Kogi Journal of Education and Pedagogy (KOJEP), Vol. 5, No. 1, JUNE, 2026

ISSN 2736-0091
E-ISSN 2737-0107

NAVIGATING PROBLEMS, POTENTIALS AND PATHWAYS FORWARD IN TEACHING ENGLISH LITERATURE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ODEDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

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Abstract
There has been a lot of scholarly interest in the problems and potentials of English Literature instruction in Nigerian schools, but none has specifically focused on schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State. This study investigates the problems, potentials and pathways forward in teaching English literature in selected senior secondary schools in Odeda LGA, Ogun State, highlighting the increased difficulty teachers face, and emphasising the gap that this research fills. As a result, a quantitative approach was employed, with data collected from teachers at selected private and public secondary schools, with a test-retest reliability assessed through repeated administration of the questionnaire. Constructivist theory adopted by the theory asserts that students actively connect with their surroundings to construct their meaning through active learning and social interaction, which aids deep learning. Findings revealed that teachers are faced with challenges teaching Literature, with 50% of the respondents reporting inadequate training; 72% noting lack of resources, and difficulty in covering the syllabus; and 62% reveal challenges in management of classroom, and adapting to diverse student needs. The study concluded that addressing the challenges experienced in the subject necessitates a coordinated effort by educational authorities, instructors, parents, and students. Also, there is the need to take into account the socio-cultural setting, all of which improve students' academic achievement and future opportunities.
Keywords: English literature, Constructivist theory, Potentials, Problems and Way-forward

Introduction
Literature in English is vital for senior secondary school students' academic development since it builds empathy, cultural awareness, critical thinking, and interpretative abilities while also strengthening students' English language skills. Literature provides students and teachers with numerous benefits when learning English, such as providing them with rich language input to express themselves, inspiring them to study, accommodating students with varied learning styles, and introducing them to figurative language and creative writing (Bist, 2018). However, a variety of hurdles limit the successful teaching and learning of English literature. In Nigeria's education system, Literature in English is not only a basic topic in the arts curriculum, but it is also a prerequisite for students who want to pursue higher education in the humanities. Despite its significance, teaching and studying literature encounter a number of persistent obstacles.

According to Adegbite (2020), the low level of linguistic proficiency among teachers and students is a significant problem, which has an impact on the overall quality of instruction and learning, making it more difficult for students to comprehend and appreciate literary works. Students' lack of enthusiasm and involvement, which leads to challenges, has resulted in poor academic performance and a decreased pleasure of literature (Braun & Clarke, 2021). To make matters worse, many schools continue to adopt traditional teaching methods that do not address their students' diverse learning needs (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In addition, teachers' ability to give high-quality instruction has been noted to have been hampered by their heavy workloads. Also noted is a lack of parental involvement and support, which have a negative impact on student performance and motivation. However, there are opportunities for improvement as Gay (2000) notes. Providing teachers with opportunities for continual professional development can help them stay up to speed with best practices and enhance their skills. Also, encouraging parental participation and involvement can motivate students and improve their academic achievement.

Traditional teaching tactics, such as lectures and rote memorisation, may make it more difficult for students to become interested in and motivated to study literature. According to Du Plessis et al. (2024), these systems usually stress knowledge transfer above the development of critical thinking and analytical skills. Du Plessis

ISSN 2736-0091
E-ISSN 2737-0107

and colleagues, for example, emphasise the importance of pedagogical mobility and flexibility in education, emphasising that educators must alter their techniques to fit students' diverse needs. For centuries, teachers have used lectures as the primary means of imparting knowledge to their students, making them a cornerstone of literature instruction. Nonetheless, this method has a number of limitations that prevent effective learning and participation. According to Freire (1970), traditional lectures can promote a "banking model" of education, in which students are viewed as passive information consumers rather than active learners. This marks off the primary disadvantage noted of traditional lecture-based approaches due to its tendency to promote passive learning. When students receive information without actively interacting with it, they may become disengaged and unmotivated (Hooks, 1994).

Despite the challenges, significant benefits of teaching English literature in Nigerian senior secondary schools are noted to: highlight the potential to enhance students' creativity; critical thinking; and cultural awareness. The significance also emphasises that literature instruction can foster empathy and tolerance by exposing students to diverse cultures and perspectives while also strengthening discussions, which improves their communication skills and academic success. It also includes effective teaching strategies, such as incorporating multimedia resources and promoting while also strengthening discussions, which improves discussions and includes the teacher being able to address challenges in literature instruction (Achebe, 2009; Emenyonu, 2006; Jegede, 2018; Okebukola, 2013).

Strategies for overcoming challenges hindering the subject include teacher training, increased funding to make provision for adequate resources, and culturally relevant curricula to create a more engaging learning environment (Jegede, 2018; Okebukola, 2013; Oviawe, 2016). Supported by the theoretical framework of the study, the constructivist theory encourages active learning and social interaction among students (Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978). The theory emphasises promotion a more inclusive and student-centered learning environment, which is especially advantageous for students who might find it difficult to study using conventional approaches. Employing the constructivist theory to tackle problems associated with literature teaching and learning instruction, these key principles are of note active learning; where learners construct their own knowledge and understanding through active engagement with their environment (Piaget, 1954); Social interaction; which encourages learning as a social process that occurs between individuals and their social environment (Vygotsky, 1978), and cultural relevance; when learning is shaped by cultural and social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). To close the gap in knowledge by critically examining the problems and prospects that come with teaching Literature at the senior secondary level, this study seeks to examine the problems, potentials, and pathways forward in teaching Literature in English in senior secondary schools in selected schools in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State, and to find practical methods for raising student achievement in the subject.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the problems, potentials, and pathways forward in teaching Literature in English in senior secondary schools in selected schools in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the key challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of Literature in English in senior secondary schools.
2. Examine the influence of teacher training; pedagogical practices; resource availability on literature instruction.
3. Investigate students' perceptions, attitudes, and engagement with literature.
4. Analyze the institutional and systemic factors affecting the effective teaching of literature.
5. Explore and recommend viable strategies for improving literature teaching and learning outcomes.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the key challenges faced by teachers in teaching Literature in English in senior secondary schools?

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E-ISSN 2737-0107

2. How do teacher training, pedagogical practices, and resource availability influence literature instruction?
3. How can students' perceptions, attitudes, and engagement with the subject be determined?
4. What institutional and systemic factors affect the effective teaching of literature?
5. What strategies and recommendations can improve literature teaching and learning outcomes?

Methodology

This descriptive survey study aims to use percentages to illustrate the proportion of respondents who hold a particular opinion, have a certain characteristic, or exhibit a specific behaviour. The study focused on fifty (50) teachers teaching English literature in senior secondary schools. Purposive sampling was used to select experienced and qualified literature teachers across different levels (SS1-SS3) from ten (10) schools. Four (4) from public secondary schools and six (6) from private secondary schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State. From each school, five (5) teachers were selected, resulting in a total sample size of 50 respondents. A structured questionnaire was designed for teachers to collect data on teaching methods, resources, perceptions, and challenges. The questionnaire had two (2) sections A and B. A contained the bio data of the respondents, while B contained five research questions and items on the challenges, prospects and pathway forward in teaching Literature in English in senior secondary schools. The questionnaire was designed in a close-ended question format with specific response options.

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were ensured through: expert review; the research instrument was subjected to face validity by experts in language education and evaluation; statistical analysis; and test-retest reliability were assessed through repeated administration of the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient was found to be .85, indicating high stability of the questionnaire's content validity, construct validity, and internal consistency. Primary data was collected for the study using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher and retrieved immediately in order to avoid loss, and for effective sorting. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to summarise the responses.

Results

This section presents the analysed data collected through the administration of questionnaires to teachers teaching Literature in English in selected secondary schools in Odeda Local Government Area. The data is presented according to the research questions, using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages). Each item is presented in a separate table with an interpretation.

Research Question 1: What are the Key challenges faced by teachers in teaching of Literature in English?

Table 1: Key challenges faced by teachers in teaching of Literature in English

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Teachers feel adequately trained and supported to teach Literature in English effectively	25 (50%)	16 (32%)	9 (18%)	0 (0%)
Lack of resources, difficulty in covering the syllabus affect teaching of the subject	36 (72%)	14 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
It is challenging teaching literary analysis, managing classroom, adapting to student needs and abilities	31 (62%)	13 (28%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)

The table shows that majority of the respondents are faced with challenges teaching the subject, particularly in the area of lack of resources, and covering of the syllabus (100% agree/strongly agree). This area calls for improvement.

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E-ISSN 2737-0107

Research Question 2: How do teacher's qualification, training, pedagogical practices and resource availability influence literature instruction?

Table 2: Teacher's qualification, training, pedagogical practices and resource availability influence literature instruction

Items	SA	A	D	SD
There is availability of resources for teaching Literature in my school	12 (24%)	26 (52%)	8 (16%)	4 (8%)
Professional development workshops and seminars are frequently organised	0 (0%)	14 (28%)	16 (32%)	20 (40%)
Teaching methods like class discussions, group work, project-based learning are applied	24 (48%)	26 (52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Majority of the respondents (76% agree/strongly agree) noted that resources to teach literature are available. Likewise, all respondents (100% disagree/strongly disagree) note that teachers employ necessary pedagogical practices to enhance student success in the subject. However, area needing improvement is the professional development (72% disagree/strongly disagree) where a notable portion of respondents express concerns.

Research Question 3: How can Students' perceptions, attitudes and engagement with literature affect engagement?

Table 3: Students' perceptions, attitudes and engagement with literature affect engagement

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Students are motivated and often read literature outside class	14 (28%)	24 (48%)	12 (24%)	0 (0%)
Students understand the purposes of studying literature to include improvement of reading and comprehension skills, learning different cultures and perspectives	8 (16%)	27 (54%)	7 (14%)	8 (16%)
Students feel engaged with literature during classes	11 (22%)	31 (62%)	8 (16%)	0 (0%)

The table reveals majority of the students in the survey are motivated to study the subject outside class (76% agree/strongly agree), which in turn aids their comprehension skills (70% agree/strongly agree), and engagement in the subject as noted by majority (84% agree/strongly agree).

Research Question 4: What institutional and systemic factors that affect teaching literature?

Table 4: Institutional and systemic factors that affect teaching literature

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Adequate library resources, digital tools and platforms, literary texts and materials are available to teach literature in my school	6 (12%)	20 (40%)	24 (48%)	0 (0%)
Teachers receive feedback or coaching on teaching practices from school administrators or peers	15 (30%)	33 (66%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
The national or state education policy do not adequately impact teaching of literature	5 (10%)	38 (76%)	5 (10%)	2 (4%)

The table shows that a slight majority perceived adequate library resources affect literature instruction (52% agree/strongly agree), while nearly half of the population (48%) disagreed. This raises concern, and the need for provision of resources to improve literature instruction in schools. Nearly all respondents (96% agree/strongly agree) confirm teachers receive feedback on teaching, and most believe education policy do not adequately impact literature teaching (86% agree/strongly agree).

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E-ISSN 2737-0107

Research Question 5: What Strategies and interventions that can enhance teaching and learning of literature?

Table 5

RQ 5: Strategies and interventions that can enhance teaching and learning of literature

Items	SA	A	D	SD
Effective teaching strategies like discussion-based learning, project-based learning, will improve teaching and learning of Literature in English	15 (30%)	35 (70%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Differentiation of instruction to meet the diverse needs of students in literature classes is a reliable intervention.	10 (20%)	21 (42%)	9 (18%)	10 (20%)
School administrators can support teachers in enhancing the teaching and learning of Literature through resource support, curriculum support, and parent engagement	24 (48%)	26 (52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

In the domain of enhancing literature instruction, the entirety of respondents (100%) agreed that implementation of effective pedagogical strategies would exert positive influence on the teaching and learning of literature. Under differentiation of instructions to meet students' diverse needs, majority of the respondents (62% agree/strongly agree) concurred that the strategy would yield positive result in the subject. All respondents (100%) agreed that school administrators can support teachers through resources and engagement.

Discussion of the Findings

The study revealed that majority of the teachers are faced with challenges teaching Literature, with 50% of the respondents reporting inadequate training; 72% noting lack of resources, and difficulty in covering the syllabus that in turn affect teaching of the subject; and 62% reveal challenges in management of classroom, and adapting to diverse student needs. The results support Agbatutu's (2020) assertions that many Nigerian literature teachers struggle with a lack of preparation as a result of inadequate training and development. Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Darling-Hammond (2000) address the aforementioned by arguing that teachers must design effective strategies to support student learning and development, participate in current training and development to stay abreast with technology and best practices.

The study indicated that schools provide resources for teaching Literature as 76% of the respondents confirmed this. In the aspect of organising professional development workshops and seminars related to Literature instruction, majority of the respondents (40%) reported that teachers are disadvantaged. Investigating pedagogical practices, all of the respondents (100%) reveal that teachers apply and vary teaching methods like class discussions, group work, project-based learning in Literature classes. Hattie's (2003) assertion that teachers who lack current knowledge and abilities may find it difficult to offer high-quality instruction is supported by the shortcomings observed in the areas of ongoing teacher training, pedagogical practices and available resources.

The study showed that students are motivated and often read literature outside class as indicated by majority of the respondents (76%). The study also stated that students understand the purposes of studying literature to include improvement of reading and comprehension skills, learning different cultures and perspectives, analysing and interpreting complex texts, and developing critical thinking and writing skills as indicated by 70% (who agree/strongly agree). The study further revealed that students feel engaged with literature during classes as reported by the majority of respondents (84%). Gay's (2000) report supports the latter conclusion, claiming that continuous professional development (CPD) enables instructors to be more aware of their students' social, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds as this will not only assist teachers improve their teaching methods, but also help students perceive, develop a good attitude towards, and engage with literature. Okafor and Nwosu (2020) and Gambari and Ogunleye (2017) continue to emphasise constant professional development programs aid in overcoming challenges in teaching literature.

The findings showed that slightly over half of the schools (52% agree/strongly agree) provide resources materials to enhance literature instruction, while nearly half of the schools (48% disagree) do not. Nearly all

ISSN 2736-0091
E-ISSN 2737-0107

respondents (96% agree/strongly agree) confirm teachers receive feedback on teaching practices from school administrators for an improved effective teaching experience. The research also noted that institutional factors like the national and state policies do not adequately impact teaching of literature as confirmed by the population (86% agree/strongly agree). The research verifies Oyinloye (2017) and Amaghionyeodiwe (2014)'s argument that literature education in Nigerian schools is hampered by a lack of libraries, top-notch amenities, textbooks, and skilled educators, particularly in government-owned schools. While policy and curriculum difficulties such as a lack of literary resources, insufficient funding, and cultural relevance hamper the subject's teaching and learning (Adeyemi, 2010; Jegede, 2018; Okebukola, 2013).

To adopt and utilise strategies that would enhance teaching and learning of literature, the study revealed that teaching strategies like discussion-based learning, project-based learning, technology integration, and role-playing or dramatisation will improve teaching and learning of the subject as indicated by all (100% agree/strongly agree) of the respondents. The study highlighted differentiation of instruction to meet the diverse needs of students in literature classes as a reliable intervention to improve learning outcomes as noted by 52% being the majority of the population who agreed and strongly agreed based on their experiences in class. In the same vein, the study confirmed that school administrators' support for teachers through resource support, curriculum support, and parent engagement is a vital strategy in enhancing the teaching and learning of literature as confirmed by all of the respondents (100% agree/strongly agree). Collaborative findings confirm strategies like effective teaching approaches, differentiated instruction, and administrative support aid in overcoming problems associated in literature teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Okoro & Okafor, 2019; Tomlinson, 2017).

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the discourse on teaching literature in English in secondary schools, as observed in the selected secondary schools in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State illustrate both the problems and potentials associated with teaching literature in Nigeria. Teaching literature in English presents significant challenges that impede effective learning, yet it also offers valuable prospects for enhancing both instruction and student outcomes. Addressing the identified challenges while leveraging opportunities such as improved teacher training and resource utilization can transform literature classrooms into dynamic, engaging learning environments. The case study of selected secondary schools in the Odeda Local Government Area underscores the multifaceted problems of teaching literature in English in secondary schools, and that addressing these challenges require a collaborative effort among educational authorities, teachers, parents, and students. When Ministry of Education develop policies that support the teaching and learning of English literature by improving teacher training, resources, and teaching methods, and when teachers themselves take into account the socio-cultural context, teaching literature would be more effective, ultimately improving students' academic performance and future prospects. In addition, the study's findings on the effectiveness of constructivist approaches, such as reader-response and inquiry-based learning, can inform teachers' pedagogical decisions and improve student engagement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers should adopt context-sensitive and interactive teaching methods that promote student-centered approaches, such as drama, group debates, and digital storytelling, for active learning in literature classes.
2. School authorities should provide continuous professional development through regular teacher training workshops to enhance teachers' skills on modern pedagogical techniques and literary analysis.
3. Teachers should adopt strategies to boost student motivation by incorporating culturally relevant texts and linking literature to real-world situations, as steps to increase student motivation and engagement in the subject.
4. School administrators should encourage parents to engage with teachers to support students' literary development, thereby addressing the challenges of teaching English literature in Odeda Local Government Area.
5. Ministry of Education develop policies that support the teaching and learning of English literature just like other core subjects in schools through curriculum review, regular and compulsory workshops, resource funding

ISSN 2736-0091
E-ISSN 2737-0107

and allocation, and time-to-time engagement with teachers and experts, who are stakeholders in policy-making for literature.

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