

Evaluation of The Teaching And Learning Of Literature-In- English In Selected Senior Secondary Schools In Bo City

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Abstract

A study conducted by Mensa et al (2003) revealed that pupils performed very poorly in Literature-in-English at WASSCE over the Years. In an annual report of the West African Examination Council (2004) the chief examiner also commented on the poor performances of pupils in both Literature-in-English and English Language at WASSCE and that it could also lead to the poor performance on these subjects in even the universities. This and many other questions were raised and critically examined. This study is therefore geared towards undertaking an evaluation of the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English, in selected Secondary Schools in Bo City.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an interactive process between a teacher and pupils which is geared towards inducing the pupils to learn. Teaching itself starts in somebody's life from cradle. Our first teachers are our parents who consciously or unconsciously teach us values and concepts. This

process continues until we are enrolled into formal educational institutions where we are subjected to systematic teaching based on curriculum and syllabus. Many subjects are taught including Literature-in-English.

The teaching of language Arts a major component of which is literature, originated from Latin when the Roman Empire was at its peak. After conquering and dominating most European countries it imposed its culture on them. Latin therefore became the language of instruction in European countries such as England and France. The methodology, which was the direct method, employed by them paid little attention to the oral aspect of the language. Rather emphases were on grammar and translation. This was why the method was called grammar and translation method. Even after the fall of the Roman Empire, European nations still applied the grammar and translation method in the teaching of individual languages including English language and literature-in-English. This situation continued until the 18 century (1700-1799). By the beginning of the 19th century (1800-1899), some educationists started advocating for a reform in the teaching methodology.

These people led by Paul Passy formed the International Phonetic Association in 1886. This association also founded the International Phonetic Alphabet. The Latter is a system of symbols, which facilitate the translations of most languages. This association also made certain recommendations paramount among them is in the teaching of language; the oral aspect should be paramount.

The teaching and learning of Literature-in English in Africa could be traced to years back even before the coming of our Colonial Masters to Africa. Literature before then was not written but rather transmitted orally from one generation to another. This oral literature took the form of proverbs, Trickster, stories, Riddles etc. Through the above forms, valuable culture was transmitted from one generation to another.

It was only in the late 19th century, that our African literature entered its written form which was marked by the end of the slave trade and the coming of our Colonial Masters to Africa.

The above way was the same way literature was introduced to European countries. That is, from it oral form to it written form.

POPULATION SAMPLE

This research was conducted in Bo City, Southern part of Sierra Leone. Bo City is the second largest city in Sierra Leone. It was chosen mainly because, according to the last statistics, this is the district where WASSCE Candidate's have performed very poorly recently in Literature-in English, 2005-2010.

The targeted sample for this study consisted of three schools.

1. Bo Commercial Senior Secondary School.
2. Centenary United Methodist Senior Secondary School, Bo.
3. Awada Secondary School Bo.

All of these Schools are Co-educational Schools. Also a total number of 120 questionnaires were administered. That is sixty (60) questionnaires to teachers and sixty (60) to pupils of the schools. Two of the schools, Bo commercial, and Centenary Secondary School Senior are public or government assisted schools, while Awada Secondary is a private school.

The reason choosing government schools and a private school gave the researcher the opportunity to assess the teaching and learning conditions of Literature-in-English in both public and private schools.

INSTRUMENTATION

Data for the research was collected through the following procedures:

- (i) Two sets of semi structured questionnaires administered to the pupils and Literature teachers in the selected secondary schools.
- (ii) Close interview (personal) with the teachers of Literature, principal, heads of Literature department and other authorities at MEST (Ministry of Education Science and technology) and WAEC (West African Examination Council) in the study area.
- (iii) Observation of classrooms during Literature periods and libraries of the schools under consideration. Also these observations were recorded in the researcher's handbook.

VALIDATION OF INSTRUMENT

Questionnaire, personal, interview and observation were used for such a research because of the following reasons:

Firstly, questionnaire assures the respondents of confidential information needed for the study. Also open-ended questions involved in the questionnaires gave the respondents the opportunity to make their suggestions, put forward their opinions and recommendations.

Secondly, observations and personal interviews will accord the researcher the opportunity of experiencing the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English in the schools selected.

DATA ANALYSES

The data for the study was analyzed using Students Packages for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S) and the findings presented using tables and Charts and then discussed.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

GENDER OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH TEACHERS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	49	75.4	81.7	81.7
	Female	11	16.9	18.3	100.0
	Total	60	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

The table 1 above reveals that 81.7% of the respondents are Male teachers and only 18.3% are Female teachers. It is clearly seen from the table that the majority of the literature-in-English teachers are Males and only a very small number of Females are teaching literature-in-English.

The above table reveals Male dominated teaching profession. This is to however encourage parents to send their Female children to school so as to balance this equation in the teaching profession.

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Co-educational School	60	92.3	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

The above table 2 reveals that 100.0% of the schools included in the study are co-educational schools. That is to say all the schools are co-educational institutions.

THE METHODOLOGY USED BY THE TEACHERS OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Methodologies used					

Valid	Reading and Explanation	43	66.2	71.7	71.7
	Dramatization	9	13.8	15.0	86.7
	Role Play	8	12.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	60	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

The above table reveals that 71.7% of the respondents actually use reading and explanation as a method in the Teaching of Literature-in-English. 15.0 % of the respondents use dramatization as a method in the teaching of literature-in-English while 13.3 % of the respondents use role play as method of teaching. It is clearly revealed from these findings that majority of the teachers use the reading and explanation method. This method is however teacher centered. This suggests that the teachers dominate the teaching and learning process.

Table 3 also reveals that not even up to 40% of the teachers use dramatization and role play which is child-centered. If the performance of pupils in literature-in-English is being improved, the teachers must use the last two methods (Dramatization & Role Play) which is promoted by UNICEF.

TIME ALLOCATED FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	30.8	33.3	33.3
	No	40	61.5	66.7	100.0
	Total	60	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

Of the 60 respondents, 66.7 % indicated that the time allocated for the teaching of literature-in-English is actually not enough for them to finish the syllabus for the academic year. While 33.3 % which actually comes from the Private School agreed that the time is enough for them to finish the entire syllabus for the academic year. The above table reveals that there is need

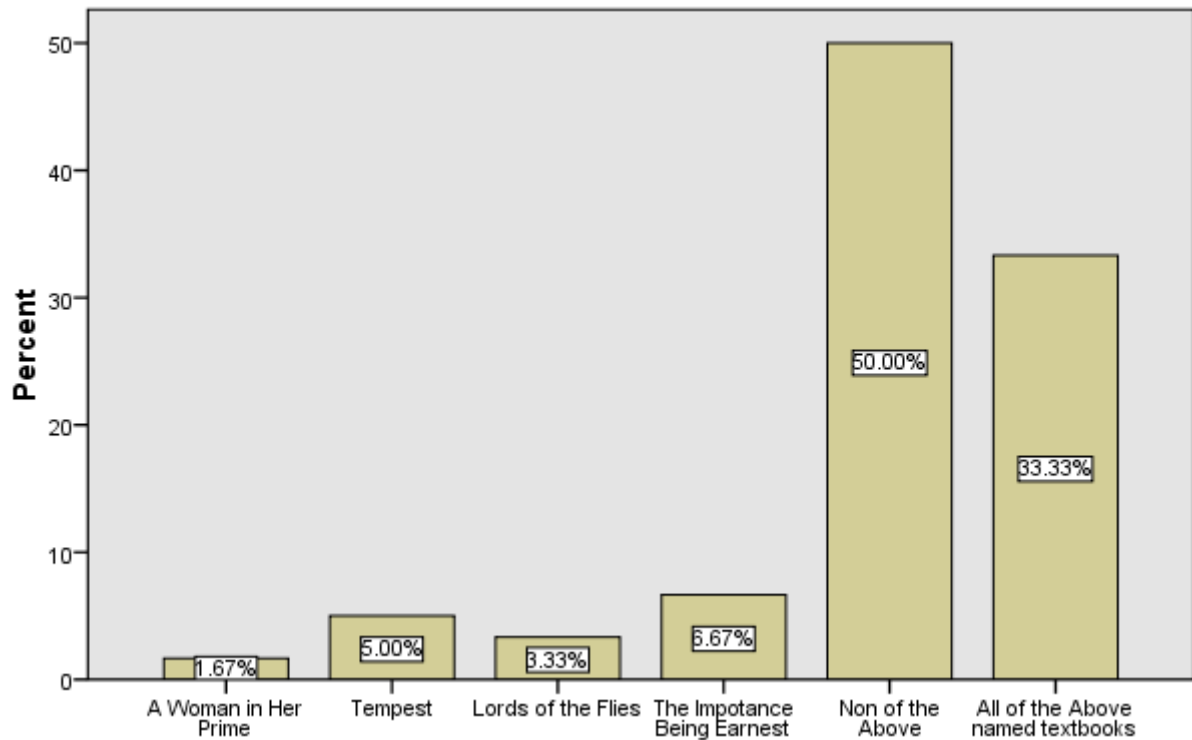
for Principals, Proprietors and Head of Departments to increase the time allocated for the teaching and learning of Literature-in-English. Once this is done, especially in the Government assisted schools, the teachers will be able to finish the syllabus before the academic year finishes. When the teachers of literature-in-English are not able to finish the syllabus, it would definitely lead to poor performance of pupils in public examinations.

This state of affairs is necessitated by the huge number of other subjects competing for space on the teaching time-table in all schools in the country. Each period last for only 40 minutes and each class has allocation of time for teaching the subject is also occasioned by the fact that in all schools, Arts and Science subjects alternate with slightly more time being given to the teaching of Science Practical.

QUALIFICATION OF TEACHERS TEACHING LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	B.A. General	9	13.8	14.8	14.8
	B.A.Ed	42	64.6	68.9	83.6
	H.T.C	10	15.4	16.4	100.0
	Total	61	93.8	100.0	
Missing	System	4	6.2		
Total		65	100.0		

The above data reveals that 68.9 % of literature-in-English teachers are holders of Bachelor of Arts in Education (B.Ed) degree. 14.8 % are holders of Bachelor of Arts (B.A General) degree, while 16.4 % are holders Higher Teachers Certificate. The table however indicates that qualified teachers are recruited to teach literature-in-English.



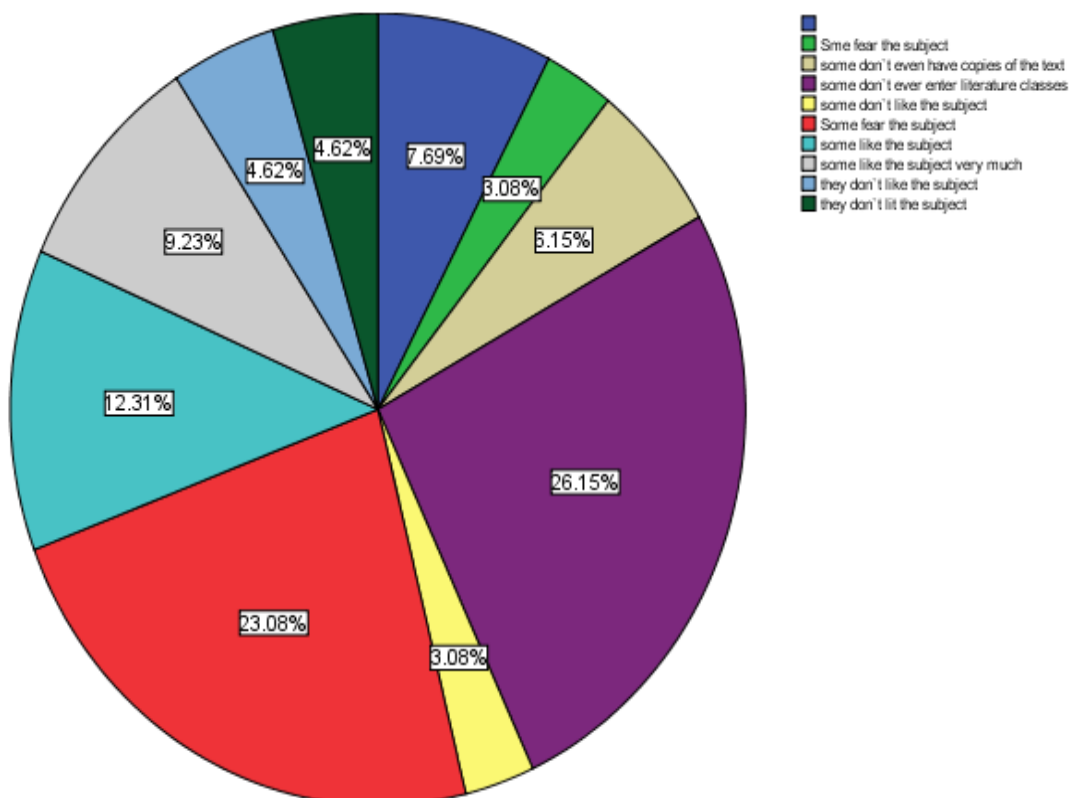
THE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS.

Figure 1 reveals that 50.00 % of the respondents indicated that their schools have libraries, but none of the literature-in-English prescribed textbooks was available in their libraries. And 33.33 % agreed that all the prescribed textbooks were available in their libraries. 6.67 % say that they only have copies of “The Importance of Being Earnest”. 3.33 % said they have copies of “Lords of the Flies”. 5.00 % say they have copies of “The Tempest” while 1.67 % Said they have copies of “A Woman in Her Prime”. The above Figure 1 reveals that there are books but not the prescribe books that will promote the teaching and learning of literature-in-English. The insufficiency of teaching-learning materials which teachers of Literature-in-English complain about is justifiable in the light of the fact that is was observed that in two of the schools in the sample have a population of well over one hundred in class and that pupils offering Literature-in-English make up approximately 85% of pupils in the Classes. So providing the textbooks for all is not easy. The data reveals a significant lack of appropriate teaching-learning aids like texts and audio-visual aids sufficient for all of them. The widespread use of only the prescribed texts and teachers notes may not only be a matter of preference but also a matter of lack of something better, since quite a few schools visited have barely a skeletal library although they accepted of having a library.

The widespread use of note-giving as a teaching method is indicative of the pre-occupation of teachers with the fact that students must pass class examination and public examinations as well as well as knowing the contents of the texts. While teachers' notes could be considered helpful, there is the possibility of large-scale misinterpretation of these notes through teachers' explanation. There is also a significant short-coming in the explanation method as a way of helping students have a firsthand experience of the characters, events and general content of the piece of literary work. It is significant that no respondent claimed the use of audio-visuals which are of the greatest help in making students understand the issues in the text. Some of the teachers of Literature-in-English use their notes as a weapon in teaching because of the fact that the content, language and culture of some the prescribed texts are quite foreign to them.

So there is need for government to provide and increase accessibility of literature textbooks in the libraries. If the of pupils' performance in literature-in-English is to be enhanced, government and other nongovernmental organization are to provide well stocked libraries as a way of promoting education in the country. This is so because there is no way you can pass literature without reading the text. Once this is enhanced, the pupils' performance in public examination will be increased.

THE ATTITUDE OF PUPILS TOWARD LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH



According to the above figure 26.15 % of pupils don't attend literature-in-English Classes. 23.08 % of pupils fear literature as a subject. 12.31 % like the subject and study it. 9.23 % don't even have copies of the prescribed textbooks. 4.62% just like the subject but don't study the textbooks. While 7.69% don't like the subject at all. Since teaching is an interactive process between the teacher and pupils, pupils are to be encouraged to study the subject. Teachers need to encourage pupils to have a positive mind about literature. The teachers are also to change their method of teaching to a child centered one.

MONITORING OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH TEACHERS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	19	29.2	32.2	32.2
	No	40	61.5	67.8	100.0
	Total	59	90.8	100.0	
Missing	System	6	9.2		
Total		65	100.0		

The table above reveals that 67.8 % of literature-in-English Teachers are not monitored by Principals/HODs while teaching their literature classes. 32.2 % of literature teachers are monitored by Principals/HODs while conducting their literature classes. If the performance of pupils in literature-in-English is to be improved, Principals, HOD and Proprietors are to put in place mechanism for the monitoring of teachers of literature-in-English. If this is not done some teachers will not read, not come to class to teach and even prepare their lesson notes which will lead to pupils' poor performance in public examination.

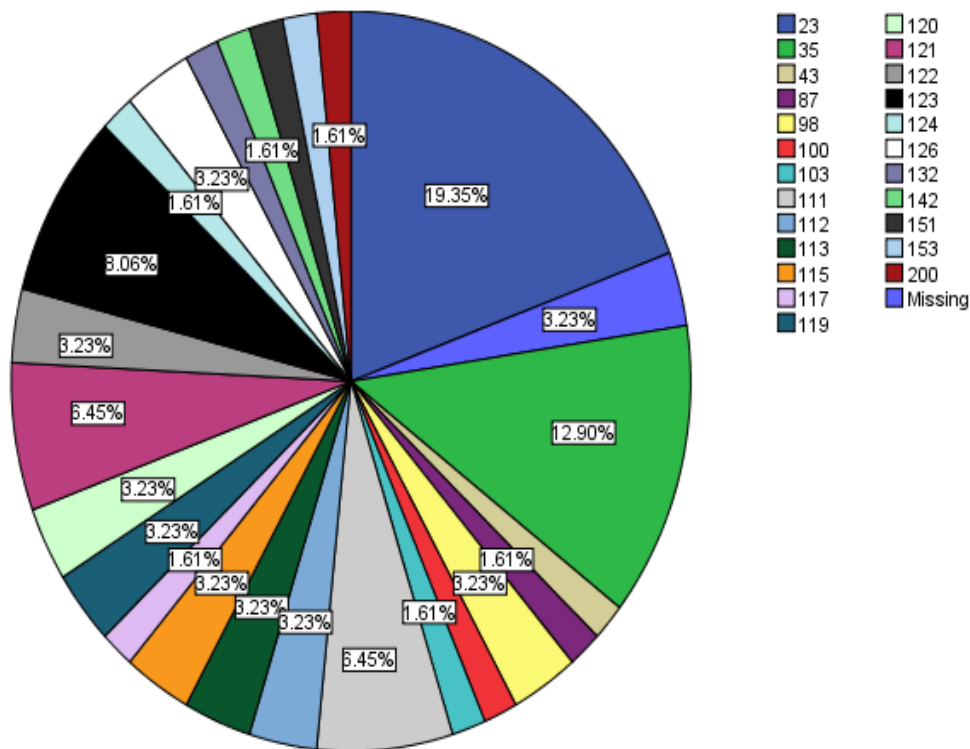
SALARY CONDITION OF LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH TEACHERS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	54	83.1	91.5	91.5
	Yes	5	7.7	8.5	100.0
	Total	59	90.8	100.0	
Missing	System	6	9.2		

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	54	83.1	91.5	91.5
	Yes	5	7.7	8.5	100.0
	Total	59	90.8	100.0	
Missing	System	6	9.2		
Total		65	100.0		

The above table reveals that 91.5 % of the teachers are not well paid for the work they do. And only 8.5% of the respondents indicated that they are paid well. The above table reveals that many of the teachers are not satisfied with their condition of service. If we however want the teachers to do a good job, their condition of service most are to be improved. It is only when the teachers are satisfied that they will teach well in the schools especially in the government assisted schools. However, there is the move by government to increase the condition of service of teachers.

NUMBER OF PUPILS IN LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH CLASSES



The above table reveals that 19.35% of the literature-in-English teachers have over One hundred (100) pupils in the classes they teach. 12.90% of the literature-in-English classes have below thirty-five(35) pupils in class while only 1'61% of the literature-in-English teachers have twenty-three (23) and below pupils in their classes.

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION OF THE LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH TEACHERS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Literature	9	13.8	15.0	15.0
	Linguistics	42	64.6	70.0	85.0
	Language Arts	9	13.8	15.0	100.0
	Total	60	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

The above table reveals that only 15.0% of the respondents teaching literature-in-English are specialized in the subject (Literature-in-English). 70.0% of the respondents are specialized in Linguistics and, 15.0% of the respondents are specialized in Language Arts.

THE DESIRES OF TEACHERS TEACHING LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	provide textbooks	5	7.7	8.3	8.3
	Settle Teachers Arrears	35	53.8	58.3	66.7
	Provide more textbooks	20	30.8	33.3	100.0
	Total	60	92.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.7		
Total		65	100.0		

The above table reveals that 53.8% of teachers want their condition of service to be improved by settling Teachers` arrears. 8.3 % want the government to provide textbooks and 33.3% said that they want the government to provide more prescribed textbooks for the teaching and

learning of literature-in-English. The above table however reveals that is an urgent need for government to improve on the condition of service of teachers so as to enhance excellent performance in literature-in-English.

THE DESIRE OF PUPILS TO BECOME LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH TEACHERS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	22	35.5	36.7	36.7
	No	38	61.3	63.3	100.0
	Total	60	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	3.2		
Total		62	100.0		

From the above data reveals that 63.3% of pupils do not want to become literature-in-English teachers. 36.7% of pupils want to become literature-in-English teacher in the future. The above reveals that there is need for teachers and parents to encourage pupils to study literature in the University.

In addition to the above, is that from the classroom observations the following was noticed

- Most of the classrooms observed were overcrowded and noisy
- The atmosphere was not conducive for the teaching and learning of literature.
- Very limited teaching and learning materials and no setting accommodation especially in the government assisted schools.
- The Private school was not over crowded, noisy there was availability of teaching and learning materials

In conclusion, the personal interviews with Mr. Mohamed S. Mbaimba, Mr. Hai and Miss Moore of Bo Commercial Secondary School revealed also the same constrains as stated above.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Teaching is an interactive process between a teacher and pupils which is geared towards inducing the pupils to learn. Teaching itself starts in somebody's life from cradle. Our first teachers are our parents who consciously or unconsciously teach us values and concepts. This

process continues until we are enrolled into formal educational institution where we are subjected to systematic teaching based on curriculum and syllabus. Many subjects are taught including Literature-in-English. This study is however geared towards the evaluating the teaching and learning of literature-in-English in selected secondary schools in Bo city.

The data was however collected using the following the following below:

Firstly, in trying to arrive at the required information or result for this research, two sets of semi-structured questionnaire in Literature-in- English were administered in three selected secondary schools.

Since Literature-in-English teachers are fairly large in number, a random selection of teachers and pupils in each school was done. This is twenty teachers and twenty pupils per school.

Secondly, although questionnaires were administered, the researcher deemed it necessary to also interview teachers of Literature. Informal interviews were conducted for teachers and pupils in all of the schools selected. Special care was taken to ensure that old and new teachers were selected. It was also the view of the researcher that answers that were given by some of the pupils may not be reflective of their views due to the fact that some may not have read the prescribed texts or may misunderstand the questions on the questionnaires. The need therefore arose for such pupils to be interviewed.

Finally, the administration of questionnaires and personal interviews were followed by a series of classroom observations of the teaching of Literature in each of the randomly selected schools. The data for the study was analyzed using Students Packages for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S) and the findings presented using tables and Charts and then discussed.

The finding revealed that:

1. Majority of the teachers teaching literature-in-English are Males and only few Female teachers are teaching literature. This is due to the fact that 81.7% of literature-in-English teachers are Males and 18.3% are Females.
2. A large number of the teachers teaching literature-in-English use the teacher Centered teaching method (Reading and Explanation) while only few use the Child Centered Teaching method that is prescribed by UNICEF (Dramatization and Role Play). Table 3 reveals that 71.7 % of the respondents use the reading and explanation and 28.3% use Dramatization and role Play.
3. The time allocated for the teaching of literature-in-English is not enough for teachers to finish the syllabus for the academic year. This however prevents the teachers from completing the job for which they are paid. This is due to the fact 66.7% said the time

is not enough and only 33.3 said that the time is actually enough for them to finish the syllabus.

4. It is also reveals that 83.7% of the teachers teaching literature-in-English are qualified and only 16.4% of the teachers are Higher Teachers Certificate holders.
5. Figure1 reveals that there is lack of accessibility and availability of teaching and learning materials in especially the government assisted schools. Because 50.0% said that though they have libraries but none of the prescribed books are available.
6. The data in Table 2 also reveals that pupils don't have a positive attitude towards literature. This is because 26.15% of the pupils don't attend the literature classes and only 7.69% of pupils study the subject.
7. Principals, HOD and Proprietors don't monitor their teachers during their teaching periods in the schools. This is because Table 2 reveals that 67.8% of the teachers are not monitored and only 32.2% of the teachers are actually monitored.
8. It is again revealed that 91.5% of the teachers are not well paid and only 8.5% of the literature teachers are well paid. So they want their condition of service to be improved.
9. Majority of the Literature-in-English classes are overcrowded and are not conducive for any academic exercise.
10. A large number of pupils do not want to be literature-in-English teachers in the future.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions have been drawn:

Firstly, a large number of literature-in-English teachers are Male teachers and only few of them are female teachers.

Secondly, 71% of the teachers use Reading and Explanation which is teacher centered as a method of teaching of literature-in-English.

Thirdly. The time allocated for the teaching and learning of literature-in-English is not enough for teachers to be able to finish the syllabus for the academic year. From the personal interviews, it was also revealed by the teachers that the division of the schools into this shift system is a course for this problem.

In addition to the above, there is also lack of affordability and accessibility of teaching and learning materials especially in the government assisted schools.

Moreover, above 70% of the pupils do not have a positive attitude towards literature-in-English.

Furthermore, majority of principals, HOD and Proprietors don't monitor their teaching during their teaching periods. Since some of these teachers especially in the government assisted or public schools are not monitored, they don't prepare lesson notes, come to class and don't teach the subject.

Added to the above, teachers are not well paid and want their condition of service to be improved.

Also, 70.0% of literature-in-English teachers are qualified to handle the subject but a large number of the pupils no interest in studying literature-in-English.

The classes in the public schools are overcrowded with more than One Hundred (100) pupils per class. Classes are small at the private schools because they are private schools as a result very expensive. Therefore, not many parents can afford to send their children there. Again, textbooks are also available at these secondary schools because of the above reason. On this basis, pupils at the private schools have the likelihood to performing better in literature-in-English in both class and public examinations.

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