

**International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH)**  
**Ethiopia**

Vol. 7 (3), S/No 26, JULY, 2018:86-91  
ISSN: 2225-8590 (Print) ISSN 2227-5452 (Online)  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ijah.v7i3.10>

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**English Language Teachers' Attitude and Challenges to Utilization of  
Improvised Teaching Materials in Anambra State Secondary Schools**

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**Abstract**

The study investigated English Language teachers' attitude and challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials in Anambra State secondary schools. The area of study was Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions and two research hypotheses. The design of the study was descriptive survey. A sample of one hundred and twenty-six (126) teachers were drawn from the six education zones in the state comprising of seventy-nine (79) female and forty-seven (47) male. To select this number of teachers, the researcher adopted simple random sampling technique using hat and draw method. A structured questionnaire with four-point scale was used as the instrument for data collection. The validation of the instrument was carried out by three experts – two experts in measurement and evaluation and one expert in English Language. The reliability of the instrument was 0.76 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and the t-test statistic for the hypotheses. Results of the analysis indicated that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female English language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials in secondary schools in Anambra State. There is significant difference in the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials by male and female English

language teachers in Anambra State Secondary schools. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made. Prominent among them is that Federal and State Government should arrange training and workshops for English language teachers on improvisation and utilization of improvised teaching materials.

**Key Words:** Attitude, Challenges, Improvisation and Utilization

### Introduction

Teachers are the cornerstones of any country's education system. They are special human resource. An English Language could be seen as someone whose job is to impart the knowledge of English as a language to the students or pupils. English language teachers should make English language lessons easy and enjoyable through the improvisation and use of improvised materials. The poor performance in English Language in most secondary schools has been attributed to the fact that the teaching of it is textbook based/dominated (Asokhia, 2009). This means that most teachers resort to the use of mainly textbooks sometimes, outdated textbooks to teach their students or pupils. Teachers do not have adequate supply of instructional materials and where they are available; they are either irrelevant or obsolete despite the United Nation declaration in 2005. The cost of purchasing instructional materials is quite enormous. It therefore, becomes necessary for teachers of English language to improvise instructional materials so as to bridge the gap between learners' real world and the abstract foreign English Language world. Improvisation in English Language teaching introduces elements of creativity and resourcefulness in the English Language classroom. It is the use of local resources in the immediate environment to build, construct, mould or make teaching-learning materials that can assist in the smooth dissemination and facilitation of learning (Adebiyi & Adelabu, 2013). According to them, improvisation is an excellent technique to use in the FL/L<sub>2</sub> classroom as it motivates the learners to be active participants in authentic situations thereby reducing their self-consciousness.

Improvisation is a valuable instrument that elicits information from the students but at times, it is neglected in our educational institutions. Learning theories and methods suggest that improvisation should be developed just like other techniques. By using appropriate learning activities at the students' level, teachers may feel more comfortable improvising teaching materials. Improvised teaching materials offer a substitute to the original materials which by their qualities are better adapted to the nature of human thinking than the original (Eneazor, Okpara, Nnajofofor and Chukwukere, 2012). Students think better with improvisation made from local materials found at homes or school premises where the original materials are not available. The improvised materials usually convey special teaching messages just like the original materials. However, the ability to improvise and utilize improvised teaching materials depends largely on the teachers' attitude.

Attitude can be defined as the feelings that a person has about an object or person based on his or her knowledge and belief about that object or person (Kind, Jones & Barmby, 2007). Attitudes are typically related to liking/disliking or with a positive/negative valence. They are more than personality traits, but linguistically used interchangeably if the traits are substantially broad or temperament. So, attitude has been seen as the sum total of a person's inclination towards a certain type of object, institution or idea. It then implies that attitude of teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials is related to positive or negative feelings about them. This determines the level of utilization of improvised teaching materials.

Improvised teaching materials in English Language are usually accompanied by a lot of learning activities that are relevant, meaningful and even significant to teaching at any given time. Hence, improvised teaching materials encourage active participation of students in the learning process. Ezeazor, Opara, Nnajofofor and Chukwukere, (2012) stated that students develop abilities in communication, leadership, ethical, decision-making and critical thinking if they are actively engaged

in the learning process. However, some challenges like lack of fund, motivation, creativity, skills, time taking, etc hinders improvisation and utilization of improvised teaching materials for English Language teaching in Anambra state secondary schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

English language is a core and compulsory subject which students must pass at credit level for admission into any higher education institution. However, the poor performance of students in English Language in both internal and external examinations gives every stakeholder a cause for concern. Failure to pass the subject in external examinations has deprived many students of admission into tertiary institutions. Good positive attitude and use of teaching materials in teaching English language could largely lead to good performance in the subject at any level.

Since English language is a core subject, there is urgent need for English language teachers to resort to improvisation. English is mainly sounds and words. The sounds (arbitrary vocal symbols) are strange to most students and as such teachers should devise means of concretizing the strange and abstract sounds and words in the students' minds for permanent and transferable learning to take place. However, in most schools in Anambra state, it could be seen that most teachers do not improvise. They usually see improvisation as task oriented which is time-consuming. Moreover, heads of schools do not support teachers in terms of finance. This usually makes improvisation difficult in many schools. The seeming difficulty might also not be unconnected with the negative disposition or attitude of the teachers towards improvisation. It, therefore means that when the attitude is positive, teachers will be disposed enough to improvise teaching materials in teaching learning process.

Furthermore, there are lots of challenges to improvisation in Anambra state ranging from lack of fund, inadequate periods on the time table, to sheer lack a daisy on the part of English teachers. Against this backdrop, the present study was designed to investigate the English Language teachers' attitude and challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials in Anambra state secondary schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the English Language teachers' attitude and challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials in Anambra State Secondary Schools. Specifically, the study was set to:

1. Investigate the attitude of English Language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials in Anambra State Secondary Schools.
2. Determine the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials faced by English Language teachers in Anambra State Secondary Schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were proposed by the researcher to guide the study:

1. What is the attitude of male and female English language teachers in Anambra state secondary schools towards utilization of improvised teaching materials?
2. What are the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials faced by male and female English language teachers in Anambra State secondary schools?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female English Language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials in Anambra state Secondary Schools.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference in the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials by male and female English Language teachers in Anambra state Secondary schools.

### Method

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Anambra State. The state has six education zones namely: Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocho. One hundred and twenty-six (126) English teachers were purposively selected through simple random sampling techniques.

A structured questionnaire titled “Teachers Attitude towards Improvisation Questionnaire” (TATIQ) was used as instrument for data collection. It consists of a four-point likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SD), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was validated by three experts – two in measurement and evaluation and one English Language expert. The face and content validity were both carried out. The reliability of the instrument was established in a pilot study using the split-half method. The test instrument was administered to twenty (20) English language teachers in a non-participating school in Enugu state. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient formula was used to compute the scores and the reliability index of 0.76 was found.

Data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to the research questions and t-test statistic was used to test the research hypotheses,

### Results

**Research Question One:** What is the attitude of male and female English language teachers in Anambra State secondary schools towards utilization of improvised teaching materials?

**Table 1:** Means and standard deviations of attitude of male and female English language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials

Gender	Number	$\bar{X}$ (Mean)	SD (Standard deviation)
Male	47	2.57	1.13
Female	79	2.54	1.21

Table 1 reveals that the mean attitude scores of English language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials were 2.57 and 2.54 for male and female respectively with standard deviations of 1.13 and 1.21 for male and female respectively. Female English language teachers had little mean score lower than male English language teachers.

**Research Question Two:** What are the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials faced by male and female English language teachers in Anambra State Secondary Schools?

**Table 2:** Means and Standard deviations on the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials faced by male and female English language teachers.

Gender	Number	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)
Male	47	2.52	1.04
Female	79	2.85	1.02

Table 2 shows that the means and standard deviation of English language teachers scores towards challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials were 2.52 and 2.85 respectively with standard deviation of 1.04 and 1.02 for male and female English language teachers respectively. It could be observed that female English language teachers had a higher mean score of 2.85 compared to their male counterparts with 2.52.

**Table 3:** t-test analysis results of male and female English language teachers towards the utilization of improvised teaching materials.

Gender	Number	Mean( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	df	T-value	P-value
Male	47	2.57	1.13			
Female	79	2.54	1.21	124	2.00	0.3546

Table 3 shows that the P-value for attitude of English language teachers towards the utilization of improvised teaching materials is 0.3546 which is higher than the significant value of 0.05 set for the study. Hence null hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 4:** t-test analysis results on the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials by male and female English language teachers

Gender	Number	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	SD	Df	T-value	P-Value
Male	47	2.52	1.02			
Female	79	2.85	1.04	124	3.24	0.0001

Table 4 shows that the P-value of 0.0001 is lower than significant level of 0.05 set for the study. it then means that the null hypothesis of no significant difference was rejected.

### Discussion and Findings

The results of data analysis for research question one showed that the mean attitude score for male English language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials is higher than that of their female counterparts. Also, the results of test hypothesis one showed that there was no significant difference in the attitude of male and female English language teachers towards utilization of improvised teaching materials. This finding corroborates with previous findings like that of Olagunju and Obioma (2008) who found that both male and female English language teachers use such improvised materials as charts, models, plants and animals in teaching. Besides, Ogott, Indoshi and Okwara (2011) found out that the early childhood development and education generally had positive attitude towards language materials.

The results for data analysis for research question two showed that mean scores in respect to challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials are relatively different for both male and female English language teachers. The results of test of hypothesis two showed that there was a significant difference in the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials between male and female English language teacher. This buttresses Ezeasor's (2012) opinion that inadequate funding to purchase some of the materials for construction of teaching materials poses greater challenge to female teachers than male teachers. Also this finding agrees with Eshiet (2001), Igwe, Arop and Ibe (2013) who found that though the challenges were found to be gender-dependent.

### Conclusion

From the result of the findings, it was concluded that both male and female English language teachers exhibited similar attitude towards utilization of improvised teaching materials. Again, it was found that there were differences in the challenges to utilization of improvised teaching materials. From the above findings, it will be helpful if teachers are provided with enable grounds to improvise teaching materials while teaching English language.

### Recommendations

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The State Government, State Ministry of Education or its agents should arrange training and workshops for English Language teachers on utilization of improvised teaching materials.
2. Professional Associations such as English Language Association of Nigeria (ELAN) and others who are concerned about the learning of English language should arrange for workshops during their annual conferences on the utilization of improvised teaching materials.

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