigeria E-mail : Fako4best@Yahoo.Com+2348034059818 primary school pupils; therefore, before the pupil can
59 proceed to secondary level of education, he must have passed the subject (Labo-Popoola, 2010). This means
60 that before a primary school pupil can proceed to the secondary level he must have been able to pass English
61 language as a subject among other subjects.

62 It is also the medium of instruction in the Nigeria schools right from the upper primary to tertiary level. The
63 knowledge of English language helps in understanding other school subjects since it is used to teach all other
64 subjects except local languages. Good foundation of the language paves way to success in life. Students whose
65 performance in English language is high usually have no problems with other subjects except in rare cases.

66 It is however a matter of great concern that, the English language achievement of the Nigerian school students
67 has been on a steady decline since 1960. Studies have shown that there is a low performance of students in
68 English language. (Abdullahi 2000; ??dejide 2000). They observed the unpleasant performance at the school
69 certificate level of the Nigerian secondary schools. At the tertiary level of education, students have so much
70 difficulty with their communicative skills in the English language as a result cannot function effectively in the
71 academic use of English (Okoro, 2000).

72 These very poor outings have made it increasingly difficult for our students to fill their admission quota in the
73 different colleges and universities in Nigeria. This is rather uncomplimentary when one considers the extent of
74 investment made in the educational sector by government, teachers, parents and other stakeholders, (Joseph and
75 Joshua, 2010). The poor performances of students in English language in public examinations in recent times
76 have left a number of questions to be answered For years, educators and researchers have debated on factors
77 affecting students' performance especially in English language. Onukaogu (2002) in his study reported that
78 various factors such as absence of vigorous and robust language policy, inadequate materials and infrastructure
79 for teaching the language, and unequipped teachers among other factors are responsible for this ugly trend. The
80 educational system in Nigeria and therefore it is introduced to students right from pre-primary to tertiary level
81 of education. It has to be offered compulsorily by examinations in recent times has been explained as a major
82 cause of the decline in academic achievement and standard of education in Nigeria.

83 It is in frantic search for solution to this problem that researchers are now beaming their searchlight on
84 characteristics of the teacher. Studies have shown that teacher education, ability and experience are associated
85 with increase in students' achievement across schools. Teachers are among the most important players influencing
86 student achievement, holding the key to sealing the gaps in students' achievement. It takes a competent teacher
87 to be able to teach the language skills effectively and to make them competent users of the English language.
88 This means that the teacher should possess some characteristics to make him an effective teacher. Anderson
89 (1991) in his study added that educators have come to realize that any meaningful improvement in the education
90 that students receive is highly dependent on the quality of the instruction that the teacher provides. ??arling-
91 Hammond (2000) emphasized on the characteristics of a teacher. He reported a study carried out by the National
92 Commission on Teaching and American's Future on the relationship between teachers' qualification and other
93 school variables such as class size on the achievement of students. The result showed that students who are
94 assigned to several ineffective teachers in a class have significantly lower achievement and gains than those who
95 were assigned to several highly effective teachers.

96 Studies have consistently shown that teacher quality whether measured by content, experience, training and
97 credentials or general intellectual skills are strongly related to students' achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000
98 and Anderson, 1991). Researchers and analysts argued that assigning experienced and qualified teacher to low
99 performing schools and students is likely to pay off in better performance gaps (Adegbile and Adeyemi, 2008).

101 The above strongly shows that subject matter knowledge (competence), Teachers' qualification, teacher Teaching
102 experience, Classroom behavior (Teachers' Altitude, Teaching skills and teacher-student relationship) are strong
103 variables indicating students' performance. Kimberly (2009) stated that teachers must be knowledgeable in their
104 area of study. In truth, if a teacher is not enlightened in his/her subject, then any hope of effectiveness goes
105 right out the window. Hence, effective teaching could be measured by the level of a teachers' subject matter
106 competence which Mullens (1993) regarded as a prime predictor of students' learning. Most teachers do not
107 possess the competence of the subject. The reason for this may be that English language is a second language.
108 They may have not acquired and master the language. Anderson (1991) opined that the teacher must possess
109 the knowledge and skills needed to attain the goal and must be able to use that knowledge and skills if the goals
110 are to be achieved. It has been established that there is a high correlation between what teachers know and
111 what they teach. Thus, the ability to teach effectively depends on the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter.
112 Teachers are handicapped if they are unfamiliar with the body of knowledge taught and teachers' characteristics
113 is subject specific. Adediwura and Bada (2007) stated in their study that nobody could teach what he does not
114 understand or know. They went further to state that they (teachers) must thoroughly understand the content of
115 what they teach. A teacher whose understanding of topic is thorough uses clearer language, their discourse is more
116 connected, and they provide better explanations than those whose background is weaker. The way the students
117 perceive the teaching in terms of their (teachers) knowledge of content of subject matter may significantly affect
118 the students' academic performance. Because of this, the teacher should therefore master the subject matter
119 before teaching commences. Most teachers go into teaching without knowing what to teach. It is to be noted
120 that pedagogical knowledge are not exactly the same thing as knowledge of subject matter, they nevertheless are,
121 intimately linked with it, because teachers' mastery and use of them in the classroom will indicate the depth of
122 their knowledge of subject matter.

123 Teachers' teaching qualification is another quality of the teacher. This means that the qualification of a teacher
124 matters when it comes to effective teaching. ??arling-Hammond (2000) opined that Certificate or licensing status
125 is a measure of teacher qualifications that combines aspects of knowledge about subject matter and about teaching
126 and learning. Its meaning varies across the states because of differences in licensing requirements, but a standard
127 certificate generally means that a teacher has been prepared in a state approved teacher education program at
128 the undergraduate or graduate level and has completed either a major or a minor in the field(s) to be taught.
129 In Nigeria, the minimum requirement for teaching is Nigeria Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) as stipulated by
130 the Federal Government of Nigeria (National policy on Education, 2004). In most schools, you find a teacher
131 who read mass communication, international relations and the likes, teaching English language. Some are B.A
132 or B.Sc holders and this does not certify them as teacher. This is because there is shortage of teachers and high
133 rate of unemployment, which have made so many people to go into teaching even when they are aware that they
134 are qualified to teach. Hence, most teachers of English language are not certified to teach the subject. Aguoru
135 (2008) observed that most teachers of English language do not perceive their jobs to be a profession in which they
136 require skills to excel. He went further to explain that a large number of these teachers lack the commitment in
137 carrying out their task and the failure came from uncertified teaches who are allowed to 2012 ebruary F teach
138 the language. Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) asserted that students, who are curious stakeholders in educational
139 enterprise, have long suspected and speculated that some of their teachers (lecturers in the university) lack the
140 necessary professional (not academic) qualification (that is, skills, techniques, strategies, temperament et cetera)
141 required to communicate concepts, ideas and principles in a way that would facilitate effective learning.

142 **3 II. THE PROBLEM**

143 There have been reports of persistent poor performance of students in English language at the Senior Secondary
144 School level of education. Scholars have attributed this to the handling of the subject by unqualified teachers
145 who themselves have no proper mastery of the subject among other factors. Hence, this study was carried out
146 to investigate the extent to which these teacher characteristics could predict students' academic performance in
147 English language among public senior secondary students in Ibarapa Central Local Government of Oyo state.

148 **4 III.**

149 **5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

150 The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions: 1. What is the relative contribution
151 of teachers' qualification to students' achievement in English? 2. What is the relative contribution of teachers'
152 subject mastery to students' achievement in English? 3. What is the joint contribution of teachers' qualification
153 and subject mastery to students' achievement in English? 4. Which of the two teacher related factors would
154 predict student academic achievement in English language?

155 IV.

156 **6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

157 The study investigated teacher related factors as predictors of senior secondary students' achievement in English
158 in selected public schools in Ibarapa Central Local Government Area of Oyo State. Findings from this study

13 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

159 would be significant in the following respects: The study would provide empirical information on the teacher
160 related factors that could predict student academic achievement in English language. The study would also
161 contribute to research efforts geared towards finding a permanent solution to the problem of poor performance
162 of students in English language. It will also serve as an eye opener to teachers and other stakeholders on which
163 of the teacher related factors could predict students' academic achievement in English language.

164 V.

165 7 METHODOLOGY

166 The study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. This is because the variables studied have already
167 been manifested and the researcher had no control over them.

168 The population consisted of all S.S.2 students and their respective teachers teaching English language in
169 public secondary schools in Ibarapa division of Oyo State. There are 25 public senior secondary schools in Ibarapa
170 Central Local Government out of which twenty (20) were randomly sampled for the study. In each of the schools,
171 a total number of fifty students (50) senior secondary II students were selected to participate in the study making
172 a total number of one thousand (1000) S.S.II students in all. All the S.S. II English language teachers in the
173 selected schools also participated in the study. Two instruments, namely, Subject Mastery Questionnaire and
174 English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) were designed respectively for the study. The questionnaire was a
175 self-designed one by the researcher and the items were carefully structured to elicit response on teachers' mastery
176 of subject matter and teacher classroom behaviour. It consists of four sections, A,B,C and D. Section A 'sought
177 demographic information of the students such as students' school and class,. Section 'B' sought information
178 on students' evaluation of the teacher on teachers' mastery of subject matter, Section C elicited responses on
179 teachers' classroom behaviour while section D was on teachers qualification. The questionnaire was fashioned
180 along four point modified Likert scale. Developed by the researcher whose scores were scaled with strongly
181 agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed attributed to the questions. Alongside this, the researcher
182 collected information about the twenty teachers' gender, teaching qualification and teaching experience from the
183 principal's office. The achievement test was constructed by the researcher based on past questions in English
184 Language. The questionnaire was given to my supervisor who made his input. It was later given to other experts
185 in the field of research in the University of Ibadan. Further comments were factored into production of final draft
186 of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha yielding co-efficients
187 of .74 respectively for items on subject mastery .The achievement test in English language was constructed by
188 the researcher based on past public examination questions. The test was administered on a separate group of
189 students from two schools, which are not part of the schools for the main study. The reliability was determined
190 through test-re-test yielding a value of .72.

191 The researcher sought permission from the principal of the sampled schools before embarking on the data
192 collection process. Appointments were booked and the researcher visited respondents in their schools ebruary
193 F to administer the questionnaire. Information on teachers' qualification and years of teaching experience. The
194 study lasted for two (2) weeks. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage.
195 In addition, multiple regression analysis were used to provide answers to the research questions. All research
196 questions were answered at 0.05 level of significance. 1 above reveals that the relative contribution of teachers'
197 qualification to students' academic performance in English language was significant .($\beta = 0.192$; $t = 5.756$; $P <0.05$), Research Question 2 : What is the relative contribution of teachers' knowledge of subject matter to
199 students' achievement in English Language?

200 8 VI.

201 9 RESULTS

202 10 Answering the Research

203 From table 1, it was observed that teacher mastery of subject contributed significantly to students achievement
204 in English language ($\beta = 0.116$; $t = 4.923$; $p < 0.05$) Research Question 3 : What is the joint contribution of
205 Teacher's Qualification and Teachers' subject mastery to students' achievement in English Language?

206 11 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

207 The findings of this study showed that 1. Teachers' teaching qualification has a significant relative contribution
208 to students' academic achievement in English language ($\beta = 0.192$; $t = 5.756$; $P <0.05$).

209 12 Teachers

210 13 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

211 The study showed that the relative contribution of teachers' qualification and subject to students 'achievement
212 in English Language is significant .These findings were consistent with those of Jones (1997) who claimed that
213 students tend to achieve better results when taught by teachers with more years of teaching experience. This

214 finding also corroborated Hariss and Sass (2008) who observed that teachers experience and qualification has a
215 significant effect on students' achievement in English language. In line with this, Strauss and Vogt (2001) were
216 of the opinion that teachers teaching qualification and experience are strong determinants of student academic
217 achievements. Komolafe (1989) and Ojo (2008) supported this in their findings that teachers' qualification and
218 experience, among others affected the performance of the students in English language. They explained that,
219 the more the teacher is qualified and experienced, the better his or her students are likely to perform. Robinson
220 (2009) and Rockoff (2004) added that teachers' teaching qualification could contribute significantly to students'
221 achievement in mathematics and language only if it was combined with others school factors. However, this
222 finding negates that of Makinde and Tom-Lawyer (2008) who found no significant relationship between student
223 academic achievement and teachers' qualification and experience. The disparity in two findings may be due to
224 the fact that this study looked at junior secondary students. Zaku (1983) who found that teaching qualification
225 had a non-significant standardized partial regression of (-0.06) and it made little contribution to the explained
226 variance. This may however, be due to the environment in which the study took place. Adewumi (2000) and
227 Adegbile and Adeyemi (2008) found out teachers' teaching qualification had non-significant correlation co-efficient
228 with students' achievement in the various subjects that they examined. This was as a result of the fact that, the
229 study was carried out on biology and integrated science.

230 The study also found out that teachers' mastery of subject matter contributes significantly to students'
231 academic achievement. This is also in line with Ehindero and Ajibade, (2000) who reported a significant
232 relationship between students' perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic
233 performance. This finding also corroborates Monk and King (1994) who reported that teachers' mastery of
234 subject matter is significant to students' achievement.

235 IX.

236 14 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

237 The study focused on teacher characteristics and class size as predictors of public school students' achievement
238 in English language in Ibarapa Central Local Government area of Oyo State and it was concluded that all the
239 variables focused viz: teachers' teaching qualification, teachers' teaching experience, teachers' mastery of subject
240 matter and teachers classroom behaviour are teacher related factors that contribute to students' achievement in
241 English Language. As such, these important teacher variables should be focused when trying to look for solution
242 to related persistent poor performance of students' in English language.

243 Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that government should regularly organize seminars,
244 workshop and training programmes to foster teachers' mastery of the subject. Government should also make sure
245 that teachers employed possess the necessary teaching qualifications to certify them to teach English language
246 Different teachers should be made to handle different aspects of English language. This would enable them to be
247 more efficient as they would be made to handle what they have interest in and capable of doing. Teachers should
also endeavor to improve themselves in the profession. They should make attempt to upgrade their certificate.

1

Model	Students' Achievement.				
	Un standard- ized co- efficient	B	Standard error	Beta t	Sig (?)
(constant)		37.969	3.847	9.871	.000
Teacher qualification		.602	.163	.192	5.756 .000*
Subject mastery		.456	.093	.169	4.923 .000*

* Significant at 0.05 Level

Research Question 1: What is the relative
contribution of Teacher Qualification to students'
achievement in English?

Table

Figure 1: Table 1 :

2

Model

Regression

Residual

Total

* Significant at 0.05 Level

Table 2 shows that the joint contribution of teachers' qualification and teachers' subject mastery to student's achievement in English is significant ($F (1,1252) = 10.105$; $P < 0.05$).

Research Question 4 : Which of the two teacher related factors would

achievement of students in English Language?

Based on Table 2, it is discovered that both subject mastery of the teachers in English language ($t = 4.923$; $p < 0.05$) and teacher qualification ($t = 0.192$; $t = 5.756$; $P < 0.05$) would predict students' achievement in English

VII.

	students' achievement in English Language	Sum squares	of Df	Mean square
Regression	1501.022	1	1501.022	105
Residual	222172	1252	177.454	
Total	226701.166	1253		

predict the academic

Figure 2: Table 2 :

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Figure 3:

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14 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

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