

SEVEN C STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Students of English language in Nigeria have achieved poorly due to teachers' poor teaching methodology, and to salvage this situation requires a review of the global best practices in the language instruction. Thus, this paper reviewed the implications of 7C strategies for teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in the contemporary Nigeria. The paper discussed 7Cs which are collaboration, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, character, communication, and computational thinking, and their implications for language educators in the contemporary Nigeria. It concluded that in the face of tremendous changes in this era, there is a need for a long-term transition from the traditional classroom into a sustainable learner-centred instructional strategy like the 7Cs for improved achievement of students in English language learning. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that: teachers of English Language should adopt the 7Cs as instructional strategies to enhance students' achievement across all the language skills; language policy makers should take cognisance of the importance of 7Cs in their decision making as a vital concept in improving the language ability of learners or users; curriculum planners should incorporate the use of 7Cs for English language instruction across all levels of education; and Government should sponsor teachers of English to workshops, seminars and conferences on current trends in language education such as the application of 7Cs.

Keywords: 7C strategies, importance of 7Cs, teaching English as a Second Language

INTRODUCTION

In a fast changing world as the 21st century, different fields of human endeavours are seen to be evolving strategies to cope with the demands of the time. Regrettably, not much of this progress has been seen in the Nigeria's education sector especially in the area of English language instruction. Observation reveals that the old-fashioned, ineffective traditional method of teaching in which the

teacher is the chief actor where the students are mere spectators dominates the classroom. The teaching-learning process is boring and unexciting because the teacher's instructional methodology does not encourage pupils' and students' active participation. The result of this is students' poor academic achievement in English language which is crystallised in abysmal poor performance in internal and external examinations. It is important to note, however, that if a modern strategy like the 7Cs is deployed by the language teacher, students' achievement will improve significantly. It is at the backdrop of this optimism that this paper reviews the implication of the strategy for educators of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Nigeria.

7Cs AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATORS IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

The 7Cs for teaching English language in the 21st century have been seen as a pivot for achieving success in language learning. They are collaboration, citizenship, creativity, critical thinking, character, communication, and computational thinking as discussed below.

1. **Collaboration Strategy:** Collaboration or what is also known as cooperative learning strategy is the 'C' that relates to humanistic education, experimental learning, system-functional linguistic and psycho-linguistically motivated classroom. According to Nnene, Ene and Chime (2014), cooperative learning implies that the contemporary educator in schools should be able to create environment of active involvement in exploratory learning, develop interpersonal relationship by establishing an atmosphere of cooperation, promote student-student and teacher-student interaction, encourage acknowledgement of individual differences; and enhance maturity, experiences and social communication in an academic environment, thereby discouraging, passivity and individuality. In this strategy, educators and the learner must become a coherent group, that dialogue and negotiation in any dynamic class becomes a grave concern. The teacher has to make all efforts to build in the learner a spirit of cooperation for positive learning outcomes.

Philosophically, collaboration brings higher achievement in any society and in any family. Therefore, collaborative approach to the 21st century English language teaching must bring to bear, maturity, experience and social communication skills to bear in the class. Effort must consciously be made to discourage repetition, passive and individualize communication as taking into cognizance contextual sense.

2. **Citizenship Competency:** By way of definition, citizenship education is educating and enlightening citizens who participate in decision concerning security (Federal Agency for Civic Education (FAC), n.d). FAC posits that a responsible citizen must be aware that, he/she must have knowledge of the following responsibilities: world responsibility, national responsibility, local responsibility, and family responsibility. In this context, responsibility entails having knowledge of the role a child needs to play in his/her community, country, and world. It also leads to learners to participate in activities that could turn the world around them. It could also make learners be change agents that act out against social, economic and environmental injustices. This goes to show that educators or curriculum implementers must be exposed to knowledge and the understanding of: laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights diversity, money and the economy, sustainable development and world as a global community, and about concepts such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law; skills and attitudes, critical thinking, analysing information expressing opinions, taking part in discussions and debates negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action; value and dispositions, respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view and a willingness to listen to work with and stand up for others in the society. Besides, Prince in

Minecraft (2023) opines that by developing empathy in children, teachers help them feel valued and understood while impacting social change and innovation for decades to come.

3. **Creativity Strategy:** Creativity can simply be defined as innovation, novelty and sustenance (Daniel, 2019). The application of creative strategy includes opening assignment, building upon past knowledge, the development of new experiment, thinking through varying scenarios, showcasing multiple solutions and considering mind expensive concepts. Therefore, educators must go extra miles to bring in new ideas, approaches, and strategies different from the one students are familiar with. It will go a long way in motivating and encouraging learning in our institutions and for bitter academic achievement.

Creativity strategy has some implications to effective ESL teaching and learning inschools.

According to Jack (2013), these include the following:

- i. **Following learners progress:** It behoves on teachers who are creative to find out from their students who must have used same classroom learning experiences when applying for scholarship, and public shows among other things. These experiences of the learner will allow the creative teacher to maintain relationship beyond the classroom.
- ii. **Making lessons unique:** Experienced creative educators should see every lesson of English as different and have experience that is different from pass lessons ever taught in class.
- iii. **Creating effective surprises:** Make lessons in that classroom to constitute an avenue to new information, new experience, interaction and so on as something students never expected.
- iv. **Avoid repetition:** Here, use of the same textbook or applying same method and teaching strategies make learning boring rather change methods by using brainstorming to eclectic method, etc.
- v. **Risk taking:** Creative teachers must always take risk in order areas that go with risk, like adventure, experimentation and excursion.
- vi. **Personalizing lesson content:** Creative teachers engage or allow learners to share their experiences on lessons presented by the teacher so as to connect it with content already explored for example, narrative writings, descriptive writing.

In a nutshell, creativity is an indispensable quality for every educator or teacher of English language required in order to attain success in the ESL learning situation.

4. **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking is the ability to think in an organized and rational manner in order to understand connections between ideas and/or facts. Michael (2023) defines it as thinking about thinking – identifying, analysing, and then fixing flaws in the way a person thinks. This means that it is the ability to solve problems and reason effectively. Critical thinking demands flexible analytical skills. Critical thinking can be of help and a huge strength in developing any career in life. Therefore, being able to analyse and reason effectively and integrate diverse sources of information systematically in the classroom in order to solve academic problems among the school learners is fundamental to the achievement of the goal of learning, namely to ensure relative change of behaviour. According to Micheal (2023), the steps to critical thinking include: identification of a problem or question/gap, gathering of data, opinions and arguments; analysing and evaluating the data, identifying assumptions, establishing significance, making a decision/reach a conclusion, and presenting or communicating. The author states that critical thinking is supposed to dispose educators of ESL to seek and offer clear statements of the conclusion or question, seek and offer clear reasons, and be clear about their relationship with each other and the conclusion, try to be well informed, use credible sources and observations and usually mention their sources, make into account the total situation, keep in mind the basic concern in the content, be open minded, seriously consider other points of view, take a position and change a position when the evidence and reasons are sufficient, seek as much

precision as the nature of the subject admits, seek the truth when it makes sense to do so, and more broadly, try to get it right to the extent possible or feasible, and employ the critical thinking abilities and dispositions.

5. **Character Strategy:** The Collins Dictionary defines character as a combination of qualities distinguishing an individual; moral strength, reputation or person represented in a play, film or story. Thus character refers to distinguishing features or quality of an individual. This means that character is connected to an individual volition. The character of a teacher of English language should be connected to physical traits, psychological/personality traits, behaviour/actions, relationship with others, weaknesses/fault, strength/virtues, moral constitution, protagonist/antagonist, complex/simple personality, history and background, and similarities and difference.

The aforementioned character traits imply that character in the learning process is a very important aspect of a successful contemporary teacher of English as a second language. Besides, Willy and George (n.d) list out ten characteristics of a 21st century teacher which have a direct link on teaching L2 in the Nigerian schools namely: improvement of one's competence in the target language that is L2, knowledge of one's students well and understand their needs, knowing how to engage student in language learning, good language teachers anytime to build their pedagogical knowledge and skills, using a well-balanced and calibrated approach to language teaching, using appropriate technology to engage students and enhance their learning, belonging to professional learning community, and being a lifelong learners. Indeed, the ESL teacher must use a well balance and calibrated approach to language teaching in this 21st century, and character is fundamental to that end.

6. **Communication Strategy:** According to Lidya (2013) states that the communication strategy is usually associated with spoken language and is an art that non-native speakers of English should know in order to avoid some problems that may occur during conversion. It is also noteworthy that in communication strategy, culture and language cannot be separated (socio and ethno-linguistics).

Scholars have outlined the types of communication strategy based on their research findings. Therefore, the types of communication and the taxonomy of communication strategies may differ from scholar to scholar. As adopted from Lidya (2013), below is a table on taxonomy of communication strategy.

S/N	Communication Strategies	Strategies	Explanation of Strategies
1.	Avoidance or reduction strategies	a. Message abandonment b. Topic avoidance	Leaving a message unfinished because of linguistic difficulties Avoid topic areas or concepts which pose linguistic difficulties
2.	Achievement of compensatory strategies	a. Circumlocution b. Approximation c. Use of all purpose words d. Word -Coinage	Describing or exemplifying the target object or action (e.g the thing with open doors with for describing keys) Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of target lexical items as closely as possible (e.g ship for describing sail boat) Extending a general empty lexical item to context where specific words are lacking (e.g overuse of thing)

		e. Use of non - linguistic means	Creating non -existing L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g. paintist for painter)
		f. Literal translation	Mime, gestures, facial expressions
		g. Foreignizing	Translating literary a lexical item an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2
		h. Code Switching	
		i. Appeal for help	Using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically (e.g. adding a L2 suffix)
			Using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation
3.	Stalling or time gaining strategies	A use of fillers/hesitation devices	Turning to conversation partner for help directly or indirectly
			Using filling words or gambits to fill in pauses and to gain time to think (e.g. now, let me see...)

It is important to observe that attitude towards a particular strategy affects the use of that strategy. Generally, a positive attitude leads to high frequency of using the language. To develop the learners' attitude towards communication strategy, the teacher should understand that the proficiency level of an individual may influence his/her choice of communication strategies, and the personality of the learners may also affect the choice of communication strategies. In addition, learning situation seems to be very powerful in achieving communication in a class by the educator, reason been that, learners may use a less strategy in formal classroom context than in a daily actual communication. Also, context to communication has much influence on learners' preferred communication strategies because context plays a role in determining communication strategies to be used.

1. Computational Thinking Strategy: Computational thinking represents an analytic approach to solving problems utilising concepts essential to computing. It could also be seen as ability to formulate thoughts and questions in a manner that is communicable to a computer to achieve desired result (Weber in Sharin, Ha, Colby & Debra, 2018). Sharin et al have observed that with the rise of automation and artificial intelligence, economists predict that up to 800 million jobs will be automated by 2030. Therefore, students are supposed to think computationally in order to succeed through navigating multiple levels of abstraction to find innovative solution for perplexing problems. To this end, computational thinking skills are taught in school so that students employ them to solve their everyday problems. Computational thinking in English language teaching may be challenging. However, it is an opportunity for better analysis of concepts.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing review that the 21st century Nigeria has witnessed remarkable changes which influence corresponding changes in students' needs and attitudes. In the face of these changes, there is a need for a long-term transition from the traditional classroom into a sustainable learner-centred instructional strategy for improved achievement of students. To this end, the teaching of English language among other subject areas requires the application of a modern instructional strategy like the 7Cs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusion of this paper, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Teachers of English Language should adopt the 7Cs as instructional strategies to enhance students' achievement across all the language skills.
2. Language policy makers should take cognisance of the importance of 7Cs in their decision making as a vital concept in improving the language ability of learners or users.
3. Curriculum planners should incorporate the use of 7Cs for English language instruction across all levels of education.
4. Government should sponsor teachers of English to workshops, seminars and conferences on current trends in language education such as the application of 7Cs.

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