
Impact of English for Specific Purpose to Technical Vocational Education and Training in Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the impact of English for Specific Purpose (ESP) to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey design was adopted with population of 148 TVET lecturers drawn from six Universities in South-south, Nigeria. All the 148 TVET lecturers were used for the study. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used for data analyses of the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed English for Specific Purpose (ESP) is relevant to TVET. The findings of the study further showed that Poor provision of qualified lecturers, poor funding, Lack of interest to attend training workshops and seminar, poor infrastructural facilities such as library, classroom blocks, workshops, laboratories and recreational facilities are challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that TVET curriculum should be reviewed in collaboration with experts in ESP, Federal, State and Local government should improve funding of TVET programmes by providing ESP compliance, facilities, equipment, instructional materials, employ TVET lecturers that are ESP compliance in TVET department, retraining of TVET lecturers to update their ESP knowledge and skills and supervise TVET programmes.

KEYWORDS: English for Specific Purpose (ESP), Vocational Technical Education, Teachers, Universities, South-south

Introduction

Education is a process of human enlightenment and empowerment, for the achievement of a better and higher quality of life for a nation. The process of education is shaped and moulded by the teacher, who plays a pivotal role in any educational system. The term Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been defined differently by many authors. Orr (2008), Evan (2014), and Norton (2004) stated that TVET is a "skill-based programme designed for sub-professional level education and based on a specific vocation." Also, TVET, according to Belcher (2006) and Fan (2014), is an educational training which encompasses knowledge, skills, competencies, structural activities, abilities, capacities, and all other structural experiences

necessary for securing jobs in various sectors of the economy or even enabling one to be self-dependent by being a job creator.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), through the National Policy on Education (NPE), defined TVET as those aspects of educational processes involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of skills for the economy and social life. The policy further stated that TVET is an integral part of general education and also a means of preparing people for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work. It is an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship, an instrument for promoting environmentally sound development and a method of alleviating poverty.

It is believed that enabling trainees to be competent in English in their training place and later in the work place can be done, better, in various ways. According to Belcher (2006) and Jasso-Aguilar (2005), vocational English as a second language is one of the ways, as it involves language education with instruction in job-specific skills, and as it enables trainees to emphasize clerical duties such as ordering supplies, taking telephone messages, etc. in occupational contexts. In other words, English skills based on need in cooperation with a program of vocational training promote the specific field itself. Dudle, Evans, and John (2011) elaborate that English for occupational purposes (EOP) played an important role in this era because the massive expansion of business had led to a huge growth in the area of English for business purposes.

‘English for Specific Purpose’ (ESP) is defined as an approach to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) instructional method based on the concept of learners’ needs and wants (Francomacaro, 2019). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is also defined in terms of the ‘purposes’ and the ‘specificity’ of the purposes for which the teaching of English is felt necessary (Anderson, 2017). This entails the importance of the ‘needs’ of the learners who learn English to respond to the specific requirements of the target situation in which they will have to use the language which, of course, cannot be ‘contrived’, but will have to be ‘genuine’ and ‘authentic’ to be able to serve its purpose. As such, ESP comprises (a) purpose, (b) specificity, (c) learners’ needs, (d) target situation, and (e) authenticity and genuineness (Anderson, 2017; Johns, Salmani & Nodoushan, 2015; Pashapour, 2018; Tahririan & Chalak, 2019).

ESP is a broad area of language learning with distinct participants across an increasingly diverse range of academics and occupational categories. ESP is an ambiguous term and not easily fixed to a single classification or domain across its wide range of branches. According to Donadio (2019), Fiorito (2019) and Francomacaro (2019), ESP is necessary in TVET programs so that students understand English language instruction easily. In the view of Pashapour (2018) and Tahririan and Chalak (2019), the level of English language proficiency affects competency in TVET training and creates a communication barrier between trainers and trainees.

Fan (2014), Evans (2014), and Kozok (2015) maintained that the government should improve funding of TVET programmes by providing ESP compliance, facilities, equipment, instructional materials, and employing TVET lecturers that are ESP compliant in the TVET department. English for specific purposes (ESP) plays an important role in training and for expansion of technological advancement. Accordingly, the English used for academic purposes

needs to be specified in the light of the needs of each field of training, be it law, business, health, etc.

Statement of the Problem

In the current TVET, where the trainees are expected to be skilful and knowledgeable, as well as effective communicators in their specific fields of study, the English language seems to be given little emphasis, contrary to what is expected to be achieved by the trainees. The observation and experience of researchers also reveals that there exists a wide range of communication incompetence with the trainees and failure in the current assessment of summative occupational competence and continuous occupational assessment where English is a medium of instruction and assessment. Currently, English is not offered in universities at all levels of TVET. But, TVET students seeking admission to tertiary institutions are required to succeed in an entrance examination prepared by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board to enrol the trainees as their students. One of the compulsory entrance exams is English. Therefore, this research investigates whether English for a specific purpose is relevant to TVET trainees or not.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine:

1. The relevance of ESP to TVET
2. The challenges of effective ESP in TVET institutions
3. The measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET

Research Questions

1. How is ESP relevant to TVET?
2. What are the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria?
3. What are the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET?

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the relevance of ESP to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Universities in South-South zone in Nigeria. The choice of this area was to contribute to the improvement of technical teacher education and the production of competent graduates. The study adopted a survey research design. The study employed descriptive survey research design. As noted by Nworgu (2015) descriptive survey design is a design approach which aims at collecting data and describing them in a systematic manner, the characteristics, features or fact about a given population. This design is used as a means of effecting clearly and properly understanding of the research findings, since it sought to ascertain the relevance of English for Specific Purpose to TVET. The population of the study comprised all the 148 technical education lecturers consisting 87 males and 61 females of the Department of Vocational Education drawn from six universities in South-South zone, Nigeria.

Purposive sampling technique was used for the study. The researchers adopted purposive sampling technique since the sample size was manageable. All the 148 TVET lecturers in the study area were used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Impact of English for Specific Purpose to Technical Education (IMESPTED) Questionnaire. The instrument was face validated by giving the draft copies of the instrument to three experts in TVET in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Corrections and possible suggestions were offered by the experts after adequate scrutiny of each item. This was to ensure that the instrument measured the intended attributes. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the researchers administered questionnaire to 30 respondents who were not part of the study but possess the same qualities of those used for the study. Cronbach Alpha technique was used for data analysis which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. This shows the instrument was reliable for the study.

The researchers administered the instrument directly to the respondents in the Universities with the help of two assistants for each of the Universities who were instructed on what is required. The entire instrument was collected immediately after completion which recorded 100% return rate. The questionnaire contained fifteen (15) items and adopted a four (4) point scoring scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). Mean, standard deviation and independent t-test were used in analysing the data collected for the study and respondents with the highest mean were considered as agreed.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: How is ESP relevant to TVET?

Table 1: Relevant of ESP to TVET

S/N	Relevant of ESP to TVET	Male		Female		DEC.
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1.	Do you think that English language program is necessary in TVET program?	3.49	0.84	3.16	0.71	Agreed
2.	Do you think your previous English courses are sufficient for your training success in the current TVET?	3.42	0.89	3.09	0.86	Agreed

3.	Do you think students understand English language instruction?	3.14	0.77	3.42	0.81	Agreed
4.	Does your level of English language proficiency affect your competency in TVET training?	3.52	0.82	3.33	0.74	Agreed
5.	Have you encountered communication barrier between you and your trainees due to English a medium of training?	3.36	0.73	3.18	0.69	Agreed
Cluster mean		3.39	0.81	3.24	0.76	Agreed

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.09 and above with cluster mean of 3.39 for males and 3.24 for female respondents on a four-point rating scale which indicate that the respondents agreed that ESP is relevant to TVET. This implies that the respondents agreed that ESP is relevant to TVET.

Research question 2: What are the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria?

Table 2: Challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

S/N	Challenges facing effective ESP in TVET	Male		Female		DEC.
		\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	
1.	Poor provision of infrastructural facilities such as library, classroom blocks, workshops, laboratories and recreational facilities.	3.48	0.92	3.38	0.77	Agreed
2.	Poor provision of qualified TVET lecturers that are ESP compliance.	3.19	0.80	3.42	0.92	Agreed
3.	Poor ESP communication methods employed by TVET lecturers during instruction.	3.11	0.87	3.33	0.69	Agreed
4.	Poor funding of the TVET programme.	3.26	0.85	3.05	0.82	Agreed
5.	Lack of interest to attend ESP training workshops and seminar to update TVET lecturers skills and knowledge	3.20	0.67	3.10	0.85	Agreed
Cluster mean		3.25	0.84	3.36	0.81	Agreed

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.05 and above with cluster mean of 3.25 for males and 3.36 for female respondents on a four-point rating scale which indicate that the respondents agreed that all the items are challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What are the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET?

Table 3: Measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET

Measures to be adopted to remedy the	Male	Female
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S/N	challenges faced by ESP in TVET	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	DEC.
1.	Improved funding of TVET programmes	3.20	0.85	3.09	0.83	Agreed
2.	Employment of qualified TVET lecturers in TVET department	3.08	0.89	3.22	0.81	Agreed
3.	Adequate provision of facilities, equipment and ESP instructional materials relevant to TVET	3.30	0.88	3.45	0.76	Agreed
4.	Retraining of TVET lecturers on ESP to update their knowledge and skills	3.49	0.72	3.33	1.20	Agreed
5.	Adequate supervision of TVET programmes	3.42	1.02	3.38	0.89	Agreed
Cluster mean		3.30	0.87	3.29	0.90	Agreed

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.08 and above with cluster mean of 3.36 for males and 3.25 for female respondents on a four-point rating scale which indicate that the respondents agreed that all the items are measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the relevance of ESP to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the relevance of ESP to TVET in Universities in Nigeria

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.39	0.81	146	1.15	1.65	NS
Female	61	3.24	0.76				

Note: NS = Not Significant

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. was 1.15 while the t-crit. was 1.65. Since the t-cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t-crit, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the relevance of ESP to TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis on the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.25	0.84	146	-0.86	1.65	NS
Female	61	3.36	0.81				

Note: NS = Not Significant

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. was -0.86 while the t-crit. was 1.65. Since the t-cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t-crit, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female TVET lecturers on the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis on the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria

Variable	N	X	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-crit.	Decision
Male	87	3.30	0.87	146	0.07	1.65	NS
Female	61	3.29	0.90				

Note: NS = Not Significant

Table 4 showed that the t-cal. was 0.07 while the t-crit. was 1.65. Since the t-cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t-crit, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Discussion of research findings

The result in research question 1, revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.09 and above with cluster mean of 3.39 for males and 3.24 for female TVET lecturers. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET. The findings of this study is in support of the findings of Donadio, (2019), Fiorito, (2019) and Francomacaro (2019), who noted that ESP is necessary in TVET program, students understand English language instruction easily.

Hypothesis 1 showed that the t-cal. was -0.67 while the t-crit. was 1.65. Since the t-cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t-crit, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the relevance of ESP to TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Research question 2 revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.05 and above with cluster mean of 3.25 for males and 3.36 for female respondents which indicate that the respondents agreed that all the items are challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria. The study is in agreement with the studies of Pashapour (2018), Tahririan and Chalak, (2019) who stressed that the level of English language proficiency affect competency in TVET training and create communication barrier between trainers and trainees.

Hypothesis 2 showed that the t-cal. was -0.67 while the t-crit. was 1.65. Since the t-cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t-crit, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the

responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the challenges facing effective ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Research question 3 revealed that all the items have mean score of 3.08 and above with cluster mean of 3.36 for males and 3.25 for female respondents which indicate that the respondents agreed that all the items are measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET. This study is in support of the studies of Fan (2014), Evans (2014) and Kozok (2015), who assert that government should improve funding of TVET programmes by providing ESP compliance, facilities, equipment, instructional materials and employ TVET lecturers that are ESP compliance in TVET department.

Hypothesis 3 showed that the t -cal. was -0.67 while the t -crit. was 1.65. Since the t -cal. at 146 degree of freedom is less than t -cri, the null hypotheses of no significant difference between the responses of male and female TVET lecturers on the measures to be adopted to remedy the challenges faced by ESP in TVET in Universities in Nigeria was therefore upheld. This implies that ESP is relevant to TVET in Universities in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Mastery of language of instruction plays a pivotal role in learners' academic achievement. In our country, Nigeria, English is a medium of instruction at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. The same holds true for TVET underway in our country. English is, in reality, the language of technology and is the language of access to contemporary global technological advancement. Therefore, neglecting English language competency in TVET, which is the bridging tool to the industrialization of the economy, seems to miss another important and relevant tool. The data presented and discussed in this paper clearly implies that since TVET trainees are expected to upgrade their professional careers either in the same professional areas or in other academic institutions where English is purely a language of instruction, work, and communication, those with TVET backgrounds will fail effectively to catch up with their academic achievements in tertiary studies.

Recommendations

1. TVET curriculum should be reviewed in collaboration with experts in TVET and ESP in relation to relevance of English Language which is important during and after TVET training.
2. Federal, State and Local government should improve funding of TVET programmes by providing ESP compliance, facilities, equipment and instructional materials.
3. Federal, State and Local government should employ TVET lecturers that are ESP compliance in TVET department.
4. Retraining of TVET lecturers to update their ESP knowledge and skills

5. Adequate supervision of TVET programmes

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