

The Disparate Impacts of Boko Haram Insurgency and Banditry on Teaching of English in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: English in Nigeria is a medium of instruction and a tool that bridges the communication gap stemmed from the multilingual and multicultural nature of the country and other multifaceted problems associated with learning in a foreign language. When learners are denied access to the only means of instruction, employment opportunities and other paths to greatness are compromised. For over a decade, the educational system of Northern Nigeria has been embroiled and teaching of English language clogged. This study aims to report the activities of an insurgency group, popularly known as Boko Haram and Bandits in Northern Nigeria on the education system and the resultant effects on teaching English Language to students and the professional developments of English teachers. The study generates data through a questionnaire administered to twenty one English teachers in Northern Nigeria through Google forms and the reports of Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA). The statistical analyses of the data reveal vulnerability of female students and teachers than their male counterparts due to armed conflicts. The study further reveals incidents of anxiety on teachers and learners, closure and militarization of some schools and other traumatic experiences that inhibited teaching and learning of English in Northern Nigeria. While this study underscores government's appropriate programmes and policies to support English teacher's professional development and the teaching of English to children who are out of school due to the nefarious activities of Boko Haram and Bandits, and their impacts in achieving desirable performance goals in English, it could not report efforts the Nigerian government has employed in ameliorating the menace. The pedagogic implication of this study is that loss of performance skills in a target language is possible when learners have not gained remarkable mastery in all levels of language study. Again, in the next twenty years, only few Northern Nigerians would be good users of English in a country where the economic and social resource greatly depend on mastery of English.

KEYWORDS: Boko Haram, Bandits, teaching English, Nigerian students.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the key for economic and social resource and a determinant for social and economic inequalities between individuals and nations. The value placed on a child's education orchestrated its adoption and enshrining in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other human rights entreaties (Hart, Cohen, Erickson, and Flekkoy, 2001). Hart et al report that almost all the countries of the world have pledged to uphold the child's right to education under 28 and 29 of the convention on the Rights of the child. This implies that free and accessible education training should be provided for primary and secondary age citizens delivered in a safe environment. Governments of nations are further coerced to enforce school attendance and ensure that discipline compatible with the child's dignity is administered at all levels. Article 29 on the convention on the Rights of the child specifies the outcome of the child's education to include the child's personality development, his respect for human rights, parents, culture, environment and others. It implies therefore, that education remains the possible medium for guaranteeing responsible citizenship.

The child's education is processed through a language; his mother tongue or a foreign language (target language). In Northern Nigeria, the child's right to education is gradually eluding, eroding and being inadvertently denied. For over a decade, the education of the Northern Nigerian child has been greatly cut back by the activities of the intractable elements called Boko Haram. This obstreperous group has posed a great security challenge to the existence of Nigeria as a nation as well as grounding the socio-economic capacity of the nation. The political, educational and socio-economic

exploits of any nation is predicated upon the security architecture accessible to citizens. Nkwede, Abah, and Nwankwo (2015) identify personal safety and freedom as indicators used in measuring the socio-economic and educational development of nations. The safety of the Northern Nigerian student is bedeviled by the nefarious activities of the BokoHaram, consequently, the academic programme is foiled, leading to closure of many schools.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Insurgency

There is no established or generally accepted definition of the concept *insurgency* due to its sophistication, violent nature and situations that orchestrate its occurrences but workable definitions have been put forward by few scholars. Abdu and Shehu (2019) see insurgency as a rebellion against constituted authority either in pursuit of political goal or for selfish interest. Similarly, though earlier, Hassan (2014) argues that insurgency can be seen as a political struggle and necessarily not a military struggle, therefore, not amenable to a purely military solution without resorting to a level of brutality unacceptable to the contemporary global environment. Insurgency, from the definitions is an outright act of irreverence or desecration of the laws of a nation, ruination of lives and property and disruption of a functional political and economic system induced by political bigotry.

Some scholars have interchanged the term *insurgency* with *terrorism* (Moore, 2007; Hassan 2014) given the diverse nature and trend to which insurgency is being used as a tool to convey one's disaffections toward government policies and programmes. Hassan observes

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that insurgents adopt same strategy which terrorists are reckoned with which includes: bombing, guerilla warfare, kidnapping and abduction. Again, the inhuman attacks are carried out by individuals or group of individuals rather than by states and with such violent attacks occurring in peace time rather than as part of conventional war. To further support his claim that both insurgency and terrorism have same operational game, Hassan records that insurgent groups use terrorism to pursue political goals or other particular objectives.

The aim of insurgent activities is to overthrow an existing order (Galula, 1964) or overthrow constituted authority or government through the use of subversion or armed conflict (Ukpong-Umo, 2016). Insurgency has also been described as a revolution, revolt, rebellion, riot and mutiny (Abdu and Shehu, 2019).

BOKO HARAM

Boko Haram is an Islamic sect whose beliefs include: Northern politics has been hijacked by corrupt and false Muslims and that western education is a sin (Walker, 2012; Dunn, 2018) therefore, they wage war in order to enshrine pure Islamic beliefs and create a pure Islamic state ruled by sharia law. The sect's presence in the country was first recorded in Nigeria in 2002 in the capital city of Bornu state, Maiduguri (Dunn, 2018). First, they presented themselves as radical Islamic youths who decried the state of corruption in the state and declared its interest to embark on *hija* (a withdrawal along the lines of the Prophet Mohammed's withdrawal from Mecca to Medina).

Since inception of the Boko Haram, Nigeria has recorded incessant and recalcitrant attacks by the group in the form of school children abduction. Notorious amongst the inhuman operations of this group are the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Bornu State which is in the North East region of Nigeria in 2014 which sparked the international community advertency, the abduction of one hundred and eleven (111) Dapchi girls in Yobe state in 2018 (GCPEA), destruction of over nine hundred and ten (910) schools between 2009 and 2015) and forceful closure of one thousand five hundred (1500) schools between 2009 and date, killing of six hundred (600) teachers and nineteen thousand (19000) forced to flee (UN). Lately, the number of school children abductions in the Northern part of Nigeria and the uninhibitedness with which they carry out these hideous operations, became worrisome. In the past six months, as recorded by Brenner (2021), more than eight hundred (800) children have been taken in mass abductions at four boarding schools in northwest Nigeria aside the Boko Haram's attacks on the people in the northeast.

BANDITRY

Sometimes, it becomes a herculean task to establish disparateness between insurgency and banditry due to their common *modus operandi*. Firstly, both insurgents

and bandits are threats to the security network of any nation. They are individual groups who launch vicious attacks on communities and kidnap people expecting their family members to pay ransom before securing their release. Banditry, according to Collins (2000) is a term used to refer to acts of robbery and violence in areas where the rule of law is broken down. Bandits are armed bands involved in attacking social institutions, enterprises or individuals. Abdullahi (2018) records that incessant attacks by this bandit groups and their prevalence in West Africa constitute potential threat to the region's integration. Ademola (2021) traces the pedigree of the phenomenon *banditry* in Nigeria to pre-civil war period when government failed in their responsibilities in certain parts of the old Western region resulting in political violence, crime and organized insurgency. After that, as Nadama (2019) reports, local bandits were reportedly stealing domestic animals. Lately, particularly in the Northwest area of Nigeria (Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Niger, Kaduna and Kebbi States), activities of bandits became gruesome and implacable. Activities of these groups include: rape, robbery, murder, cattle rustling, etc. Their victims are maimed and killed at the least expectation.

Some factors which have aided the escapades of urban and rural banditry, mostly in the Northwestern and few areas in the Northeast parts of Nigeria include mismanagement of natural resources, the economy, and exploitation of the masses by the government (Odinaka, 2018). Other factors include, farmers and herders clash over lands and water resources, poverty, proliferation of light arms and weapons, ethnic division, and uncoordinated and under policed borders (Ademola, 2021). Again, the forestlands in Northwestern and some parts of Northeastern Nigeria are vast and become hidey-hole to bandits. Okoli (2019) observes that such areas are not only under-policed but run alongside the diverse porous borderlines on the region's frontiers. Criminal syndicates leverage the poorly governed areas of the North to unleash disgustingly unpleasant attacks to their victims. Illicit and artisanal mining, as Okoli further records, has equally drawn the attention of rural bandits to the region, especially in Zamfara State. Lack of presence of well-armed security operatives in the area, coupled with the prevailing socio-existential conditions in the area paved the way for rural banditry in the region.

No sector of an economy of any nation thrives in an insecure environment. The rise of armed attacks on individuals, communities, schools and other social institutions has grossly affected the smooth-run of the education system in the affected parts of Nigeria. Education was introduced in Nigeria by Christian missionaries during the colonial period and the view of Boko Haram insurgents is that it is an attempt to convert Muslims in Nigeria's northeast; therefore, they oppose teaching of circular scientific principles and the co-education of boys and girls (Segun, 2016). Segun

further observes that this ideology stemmed the destruction of nine hundred and ten (910) schools and forceful closure of one thousand four hundred schools (1400) in the region by February 2016.

To say that the Northern Nigerian education system has been greatly affected is to say the least. Prior to the emergence and penetration of Boko Haram in the region, as Adedeji (2016) records, there had been a long history of attacks on schools in northern Nigeria, especially Islamiyah schools. Aside the setbacks on schools orchestrated by this sect, soldiers who were engaged by the Government of Nigeria to contend the noxious activities of Boko Haram have also brought their backwashes on the educational system of the area. They converted some classrooms to their base. When schools are made military base, the students are predisposed to attacks by Insurgents who see them as party to the conflict. That has been the position of Safe Schools Declaration (SSD), an intergovernmental political commitment that provides countries with the opportunity to express support for protecting students, teachers, schools and universities from attack during times of armed conflict. SSD was ratified in Nigeria in 2019 (Sanusi, 2019). By endorsing the Declaration, Nigeria is supposed to be committed to restoring access to safe education and to develop education systems that are conflict-sensitive and promote respect between social and ethnic groups.

(UNICEF, 2021) laments that in towns and villages bordering Bornu state, one of the states in the North East of Nigeria, schools remain the targeted areas for destruction whenever such attacks occur. Apart from the record of huge loss of valuable school assets in these affected areas, teachers' professional development and well-being have been grossly contrived. The consequences therefore, are delivery of poor quality instructions, anxiety, frustrations arising from displacement, and other traumatic experiences. For learners, access to education is gradually becoming impossible. UNICEF reports show that in the affected regions, these insurgent attacks have their untold psychological impacts on learners' cognitive abilities, with resultant negative learning outcomes. Demand for education is daily dwindling in Northern Nigeria and parents are no longer eager to send their children to school due to the risks associated with learning in such volatile areas.

ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a country formerly colonized by the British. Before colonization, and even before the political entity called Nigeria was inaugurated in 1914, the English language had found its roots in the area through the agency of commerce as far back as the sixteenth century (Banjo, 1996). Although the emergence of the English language was earlier facilitated by the agency of commerce, the grafting of the language into the sociolinguistic scene, as Banjo further records, was

superintended by the Christian religion through missionary activity which dates back to 1842. The language policy offered to Nigerians by the missionary societies was bilingualism in English and the mother tongue, with English dominance. Although it is common place that the colonized adopts the language of the colonizer since the former is expected not to operate in any other language other than his mother tongue, Banjo (1996) records that in the case of Nigeria, the colonial government never expressly declared English the official language of Nigeria, but the ability to speak the language of the colonizer confers Nigerians with rich rewards by the colonial masters. Such rewards brought instrumental motivation on the natives, and invariably promoted the learning of English language by Nigerians.

The English language policy posed some difficulty to colonial administrators who kept different conditions for people from the South and Northern Nigeria (Banjo, 1996). In the North, Hausa was promoted as a *lingua franca* while in the South; the teaching of English language was supported because the government acquiesced in the proselytization of the population by the Christian missionaries. In order to promote missionary activities in the Southern part of Nigeria, Priests had to be trained, some of them according to Banjo (1996) were sent to England to complete their undergraduate education, on return, they were charged with responsibilities in the church, in education and also in the state. The case was not so in the Northern Nigeria. Missionary activities could not penetrate the North. As far back as the late nineteenth century, the Northern Nigeria was already disadvantaged in the learning and teaching of the English language. In the 1970s, it became imperative for Nigeria to have a coherent language policy in education. English language was superimposed as the official language for a country that has over four hundred indigenous languages as well as a medium of instruction in schools. English language was considered to be a rallying point between the Southerner and the Northerner who already have multilingual, multicultural and multifaceted inclinations.

LANGUAGE POLICY IN NIGERIA

Nigeria, being a pluralistic and multilingual African state had underestimated language and socio-political issues that demanded a po-faced and interactively-oriented language policy to promote both nationalism and economic buoyancy. To solve the inherent challenges evident in a pluralistic linguistic situation, the English language, through the language policy of 1981 was promoted to be the official language of Nigeria. However, the mother tongue and language of the immediate community should be the medium of instruction at pre-primary and early primary levels, with English emerging as the medium of instruction half-way through primary education, secondary and tertiary. Over these years, the English language has grown and

continues to be the language of education, media, governance, and law. It continues to enjoy primacy and becomes the language of the elites and also the first language for some Nigerians. The present language ethnography, according to (Ogunmodimu, 2015), records over five hundred and twenty one languages and ethnic groups in the nation. The language policy of Nigeria recognizes the three major languages –Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, with over twenty (20) million speakers (Oyetade, 2003) as the national languages. The roles assigned to the English language in Nigeria place it above the indigenous languages and its mastery is a gateway to economic responsibility. Nigeria therefore, requires an effective teaching and learning of the language for her citizens.

TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

Having highlighted the agencies and circumstances that paved way for the adoption and development of English in Nigeria, it is imperative to examine how the language is taught or found within the educational system. Nigeria adopted a British-type system of education as introduced by the missionaries. The quality of English language taught in schools during the beginning of the 20th century was characterized by adequate competence on the parts of both teachers and students (Alexander 2014). This could be because the crux of teachers who taught the language at that time was more of the stream of Nigerians who had sponsorship by the Church Missionary Society to England and to Freetown to receive undergraduate training. These men, according to Banjo (1996) studied side by side with the native speakers of English and the elites of Sierra Leone who were already very proficient in the language. Lately, the standard of both spoken and written English amongst students as well as the quality of English teaching and learning began to decline. Scholars have attributed the fallen standard of English in Nigeria to many factors, amongst them are: inadequate government funding for education (Jeyifo, 2011), which remarkably affects teachers training and professional development; poor or deficient English language environment which affects learners who come from backgrounds where their parents cannot communicate in English but solely depend on the little contact with the language in the formal setting. Other factors which contributed to the steep fall in the standard of English teaching and learning in Nigeria include: the number of incompetent teachers who teach English with lack of passion, lack of good reading culture and motivation among learners. These factors have grossly hindered the acquisition of new vocabularies in the language. In addition to the factors above, Alexander (2014) sees the environment of teaching and learning (where learners are exposed to deviant linguistic forms within and outside the school) in a multilingual society as a major declining factor.

For a country that recorded excellent performance in both oral and written forms of English and whose learners achieved desirable academic goals in English to

suddenly have an upturn in social mobility is an indication that teaching of English has been compromised. To some scholars, English has been taught by coercion (Alexander, 2014), giving rise to language learning anxiety. In other instances, the language is taught without recourse to the indigenous languages, consequently, learners place premium on the English language and operate with the perception that their mother tongue is inferior. If we believe in the theory of mother tongue education and its role, we say invulnerably that poor grounding in one's mother tongue greatly affects his performance in the second or target language. Supporting Choi (2006), the learner's first language is not an impediment to the target language, rather a resource.

ENGLISH TEACHING METHODOLOGIES IN NIGERIA

In Nigeria, as found in many other countries, the teaching of English assumed with prescriptive approach to language teaching where learners were subjected to learning the rules of the language. By that approach, premium was placed on a variety of language above others. The descriptive approach to language teaching succeeded the prescriptive approach where learners were required to take less care about standards but see all forms of usage equally reasonable and acceptable (Crystal, 2010). Instead of teaching learners isolated prescriptive rules, they were encouraged to see language in real use and describe every language deeply based on structure. The prescriptive and descriptive approaches had their relevance and according to Adebileje and Akintola (2020), they satisfy the conditions of acceptability and intelligibility. After the two approaches came the '*grammar translation method*' in teaching L2, an approach where the teacher is an absolute authority and students engaged in writing whatever the teacher says. Chastain (1976) refers this method as a mixture of grammar and translation activities. Learners are to learn and memorize the rules of grammar deductively and in detail. Translation is embedded in this method to test learners' understanding of the rules of grammar presumed to have been learned. Learners must translate written forms into and from their native language. The backwash of this method is that it is not a good way of teaching to communicate appropriately in English since its focal point is teaching writing.

Other methods adopted in teaching English in Nigeria include: *the direct method* (which discovers the importance of speaking). Students by this method learn by directly associating meaning in English, that is, the technique aims at building a connection between thought and expression. *The audio-lingual method* (the first modern method) is another method commonly adopted by Nigerian teachers. By this method, students listen and speak by pattern practice in English only. It resembles the direct method in a way. This approach requires the learner to think in the target language, as

instruction is given in the target language and express thoughts in the same. Following this process, learning takes place. The focal points of this method are on sentence and sound patterns. Audio lingual method is still being used in Nigeria today. *The cognitive code approach* centres on grammar rules and learning occurs through cognitive memory structures, which perceive, process, store for short-or long term recall and retrieval of information stored in the brain (Demirezen, 2014). Language therefore, is learnt through internal processing of information. This informs Nigerian teachers' asseveration on teaching the rules of grammar first before any other aspect of the language skills. Students under this method deduce English grammar rules and apply to them to context. This approach buttresses Carroll (1966, p. 102) claim that "learning a language is a process of acquiring conscious control of the phonological, grammatical, and lexical patterns of the second language, largely through study and analysis of these patterns as a body of knowledge". One of the major weaknesses of this approach is its gross emphasis on rules and paradigms which makes learning of the target language unattractive. On the part of the teacher, this approach is time-intensive as it requires the teacher's constant recording of the needs and different skills of his learners (Nunan 2003). Four teaching approaches are grouped under the *humanistic approach*. They include: *the silent way* (students are allowed to uncover how English works while the teacher remains silent); *suggestopedia* (students are kept in a relaxed atmosphere, with music to encourage subliminal learning). This method uses certain principles of memory to teach English as a second language; *community language learning* (an approach where students are engaged in active interactions for learning for a mental grasp of English); and *comprehension approach* (which tests listening comprehension). Students' speaking skills in *comprehension approach* is delayed until a time when they're ready to communicate. *Communicative language teaching* (CLT) is another method being advocated in Nigeria where students learn by interacting with others through role-plays, pair works, games, etc, being managers of their own learning process. The teacher's roles in connection with CLT are a facilitator, resource organizer, a guide in classroom activities, researcher and learner and not an all-knowing bestower of knowledge (Breen and Candlin, 1980). This is the most sourced method and an accepted standard of teaching English in modern times. In Nigeria however, insufficient use of materials, teachers' lack of practical knowledge, large classroom sizes, students' background among other factors are impediments to full implementation of CLT (Onotere, 2019). The focal points are achieving interaction, authentic communication and negotiating meaning. It tries to develop grammatical fluency in learners and emphasizes communicating the meaning of the message. *Content-based, task-based and participatory approaches* as the names imply, are other ways learning

is structured to be task-based. Students are engaged in activities and tasks that are relevant to their lives and problem-solving programmes in the target language. The effectiveness of this method depends on the teacher's ability to organize tasks from the simple to complex and from the known to unknown (Wesche and Skehan, 2000). Umo (2014) sees task-based and participatory method as an effective tool in facilitating students' achievements in various aspects of Igbo language which is one of the major national languages in Nigeria. Another very important method is *learning strategy training, cooperative language learning and multiple intelligences*. The teachers serve as facilitators in this method and learners are made to take responsibility of their learning progress. Learners are grouped according to their level of intellectual capacity and cooperation. *The principled eclectic approach* is another current method which stresses a variety of methodologies and approaches, choosing techniques from each method that the teacher deems effective and applying them according to the learning context and objectives (Alharbi, 2017). The teacher must first, in this method, understand the needs of his learners to be able to choose the right teaching approach.

There is no perfect method of teaching English but scholars have shown that the choice of any method depends on the students involved, the contexts, and desirable achievable teaching objectives. Adebileje and Akintola (2020) suggest that teachers should employ the most proper method that would meet the learners' needs. Adopting eclectic approach that suits learners' specific needs is emphasized but only trained and retrained linguists can determine which method to adopt for which contexts and learners. The task-based approach, however, has been applauded for its effectiveness. Adebileje and Akintola records that in this approach, language teaching revolves around the tasks learners are engaged with. Firstly, teachers must identify their learners' needs and expectations, design lessons that will help learners in achieving their personal and professional needs for a task-based approach to be productive.

The teaching of English in the Northern Nigeria in particular and the whole country at large is bedeviled with many problems, amongst them are the quality of teachers available for teaching the language. Owolabi (2013) observes that almost all English teachers in the North are L2 speakers who were taught by other L2 speakers. Some of these teachers in the first instance, have no training in contrastive linguistics and have not benefited from any professional on-the-job development that could improve their classroom performance due to security challenges engulfing the country. North East Nigerian Education in Emergencies Working Group (NENEEWG) newsletter of July –September, 2021 records that teachers' well-being and professional development are adversely affected in Yobe state, one of the states in North East region due to traumatic

experiences of the violent attacks on teachers. Children's psychosocial well-being and cognitive abilities, according to the group, are grossly affected leading to negative learning outcomes. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the teaching and learning of English experiences in the Northern region of Nigeria in a violent and insecure environment engendered by pernicious Boko Haram insurgents. It examines the disparate impact of insurgency on both the learners and teachers of English, bearing in mind the invaluable import of the language in a pluralistic nation, especially as English is a major key to economic and socio-political gateway in both Nigeria and the world at large. To achieve the goal above, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the most vulnerable in this period of armed conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria
2. What are the teaching and learning experiences of both teachers and learners of English amidst the record of insurgency and banditry?
3. Are there records of access denial to the learning of English and what measures are in place for displaced learners to acquire the official language in Northern Nigeria?.
4. What would be the record consequences of access English denial and pedagogic implications of insurgency in the Northern Nigeria with respect to English usage in the region?.

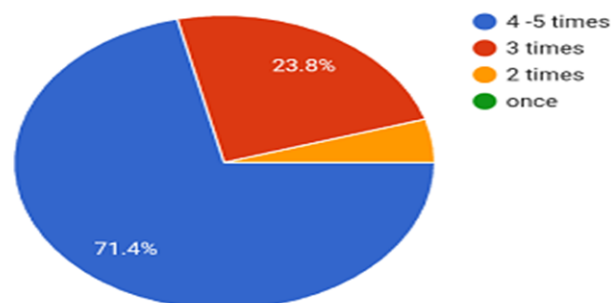
METHODOLOGY

The study was an investigation into the current challenges in teaching English in the North East and

FINDINGS

Before the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency in the north, how many times was English language taught in your school per week?

21 responses



Those who taught English four to five times per week constituted 71% of responses, while the minimal number of times English was taught in schools was

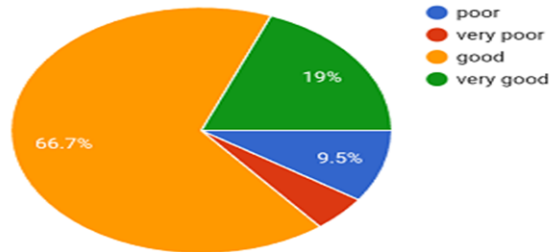
North West regions in Nigeria. It generated its data through: well-structured questionnaire that was pre-test validated by an expert in measurement and evaluation before administration through Google forms. The instrument was administered to twenty one English teachers in the Northern part of Nigeria to ascertain how nefarious operations of Boko Haram and insurgents in the North have impacted the teaching and learning of English and teachers' professional development bearing in mind the role of English in the multilingual and multicultural nation. The respondents were given the soft copy of the questionnaires which they submitted after responding to the questions. The study also leverages the reports of Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA), a coalition of organizations established in 2020 to share concern about ongoing attacks on educational institutions, students and educators in countries affected by conflict and insecurity. The reports of the North East Nigeria Education in Emergencies Working Group (NENEEWG) and Africa in Focus on Boko Haram operations also formed the data. These reports were accessed through their newsletters and periodic prints. The North East region of Nigeria consists of six states, namely: Adamawa, Taraba, Yobe, Borno, Bauchi and Gombe. These are the states with rising Boko Haram activities. The North West states include: Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa and Zamfara, the region ravaged by Bandits. The data generated were presented and analyzed using pie charts. Different colours of the pie chart highlighted the percentages of responses.

twice in Northern Nigeria, constituting only 4.8 percent of responses.

What was your students' level of performance in the English language?



21 responses

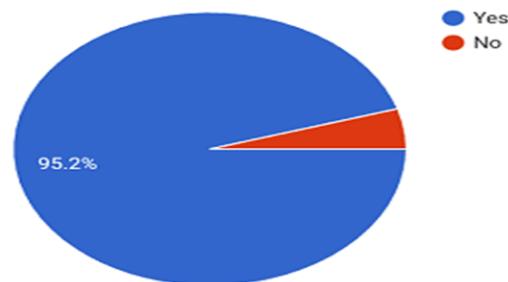


The pie charts reveals that only 14.3% were marked as poor and very poor users of English in the North before the region started recording attacks on both teachers and

learners while the other percentage (85.7%) falls within good and very good users of the language.

With the security situations in Northern Nigeria, is your school open to teaching/learning of English language?

21 responses

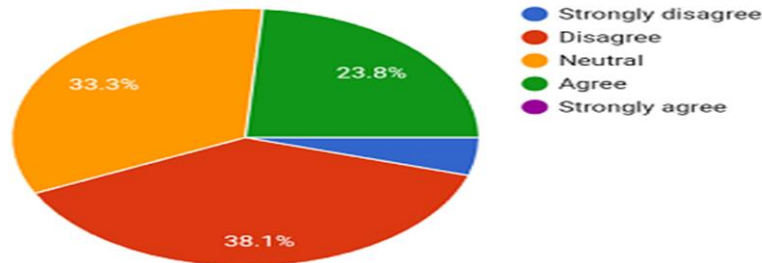


95.2% of schools in the North, as revealed above are open for teaching and learning of English while 4.5% of

schools have been forced to close for teaching and learning activities due to insurgent attacks.

English language teachers in the Northeast are no longer in touch with their students due to insurgent attacks on teachers and students

21 responses

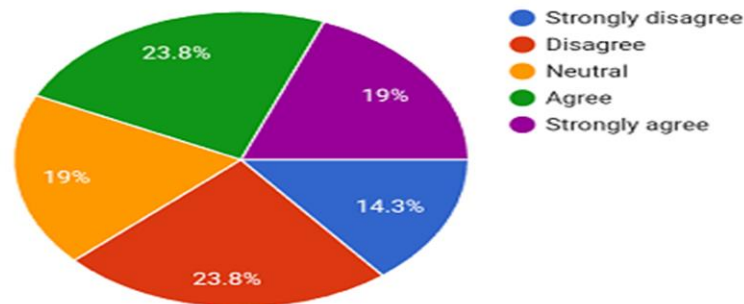


The likert question above which stated that some teachers in the North are no longer in touch with their students had 38.1% and 4.8% disagreeing and agreeing

to the assertion, respectively. 23.8% of respondents agreed to the claim while 33.3 remained neutral.

English teachers in the Northern Nigeria teach with much anxiety, frustrations and traumatic experiences?

21 responses

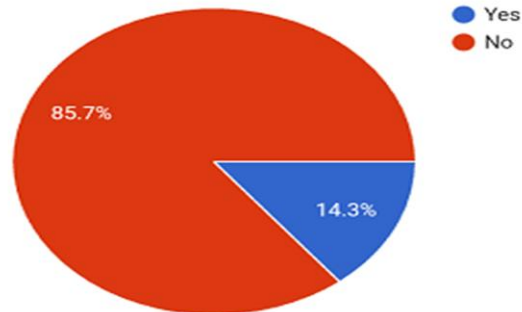


The percentage of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed that teachers in the North teach with much anxiety constitutes 23.8% and 19%, respectively as

revealed above. 23.8% claims that teachers do not teach with anxiety while the remaining 19% remains neutral over the inquiry.

Is your school among the ones used as a military base?

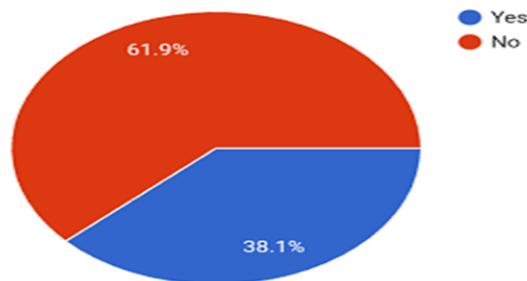
21 responses



14.3% of the schools in the North are used as a military base while 85.7% is not.

Is there any government programme in place to teach English to students in the IDP camps or in their homes?

21 responses

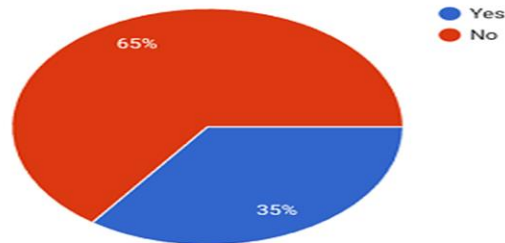


A greater number of respondents (61.9%) maintain that the government of Nigeria does not have any academic programme or platform for teaching and learning of English for students in the internally displaced camps

whose homes have been displaced by Boko Haram insurgents nor for students who have been forced out of school due to fear of insecurity.

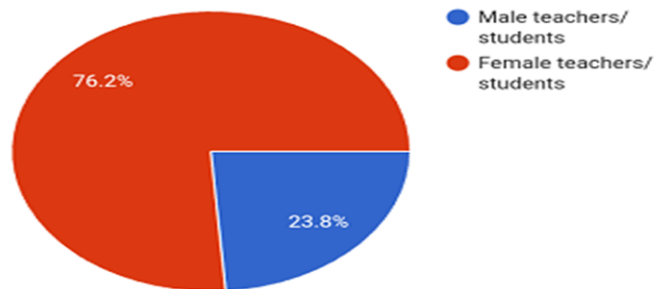
Are workshops/seminars/webinars/teachers' associations or other training organized for English teachers for their professional development during these periods?

20 responses



Between the male teachers/students and their female counterparts, who are the most vulnerable?

21 responses

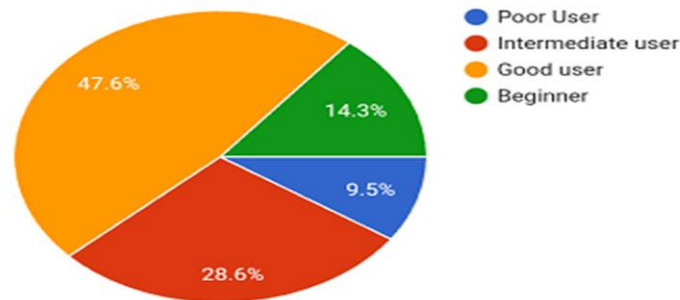


The first pie chart shows that a greater percentage of respondents (65%) maintains that teachers in the North are not professionally developed through workshops, seminars, trainings and teachers' associations while

35% responded contrarily. The second pie chart shows that female teachers are the most vulnerable (76.2%) in the North than their male counterparts.

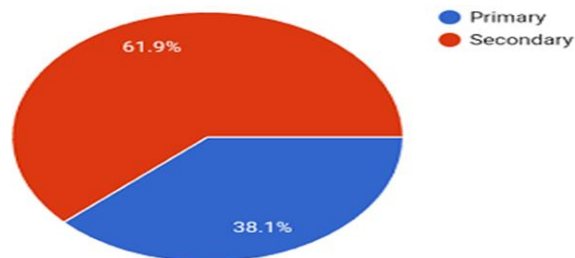
With the role of English in Nigeria as a medium of instruction and an official language, where do you see an average Northern Nigerian in the next twenty years with regard to English usage?

21 responses



What level of students do you teach?

21 responses



DISCUSSIONS

English is a subject that is highly taught in Nigerian schools than any other subject. Aside being taught as a subject, it remains the sole medium of instruction from the third year of a child's primary education. From the first pie chat, it is established that it is taught four to five times per week before Boko Haram attacks in the region were recorded. Student's general academic performance in English was gradually dwindling in the North by 14.3% before the record of impious activities of the sect as shown on pie-chat above. This finding is congruent with Sa'ad and Usman (2014) early report on unusual poor performance of students in Dutse Metropolis of Jigawa State in Nigeria at public examinations which consequently, was a major cause of decline in the general academic performance and standard of education in Nigeria. Again, studies have established strong correlation between a good performance in English and overall performance in other subjects (Oluwole, 2008), especially as English is

the medium of instruction. It is further revealed from the findings (third pie chat) that 4.8% of the schools have been forced to close down due to insecurity in the region, this finding is below Segun, Adedeji and Donnelly (2016) record that more than 1500 schools have been forced to close while 910 schools destroyed between 2009 and 2015. However, from the two reports, it is a verifiable fact that some children are out of school and some schools in the Northern region of Nigeria are forcibly closed due to insurgency and banditry. Consequently, some English teachers (23.8%) are no longer in touch with their students and there is no evidence of further teaching and learning of English in the region. Education is crucial to the development of a child and in many instances, his survival and safety. Children are custodians and repositories of nations' economic resource and great determinants for social and political equalities, so if Nigeria does not protect, uphold and support children's right to education as enshrined under Articles 28 and 29 of the convention on

rights of the child, if children in the Northern Nigeria, whose schools have been closed down are inadvertently denied access to instruction in the English language, the sole medium of instruction and official language, if Nigerian government does not pursue education and learning in and beyond school settings in deliberate and coordinated ways, the pedagogic implication would be a record of fossilized adults who would not integrate effectively to function maximally in various spheres of endeavours.

Again, some schools in the North, as the findings further revealed, are used as military base. This is in keeping with Sheppard (2019) and the survey by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks (GCPEA) who observe incidents of military use of schools or universities in armed conflicts in each of the twenty-nine countries between 2013 and 2017. Sheppard specifically records that whenever and wherever there is a conflict, there is a strong likelihood that schools are being used for military purposes. Military use of schools during armed conflicts harms student's education; many drop out of schools due to fear thereby reducing attendance and the number of students who transit to higher years of study, the lives of both teachers and students are endangered, many suffer sexual abuses, students are recruited by armed groups for war, record of forced labour, as well as destruction of school infrastructure. A greater number of respondents as revealed through the findings claims that the government of Nigeria has no structural plan to take teaching and learning of English to internally displaced persons who lost access to their homes and family in this period of insurgency. This finding is similar to Alaka, Powell, Akogun, Musa, Mohammed and Njobi (n.d) who claim that displaced pupils from the rural areas have been set back and their education disrupted by armed bandits, consequently, they lag behind their urban counterparts. Displacement exacerbates poverty and can cause breakdown of family and community structures. The government of Nigeria has the primary responsibility for ensuring children's rights in displacement. Where this is denied, and the period of displacement is protracted, displaced children lose access to education and a meaningful contribution to the growth and development of their nation. Again, these children will reach critical period when learning of the second language or language of instruction would be unattainable.

A greater number of respondents also show that English teachers in Northern Nigeria cannot benefit from organized structural professional development through workshops, seminars or other forms of training in this armed conflict period. This finding is at variance with Penfold (2020) who investigates remote teacher professional development, six principles for effective programmes, which amongst other findings maintain that given the new demands of the pandemic and other world challenges that may affect children's education

and regardless of whether teaching is delivered in a face-to-face, remote or blended format, it follows the same principles of effective professional development identified by rigorous research and systematic reviews of the latest evidence. Female students and teachers, following the finding above are the most vulnerable than their male counterparts. The finding is related to Lindsey-Curtet, Holst-Roness and Anderson (2004) on women facing a war, which reveals that women's experience of armed conflict is multi-faceted, ranging from loss of relatives, physical and economic insecurity, and increased risk of sexual violence, wounding, detention and deprivation. Since women are greatly affected in situations of armed conflict, their education in such intractable period would be invariably jeopardized.

With the trajectory of armed conflict in Northern Nigeria, in the next twenty years, only 46.7% of people in the region, as the findings reveal, would be good users of English in a nation where legislative, economic, social and political intendance are conducted in the English language. A study commissioned and concluded by the British council in 2011 records that learning English in a developing country can increase an individual's earning power by around 25 percent. The study gathered data from five countries in which Nigeria was listed; which reveal that English speaking countries receive more investment from other English speaking countries such as US and UK. Insurgency and banditry however, have hindered Northern Nigeria children's access to the learning of English and since the language guarantees international mobility, employability, and development opportunities, the average Northerner would be missing out in the most competitive economic and social organizations and projects.

Primary school teachers constitute majority of the respondents in this study. Primary education is the bedrock of children's quality training and skills development and English language is one of the key subjects to be taught at the pre-primary and primary stages aside being used as a medium of instruction.

CONCLUSION

This study which investigates the teaching and learning of English experiences in the Northern region of Nigeria in a violent and insecure environment engendered by pernicious Boko Haran insurgents reveals that militarization of schools, lack of teacher's professional development, teaching with much anxiety and frustrations, closure of some schools, little or no government structural academic programme for internally displaced persons, low school enrolment, loss and abuse of female teachers and students have dissimilarly affected teaching and learning of English language and the English performance goals of students in the region. . Although teaching of English in Nigeria has followed same methodology and practice as found

in most countries where English is taught as a second language, in the next twenty years, only few Northern Nigerians would be good users of English in a nation where legislative, economic, social and political intendance are conducted in the English language due to intractable activities of insurgents and Bandits in the region. Although many factors have contributed to armed conflicts in Northern Nigeria, the findings underscore government's appropriate programmes and policies to support children in this conflict zones in the learning of English. Pedagogically, English language access denial in armed conflict, especially when the learners have not reached plateau, can lead to fossilization in second language learning.

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