Revamping the English Language Education in Nigeria to Meet Global Needs and Challenges in Post-Pandemic Era

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Abstract: *Coronavirus disease which has also been referred to as Covid-19, is a pandemic which was first discovered in Wuhan, China in December, 2019. Since the outbreak in China in January, 2020, cases have been reported in many countries of the world. The first case was confirmed in Nigeria on 28th February, 2020. The pandemic has affected every sector of the nation's economy which resulted in the closure of schools, yet the spread has not been contained. Although, some advanced countries tried to contain the spread, but in Nigeria, the spread paralysed the economy, especially the education sector. This work is aimed at suggesting ways of revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in the post-pandemic era. To achieve the aims of this work, the writers highlighted some conceptual frameworks. They explained the following terms: pandemic and post pandemic eras, English language education, challenges facing the English language education during pandemic/post pandemic eras and revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in the pandemic and post-pandemic eras. The researchers also reviewed theories such as theories of behaviourism in English language teaching and constructivism views of learning as an interpretive, recursive, and non-linear process theories to highlight the work more. Notable empirical studies were reviewed. The paper recommended what should be done to ensure proper renovation, repair and restoration of the damages caused by the pandemic in the English language education in Nigeria schools so as to be able to meet global needs and challenges in the post-pandemic era. Lastly, comments, opinions, suggestions and conclusions were made by the researchers.*

Keywords: Revamping**,** English Language, English Language Education, Pandemic Era, Post-Pandemic Era.

INTRODUCTION

The English language in Nigeria allows the people to develop a sense of self Confidence, and to interact with others in their speech communities in Nigeria as a multilingual and multi-ethnic state. The language is used as a means through which knowledge is transmitted among the citizens of different speech communities. Every form of education; formal, informal or non-formal, is expressed and acquired through the English language in Nigeria. Through the English language education, the users' potentials are developed. Skills, knowledge and expertise that will enable them to become more productive and creative in their environment are acquired. Through the English language education, users are equipped to engage in profitable ventures that would earn them higher income and improve their standard of living. It is a powerful instrument for human and national development. In fact, the English language education if completely revamped, will definitely meet the global needs and the challenges in the post-pandemic era especially in Nigeria education today.

However, the writers after, pondering on the ugly state of the English language education in Nigeria before, during and after the pandemic era were motivated to present a paper on revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era. The objectives of this work are to outline functional or workable strategies that can improve, repair, and renovate the seeming unrepairable state of the English language education in Nigeria schools before now. Again, to provide a platform to seek further opinions, comments, and to make suggestions to the challenges in the English language education which when implemented will help in meeting up with the global needs and challenges of the post-pandemic era. So, the purpose of this paper is to expose in the work methods strategies, and ideas that can help to improve, renew, removate or revise the English Language Education in Nigeria to meet the global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era.

Conceptual Clarification and Definition of Terms

Pandemic/Post Pandemic Eras

A pandemic is an epidemic that assumes a global spread, usually very infectious.Eze (2022) identified the corona virus disease also known as COVID-19 as a pandemic which was first discovered in Wuhan, China in December, 2019. It is worthy of note that after the outbreak of the disease in china in January, 2020, the first case was confirmed in Nigeria on 28 February, 2020. The corona virus disease (COVID-19) was described as a pandemic by world health organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sinth.2020. The pandemic has affected every sector of our nation's economy which resulted in the closure of schools, yet the spread has not been contained. Although, some advanced countries have contained the spread. In Nigeria, the spread paralysed the economy, especially the educational sector. So, the terms pandemic/post pandemic eras simply means during and after the outbreak of corona virus disease (COVID-19) in the world. The effects of this pandemic during and after the period motivated the writers to engage in this work. So, the ugly situations serve as the rationale behind conducting this research.

English Language Education

In Igiri et al (2021), "language in its natural or functional perspective has many unique features which one can conclude that it plays dual roles or functions in a well-known formal educational system. According to the researchers, English language education can be seen in two definite perspectives. In the first place, it can be seen as a school subject on the school scheme of work or curriculum in this case, it can be referred to as English language education just as we can see in other disciplines like economics education, religion education, political science education, mathematics education etc. However, the second role or function of the English language as they continued in their work is actually what made it different and unique to other school subjects. In all over the world, the English language is used as a medium of instruction or teaching in all other disciplines including the English language itself. As a result of this second role, one can comfortably coined out the title of the English language in education.

So, from the explanations made by Igiri et al (2021) above one can see the English language education and the English language in education as being referred to as the two unique and distinct roles or functions that the English language naturally plays in educational system. In any case, the researchers are majorly talking and touching on the former, which is "language education in this work".

Challenges facing the English language education during pandemic/post pandemic eras

From Faridi and Mujiyanto (2022) "language is a vital aspect of human life that also serves as a means of communication in daily activities. Wibowo (2001:3) in the same Faridi and Mujiyanto (2022) defined language as a system of symbols that are meaningful sounds that are arbitrary and conventional and that is utilized by a group of men to give birth to feelings and thoughts. In this, one can understand that language is used by human to communicate with others.

Faridi and Mujiyanto (2022) insist that it will be difficult to converse with others without language. Human survival depends on communication. It will be easier to convey information, complete tasks, and even actualize ideas with human dialogue. The writers says that if both the sender and the receiver grasp the information, communication will be successful. As a result, language is necessary for human survival because communication is impossible without it.

However, the most significant language of the world is the English language. This is because, it is an international language used in international communication. As a result, it is taught as a subject in schools and as an extracurricular activity.

According to Eze (2022), "the pandemic has affected every sector of our nation's economy which has resulted in the closure of schools, yet the spread has not been contained. The writer maintains that some advanced countries have contained the spread in Nigeria the spread has paralysed our economy, especially our educational sector.From the same Eze (2022) in his work on "challenges in language learning during COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria". The

researcher highlights that teaching a foreign language to a non-native speaker is an uphill tasks which requires an active participation of both the teacher and the students for a better understanding of the subject matter. According to him, the students come from different sociolinguistic backgrounds. The writer maintains that the language teachers should do their best to minimize the language problems of their students. Thus, in an explicit face to face interaction that requires the input of the teachers to be equal to the output of the students, anything short of the above, the researcher insists that it produces a downturn result.

However, this work's major concern is on the English language education's challenges during and even after the pandemic eras. In this case, examples from Eze (2022) can also be of a help. The writer states the massive failure in external examination by students of English each year in secondary schools in Nigeria which he says is alarming and weeps on increasing. According to the researcher, "From NBS (National Bureau of Statistics) 2019 report for 2016-2018 WAEC results, 1,543,974 students sat for the WAEC exams in English 967,829 passed, 1,558,452 students sat, 964, 760 passed and 1,571,536 students wrote, and 849,069 passed respectively with the advent of COVID-19 pandemic in all the nations of the world, Online classes would have been the only alternative and also the best option if Nigeria educational sector had prepared for it.

Eze (2022) in his work also cited some scholars such as (Che, Musa, Azman & Koo, 2012; Yadov Gupta & Khetrapal, 2018; Adnan et al, 2019; & Pital, 2020) which advocate that technological devices, or more practically online classrooms can be regarded as useful alternative in difficult and unanticipated situations like COVID-19. The researchers conclude that adopting online classes or E-learning strategies would expose the incompetence of the managers, government, teachers, and students of the educational sector in Nigeria as the facilities have not been put in place, especially in our public schools. Many parents may not be able to afford the gadgets required for the e-learning.

Faridi and Mujiyanto (2022) added that many lecturers are unprepared for digital literacy in distance learning as a result of the epidemic. Again, the change in the learning system during pandemic really affected the learning and teaching in the English language education in Nigeria. In normal activities, the lecturer explains, then students can directly understand and follow, if there are questions, students can ask directly, and the lecturers answers directly. In addition, the ultimate conclusion or evaluation may differ. Using an online report, the final result must be modified and processed. Students generally utilize paper for daily assessment but now they must use the media which is a smart phone, to work on the questions.

Revamping the English language Education to meet Global Needs and Challenges in the Pandemic/Post pandemic eras

Indeed, the pandemic of COVID-19 has affected every element of human life. With the pandemic, everything changes in an instant. People are forbidden from leaving their homes, working or even attending schools. Changes in teaching and learning relationship in schools were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Face to face learning is prohibited, lecturers and students engage in virtual learning through the use of internet applications.

This system really affected the teaching and learning of the English language education during and even after the pandemic eras. As a result, the researchers intended to see how the English language education in Nigeria can be revamped to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era.

Definition of the key word in the topic, "Revamp" from the Collins English Dictionary (2023) Revamp in its word forms, 3rd person singular present tense revamps, present participle revamping, past tense, past participle revamped. In verb, if someone revamps something, they make changes to it in order to try and improve it. For example, all Nigeria political parties have accepted that it is time to revamp the system.

Revamp can also be used in a noun. The revamp includes replacing the old navy uniform with a crisp blue and white cotton outfit. From the above explanations, one can see the word in a transitive verb as to patch up or renovate, repair or restore. In a noun form, it can be seen as something that has been renovated or revamped, the act or process of revamping. An act or instance of restructuring, reordering, or revising something, overhaul. So, the work "Revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era is a work that focused on restructuring, reordering, revising, overhauling, renovating and repairing the damages caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic on the teaching and learning of the English language education in Nigeria during the period. The aim of the researchers is to enable the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era which is now. The following strategies have been suggested:

i. **Reinvention of the Teachers' Position in Schools:** Teachers' position must be reinvented. They should be viewed as facilitators who assist students in developing and contributing to society. Governments and other institutions that own schools including privates should encourage teachers to develop innovative teaching methods.

ii. **Revision and Revalidation of Curriculum to suit the New Digital Development in the System:** The centralized curriculum should be condensed so that teachers can use it as a guide when implementing distant learning which has been introduced during the pandemic era. Teachers will be considerably aided in developing their capacity by the availability of a revised curriculum and the full backing of the national and local governments.

iii. **Improving on the Standard of Technology Infrastructure in Nigeria Schools:** From Faridi and Mujiyanto (2022) another strategy to revamp the English language education is by improving on the standard of technology infrastructure in Nigeria schools. The researchers pinpointed that according to the ministry of education and culture's evaluation statistics, limited access to technology, insufficient gadgets/devices, internet networks and learning applications/media, have all contributed in the teaching and learning of the English language education in Nigeria, but turned to challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The writers explained that due to an unequal distribution of internet network connectivity between established urban centres and rural areas, internet challenges have arisen. They therefore suggested that local governments could

collaborate with local television and radio stations, as well as community radio to effect positive changes in the system, as a way of revamping the system.

Theoretical Frameworks

The work of Xiaofei Rao (2018) was fully coined by the writers of this paper hence the two theories formally used by the writer was found by the researchers to be suitable for their work:

(1)   Behaviourism in the English language teaching

(2)   Constructivism views in the English language teaching

(1)   Behaviourism in the English language teaching

The popular understanding of learning in the first half of the 20th century characterizes a system of behavioural responses to physical stimuli by behaviourist linguists such as Throndike (1921), Watson (1925) and Skinner (1957) as cited in Rao (2018). They believed the essence of learning was developed in terms of stimulus-response association through habit formation, operant conditioning, and reinforcement with an emphasis on successful error-free learning in small and prepared steps and stages. Then, habits would be formed, reinforced, and strengthened by drill practice and imitation. Behaviourist learning theory derived from Skinner's (1968) work in the 1960s claims that learning was evaluated as change in a learner's behaviour with emphasis on modification of the learner behaviour. Its pedagogical implication includes presentation of information, question and feedback to arouse learner response and positive reinforcement for correct answers and repetition of the cycle for correct learning. Behaviourist learning theory contended Greeno, Collins & Resnick (1996), forms the basic of the traditional learning environment geared for the efficient transmission of the information and basic skills to learners in a neatly organized manner. To those who advocate behaviourism in learning behaviours are learned habits are formed to influence the learning process.

Teachers with a behaviourist mindset take classroom as a teacher centered environment, with teachers textbooks, and other enrichment materials as the major source of knowledge. They regard curricula as the intensified teaching guideline in which text-based exercises are designed and developed with intestinal guidance, regular repetition and review, and increasing difficulty levels. According to Bloom (1956) and Gagne (1965), constant repetition and consideration are necessary for the effective reinforcement of responses and able to reproduce the whole.

Behaviourist theory of learning summarized Dai and Chen (2007) which addresses more the process than the condition of learning featuring the principles as follows:

(i)   Language learning is habit formation

(ii)   Mistakes are bad and should be avoided, as they make bad habits

(iii)   Language skills are learned more effectively if they are presented orally first, then in written form.

(iv)   Analogy is a better foundation for language learning than analysis

(v)   The meaning of words can be learned only in a linguistic and cultural context.

Additionally, behaviourists resort to observable and testable behaviours, such as efficiency of positive reinforcement in verbal praise, good grade, and prize to students. Fosnot and Perry (2005) claimed that bahviourist teachers intend for a "sequenced, well-structured curriculum", to guide them pedagogically on how to assess, motivate, reinforce and evaluate learners. The writer concluded that in China, such teaching philosophy and pedagogical practices remain popular in schools of different educational levels.

Constructivism Views in the English Language Teaching

Rao (2018), constructivism views learning as an interpretive, recursive, and nonlinear process by active learners interacting with the surroundings of the physical and social world, (Fosnot, 2005). two schools of constructivism prevail, namely cognitive constructivism and socio-cultural constructivism. Cognitive constructivism stems from the work of J.Piaget, featuring the individual learning process and how a person constructs and develops his knowledge through experience. Socio-cultural constructivism, developed by L.S Vygotsky, emphasizes the social context of learning. Though Piaget did not include the influence of social inputs, while Vygotsky did not stress the action and reflection of individual learners, they each told half of a good story of learning that complements the other (Cobb, 2005; Dimitrials & Kamberelis, 2006).

Cognitive Constructivist Theory of Learning

In Piaget's stance, cognitive constructivism conceives learning as a "holistic, bottom-up process" Dimitriadis & Kamberelis (2006:169), enacted by an active learner as the constructor of his knowledge structure. Learning comprises successive and spiral stages in which a learner's intellectual growth is mostly influenced by personal intellectual activities while he explores, manipulates, and understands his experience Goodman (1990). Learning occurs through self-regulation, which involves retroactive and participatory construction and adjustment on the part of the learner in response to the external perturbances. The mechanism that promotes change in cognitive structure is equilibrium, which accounts for a learner's continual adaptation to the world around him in a non linear, flexible and open way. The complexity of equilibrium makes clear how learning is continuity how thought is marked by "acceptance or rejection of something as reasonably probable or imply probable. Dewey (1910/1997:4), and how living itself could be defined as knowing, (Deutsch, 1997). One can come to a conclusion with the above explanations that cognitive Constructivist Theory of learning develops abilities to select information, originate assumptions, and make decisions in the process of integrating learning experience into their existing cognitive structure (Bruner, 1973). This process allows them to proceed beyond the surface of information given and to interact with the environment by exploring and manipulating objects, (Bruner, 1973).

Socio-Cultural Constructivist Theory of Learning

The socio-cultural perspective of social context of learning acquisition originates in the work of Vygotsky (1981), who studied the role of social experience in the development of individual knowledge. Vygotsky placed emphasis on the social context of learning, namely, how social and cultural contexts affects a learners cognition or how the social environment accounts for the development of the higher cognitive process. Vygotsky stressed the connectedness between learning and a learner's social and cultural world. since people start

to learn long before they attend school, any learning one encounters in school, argued Vygotsky (1978), has a "previous history" The pedagogical implication is that all fundamental cognitive activities have social foundations, and cognitive skills and patterns of thinking are products of the activities practiced in the social institutions of the culture in which individuals grow up and mature through the process of "internalization" which is the process where by the individuals, through participation in interpersonal interaction in which cultural ways of thinking are demonstrate in action, is able to appreciate them so they become transformed from being social phenomena to being part of his or her own intrapersonal mental functioning, (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006:123).

DISCUSSION OF THE FRAMEWORK

In the above highlights, the writer has shown how each of the two theories have their own explanatory powers. However, each of them remains partial in its ability to grasp the whole, especially when evaluating such a complex endeavour of revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era. However, proper implementation of the above information can help to achieve the objectives of the researcher in this paper.

Empirical Studies

Research topics like "Revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic era" as a title of this paper or other closely related paper topics have been presented by so many researchers and educationists in both national and international levels in this work, the researchers have carefully selected some of those closely related topics to express their paper better for their reader and other scholars or researchers.

From Cambridge University Press (2023), meaning of revamping in the English language were lucidly explained in the work. to revamp as a verb according to the writers in the paper means to change or arrange something again, in order to improve it. It also means to decorate for example a room, house etc. More definitions were found from Collins English Dictionary (2023), "if someone revamps something, they make changes to it in order to try and improve it. It means to patch up or renovate, repair or restore something that has been renovated is said to be revamped.

Njoku (2017), the role English language plays in human development in Nigeria was the focal point of her paper. Njoku maintains that the language is the most frequently used and the most highly developed form of human communication. with the importants of the English language to man and his development as outlined by the writer in her article, it therefore become more motivating to mankind to aid in revamping the English language especially in Nigeria to enable the citizens to meet global needs and challenges in this post-pandemic era.

Njoku (2017), also states the place of English language in the Nigerian education system. She explains that a good knowledge of the socio-political history of Nigeria will enable one

understand how English language came into Nigeria and occupied a colossal position in the Nigerian education system. The multilingual and multi-ethnic nature of Nigeria needs the revamping of the English language education to meet both internal and global needs and challenges of this period of post-pandemic era.

In the sane Njoku (2017), the writer expresses the indispensability of the English language and human development in Nigeria. The writer identified education as a major tool in human development. Hence, every form of education is expressed and acquired through English language, it therefore becomes very necessary to revamp the language to achieve its aims and objectives.

Research Implications and Future Research Works/ Recommendation/Suggestions
From the topic "Revamping the English Language Education in Nigeria to Meet Global needs and Challenges in Post-Pandemic Era". The researchers carefully outlined reasons and how the English Language Education can be revamped in order to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic Era in Nigeria.

Vuzo (2018) in Igiri et al (2021) as cited also in Igiri et al (2022) illustrated that using an unfamiliar language of instruction contributes to school dropouts. To handle these challenges the researchers suggest that revamping of the English language education should be the solution. The writers states that qualified and competent English language teachers should be employed to handle the subject in schools and colleges which can increase the learners' capacity to maximize their learning potentials and there by repositioning or improving the English Language Education.

In Igiri et al (2022), un world summit in Johannes bury in 2002 emphasized on the need for good quality education which suggestions were made on the necessities of reorientations or repositioning of current educational system and development of the English language teaching curriculum in Nigeria as a language instruction in Nigeria schools. This really means that a serious need for revamping of the language should be made. Revamping of the English language efficiency in its diversity is necessary for sustainability and more improvement in the system.

Again, Nigeria English language education curriculum should be revamped in such a way that it can expose and build a speaker of the language to be able to function in a variety of socio-cultural levels on bother the micro and macro scales.

Igiri *et al* (2022), for the English Language Education to be more interested, focus should be on wider institutional and administrative context than just on examination and thereby limiting the learners knowledge to pass and not necessary to acquire the necessary information needed to empower the learners after their education. For proper and practical improvement and repositioning of the English Language Education in Nigeria Schools, the educators' capacity should strategically plan and implement changes in teaching and learning skills including extra-curricula activities.

Finally, revamping the English Language Education in Nigeria according to the writers' recommendations and suggestions can entail teaching on how to communicate and be creative in expressing thoughts and ideas which can help to meet global needs and challenges in these contemporary days known as Post-Pandemic Era.

CONCLUSION

Vuzo (2019) in Igiri et al (2022) communication is one of the vital skills for the 21st century. Language is a central aspect for communication and hence language teaching should be promoted to acquire requisite skills necessary for the future of students and for sustainable language education needed for education and development.

In this, the writers were simply saying that they should be need for revamping the English language education in Nigeria to meet global needs and challenges in this present days of post-pandemic era.

Aboluwodi and Owolewa (2018) expressed that the greatest challenge with the use of education to achieve sustainable development goals in Nigeria is found with the severe deficiencies in the structure that carries its education system. By structure the writers mean the school buildings, teachers, assessment, procedure, and so on. The researchers state that most of these elements still carry the old order as left behind by the colonial education officials. The problem remains the same across the country. Most of the buildings inherited from the colonial officials are still being used, assessments are designed to measure performance in examination, and the quality of teachers is declining by the day. Most institution of learning in Nigeria hardly emphasized strict adherence to the teaching of 21st century skills and competencies identified by the world Economic Forum. With all these pointed challenges in Nigerian educational system and the roles the English language education play in restructuring. Repositioning of the system, the researchers were motivated to go into this work in order to repair, renovate, revamp the English language education which serves as a key for improvement of the system.

So, proper adherence to the information, theories used, recommendations, suggestions in this work can help in revamping the English language education in Nigerian to meet global needs and challenges in post-pandemic Era.

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