

Challenges of Teaching English as A Second Language (ESL)

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ABSTRACT

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The study examined the challenges of teaching English as a second language (ESL). It further determined whether the participants are native speakers of English, and the challenges they face while teaching English. Purposive sampling was used to interview 800 English teachers in senior high schools in the Sunyani Municipality in the Bono region of Ghana for data. It was revealed among other things that 100% of the participants said that they are not native speakers of English. It was also shown that 49% of the participants as the majority confirmed that lack of enough professional training makes non-native English-speaking teachers struggle with teaching approaches in class. Consequently, it was recommended among other things the Ghana Education Service (GES) should try to recruit native English-speaking teachers to shore up effective teaching and learning of English in Ghanaian schools.

1. Introduction

Like it or not, English is the most spoken language worldwide. According to the Harvard Business Review English has become the global language of business. Now, round about 1.75 billion of us speak English at a helpful level. This translates to 1 in 4 of us (hbr.org). Most of these people are however not native speakers of English. Just about 360 million of them speak English as their first language (babble.com). The Government of the United Kingdom considers just the United Kingdom, the United States of America, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Belize, the Bahamas, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, Jamaica, Dominica, Malta, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis and Grenada as the most native speakers of English (sheffield.ac.uk). Moreover, Freeman et al (2015) claimed that, presently, there are approximately 15 million English teachers worldwide and most of these teachers are non-native speakers of English. Just like any teaching task, teaching English as a second language (ESL) can be challenging for teachers who are not native speakers of English.

The history of English as a second language dates backs to the period of United Kingdom colonialism in countries such as Ghana, India, Nigeria and others (Thirusanku and Melor, 2012). Gill and Kirkpatrick (2013) opined that learning English as a second language boosts opportunities, prestige and social elasticity. Further, they observed that it consistently shows the difference between the upper class and the shunned community. Besides, Shore (2001) established that students who study English as a second language constitute a substantial percentage of the population of the world. The number of these students continues to grow faster in contrast to students who are native speakers of English; consequently, English is assuming crucial importance.

According to Songbatumis (2017), generally, teaching English may sound similar to any other teaching, and teachers are confronted with many challenges in and outside the classroom in different ways. Khan (2011) argued that teaching English becomes a critical issue when it is taught as a foreign language. That teaching English as a foreign language is a challenging task in areas where English serves limited exposure. Emery (2012) also averred that the task of teaching English is likely to be difficult in respect of the qualification of teachers, level of language proficiency and training as these issues can affect the confidence of teachers.

Littewood (2007) stated that teachers who do not have sufficient professional training might struggle to absorb and comprehend teaching approaches successfully. In addition, Ansari (2012) maintained that using the right teaching approaches and strategies is difficult in that the teachers do not just think of the way to convey the four skills of language, but the way to maintain the motivation and enthusiasm of students in learning and practicing English.

Emery (2012, p. 4) diagnosed overcrowded classes and its effects on teaching and learning as one of the challenges confronting English teachers. Similarly, Nurkamto (2003) adduced the size of the classroom as one of the challenges that confronts the teaching of English. Baker and Westrup (2000) found that desks and chairs fixed or hard to move; students sitting close together in rows; little space for the teacher and students to move about; walls between classroom being thin and noise that disturbs other classes as some of the challenges inherent with teaching large classes.

According to Fatima (2015) it is in fact challenging to pinpoint one teaching approach as effective until it is used in a classroom of students with different learning needs, intellectual levels, cultural backgrounds and attitudes towards learning English as a second language. She also suggested that more than one teaching approach is used to bring out the desired outcomes in the language class where communication becomes the major driver for teaching and learning process. Further, she stated that until students learn to use the classroom approach to articulate thoughts and feelings the actual-world situations, the learning cannot be successful notwithstanding the teaching approach that is used in English as a second language classroom. Besides, she observed that teacher-student role becomes the centre in bringing out the maximum in the limited time in a class.

What is more, teaching students a new language is not just a complex task, but a laborious one. During the teaching of English as a second language, one is constantly racing against time. In order to teach within time and give one's students in-depth teaching, it is essential for one to meticulously plan every lesson session ahead of time (internationalteachersplus.com).

Problem Statement

Many studies have highlighted the challenges of teaching English as a second language. According to Freeman et al (2015), now, there are approximately 15 million English teachers worldwide and most of these teachers are not native speakers of English. Moreover, Khan (2011) adduced that teaching English becomes a critical issue when it is taught as a foreign language. That teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is a challenging task in areas where English serves limited exposure.

Emery (2012) also advanced that the task of teaching English is likely to be difficult in respect of the qualification of teachers, level of language proficiency and training as these issues can affect the confidence of teachers. In addition, Littewood (2007) established that teachers who lack enough professional training might struggle to absorb and comprehend teaching approaches successfully. Again, Emery (2012, p. 4) identified overcrowded classes and its effects on teaching and learning as one of the

challenges confronting English teachers. In like manner, Nurkamto (2003) found the size of the classroom as one of the challenges that confronts the teaching of English.

Besides, Harumi (2011) argued that most teachers are confronted with challenges in teaching English due to a lack of appropriate and sufficient teaching materials, which adversely affect teaching and learning. What is more, Nhan and Lai (2012) averred that the lack of context in the syllabus and the use of unfamiliar words have been pinpointed as the main challenges facing English as a second language teachers.

By examining the challenges of teaching English as a second language (ESL), using qualitative study design and with English teachers as participants, we can better understand the challenges of teaching English as a second language (ESL) in the Sunyani Municipality of Ghana, and proffer remedies going forward.

2. Literature Review

1. Lack of Professional Training for Teachers

According to Burns and Richards (2009) the English skills of citizens of a nation are important for the nation's development and active participation in the global economy and central to this enterprise are English teaching and English teachers. Moreover, Freeman et al (2015) stated that, currently, there are roughly 15 million English teachers worldwide and most of these teachers are not native speakers of English. Consequently, Diaz-Maggioli (2003) suggested that English teachers worldwide play an influential part in the development of English competence among learners of English and in order for teachers to be capable of producing competent speakers, the professional competence of the teachers is equally of prime importance.

Teachers are supposed to be well-trained at the time of being hired, but the changing and dynamic nature of the English teaching profession shows that teachers require on-going professional development, not just to be abreast with changes and trends, but to mitigate the attrition rate among language teachers, with many of them exiting the profession after just a few years of practice (Diaz-Maggioli, 2003).

Richards and Farrel (2005) adduced that in the entire teacher education programmes, and in particular, Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE), different activities have been suggested to support professional development for language teachers. However, according to them, there is little documented evidence about whether and how teachers in English as a foreign language context participate in personal development activities. In their study about the professional development among English teachers, Sadeghi and Richards (2021) established that English teachers frequently do not participate in considerable professional development activities and when they do, motivations for doing so are not intimately connected to an interest in personal professional development. Further, they observed that the minimal rate of commitment for some of the teachers appears to reflect their dissatisfaction of choice of language teaching as a career.

Studies show that in English teaching, professional development plays many crucial roles. First, if, for example, there is a connection between good teaching and student success, professional development can enhance teacher learning which results in better teaching, which in turn, leads to better student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Diaz-Maggioli, 2003; Sparks, 2002). Moreover, the field of English language teaching (ELT) is subject to constant change and as such, professional development can

enable teachers become familiar with new developments in the field, including updating their knowledge base and teaching skills such as the use of technology in teaching. Further, learning which emanates from professional activities can invigorate, inspire and empower the teacher.

Like Murray (2010) espoused, “teacher empowerment leads to improvement in student performance and attitude”. Professional development can be inspired by teachers themselves or regulated through management, and can be done on an informal basis (such as talks with colleagues) or formally (such as attending seminars). Besides, it can be an individual activity (such as reading professional materials) or a collaborative one (attending a conference or workshop). Scholars have recommended a lot of professional development activities for language teachers (e.g., Gebhard, 2009; Murray, 2010; Richards, 2015). One of these professional development activities is expanding our understanding of language teaching (through going online; attending workshops/seminars/conferences; reading (or writing for professional magazines/journals; doing participatory practitioner research; joining teacher/professional organisations; joining teacher support groups; virtual networking with the help of telegrams and others). Nevertheless, Borg (2015) admonished that “there are no universal templates for success”, and recommended conditions under which professional development works successfully as whether professional development is critical to the needs of teachers and their students, and whether teachers are involved in decisions about content and process of professional activities.

2. Crowded or Packed Classrooms

Halil and Abdullah (2018) advanced that a class is overcrowded when the actual number of students exceeds the expectation of the teacher or lecturer’s contract. That college classes are pegged at between 30 and 33 students, while high school classes are set at 34 students. Consequently, they argued that any class which is beyond average of 30 students is overcrowded. They stated that, presently, it is a commonplace to see classes with 40, 50, 60 and 70 students. According to them, this minimizes the quality of education and the general purpose of learning is torn apart with these overcrowded classes. Emery (2012, p. 4) stated that overcrowded classes and its consequences is one of the challenges which confronts English teachers.

Moreover, Nurkamto (2003) stated the classroom size as among the many challenges that confront the teaching of English. In addition, Baker and Westrup (2000) adduced desks and chairs being fixed or hard to move; students sitting close together in rows; little space for the teacher and students to move about; walls between classroom being thin and noise that disturbs other classes as some of the challenges inherent with teaching large classes.

According to Halil and Abdullah (2018) there are numerous challenges in large classes which affect teaching and learning. However, they contended that teachers can turn these challenges into opportunities by using strategies which will enable them maximize learning. Further, they suggested that these strategies are extremely effective and will enable the students and the teachers collaborate to ensure effective learning. May (2018) averred that overcrowded class leads to a rise in discipline challenges. More students in a class creates opportunities for personality conflict, stress and basic behaviour which is disruptive. The most useful teachers are likely to fight to manage an overcrowded classroom and will eventually, find themselves spending more time to managing their class at the expense of training.

However, Halil and Abdullah (2018) concluded that success is chalked in large classrooms when a topic is accorded a high level of motivation and interest. According to them, having an understanding of teaching methods helps the teachers, while the availability of sufficient teaching resources such as power-point-presentations, tape recorders and others help promote learners’ performance and produces a friendly learning environment.

Moreover, the issue of teaching students in large class always generates debate, particularly in countries where English is used as foreign language (EFL). While investigated “large class size: Strategies for success”, Marcus (1997) asked “how large is large?” as regards the class size. Further, he gave the ratio of students who study language in different countries that clearly indicates that the concept of large class differs from one to the other. For example, he showed that, in the US, the average large class size is 80. That in India, it is 45, while in Hong Kong and in Singapore, it is 16 and 20 respectively.

According to Leah (2018) there is the challenge of teachers’ inability to evaluate students’ knowledge and feedback in large classes. Students who struggle with learning will lag behind. Besides, average and unhealthy students will even struggle the more to advance in overcrowded class. These categories of students require more direct instruction, one-on-one instruction, and little distractions to maximize their learning potentials. In large classes, the probability of many students, completing an entire term of study without experiencing interaction with their teachers is quite high.

Overcrowded class stifles classroom management. Classroom management is about all the things which a teacher does to organize student’s space, time and materials in order for learning to occur. Large class size benefits some students. These students dodge classes without being noticed. They photocopy class notes from their mates rather than attending classes themselves. That is, overcrowded class leads to high rate of absenteeism among both students and teachers. If the students are too many, for example, they disturb by making loud noise and the teachers are unable to control them. Noise in classroom leads to distraction, making it more challenging for students to understand lessons and teachers to teach (Makielski, 2018).

3. Limited Access to Teaching-Learning Resources

Educational resources such as Wi-Fi, projectors, whiteboards, photocopiers, textbooks, computers, posters and others can enable teachers teach effectively. Awotua-Efeto (2021) found that teachers use a variety of instructional materials to motivate learning. However, studies show that teachers may completely not have access to these resources. Or they may be confronted with a situation where the supply of these resource is limited or are not functioning properly, and the lack of these resources make it impossible for teachers to teach effectively (Fatiloro, 2015; Nurkamto, 2003). Most teachers are confronted with challenges in teaching English due to a lack of appropriate and sufficient teaching materials, which adversely affects teaching and learning (Harumi, 2011). Nhan and Lai (2012) recorded that the lack of context in the syllabus and the use of unfamiliar words have been pinpointed as the main challenges facing English as a second language teachers. They also argued that most textbooks and other teaching resources did not contextualize their media of expression for the best understanding of the learners in context.

According to Cummins (2017) some of the textbooks used to teach English as a second language are mostly old with pictures which are not attractive to learners. These revelations resonate with the assertion of Ngwaru (2010) that the use of unfamiliar language as a medium of instruction is the main hindrance to learning. In a study in Zimbabwe, Ngwaru (2010) found that comprehension passage in the English textbooks used the expression “as white as snow”. Learners cannot relate to this expression (“as white as snow”) because snow is not experienced on the continent of Africa. Consequently, Fatiloro (2015) opined that the lack of different teaching approaches, techniques, knowledge, expertise and approaches used to teach English as a second language (ESL) is an impediment to English teachers. Moreover, Davila (2019) advanced that most English as a second language lessons lack the learner-centred approach required to promote and reinforce teaching and learning of English as a second language.

While investigating barriers to learning ESL in two higher institutions of learning in Namibia, for example, Thulha (2016) established that a curriculum is a comprehensive and operational statement of teaching and learning features. Consequently, the study stated that the curricular at those institutions did not have proper guidelines or objectives about how to teach oral and writing skills to second language students. Nevertheless, the study recommended a further study in this context to establish ways in which ESL can be best developed and delivered to the students in an instructional setting.

Awotua-Efeto (20021) argued that teachers use a variety of instructional materials such as textbooks, charts, models, graphics, real objects and improvised materials to motivate learning.

However, Olaitan and Agusiobo (1994) established that the success of achieving what they are meant to achieve in teaching depends on the appropriateness of the instructional materials, sufficiency and effective use of the materials. They added that the efficacy of instructional materials in enhancing students' academic performance in teaching and learning is incontrovertible. That it gives the much-needed sensory experiences required by the learners for an effective and meaningful behaviour change. What is more, they contended that instructional materials are geared towards improving the quality of education for effective academic performance of students in schools. According to them, students' academic performance on the intended learning outcomes provides the validation, loop on the success of the interaction and instruction.

Ngwaru and Opoku-Amankwa (2010) observed that socio-economically disadvantaged learners, are, incontrovertibly, confronted with enormous consequences in learning. Some of these consequences include absenteeism from school due to lack of school necessities, taking care of their siblings while their parents search for food and even resorting to petty jobs to support the family's income. To compound matters, parental involvement in the learning of these children is minimal. Njogu (2008) recorded that most parents, who are socio-economically disadvantaged, are pre-occupied with challenges of trying to make ends meet leaving too little opportunities to support the learning of their children at home.

Learners of second language tend to look for support while learning. But learners who do not get the assistance they seek for lag behind and this affects their second language development. According to Khan (2011) in countries such as Saudi Arabia people are poorly educated and do not have qualified education background. Moreover, he observed that the incomes of large families are not sufficient; consequently, families are not interested in giving their children enough education. As regards this, Saleme (2012) defined family and school as two major social environments where a child grows. As a result, "socio-psychological perspective is largely influenced by these social environmental drivers.

4. Linguistic Barriers

Arguably, how we learn to speak our first, second or third language is unique. We acquire the first language and learn the second and third languages. According to Ying (2009) when we speak our first language, we can say it naturally and we acquire it from our environment before we learn words and phrases. However, he said that when we learn a second language, we inevitably need to learn vocabulary, sentences, grammar and others before we attempt to translate it into our first language. That it is a complex language. The most common linguistic problems inherent with learning English as a second language is that, as the things students learn at school cannot be used in everyday life, while at the home, they do not need to speak English; they do not so either. Moreover, they do not practice second languages with their members of their family and they are used to thinking and speaking in their first language (Ying, 2009).

According to Brown (2000, p.284) “If you are familiar with the sound system of learner’s native language, you will be better able to diagnose learner difficulties”. Brown also argued that “Many L1-L2 carry overs can be overcome through a focused awareness and effort on the learner’s part”. Nuraini (2016) stated Brown concluded that mother language of learners will be a challenge in teaching speaking English if the teacher cannot take the fact and decided on how to mitigate the condition. If the linguistic aspect of the native language learners have is English as foreign language and it is completely varied with target language. That in the condition, linguistically, the difference of L1 and L2 is the basic driver that determines success of speaking class (Nuraini, 2016).

Crivos and Luchini (2012) claimed the perception of numerous when the word “English” is mentioned is sadly the grammar. Nevertheless, they stated that the grammar has been misinterpreted, and it has been reflected as a medium of language learning. The present consensus aligns with teaching grammar implicitly by exposing the students to comprehensible input (Cullen, 2012; Richards and Reppen, 2014). A study by Underwood (2012) show that several teachers find the fusion of grammar instruction with the activities based on communication-oriented effective.

Many people stress grammar as the core of language learning. However, vocabulary is one of the critical aspects that must be first considered. Moreover, vocabulary is believed to be the core element by most studies (Harley, 1996; Coady and Huckin, 1997; Read, 2000; Nation, 2001; Kocaman and Cumaoglu, 2014). We cannot have a language without vocabulary, and a meaningful communication cannot take place without proper vocabulary either. Consequently, it can be concluded that vocabulary and proficiency are two inseparable and closely integrated components (Lupescu and Day, 1993; Kocaman and Cumaoglu, 2014). Nevertheless, studies show that memorizing vocabulary and achieving fluency have been a barrier for language learners (Demir, 2013; Oxford, 1990). Here, speaking seems to be another hurdle for language learners.

Consequently, Asian (2016) stated that vocabulary is one of the most critical and necessary components of language and suggested that enrich of vocabulary knowledge removes a huge barrier to learning another language. Further, Yin and Zhang (2009) argued that “among many other factors, the most important is phonetics, which, to a large degree weakens the learner’s confidence in speaking and listening”.

5. Instructional Barriers in Teaching English

Linguistic items are not only the barriers to teaching English as a second language. There is also the problem of instruction. Teachers can in fact be among the significant drivers for challenges in language teaching and learning. Teachers, who refresh themselves on current issues, should be a priority in schools. Or successful language learning cannot be achieved because of the problems teachers create through the use of teaching approaches and techniques in class. Gandara (2005) adduced that what makes a difference in students’ success is well-trained teachers, comprehensive content knowledge of teachers, their educational background, degree of certificates and their experiences.

3. Methodology

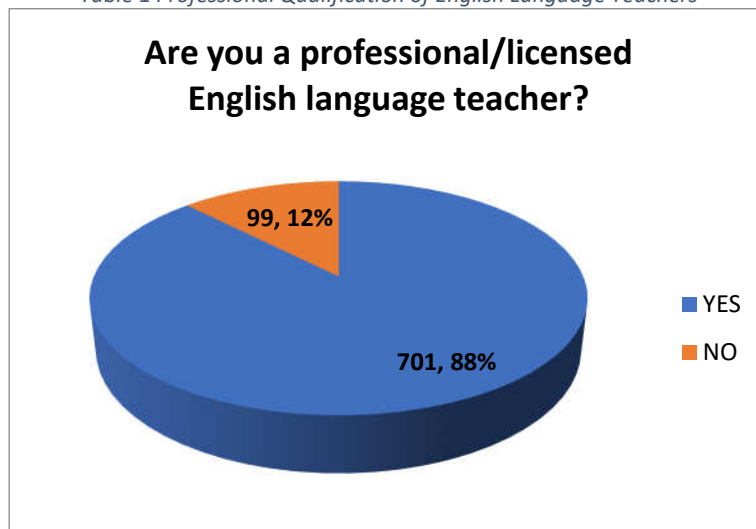
The study probed the challenges of teaching English as a second language (ESL). Having observed all the necessary ethical considerations, purposive sampling was used to interview 800 English teachers in the senior high schools in the Sunyani Municipality in the Bono region of Ghana for data. Interview was used to gather data because it is considered one of the most effective tools for obtaining, appreciating and describing the meaning of particular theme and the story of people’s experiences.

In addition, the interview assisted the researcher to gain in-depth information about the topic of the study. Besides, the purposive sampling enabled the researcher to produce a sample that could be logically accepted to be representative of the population. Data collected was analysed with Excel. The response of each respondent was written down and tagged by a research identity, while tables and graphs were used to present data.

4. Results

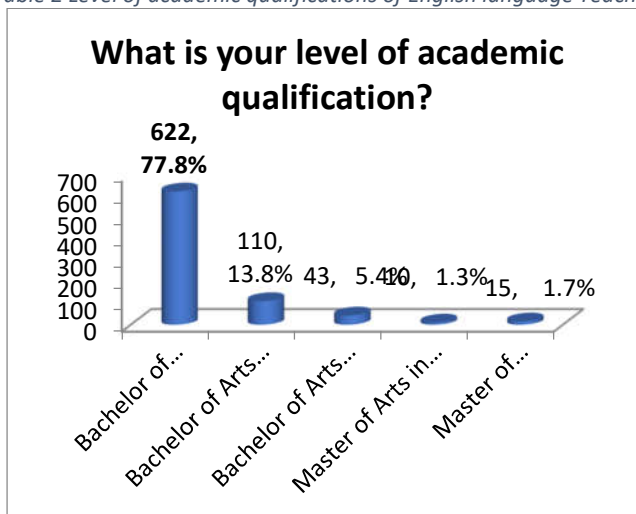
Are you a professional/licensed English teacher?

Table 1 Professional Qualification of English Language Teachers



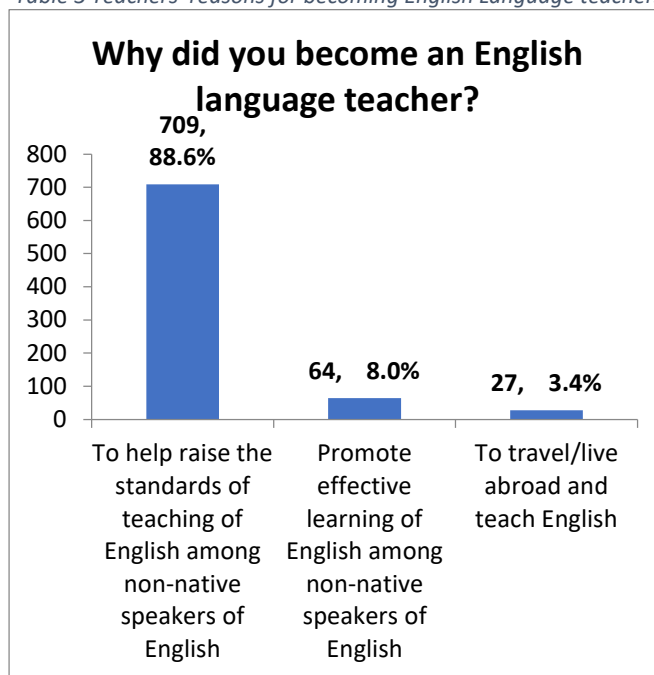
What is your level of academic qualification?

Table 2 Level of academic qualifications of English language Teachers



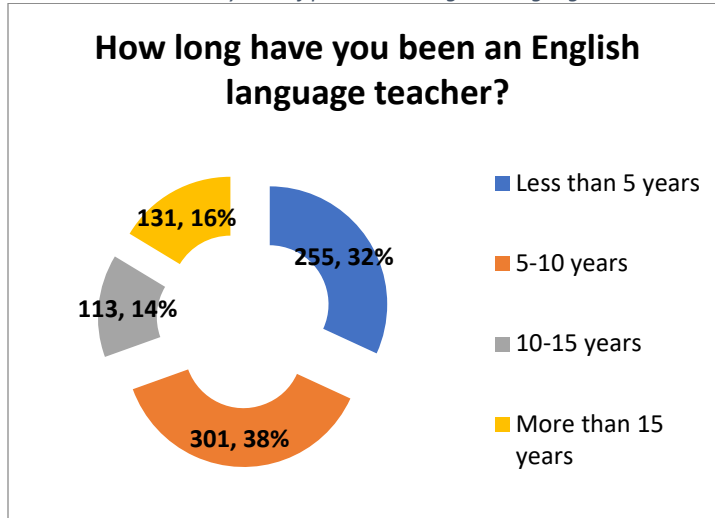
Why did you become an English language teacher?

Table 3 Teachers' reasons for becoming English Language teachers



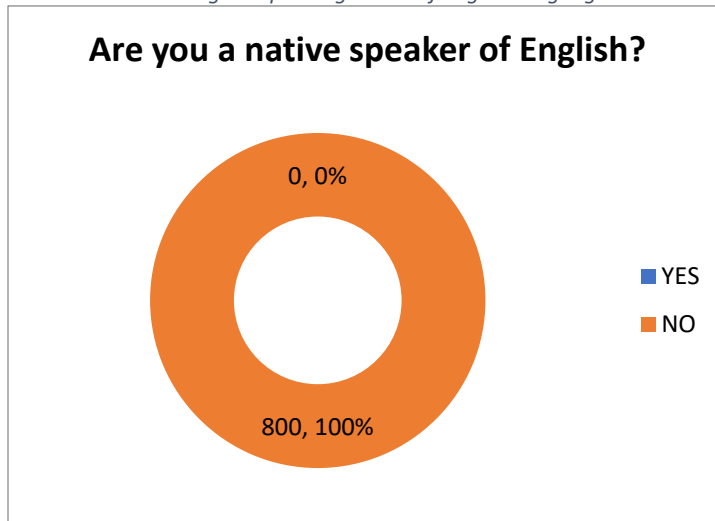
How long have you been an English language teacher?

Table 4 Teachers' years of practice as English Language teachers



Are you a native speaker of English?

Table 5 Native English-speaking status of English language teachers



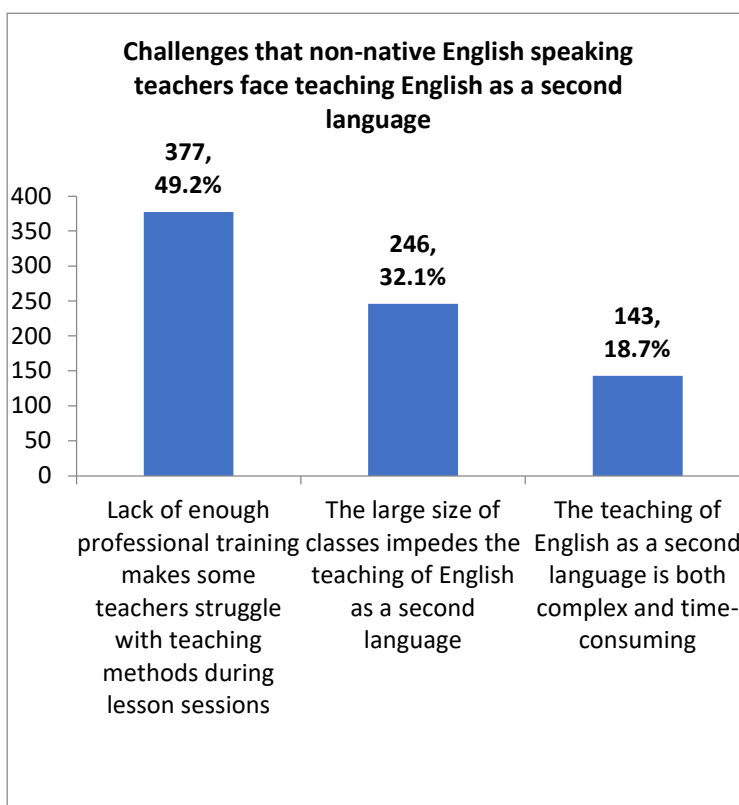
Do you think non-native English speaking teachers face challenges teaching English as a second language?

Table 6 Challenges confronting non-native English-speaking teacher face in teaching English as a second language



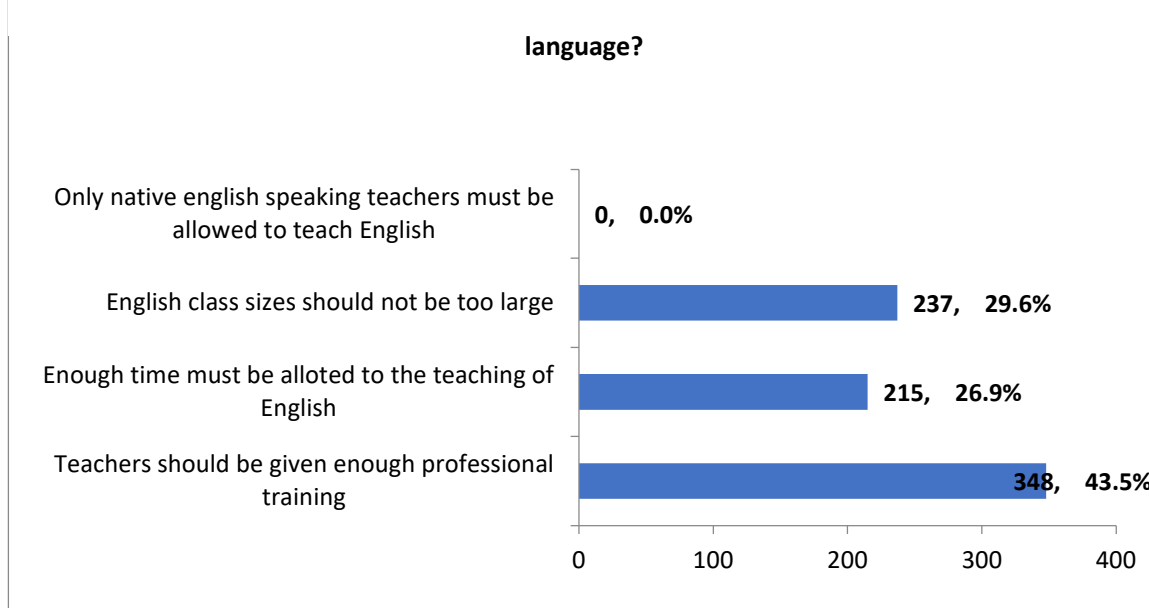
If YES, state the challenges that non-native English-speaking teachers face teaching English as a second language.

Table 7 Specific challenges confronting non-native English-speaking English teachers in teaching English as a second language



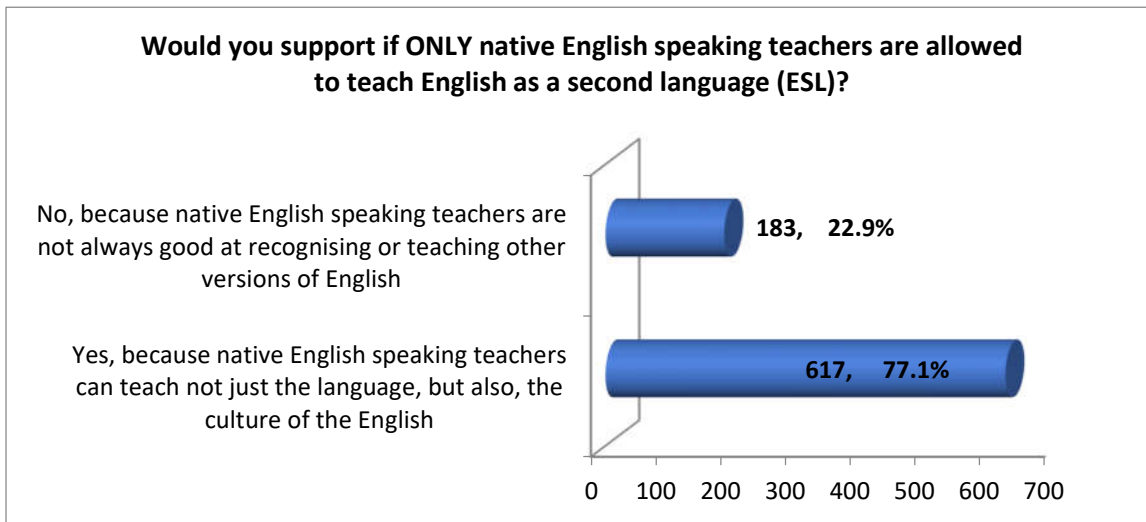
What do you think can be done to address the challenges that confront teachers in the teaching of English language as a second?

Table 8 English teachers' perspectives on how to address the challenges that confront non-native English-speaking teachers in teaching English a second language



Would you support if ONLY native English-speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language (ESL)?

Table 9 Support of English teachers if only native English-speaking teachers are permitted to teach English as a second language



It was revealed that 701 English language teachers representing 88% of the respondents confirmed that they are professional or licensed English language teachers, while 99 of them representing 12% of the respondents said that they are not professional or licensed English language teachers.

Secondly, it was observed that 622 English language teachers representing 77.8% of the respondents confirmed that they hold Bachelor of Education in English; 110 of them representing 13.8% of the respondents said that they have Bachelor of Arts in English and 43 of them representing 5.4% of the respondents admitted that they hold Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics.

It also came to the fore that 10 of the English language teachers representing 13% of the respondents said that they have Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language, and 15 of them representing 17% of the respondents said that they hold Master of Philosophy in English.

Further, the study showed that 709 English language teachers representing 88.6% of the respondents said that they chose to become English language teachers to help raise the standards of teaching of English among non-native speakers of English; 64 of them representing 8.0% of the respondents said that they opted to become English language teachers to promote effective learning of English among non-native speakers of English and 27 of them representing 3.4% of the respondents said that they decided to become English language teachers in order to travel or live abroad and teach English.

Moreover, it was established that 301 English language teachers representing 38% of the respondents said that they have been English language teachers for 5-10 years; 255 of them representing 32% of the respondents said that they have been English language teachers for less than 5 years and 131 of them representing 16% of the respondents confirmed that they have been English language teachers for more than 15 years.

It was as well recorded that 113 English language teachers representing 14% of the respondents said that they have been English language teachers for 10-15 years.

Besides, it was realised that all the 800 English language teachers representing 100% of the respondents said that they are not native speakers of English.

In addition, it came to light 766 English language teachers representing 96% of the respondents admitted that non-native English-speaking teachers face challenges teaching English as a second language (ESL), and 34 of them representing 4% of the respondents revealed that non-native English-speaking teachers do not face challenges teaching English as a second language (ESL).

Next, the study found that 377 English language teachers representing 49% of the respondents said lack of enough professional training makes non-native English-speaking teachers struggle with teaching approaches during lesson sessions; 246 of them consisting 32.1% of the respondents claimed that the large size of classes impedes the teaching of English as a second language and 143 of them representing 18.7% of the respondents said that the teaching of English as a second language is both complex and time-consuming.

Again, it was revealed that 348 English language teachers representing 43.5% of the respondents suggested that to address challenges that confront non-native English-speaking teachers, teachers should be given enough professional training, and 237 of them representing 29.6% of the respondents said that English class sizes should not be too large.

What is more, it came to light that 215 of the English language teachers representing 26.9% of the respondents however said that enough time must be allotted to the teaching of English to address the challenges that confront non-native English-speaking teachers.

Finally, it was observed that 617 English language teachers representing 77.1% of the respondents said that they would support if only native English-speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language (ESL) because native English speaking teachers can teach not just the language, but also, the culture of the English; however, 183 of them representing 22.9% of them alluded that they would not support if only native English speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language because native English speaking teachers are not always good at recognising or teaching other versions of English.

5. Discussion

The revelation that 88% of the respondents confirmed that they are professional or licensed English language teachers is good news for Ghana's education. Having such a significant number of professional or licensed English language teachers, will not just help raise the standards of teaching and learning of English, but also, promote effective teaching and learning of English. However, it is just to say that it seems this sizable number of professional or licensed English language teachers does not match the performance of students in English language in the West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). This is because in spite of the calibre of the English language teachers, students continue to record abysmally performance in English language in the WASSCE year in, year out. Anyway, it is also fair to maintain that the teachers cannot be entirely indicted for the perennial poor performance of students in English language in the WASSCE as most students nowadays do not take their studies seriously. It takes two to tango! Consequently, if the teachers deliver, but the students fail to study to complement that then we cannot expect them to do well in the exam.

Secondly, the score of 77.8% respondents that said they hold Bachelor of Education in English will significantly benefit the government's flagship programme 'free senior high school'. This is because the success of the programme is entirely dependent on quality teachers. However, it will translate to nothing if the government does not change its posture towards clarion calls to pay teachers well. Ghanaian teachers have been marginalised. Their pay do not commensurate with their work output. Unfortunately, many attempts by teacher unions to make governments do the needful have been unsuccessful. Consequently, some teachers intently absent themselves from class or are reluctant to deliver.

Moreover, the realisation that a whopping 88.6% respondents said that they chose to become English language teachers to help raise the standards of teaching of English among non-native speakers of English can mean that notwithstanding the marginalisation of Ghanaian teachers, a significant number of them remain loyal to Ghana. Like it or not, the allegiance of these teachers to Ghana is ironclad. However, this does not guarantee that if they get the opportunity to teach elsewhere for better pay, they may not exit their current employment.

In addition, the fact that 38% respondents said that they have been English language teachers for 5-10 years again raises concern about the yearly deplorable performance of students in English language in the WASSCE. What is actually happening in Ghanaian high schools? Do we have experienced teachers, but they can't deliver? Or the crux of the matter is, students simply do not take their studies seriously to complement the effort of the teachers? Make no mistake! There is surely the urgent need for Ghanaians to have a sober retrospection of teaching-learning in their senior high schools.

Besides, the score of 100% respondents that confirmed that they are not native speakers of English should bother policy makers of secondary education. Ghanaian English language teachers are incontrovertible up to the task. However, the government can achieve the objectives of its flagship programme 'free senior high school' without a glitch if it can hire native English-speaking teachers to shore up the teaching and learning of English language in senior high schools. Some may opine that some Ghanaian English teachers will raise red flags. However, this will not be new in Ghana. Native English-speaking English teachers have always taught in Ghanaian schools.

Again, having 96% respondents admitted that non-native English-speaking teachers face challenges teaching English as a second language (ESL), once more underscores the need for government to hire native English-speaking teachers to strengthen effective teaching and learning of English language in our senior high schools. However, if government thinks that hiring such teachers might be costly then it must be prepared to provide further professional training for the non-native English-speaking teachers and also pay them better pay to deliver.

Further, the record of 49% respondents that said lack of enough professional training makes non-native English-speaking teachers struggle with teaching methods during lesson sessions must be a wakeup-call for government and the Ghana Education Service (GES). The fact that Ghanaian English teachers are professionals and are capable of delivering is undisputable. However, government should retool the GES to enable it provide sufficient professional training for English language teachers to improve their professional competencies as teaching English language to non-native English speakers is dependent on teachers' professional competencies.

Also, the 49% respondents that said lack of enough professional training makes non-native English-speaking teachers struggle with teaching method during lesson sessions gives credence to the claim by Littewood (2007) that teachers who lack sufficient professional training might struggle to absorb and comprehend teaching approaches successfully.

What is more, the observation that 43.5% respondents argued that teachers should be given enough professional training to resolve that challenges that confront non-native English-speaking teachers suggests that the teachers are not in denial of the challenges that they face teaching ESL. On that score, one can say that these teachers will embrace attempts to mitigate the challenges that confront them in their line of duty.

Lastly, the revelation that 77.1% respondents said that they would support if only native English-speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language because native English-speaking teachers can teach not just the language, but the culture of the English can make some construe the non-native English-speaking teachers have lost confidence in their ability to deliver and want the native English-speaking teachers to save the situation. However, others may also argue that that is not the case. But it just shows the respect the non-native English-speaking teachers have for the native English-speaking teachers.

5. Conclusion

The study gauged the challenges of English as a second language (ESL). It was found that most of the respondents (i.e., 88%) confirmed that they are professional or licensed English language teachers. Secondly, it was recorded that most of them (i.e., 77.8%) said that they hold Bachelor of Education in English, while a few of them (i.e., 5.4%) claimed that they have Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics.

Thirdly, it was observed that most of the respondents (i.e., 88.6%) alluded that they chose to become English language teachers to help raise the standards of teaching of English among non-native speakers of English, and a few of them (i.e., 3.4%) said that they opted to become English language teachers in order to travel or live abroad and teach English.

In addition, it came to the fore that 38% respondents being the majority said that they have been English language teachers for 5-10 years, while 14% of them as the minority confirmed that they have been English language teachers for 10-15 years.

Moreover, the study established that all the 800 English language teachers representing 100% of the respondents revealed that they are not native speakers of English.

Besides, it was realized that most of the respondents (i.e., 96%) admitted that non-native English-speaking teachers face challenges teaching English as a second language (ESL), and a few of them (i.e., 4%) confirmed that non-native English-speaking teachers do not face challenges teaching English as a second language (ESL).

Also, the study found that most of the respondents (i.e., 49%) said lack of enough professional training makes non-native English-speaking teachers struggle with teaching method during lesson sessions; just a few of them (i.e., 18.7%) revealed that the teaching of English as a second language is both complex and time-consuming.

What is more, it was revealed that most of the respondent (i.e., 43.5%) suggested that to address that challenges that confront non-native English-speaking teachers, teachers should be given enough professional training, and a few of them (i.e., 29.6%) said that English class sizes should not be too large.

Finally, it came to light that most of the respondents (i.e., 77.1%) said that they would support if only native English-speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language as native English-speaking teachers can teach not just the language, but also, the culture of the English. However, a few of the respondents (i.e., 22.9%) contended that they would not support if only native English-speaking teachers are allowed to teach English as a second language since native English-speaking teachers are not always good at recognising or teaching other versions of English.

Recommendations

- i) The Ghana Education Service (GES) should recruit native English-speaking teachers to shore up effective of teaching and learning of English in Ghanaian schools.
- ii) Non-native English teachers must be given sufficient professional training.
- iii) English teachers should be given better salaries to motivate them to deliver.

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