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# **Restructuring English Language Curriculum for Enhanced Implementation in Nigerian Secondary School**

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**ADAObI FIDELIA OKONKWO**

*Department of Arts and Social Science  
Ebonyi State University,  
Abakaliki.*

and

**JOHN S. EREKE**

*Department of Arts and Social Science  
Ebonyi State University,  
Abakaliki.*

## **Abstract**

*The topic of this paper is restructuring English language curriculum for enhanced implementation in Nigerian secondary schools. The aim of this paper is to take a look at climate change; the English language curriculum and how the curriculum could be reviewed for enhanced implementation in Nigerian secondary schools. Countries all over the world experience different forms of climate change which causes destruction of lives and properties, and inconveniences human beings and animals. Climate change affects the society and this yielded to the need in the growth of technology to guard against its effect especially in a country such as Nigeria. Languages especially the English Language which is a second language in Nigeria is a necessary medium of instruction and a subject taught in the schools. The need to restructure the content of languages especially the English language used in Nigeria secondary schools arises. Incorporating the topics on climate change into the English language content areas such as reading comprehension, writing, lexis and structure and other aspects of the English Language content could help to understand the environment better and enhance implementation of the curriculum in Nigerian secondary schools. This will make the students to be aware, learn and guard themselves against effects climate changes. Variables such as*

*training and retraining of the in-service teachers and employment of more qualified English language teachers, provision of facilities, text books and other instructional materials and proper remuneration of teachers can help in achieving effective teaching of the English language for sustainable development in Nigeria.*

Climatic change is a phenomenon that causes changing in the atmosphere and such changes could be positive or negative and they affect human beings, animals and plants. The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2010) defined climate change as a phenomenon that is created by human beings and nature which devastates the earth and causes hardship of unpredictable magnitude to the living. Uduagha (2010) conceived climate change as a change in the climate condition of the world which the scientists consider as negative one. It is also referred to as global warming or global weather patterns. Omotosho (2007) defined climate change as a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activities and which alters the composition of the global atmosphere in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods. Scientists have intensified the green house effect by increasing the concentration of green house gases in the atmosphere. Climate change involves occurrences from natural events and lies. These occurrences could be disastrous to human existence. For people , human activities which can lead to climate change are; emission of poisonous wood gases to the atmosphere, blurring, smoke, emission which lead to depletion of ozone layer, deforestation, excavation of soil, mining, heavy generation of noise and charging of harmful weapon etc. These can lead to changes that can cause illnesses, diseases, flood that leads to destruction of lives and properties and decline in both human and material resources are *all* affected.

Climate change constitutes a great environmental problem. This climate change is global. Countries like China, Philippines, California, India, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and parts of Nigeria have experienced climate changes in various forms. Nigeria has witnessed much devastation in climate change which includes; frequent draught, flooding, increased infestation of crops by pests, diseases, destruction of household properties, much destruction of biodiversity, change in vegetation type, decline in forest resources, spread of infectious diseases, change in livelihood systems. These have also affected human learning and language development in great magnitude.

Two types of climate changes exist. Man-made climate change and natural climate change. The man-made climate change is that climate change in which man is responsible. Examples include, bush-burning, polluting the atmosphere with smoke and company waste. These human activities influence global system and raise the earth temperature. There has been great emission of gas inform of carbondioxide to the

atmosphere. All these constitute health hazards and waste, which affect teaching and learning especially teaching of the English language in Nigeria.

The international Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (1990) stated that climate change occurs as a result of the following:

- a. The way the atmosphere and the ocean interact with each other
- b. Change in Energy received from the sun
- c. Change in the earth's orbit

Human activities change the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere in three major ways; such as fossil fuels which uses this fossil fuels to heat homes and buildings; growing, transporting and cooking food; travelling e.g. by car, plane, bus and train; manufacturing, using and transporting product; purifying water to become drinkable; manufacturing water and transporting products.

A growing world population causes more people to need food, livestock and energy. The increase in emission of gases to the atmosphere causes changes in whether which can cause heavy rainfall that leads to destruction of farm crops. Another phenomenon that causes climatic change is influence of the sun, which is the driving force behind the weather. It makes a lot of heat to be given off by the earth surface such as the hot road, sand, ocean variability, mountain etc. All these lead to climate change and they affect human activities. Language such as the English Language is affected adversely.

The content of the English Language includes; reading, writing, vocabularies, lexis and structures and language registers. The above aspects of the English language are affected because the contents need to be restructured to suit the great challenges of the global climate change. Effect of global climate change is highly catastrophic on the society. It affects human learning which includes language especially the teaching of English language in the Anglophone countries in Africa such as Nigeria. Udenyi (2010) stated the various effects of environmental change which results in global warming, ozone layer depletion, rains, extinction of wild life and various plants, earthquakes and volcanic eruption, flood, disaster, rock fall, mud flow, hurricanes, or hill storms, melting of ice sheet, draughts, desertification, heal wave, wind storms, etc. These global climate changes affect human and human activities in many forms and it badly affects Nigeria. Different Languages especially the English language which is a communicative medium and a vital link language in Nigeria, its contents has not been addressed to suit the global climate change.

### **Climatic Change and the English Language in Nigeria**

Different countries of the world have been exposed to a lot of hazards as a result of climatic change. Different states, towns, communities in Nigeria have experienced

the effects of global climate change. Nigeria has been known to experience flood but the worst has been one of 2012 which displaced people of different families from their homes. A good number of people lost their lives and properties, while many farm lands and crops were washed away. The National Television Authority (NTA) (2012) reported that thirty (30) states in Nigeria were gruesomely affected due to continuous heavy rainfall that caused flooding. This led to loss of thousands of lives and massive loss of properties. Thus rendering the people that survived the horrible disaster homeless and in abject poverty.

Climate change in Nigeria is likely going to result in serious pest infestation which may affect agricultural production if adequate measures are not taken. The resultant effect may be shortage of food which could lead to malnutrition. Shift in the pattern of rainfall may result in water logging in most African countries and this will likely breed mosquitoes which spread malaria and other insects that spread various diseases. People die in thousands yearly as a result of malaria.

Climate change leads to cerebra-spinal meningitis in Nigeria especially in the Northern part of the country. It also leads to dryness of water beds that is meant for feeding of pasture. The overall effect is the migration of people with their animals to areas where there are moisture and greener pasture for their animals. The immigrants who are mainly nomadic in nature sometimes do not respect the culture of the indigenes and do not control their animals that destroy crops of the host community. This has always resulted to conflict between the original occupants and the strangers seeking food for their animals.

Climate change has resulted in serious soil degradation particularly in the South eastern Nigeria where gully, sheet, and reel erosion are devastating the communities. Many lives and properties particularly schools and roads have been erosion. Air transport system is affected because of bad weather. There have been cases of air crash in Nigeria and people die in great numbers. There have been cases of ship-wreck as a result of bad ocean tide resulting in loss of goods and services. All these have greatly affected people in Nigeria. The economic sector has been adversely affected and people are forced out of job on daily basis. Languages, both the recognized local languages and the English language that are used in the educational sector have vital roles to play in ameliorating the effects of climate change.

The contents of languages in Nigeria education have not articulated these climate changes, and languages used in the Nigeria education have not been fully utilized to avert the effects of climate changes in Nigeria. As it stands, the content of the curriculum in most Languages used in the educational sector especially the English Language is not one that can create awareness on the causes, prevention or solution to devastating

effects of climate change on the people of Nigeria. The contents of the English language, teacher education, instructional materials and facilities for improving education delivery have not been adequately provided in Nigerian secondary schools to face the challenges of this climate change.

### **Climate Change and the Curriculum Contents in English language in Nigeria**

Language is a tool for social change and information dissemination. The causes, effects, prevention and corrective measures of climate change can be articulated in the curriculum contents of the local languages and the English language as a subject taught in schools. Curriculum as defined by Onwuka (1981) is a total experience with which the school deals in educating the young people. Also, Mkpa (1987:12) defined curriculum as vehicle' through which the school strives towards the achievement of educational ends, be it those of the national, local government or even the community. The content of the English Language for example, at all levels of education consists of the four language skills which include reading, writing, speaking and listening. These skills consist of vocabulary and comprehension, summary, grammar, oral English, lexis and structure, essay and letter writing. It is based on this content that different schemes and topics for different classes are developed. The English text books are not written considering the global climatic change. Baldeh (2004) and Otagburuagu (2002) stated that language is a vehicle of communication.

Comprehension and reading passages in the English language textbooks at all levels should articulate the different climate changes; their causes and effects on people, prevention and remedy. When students read it as a passage in the English language class; they get informed of changes in the weather and know how to take adequate measures on the occurrences of certain global changes and understand why people should not involve themselves in such activities that can cause environmental hazards

Topics on the contents can be based on increasing heat wave, rainfall, flooding, desertification, erosion, etc. Whichever topic treated should be based on the causes, effects, prevention and corrective measures. In this way, students should be aware of what climate change is all about.

Vocabularies on climate changes should be incorporated in reading comprehension in English text books used in schools. Treatment of grammar should be adequately handled and examples should be drawn from different changes in climatic change. Oral English should as well be treated to incorporate examples of words that bear certain sounds which should be drawn from issues under climatic changes. For example sounds such as /l/ and /i:/, / f/, its examples can be drawn from words such as hill, bill, hurricanes, ill, sick, heat, weed, flood, fog, log etc. Examples can be drawn from diphthongs such as /ai/ as in ice, climate, wide, carbon dioxide, environment, life,

diversity etc. The teacher can drill students on the sounds and explain their meanings in few words and how they affect people lives. This may create awareness for the students on climate change and how it affects people as well as how they can be prevented.

### **Climatic Change and Curriculum Implementation in Nigerian Secondary Schools**

Curriculum involves systematic planning to effect a change in the behaviour of the people. The curriculum must be planned to suit the changing lime such as the climatic change that is being experienced today. The use of the English language as a second language in Nigeria dates back to the Phelps Stock Commission report of 1922. Otagburuagu (2002) stated that the commission made reading and writing of English compulsory in Nigerian schools English language remained a medium of instruction. Also the recommendation adopts local languages and English language in the education of the Nigerian child. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) saw the crucial role of education to the national development and in her philosophy of education states the goal of education in Nigeria as:

- A free and democratic society
- A just and egalitarian society
- A united, strong and self reliant nation
- A great and dynamic economy
- A land full of bright opportunities for all citizens

In order to achieve the above, the policy saw the crucial roles English language will play because of its permanent and indispensable nature being a language which other subjects are taught and learnt. The English language in the senior secondary schools had a clear objectives spelt out in the National Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools (2004) as; to achieve a high level of proficiency in the Nigeria students' use of English language; preparing students for tertiary and vocational education and for the world of work after learning schools.

Teaching should be relevant to the climatic change that is being experience now. Most schools do not have enough teachers and the ones in the field are over worked because of the teeming population of students. In Ebonyi state for example, the teachers lament on the number of students they have to teach and mark their scripts in the JSS and the ratio is 1:669, (Agwu in Okonkwo 2008). This insufficient number of teachers no doubt leads to poor prevention of the effect of this climate change that is being experienced now. Since climate change is not incorporated in the curriculum, it becomes difficult for people to adapt to it today.

Teachers are poorly recommended and it affects their output. Unavailability of facilities and instructional materials are experienced in most schools. For languages especially the English language to thrive in Nigeria, attention must be directed to teaching and learning. Baminye (2010) noted that qualitative education planning must involve the overall planning process and prevent misallocation of resources, misdirection of energy and bottleneck. In Nigeria, education does not seem to have been given its due attention considering the global climate change in the country and its affects Nigerians. Baminye (2010) stated that the inputs to primary and secondary education in Nigeria are comparatively lower in quality than in many advanced countries. Again, the relevance of what is being taught in this era of serious global climate change becomes issues of great concern to the society at large. Teaching should be made relevant to the needs of the society for sustainable development. Information communication technologies are not available in schools and students do not have access to computer as to be computer literate. Teachers need to be abreast so that they can competently handle their lessons. Textbooks are very important to students' academic pursuit. Most schools lack relevant textbooks and English language textbooks are not exceptions. Oyetunde (2001) observed that most schools in Nigeria have no library and the few libraries that are available can be best described as stores for packing obsolete books. Most of the textbooks especially the English language textbooks have not reflected the global climatic change today.

### **Conclusion**

Climatic change in Nigeria affects man and animals adversely. It leads to destruction of lives and properties. People living in Nigeria do not seem to be aware of climatic change and fall easy prey to their devastating effects. Climate change affects other human disciplines and language is not an exception. Restructuring the curriculum content and incorporating different issues of climate change in the languages especially the English language curriculum content in the education system in Nigerian secondary schools is considered a measure for solving climate change which constitute problems to man. Creating enabling environment for adequate implementation of the curriculum contents of languages especially the English language used in the Nigeria system of education will serve as another major way to solving climate change problems in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Climate change has constituted problems in the Nigeria environment, restructuring the English language curriculum for enhanced implementation in Nigeria secondary school is the best bale. Based on this, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Manpower resources should be made available. Teachers should be trained and retrained to meet the global needs of the world climate change.

### *The Intuition*

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- ii. Curriculum planners and stake holders in education should review the curriculum content to suit the global climate change in the country.
- iii. Language writers, especially the English language text book writers should include climate change as topics to enhance learning and understanding of the phenomenon.
- iv. Meteorological facilities such as wind vane, rain gage, etc; should be provided to enhance teaching and learning.
- v. Information communication technology should be provided in public schools and computer operators should be trained to teach students.
- vi. Teachers should be adequately remunerated and on time.
- vii. Libraries should be built in schools and equip them with relevant text books in different fields of study.

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