AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EXISTENCE OF CURRICULUM INADEQUACIES IN RELATION TO GENERAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES: A CASE STUDY OF ABIA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL) AROCHUKWU

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Abstract
General English Language courses in NCE programe were designed mainly to equip students with communication skills. But there exit curriculum inadequacies in these General English Language courses. This paper therefore, investigated the curriculum inadequacies in these courses. The process of the investigation began by formulation of seven research questions. This followed by the construction of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated and has reliability value of 0.95. The questionnaire has sixty (60) items. The study was conducted in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. The study used survey research design. The population of the study comprised of 21 teachers from secondary schools in Arochukwu. There no was sample and sampling technique as the population was manageable. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The finding of the study revealed the inadequacies in the curriculum of general English language courses. Based on these findings, the paper recommends the following among others that NCCE should integrate the indings of this study into the curriculum of general English language courses and Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu should organize a workshops to general English language lecturers on how to teach the topics associated with the findings of the study.

Introduction The establishment of school of General Studies Education in different institutions of higher learning such as Abia State College of Education culminated in huge success as a feeder Department. The importance of General Studies Education cannot be over emphasized. We have general studies in Education, General Studies in English, General Studies in computer, General Studies in Political Science, etc. Okigbo (1999) opines that, "Research is a prelude to technological advancement. According to Oxford Advanced Leaner's Dictionary (2000) research means, "a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it. A careful study of the General Studies Education especially GSE English courses revealed there are mirage of problems rocking this feeder Department. These problems have been there since time immemorial and may remain till time indefinite. For instance, during accreditation in 2007, these problems were there. During visit of accreditation penal from Abuja in 2018 such problems were there too.

In Nigeria like in other developing countries of the world such as Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal, etc. education ranks the greatest industry. The Nigerian students need proper education so that they develop physically, physiologically, morally, socially, psychologically, mentally and culturally.

One of today's needs of the federal government of Nigeria is a broad-based, well-balanced education system that allows for thorough development of individual skills (Goldberg, 2001). Education is a major 'human industry' where these human beings are molded both in character and in learning. Again, education constitutes the bedrock of development both in the arts, science and technology, etc. It suffices to say however that a lot has been done to discover this problem which has lingered for many years. Every subject has its value and importance on the teacher and its method of teaching. And the problem associated with studying oral English are further compounded by many oral English teachers not to talk of when it is not introduced at all. Quite often the teacher approaches and delivers his oral English lessons in such a luckluster manner that the interest of the pupils take to flight because many of the teachers have not been given the correct orientation necessary for delivering oral English lessons effectively and in a pleasurable manner.

All these and a lot more will be given special attention when it is introduced in the GSE scheme of work of English language. It should be born in mind that the NCE students on graduation become teachers in the primary school and/or teachers in the junior secondary. If the English teacher is not well grounded in oral English language as to show-case oral English proficiency, problems begin to crop up. For example, if a teacher who passed through NCE programme who did not major in any English related courses like Biology/Chemistry, Eco/Sos. Math's/ Comp,etc could use his knowledge of GSE English to teach English in the junior section when the English teacher is on maternity leave.

English language has many branches. These branches are very important:(a) grammar, b) essay writing, c) comprehension, d) summary writing, e) oral English, f) letter writing and care must be taken to cover these aspects of English (Nwokedi,1991). The importance of these aspects cannot be overemphasized; for example, in the case of a good oral English teacher who knows fully well that some words in English have long sound while some words in English have short sound and that those with long sound while pronouncing them should draw them and those with short sound should be pronounced straight forwardly. And that we have 20 vowels in English. Twelve (12) are pure vowels while the remaining eight (8) are diphthongs. These and more the teacher/lecturer should impact to the students. Therefore, there is no gain saying the fact that non-inclusion of oral English in GSE English as general English is a ''slap on our faces''.

Oral English language is not the only aspect of English language omitted in general English language. Other aspects of English language such as speech writing, invitation letter, petition writing, report writing and minutes of meetings were either omitted or appeared only once in the whole of NCE general English courses. The need to write a speech has continued to surface day –in- day out in this present world of ours (Idowu, 2003:47) . If the governor of the state or commissioner of Education schedules to visit a university or a college. The students' union president of the college could want to utilize such golden opportunity to state when the college started, the achievements of the college so far and the problems that have been rocking the college with a view to finding a lasting solution to such problems. Even in our different churches it is common to write a speech to welcome the general over –seer of our church/denomination (Oyakilomi, 2013).

When an incident like fire outbreak has happened in a market, or there was students'' rampage in an institution of higher learning, a committee could be appointed to look into both the immediate and remote causes and summit its report after two weeks, speech writing is one of the blessings from lecturers a student should go home with on graduation (Ndukwe ,1997). According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary by A.S. Hornby. it defines "report" as to give people information about something that you have heard, seen, done etc. The question is how many NCE holders can write a good report. Invitation writing is another important branch of English language. For example, one will be asked to write a letter of invitation inviting his friends and well-wishers to a ceremony or any other event. An NCE holder should be able to recognize we have: (a) special invitation, (b) an invitation to a reception ceremony, (c) a general invitation, (d) a wedding invitation with their different features and their common features too; when a person needs to send invitation to people for any occasion (Ogbonna,1995:260).

As we train future teachers so are we training future secretaries that could stand the test of time; the appearance of some important topics like writing of minutes of meetings have a glamorous negative effect on our future leaders (Onuigbo, 2000).   A good secretary should know the meaning of A.O.B., Agenda, Item etc. and should be able to develop and write a readable good minute of meetings. Memorandum is yet another branch of English language that should be learnt in GSE English.: What is a memorandum? A memorandum is ''something to remember''. The singularity is ''memorandum'' while the plural aspect is ''memoranda''. A memorandum (or memo) has its features which must be legally followed. A memo must be very brief but straight to the point. Petition writing is another aspect of English that NCE students should boast of, especially NCEIII final year students. Petition writing is a legal way to seek or pursue ones right. It could be a way to seek redress. Petition according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is a written document signed by a large number of people that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something; e.g., a petition against experiments on animals

Problem Statement

Every NCE student is expected to register and pass five general English courses. Such general English courses are expected to improve his communication skill, oratory ability, vocabulary and writing skills. They also improve in the students the innate ability for academic prowess. But the present general English courses from NCEI-III do not contain some important aspects of English language such as oral English, memorandum and invitation writing. Speech writing, minutes of meeting, petition writing and report writing appeared only in the final GSE 321.The absence and inadequacies of these aspects of English language can lead to the graduation of NCE students without acquiring the requisite skills for their feature endeavours.

Objectives of the Study
The main objective of this study was to identify the inadequacies in relation to general English language courses in Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu. Specifically, the study will identify the curriculum inadequacies in relation to:

1. Oral English
2. Speech Writing
3. Report Writing
4. Invitation Writing
5. Minutes of Meetings
6. Writing of Memorandum
7. Petition Writing

Research Questions
1. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Oral English?
2. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Speech Writing?
3. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Report Writing?
4. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Invitation Writing?
5. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Minutes of Meetings?
6. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to writing of Memorandum?
7. What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Petition Writing?

Literature Review
This chapter contains useful materials related to the topic of the study. It is organised under the following headings: importance of oral English proficiency, problems students could envisage because of non-inclusion of semi formal letter writing in general English scheme of work, lack of teaching facilities of oral English, non-inclusion of such important topics like speech writing, writing of memos, report writing, writing of minutes of meetings, etc in all the General English Courses like General English I, General English II, General English III

Importance of Oral English Proficiency
According to Idowu (2009:37), the importance of speech to a learner of a language has necessitated the inclusion of spoken English in the senior school certificate examination. The Oral English is now compulsory and contributes to the overall mark obtainable in the examination. Students are therefore advised to make the best use of periods spent learning this aspect of the language in school. They are also advised to practice outside school. Radio and television are useful aids. Time spent listening and imitating the speech of good newscasters and characters in some of the local drama series is time well-spent.

English language makes use of twenty-six letters (symbols). These letters, which make up the alphabet, are divided into two main groups, vowels and consonants. When we read, we convert the written symbols into speech sounds. In fact, the sounds we make represent symbols referred to as phonetic alphabet or phonetic notation. In English, there are a total of forty-four sounds – twenty vowel and twenty consonants.

Problems Students could Envisage because of Non-inclusion of Semi-formal Letter – writing in general English Scheme of Work

Oluikpe(1999) in his write-up was able to discover why a writer used "Dear Mr.Okoye" instead of "Dear Sir", "How many addresses a semi-formal letter has"? Apart from the above, the writer of a semi-formal letter writing uses sincerely "instead of "faithfully" to close his letter. The writer also includes his surname at the end of his letter. Gratitude is an important virtue in life. Hence, any situation in which you receive a fair treatment from an older person calls for a semi-formal letter of gratitude.

The following are more of the situations which call for a semi-formal letter: (a) Giving an invitation to an acquaintance (b) Sending greetings or congratulatory messages to an acquaintance (c) Conveying condolences to an acquaintance, and (e) Offering an apology to an acquaintance.

Features

	Feature	Description
a.	The Address	Requires only the writer's address
b.	The salutation	Requires a semi-formal greeting such as: Dear Mr. .... (surname)
		Dear Professor ... (surname)
c.	Language and tone	The language and tone should be semi-formal
d.	Close	Requires informal closing, for example:
		Yours sincerely,
e.	Signature	Requires the writer's (i) full name or initials and surname such as
		Chioma Ogbonna or C, Ogbonna.
		(ii) Signature,
		(iii) Position or status for example:
		President/Secretary,
		History Society

Lack of Teaching Facilities (i.e. oral English)

In our language laboratory in ASCETA the language laboratory is obsolete and needs government intervention.

Non-inclusion of such topics like: speech writing, writing of memos, report writing, writing of minutes of meetings, invitation writing etc in general English i, general English ii, general English iii, and general English iv.

In feature, we expect to have General secretaries, speech composers/writers, Reporters, etc. To save society from imminent collapse, government should as a matter of urgency do something.

The problem associated with studying oral English are further compounded by many oral English teachers not to talk of when it is not introduced at all. And quite often the teacher approaches and delivers his oral English lessons in such a luck-luster manner that the interest of the pupils take to flight because many of the teachers have not been given the correct orientation necessary for delivering oral English lessons effectively and in a pleasurable manner. All these and a lot more will be given special attention when it is introduced in the GSCE scheme of work of English language. It should be born in mind that the NCE students on graduation become teachers in the primary school and/or teachers in the junior secondary. If the English teacher is not well grounded in oral English language as to show-case oral English proficiency, problems begin to crop up. For example, if a teacher who pass through NCE programme who did not major in any English related courses like Biology/Chemistry, Eco/Sos. Maths/ Comp, etc could use his knowledge of GSE English to teach English in the junior section when the English teacher is on maternity leave.

Speech writing

The need to write a speech has continued to surface day in day out in this present world of ours (Idowu 2003:47) If the governor of the state or commissioner of Education schedules to visit a university or a college. The students' union president of the college could want to utilize such golden opportunity to state when the college started, the achievements of the college so far and the problems that have been rocking the college with a view to finding a lasting solution to such problems. Even in our different churches it is common to write a speech to welcome the general over –seer of our church/denomination (Oyakilomi, 2013).

Report Writing: When an incident like fire incident has happened in a market, or there was students'' rampage in an institution of higher learning, a committee could be appointed to look into both the immediate and remote causes and summit its report after two weeks, speech writing is one of the blessings from lecturers a student should go home with on graduation (Ndukwe, 1997). According to Oxford Learner's Dictionary by A.S. Hornby. It defines "report" as to give people information about something that you have heard, seen, done etc. The question is how many NCE holders can write a good report?

Invitation Writing: example

A Special Invitation: The Management and Staff of St. Joseph's Hospital, Aba, Abia State cordially invite

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To the opening ceremony of their hospital complex
on Monday 26th December 2009   at
No. 103 azikiwe Road,
Aba at 10 am prompt.

Special Guest of Honour………………………………….

RSVP	Telegrams
Dr. C.O.Njoku	Dr. C.C.Alamba
Chief Consultant,	Director,
St. Joseph's Hospital	St. Joseph's Hospital
103 Azikiwe Road, Aba.	103 Azikiwe Road, Aba.

An NCE holder should be able to recognize we have: (a) special invitation, (b) an invitation to a reception ceremony, (c) a general invitation, (d) a wedding invitation with their different features and their common features too. And when a person needs to send invitation to people for any occasion (Ogbonna,1995:260).

Minutes of Meeting: As we train future teachers so are we training future secretaries that could stand the test of time the appearance of some important topics like writing of minutes of meetings has a glamorous negative effect on our future leaders (Ndigbo 2000).   A good secretary should know the meaning of A.O.B., Agenda, Item etc. and should be able to develop and write a readable good minute of meetings.

Writing of Memorandum: What is a memorandum? A memorandum is ''something to remember''. The singularity is ''memorandum'' while the plural aspect is ''memoranda''. A memorandum (or memo) has its features which must be legally followed. A memo must be very brief but to the point.

Petition Writing: This is a legal way to seek or pursue ones right. It could be a way to seek redress. petition according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary is a written document signed by a large number of people that asks somebody in a position of authority to do or change something; eg. A petition against experiments on animals

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. Such design enabled the researcher to identify new and additional topics to be included into general english language course. The study was conducted in Arochukwu local government area of Abia State. The population of the study comprised of 21 English teachers in Arochukwu local government area of Abia State. No sample and sampling technique for this study as the population of the study is manageable. Structured questionnaire with five-point scale was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated and has reliability value of 0.95. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using mean and standard deviation respectively.

Findings
Research Question 1
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Oral English?

Table 1: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inaequacies in relation to Oral English*

N=21

S/N	Oral English	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
1	The meaning and importance of speech	4.81	0.22	Needed
2	Vowel and consonant sounds	4.71	0.56	Needed
3	The speech Organs	4.86	0.48	Needed
4	Vowel sounds	4.95	0.22	Needed
5	The pure Vowels	4.86	0.48	Needed
6	The Diphthongs	4.95	0.22	Needed
7	The Connsonant sounds	4.95	0.22	Needed
8	Constructing sounds and Rhymes	4.86	0.48	Needed
9	Consonant clusters	4.71	0.96	Needed
10	The syllables and stress	4.71	0.56	Needed
11	Stress	4.95	0.22	Needed
12	Types of Syllables	4.95	0.22	Needed
13	Intonation	5.50	0.00	Needed
14	Tune I(Falling tone)	4.81	0.22	Needed
15	TuneII(Rising tune)	4.71	0.56	Needed
16	Mixed intonation pattern	4.95	0.22	Needed

Table 1 shows the mean responses of the items to be included into oral English course. The table shows that all the items have mean values of more than 3.50.This implies that such items are to be included into the oral English course.

Research Question 2
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Speech Writing?
Table 2: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inaequacies in relation to Speech Writing*

N=21

S/N	Speech Writing	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
17	How to prepare for a speech	4.95	0.22	Needed
18	Parts of a speech	4.81	0.22	Needed

A close look at table 2 shows that all the items had mean response of more than 3.50. This mean that the two items are to be included in de3veloping speech writing course.

Research Question 3
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Report Writing?
Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inaequacies in relation to Report Writing

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N=21

S/N	Report Writing	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
19	Definition of Report or Report Writing	4.95	0.22	Needed
20	Why Report Writing or the benefits that could accuse as a result of report writing	4.71	0.56	Needed
21	Format of Report Writing	4.71	0.56	Needed
22	Any difference from Reports written in security offices, police stationed and the ones written in different	2.95	0.22	Not needed
23	churches and institutions of higher learning Types of Reports: (a) formal and informal Reports	5.00	0.00	

In Table 3, four items (19,20,21 and 23) had mean values of more than 3.50. This implies that such items are to be included into report writing course to be developed. However, item 22 with mean value of 2.96 is not to be included into the course.

Research Question 4
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Invitation Writing?
Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inadequacies in relation to Invitation Writing

N=21

S/N	Invitation Writing	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
24	Name of the inviting agency or organization	5.00	0.00	**Needed**
25	Address of the inviting agency or organization	5.00	0.00	**Needed**
26	Phone number of the inviting agency or organization	5.00	0.22	**Needed**
27	E-mail of the inviting agency of organization	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
28	Reference number of the invitation letter	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
29	Date of writing of the invitation letter	4.57	0.59	**Needed**
30	Name of the invitee(person(s) or organization(s))	4.71	0.90	**Needed**
31	Address of the invitee(person(s) or organization(s))	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
32	Statement of invitation which must include date, time and venue for the invitation	4.71	0.90	**Needed**
33	Closing sentence	4.81	0.22	Needed
34	Name of inviter	4.86	0.48	Needed
35	Position of inviter	4.71	0.56	Needed
36	Signature of the inviter	4.95	0.22	Needed

Table 4 shows that all the 13 items had mean values greater than 3.50. This implies that all the items are to be part of the invitation writing topics.

Research Question 5
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to Minutes of Meetings?
Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inadequacies in relation to Minutes of Meeting

			N=21	
S/N	**Minutes of Meeting**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**Remark**
37	Features and definitions on minutes of meetings	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
38	Name of the organization	4.86	0.48	**Needed**
39	Title of the minutes of the meeting	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
40	Number associated with the minutes of the meeting	4.71	0.64	**Needed**
41	The venue where the meeting took place	4.71	0.64	**Needed**
42	Opening	4.67	0.56	**Needed**
43	Chairmans' opening remarks	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
44	Reading of the last minutes of meeting	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
45	Corrections and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting	4.86	0.48	**Needed**
46	Matters arising	4.81	0.78	Needed
47	Substantive agender	4.57	0.75	Needed
48	A.O.B	4.81	0.78	Needed
49	Closing	4.86	0.48	Needed
50	Name. designation and date of the chairman on the left bottom of the paper	4.95	0.22	Needed
51	Name, designation and date of the chairman on the right bottom of the paper	4.86	0.48	Needed

Table 5 reveals that all the items had mean values more than 3.50. This implies that such items are to be used during the development of minutes of the writing topics.

Research Question 6
What are the curriculum inadequacies in relation to writing of Memorandum?
Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inadequacies in relation to Writing Memorandum

		N=21		
S/N	**Writing Memorandum**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	**Remark**
52	Definition of Memorandum	4.95	0.22	Needed
53	Importance of Memorandum	4.38	1.45	Needed
54	Where does memorandum function mostly	4.71	0.64	Needed
55	Features of a memorandum	4.95	0.22	Needed

Table 6 shows that all the items had mean values more than 3.50.This mean that such items will form the topics for writing memorandum.

Research Question 7
What are the curriculum inadequacies associated with Petition Writing?
Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses of Teachers on the Curriculum inadequacies in relation to Petition Writing

S/N	Petition Writing	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
		N=21		
56	Definition of Petition	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
57	How to use petition to achieve goal(s)	4.81	0.22	**Needed**
58	Reasons why government allows petition	4.71	0.64	**Needed**
59	Types of petitions	4.95	0.22	**Needed**
60	Difference between petition writing and report writing	4.95	0.22	**Needed**

Table 7 revealed that all the items had mean values more than 3.50. This implies that such items will form the topics of petition writing.

S/N	Evaluation Criteria	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remark
		N=28		
56	Completion of task given by a teacher within a specified time	4.33	0.69	Needed
57	Completion of task given by a teacher accurately	4.56	0.56	Needed
58	Completion of task given by a teacher with minimum of steps specified by the teacher	4.12	0.65	Needed

Table 7 reveals that all the items had Mean values more than 3.50. This implies that such items are to be used during the evaluation of student's competencies after LCD TV troubleshooting training. In addition, such items had values of standard deviations ranged from 0.51 to 0.94 which are less than 1.96, meaning respondents vary very little on the items under the study

Conclusion
English language courses are very important components of the NCE programmes in all Colleges of Education in Nigeria as many of the other courses in the programmes are taught in English language. But there exist some inadequacies in the curriculum of general English language courses in NCE proramme.To improve the curriculum offerings of general English language courses curriculum, the author conducted a study that culminated into identifying the inadequacies. Certainly, implementation of the inadequacies identified by this study will lead to the improvement of NCE students' knowledge in English language as well as their communication skills.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.
1. NCCE should integrate the indings of this study into the curriculum of general English language courses.
2. The management of Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu should organize a workshop for general English language lecturers on how to teach the topics associated with the findings of the study.
3. The management of Abia State College of Education (Technical) Arochukwu should purchase instructional materials that will be used in teaching the new topics identified by this study

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