
**Enhancing English Language Teaching in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions: A
Pathway to Global Competence**

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Paper Received on 25-10-2024, Accepted on 23-11-2024
Published on 25-11-24; DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2024.9.4.304

Abstract

The teaching of English in Nigerian tertiary institutions remains crucial for students' academic and professional success. Despite the centrality of English as the medium of instruction, the current state of English language education is hindered by outdated curricula, traditional teaching methods, and a lack of technological integration. This study explores how alternative frameworks like Krashen's Input Hypothesis and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach can enhance English language teaching in these institutions. Drawing on global best practices, particularly the emphasis on comprehensible input and real-world language use, this study highlights the benefits of adopting communicative and technology-driven methods to foster language acquisition. In doing so, it highlights the current challenges of language acquisition in these institutions, such as large class sizes, inadequate teacher training, and limited resources, while proposing reforms to better align the curriculum with global trends. The findings suggest that adopting these approaches could significantly improve students' linguistic competence, academic performance, and readiness for global engagement.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching, English Language Teaching, Input Hypothesis, Nigerian Tertiary Institutions, Second Language Acquisition.

Introduction

The teaching of English in Nigerian tertiary institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic success and professional careers. As English serves as the official language of instruction, it is essential for students to master it not only for communication but also for engaging effectively with academic content across disciplines. Despite its importance, the state of English education in Nigerian universities, colleges of education, and polytechnics face numerous challenges, some of which have persisted over time, while others have emerged with changes in societal and technological dynamics. Fatiloro (2015) outlines several enduring challenges in English language teaching, including overpopulation, inadequate staffing, inconsistent government policies, lack of essential teaching facilities, and mother-tongue interference, all of which impede the effective teaching of English in Nigeria's higher institutions (p. 26).

In many Nigerian tertiary institutions, English is not only taught as a discipline in departments of English and Linguistics but also used as the medium of instruction in virtually all academic programs. Thus, proficiency in English is a prerequisite for students' overall academic success. However, several issues have hampered effective English teaching, including underdeveloped curricula that fail to reflect modern linguistic trends, inadequate pedagogical methods, and insufficient teacher training. Muhammad H. A. et al. (2018) notes that various issues, such as inadequate curricula and insufficient teacher training, impede effective English teaching (p. 11).

Moreover, the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in English language education has widened. Students often struggle with advanced academic writing, research skills, and critical thinking—core competencies necessary for success in higher education. This inadequacy is exacerbated by a heavy reliance on traditional, lecture-based instruction, which rarely fosters engagement, creativity, or critical analysis. Accordingly, Yede (2020) observes that the traditional methods utilized in teaching English fail to promote adequate communicative competence expected of learners. This issue is tied to a focus on rules, drills, and grammatical accuracy, which do not foster real-world application or effective communication skills (p. 142).

From this, it can be observed that some of the primary challenges hindering the effective teaching of English in Nigerian tertiary institutions include outdated curricula and many such institutions still operate with syllabi that have not been

revised to include recent developments in language teaching. The current curriculum may not prioritize skills such as digital literacy, academic writing, and public speaking, which are essential in today's globalized world. Large class sizes or overcrowded classrooms make individualized attention nearly impossible. In such settings, teachers often resort to lecturing, which reduces opportunities for interactive or communicative learning methods. The diverse linguistic backgrounds of students compound this problem, as some students enter with limited proficiency in English. The scholars also hint at the lack of adequate resources such as language labs, multimedia facilities, and contemporary teaching materials, which hampers effective language acquisition. Libraries in many tertiary institutions lack access to up-to-date English language texts, while access to internet resources remains unreliable for many students. Nigeria's rich linguistic diversity, with over 500 indigenous languages, also creates a unique learning environment where students bring different language influences into the classroom. This situation often leads to interference in students' written and spoken English, affecting overall proficiency. It can be equally noted that the economic realities facing many students also contribute to the challenges of learning English. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may have had limited exposure to quality English instruction at earlier levels of education, which further impairs their language development at the tertiary level. Lastly, there is a growing decline in the culture of reading among students, a trend that has been attributed to the increasing influence of social media and the internet. Students' limited engagement with reading materials outside of academic requirements severely limits their language development, particularly in areas like vocabulary acquisition and comprehension.

Addressing the challenges facing English language teaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions is essential for the broader development of the country's higher education system and its graduates. English proficiency is crucial for academic success, as students must demonstrate mastery in writing, presenting research, and engaging with global academic conversations. Moreover, as Nigerian graduates enter a competitive global job market, their command of English often becomes a key determinant of their employability.

This study aims to highlight these pressing issues and provide actionable insights on how to improve the teaching of English in a way that enhances students' linguistic competence and academic performance. It contributes to ongoing efforts to reform Nigeria's educational system by offering a focused analysis of how English

language teaching, as a critical aspect of higher education, can be improved to meet contemporary needs. By addressing these challenges, Nigeria can produce graduates who are not only proficient in English but also equipped with the necessary skills for leadership, innovation, and global engagement in the 21st century.

Literature Review: Theoretical Background

Improving the teaching of English in Nigerian tertiary institutions requires a comprehensive understanding of both global and local perspectives on language education. Theoretical frameworks for language acquisition and teaching strategies vary across countries, but there are valuable insights that Nigeria can adopt, especially from nations like India, which faces similar multilingual challenges. This section reviews global perspectives on English education, examines local challenges specific to Nigeria, and discusses relevant theories that provide a foundation for understanding and addressing the current issues.

Global Perspectives: Lessons from Around the World

The teaching of English in higher education systems around the world has evolved, with many countries adopting innovative strategies to improve language proficiency among students. These international examples offer valuable lessons for Nigeria's context.

India, like Nigeria, is a multilingual country where English functions as a second language and serves as the medium of instruction in many tertiary institutions. India has developed various models of English education that balance local languages with English, ensuring that students are proficient in both. One such model is the Three-Language Formula, which encourages students to learn their regional language and English. Nigeria can take valuable lessons from India's approach to English education, particularly its attempt to improve the system through initiatives like the Three-Language Formula.

The Three Language Formula in India was introduced to promote multilingualism and linguistic integration by encouraging proficiency in English, Hindi, and a regional language. Despite its uneven implementation across states, it still serves as a model for linguistic and cultural cohesion. As Vater and Sen (2019) note, "the three-language formula aims to promote 'multilingualism' and 'national harmony'" by making citizens proficient in their mother tongue, English, and Hindi (p. 1). This structured approach encourages a balanced linguistic identity, allowing for both local language preservation and global language competence through English. Even though states like Tamil Nadu have opted for a two-language formula,

the three-language system continues to hold potential for ensuring that Indian students gain proficiency in English, which "remained the uncontroversial, neutral language of statecraft" (Vater & Sen, 2019, p. 2). This balanced linguistic policy allows for the integration of diverse linguistic identities while maintaining English as a critical link language for broader opportunities.

Despite India not fully implementing the formula across all states, the model promotes a balanced proficiency in both local languages and English, ensuring linguistic and cultural integration. Nigeria, also a multilingual country, can benefit by adopting a more structured and inclusive language policy. By promoting local languages alongside English, Nigeria can enhance students' linguistic competence while ensuring cultural preservation. Incorporating such models will not only address the current over-reliance on English but also foster bilingual or multilingual proficiency, ensuring that students can excel academically and socially in diverse settings.

Finland, known for its advanced education system, has incorporated technology extensively into language education. Digital tools such as language-learning apps, virtual classrooms, and interactive platforms are used to supplement traditional learning methods. By embracing technology, Finland has made language learning more dynamic and accessible, allowing students to practice English through multimedia resources and online communities.

In line with global best practices, Nigeria can enhance the teaching of English by adopting ICT in educational settings, following Finland's successful model. Lander (2019, p. 33) cites Vahtivuori-Hänninen & Kynälsahti (2016), who identified four key elements for integrating ICT in schools: developing learning environments, supporting student growth, addressing teachers' needs, and fulfilling societal demands. By incorporating ICT into the English language curriculum, Nigerian institutions can provide innovative teaching practices that engage students, improve learning outcomes, and equip both teachers and students with the necessary tools for the modern workplace. Emulating such an approach would support Nigeria's goal of producing globally competent graduates. Incorporating similar technological advancements in Nigeria could help address the limitations of large class sizes and lack of resources. Tools like online quizzes, virtual discussions, and interactive assignments can provide students with opportunities to practice and refine their English skills independently, complementing classroom instruction.

In the UK, the communicative approach to teaching English has become standard

practice, emphasizing the importance of real-world language use over traditional grammar-focused instruction. This method engages students in activities such as role-playing, discussions, and collaborative projects, which encourage them to use English in a meaningful context. By focusing on communication and practical application, students become more confident and competent in using the language beyond the classroom. Canale and Swain (1980) provide a foundational theoretical framework that highlights the key elements of communicative competence. They emphasize that language teaching should extend beyond grammatical accuracy and focus on the ability of learners to function effectively in diverse communicative contexts. As they explain, "communicative approaches are characterized by a focus on the functional aspects of language use and the development of learners' abilities to communicate in a variety of contexts" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 1).

This perspective underscores the importance of engaging students in meaningful activities that reflect real-world language use, such as role-playing, discussions, and collaborative projects. In these activities, learners are encouraged to practice English in practical and dynamic contexts, allowing them to build confidence and fluency. Rather than focusing solely on memorizing grammatical rules, students develop skills that enable them to navigate real-life interactions where language is used naturally and fluidly.

Local Challenges: Contextual Issues in Nigeria

While global perspectives provide useful insights, it's crucial to recognize the unique challenges that Nigeria faces in the teaching of English at the tertiary level. These challenges stem from both historical and contemporary factors that affect language education.

Nigeria's linguistic diversity, with over 500 indigenous languages, creates a complex environment for teaching English. Many students enter tertiary institutions with varying levels of proficiency in English, depending on their primary language of communication. This linguistic diversity often leads to interference from mother tongues in students' use of English, especially in written and spoken forms. Nigeria's linguistic diversity, with over 500 languages, presents significant challenges in teaching English as students enter tertiary institutions with varying levels of English proficiency. This complexity, often compounded by mother-tongue interference, affects students' written and spoken English. As Akindele et al. (2022) explain, many Nigerian students struggle with using English accurately because their primary language influences their expression, particularly in educational and formal settings

(p. 73). The authors further emphasize that English remains crucial for academic success in Nigeria, given the vast linguistic diversity across the country.

Unlike countries like the UK, where English is the native language, Nigerian students are primarily second-language learners. This creates a distinct challenge for educators, who must address both the grammatical aspects of English and the cultural-linguistic influences that shape students' understanding and usage of the language.

In this vein, Uwen et al. (2020) examine the sociolinguistic shifts in Nigeria, particularly the increasing dominance of English in urban areas such as Calabar. The study finds that due to parental influence, educational policies, and the effects of globalization, English is becoming the first language for many children, while Indigenous languages face endangerment (p. 399). This trend presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Nigerian tertiary institutions. On one hand, the preservation of Indigenous languages must be addressed to maintain cultural identity. On the other hand, the widespread use of English offers a unique opportunity to enhance students' global competencies. The authors argue that proficiency in English opens numerous opportunities, including career advancement and social mobility, which are essential in a globalized world (p. 401). Thus, Nigerian tertiary institutions should design curricula that prioritize English proficiency while fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity.

Another critical challenge in Nigeria is the economic disparity that exists between urban and rural areas. Students from wealthier backgrounds often have access to private schools with better English instruction, while those from economically disadvantaged areas face significant educational hurdles. Tertiary institutions often reflect these disparities, with students arriving at universities with vastly different levels of English proficiency. Additionally, the lack of resources in many Nigerian institutions—such as textbooks, language labs, and access to the Internet—further exacerbates the problem. Unlike countries like Finland, where digital learning tools are readily available, many Nigerian universities struggle to provide basic teaching materials.

Nigeria's economic disparities between urban and rural areas significantly affect access to quality English education. As Iwuchukwu (2021, p. 13) highlights, students from disadvantaged areas often lack adequate resources, such as qualified teachers, textbooks, and modern language labs. These limitations result in varying levels of English proficiency among students entering tertiary institutions. Moreover,

the lack of instructional resources, including access to digital learning tools, further exacerbates the problem, hindering students from rural areas in comparison to their urban counterparts.

Data Presentation: The Nigerian Polytechnic English Curriculum Today

Since 1999, the English curriculum in Nigerian Polytechnics, for example, has remained unchanged, even as significant advancements in technology and shifts in global educational paradigms have transformed higher learning worldwide. The current study presents data and focuses on the first and second-semester English curriculum and course specifications for National Diploma I programs, which were published by the National Board for Technical Education in 1999. These courses were originally designed to enhance students' proficiency in English and equip them with the necessary communication skills for academic and professional success. However, despite the rapid technological advancements and growing emphasis on global competence, these curricular frameworks have persisted for over two decades without substantial reform.

This stagnation is not unique to Nigerian Polytechnics; similar institutions of higher learning across Nigeria may also be operating under outdated curricular models. The resilience of these frameworks raises important questions about their relevance in a modern, globalized world. As educational institutions worldwide continually adapt to meet new demands, the static nature of the Nigerian Polytechnic English curriculum highlights a pressing need for reform. This study presents the current state of the curriculum as a foundation for exploring how it can be aligned with contemporary global standards. The detailed contents of the courses, which aim to improve students' knowledge of English, are presented below as a basis for future reforms:

Course Title	-	Use of English I
Credit Units	-	2
Schedule	-	First Semester
Goals	-	This course is designed to provide the student with the necessary language skills which will enable him cope effectively with the challenges of his course, to use English effectively in the practice of his chosen profession as well as interact with others in the society.

General Objectives

On completion of the course, the student should:

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1. Develop appropriate study skills.
2. Know the nature of language.
3. Understand the basic rules of grammar.
4. Know the essential qualities of paragraphs.
5. Appreciate literary works in English.

Table I:

First Semester English curriculum and course specifications of the National Diploma I

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
Develop appropriate study skills	Study Skills 1.1 Explain the necessity for acquiring good notetaking/making techniques 1.2 List the methods of notetaking/making 1.3 Use the dictionary correctly 1.4 List information sources in the library 1.5 Locate information in the sources in 1.4 above 1.6 Identify good reading habits 1.7 Explain the different methods of reading, viz., scan, skim, normal, and study 1.8 Use the different reading explained in 1.7 above.
Know the nature of language	Language 2.1 Explain the concept of language 2.2 List the characteristics of language 2.3 Explain the four language skills, viz., speaking, listening, writing, speaking 2.4 Explain the functions of language 2.5 List the uses of the English language in Nigeria, e.g., as the

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	Language of research, government, commerce, etc.
Understand the basic rules of grammar	<p>Grammatical Conventions</p> <p>3.1 Explain grammar</p> <p>3.2 Explain parts of speech,</p> <p>3.3 Analyze the use of parts of speech in sentences</p> <p>3.4 Correct common errors in the use of parts of speech in sentences.</p> <p>3.5 Construct sentences with the correct syntactic arrangement</p> <p>3.6 List punctuation marks</p> <p>3.7 Enumerate the uses of punctuation marks.</p> <p>3.8 Punctuate a given sentence</p> <p>3.9 Explain idioms</p> <p>3.10 Explain figures of speech</p> <p>3.11 Explain affixation</p> <p>3.12 Construct sentences to illustrate idioms, figures of speech, and affixes</p>
Know the essential qualities of paragraphs	<p>Paragraphing</p> <p>4.1 Define a paragraph</p> <p>4.2 Name the parts of the paragraph, viz., topic sentence, development, and conclusion/transition.</p> <p>4.3 Explain the thematic qualities of a paragraph, viz., unity, coherence, and emphasis.</p> <p>4.4 Explain methods of paragraph development, viz., example, definition, comparison, and contrast, etc.</p> <p>4.5 Explain methods of ordering details in a paragraph, viz.</p>

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	Less complex to more complex and vice versa, less important to more important and vice versa, spatial, chronological, etc. 4.6 Write specific paragraphs to illustrate 4.2 to 4.5 above.
Appreciate literary works in English.	Literature in English 5.1 Give the meaning of literature 5.2 Trace the development of literature 5.3 Differentiate between the literary genres 5.4 Explain the functions of literature 5.5 Explain the terminology of prose fiction, e.g., plot, setting, characterization, etc. 5.6 Answer an essay question on a given novel.

Source: (National Board for Technical Education, 1999).

Course Title	-	Communication in English I
Credit Units	-	2
Schedule	-	Second Semester
Goals	-	This course is designed to enable students to acquire the necessary communication skills, know the techniques of correspondence, and comprehend written materials.

General Objectives

On completion of the course, the student should:

1. Understand the concept of communication.
2. Know how to make oral presentations.
3. Know the essential elements of correspondence.
4. Know the rules of comprehension and interpretation.

Table II:

Second Semester English curriculum and course specifications of National Diploma I

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES
Understand the concept of	Communication

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communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Define communication1.2 Analyze the process of communication1.3 Analyze the purpose of communication1.4 Explain the relationship between communication and language1.5 Explain the impact of interference on communication at various levels, e.g., phonological, syntactic, etc.1.6 Explain code-mixing, code-switching, and dissonance in communication.
Know how to make oral presentations.	Oral Presentations <ol style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Label a diagram of the organs of speech2.2 Describe the functions of the organs in 2.1 above in speech<ol style="list-style-type: none">Production2.3 List phonemes of English2.4 Produce correctly each of the phonemes listed in 2.3 above2.5 Pronounce correctly by making distinctions between sound<ol style="list-style-type: none">Contrasts in consonantal and vowel systems of English2.6 Explain the principles of effective speaking, viz., correct<ol style="list-style-type: none">Use of stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns2.7 Read fluently
Know the essential elements of correspondence	Correspondence <ol style="list-style-type: none">3.1 List the various type of correspondence, e.g., letters, memos, circular, etc.3.2 Explain the various parts of the letter3.3 Differentiate between formal and informal letter formats

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	<p>3.4 Explain the characteristics of styles suitable for formal and informal letters.</p> <p>3.5 Explain the functions of the first, middle, and last paragraph</p> <p>3.6 Write a formal and an informal letter.</p>
<p>Know the rules of comprehension and interpretation</p>	<p>Comprehension and Interpretation</p> <p>4.1 Identify the main ideas in a given passage</p> <p>4.2 Differentiate the main ideas from the details in a passage</p> <p>4.3 Use the main idea to anticipate specific details in a passage</p> <p>4.4 Use context clues to aid comprehension</p> <p>4.5 Identify relationship patterns of ideas in a passage</p> <p>4.6 Use context clues such as definitions, restatements, and examples to derive meaning</p> <p>4.7 Explain how affixes modify meanings</p> <p>4.8 Interpret figurative language in a passage</p> <p>4.9 Draw conclusions from available information</p>

Source: (Nigerian et al. for Technical Education, 1999).

Relevant Theories: Supporting Language Acquisition

To effectively address the persistent challenges of English language teaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions, it is crucial to explore alternative pedagogical frameworks grounded in proven language acquisition theories. Traditional methods of English instruction, often heavily focused on rote learning and grammar drills, have shown limitations in fostering genuine communicative competence among students. As global education trends evolve, Nigerian institutions must adopt approaches that emphasize real-world language use and practical application, enabling students to confidently navigate academic and professional settings. Two key theoretical frameworks that offer promising alternatives are Krashen's Input Hypothesis and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis

Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of

comprehensible input in language learning, suggesting that students acquire language best when they are exposed to language slightly above their current proficiency level (i+1). This theory supports the idea that exposure to English through reading, listening, and interactive discussions can significantly improve students' proficiency (Krashen, 1985). In the Nigerian context, educators should focus on providing students with rich, meaningful exposure to English. This can be achieved through a combination of reading materials, multimedia resources, and classroom discussions that push students to engage with language beyond memorization.

The various hypotheses concerning language acquisition offer valuable insights into effective strategies that can be applied in the Nigerian context to enhance language acquisition in tertiary institutions. Among these hypotheses, Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1992) stands out as a relevant model that emphasizes the significance of comprehensible input (CI) in the language learning process. According to Krashen, language acquisition occurs primarily through understanding messages, suggesting that learners must be exposed to input that is both understandable and slightly beyond their current proficiency level, often denoted as "i+1" (Krashen, 1992, pp. 409-410). In the Nigerian context, where English is often taught as a second language, the principles of the Input Hypothesis can be effectively integrated into curricular designs and instructional practices. For instance, educators can create learning environments that prioritize comprehensible input by utilizing materials and resources that reflect the students' linguistic capabilities while also challenging them to advance. This could involve the use of authentic texts, multimedia resources, and interactive learning activities that engage students in meaningful communication.

Moreover, the concept of the Affective Filter is crucial in this context. Krashen posits that a learner's emotional state significantly impacts their ability to acquire a language. A low Affective Filter—characterized by reduced anxiety and increased motivation—facilitates better comprehension and assimilation of language input. Therefore, creating a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere is essential in Nigerian tertiary institutions. By fostering positive relationships among students and between students and instructors, educational institutions can lower the Affective Filter, making learners more receptive to comprehensible input.

The Reading Hypothesis, a subset of the Input Hypothesis, further underscores the importance of reading as a vehicle for language acquisition. By promoting extensive reading practices among students, Nigerian institutions can enhance language acquisition outcomes. This could include the incorporation of

diverse reading materials that align with students' interests and cultural contexts, encouraging them to engage with the language actively. Such practices not only stimulate language acquisition but also foster critical thinking and cultural appreciation.

Additionally, the Simple Output Hypothesis and the Output Plus Correction Hypothesis provide insights into the role of production in language learning. While the Simple Output Hypothesis suggests that language production alone can lead to acquisition, the Output Plus Correction Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of feedback. In the Nigerian educational context, fostering opportunities for students to practice speaking and writing, combined with constructive feedback from peers and instructors, can significantly enhance their language skills. This could involve structured peer review sessions, workshops, and interactive classroom discussions that allow for the real-time application of language skills.

Furthermore, the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis asserts that learners refine their language skills when they encounter communication breakdowns. In practice, this means that providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations where they must negotiate meaning will lead to greater language competence. Group activities, presentations, and collaborative projects can serve as effective platforms for learners to practice their output and receive feedback, thereby facilitating the acquisition of new language rules and vocabulary.

Lastly, the Skill-Building Hypothesis suggests that conscious learning of language rules, followed by practice, leads to automation of these rules. In Nigerian polytechnics, integrating skill-building exercises—such as drills and contextual practice—into the curriculum can aid students in transitioning from conscious learning to automatic language use. This approach not only aligns with Krashen's theories but also addresses the practical needs of learners, equipping them with the necessary skills for effective communication in English.

This study argues that these hypotheses of language acquisition proposed by Krashen offer a robust framework for enhancing English language teaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions. By focusing on comprehensible input, creating supportive learning environments, promoting extensive reading, facilitating productive output with feedback, and incorporating skill-building exercises, educators can significantly improve language acquisition outcomes. Adapting these principles to the unique linguistic and cultural context of Nigeria can lead to more effective and engaging language learning experiences, ultimately preparing students

for success in a globalized world.

Krashen's input hypothesis has proven to be highly effective in advancing language education across different contexts, including China. Despite China being recognized for its progress in various educational fields, its implementation of Krashen's theory in teaching English, particularly listening comprehension, has been transformative. According to Li Chao (2013), "Krashen's Input Hypothesis, with its wide influence in the western language research field, impresses Chinese researchers as convincing, systematic, and having practical value for Chinese foreign language teaching" (p. 49). This highlights the global applicability of Krashen's theory, even in advanced educational settings.

In the Chinese context, where English learning is time-consuming and often yields limited success, the Input Hypothesis has provided a structured framework for improving language acquisition. Specifically, it suggests that learners must be exposed to language slightly beyond their current competence level, labeled as "i+1." By creating comprehensible yet challenging input, teachers foster an environment where students can progress effectively. As Chao (2013) explains, "the language which learners are exposed to should be just beyond their current competence. They can understand most of it, but still be challenged to make progress" (p. 49). This nuanced approach has allowed Chinese educators to address the critical challenges their students face in English learning, especially in listening.

The success of Krashen's Input Hypothesis in China strengthens the argument that Nigeria, too, can benefit from adopting this approach. Like China, Nigeria aims to prepare its students to succeed in a globalized world. By incorporating Krashen's theory into English language instruction, Nigerian educational institutions can ensure their students are better equipped to meet global standards. The Input Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of continuous, comprehensible input, which aligns with the goal of helping students acquire not just basic linguistic skills but communicative competence, a critical asset in today's interconnected world.

Thus, if a rapidly developing nation like China can significantly enhance its language education using Krashen's Input Hypothesis, Nigeria should also consider utilizing this valuable approach to improve its English curriculum. Doing so will not only help students overcome the difficulties of language acquisition but also ensure their competitiveness on a global scale. As Krashen (1985) emphasized, "learning a new language requires not only several exercises but also continuous conversation and reading," underscoring the need for comprehensive input that Nigeria's English

teaching reforms can embrace.

To strengthen the argument for adopting Krashen's Input Hypothesis in Nigerian tertiary institutions, it is important to recognize that the hypothesis has been widely recognized as a fundamental factor in second language acquisition (SLA). As Bahrani and Nekoueizadeh (2014) note, "SLA simply cannot take place in a vacuum without considering exposure to some sort of language input" (p. 2). This statement underscores the necessity of structured and continuous language input for effective language learning, aligning well with the goals of English language reforms in Nigeria.

Krashen's Input Hypothesis emphasizes that students must be exposed to comprehensible input which is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency ($i+1$). This concept is central to effective SLA. According to Krashen (1981), "comprehensible language input is the only causative variable in SLA" (as cited in Bahrani & Nekoueizadeh, 2014, p. 4). This principle suggests that without adequate exposure to appropriately challenging language material, learners are unlikely to progress. Nigerian institutions should adopt this approach to ensure students receive the level of language exposure needed for global competitiveness.

Moreover, increasing the quantity and quality of comprehensible input has been shown to accelerate language acquisition. Bahrani and Nekoueizadeh (2014) explain that "more quantities of comprehensible input seem to cause faster or better SLA" (p. 4), which further supports the argument for incorporating more extensive and varied English language input into Nigerian curricula. This approach can help students not only pass exams but also use English effectively in international contexts.

By adopting Krashen's model, Nigeria can align its educational system with proven SLA theories that have been successful in other countries. Structured exposure to English in real-life communicative situations will prepare Nigerian students to meet the demands of a globalized world, where language competence is essential.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), or the Communicative Approach (CA), is an approach to language teaching that aligns with Krashen's theory by emphasizing language use in real-life situations. CLT advocates for activities that promote interaction, such as group work, peer teaching, and role-play. This method shifts the focus from grammar and syntax to fluency and practical communication.

In Nigeria, where students often struggle with practical language use, CLT can be a valuable tool for improving language proficiency. By encouraging students to use English in meaningful contexts—such as debates, discussions, and collaborative projects—teachers can help students develop both linguistic and communicative competence. Ezeh et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of interactive approaches to language teaching. They argue that classroom interaction, facilitated through communicative language teaching, enhances learning by engaging students in active participation rather than passive reception of information (p. 112). This approach could involve group discussions, presentations, and language games, which would make the learning environment more dynamic and participatory. Such methodologies align with global standards of language education and could significantly improve students' communicative competence.

Nigeria can adopt elements of the communicative approach to encourage more interaction in the classroom by integrating activities such as group discussions, presentations, and language games. These methods actively engage students, fostering their communicative competence. As Akinwamide and Akande (2019) highlight, classroom interaction not only boosts students' speaking skills but also allows them to attain fluency and effectively communicate in real-life situations. Encouraging this kind of active participation in language learning ensures that students are not merely passive recipients of information (p. 12).

India has also implemented communicative language teaching (CLT) in many institutions, focusing on practical usage and communication skills rather than rote memorization of grammar rules. This has helped Indian students become more fluent and confident in using English in both academic and professional settings. Additionally, India's investment in teacher training programs and online education resources has greatly enhanced the quality of English instruction, especially in rural and underserved areas. The study "*Enhancing Communicative Competence of Undergraduate Students Using Communicative Language Teaching Approach*" conducted by Sharma (2022) concludes that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an effective strategy that enhances students' interest in learning and improves their communicative competence in English. Conducted at Kurukshetra University, Haryana, India, the research shows that by adopting a task-oriented and student-centered approach, where the teacher acts as a facilitator, CLT helps students develop language fluency and active participation. The use of activities such as dialogue memorization, role-plays, and group discussions engages students and

boosts their essential communication skills. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding students' language behavior, reducing the focus on grammar rules, and promoting mutual learning. The CLT approach fosters real-life language skills, enriching students' vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency, making it an adaptable and effective method for evolving educational needs (pp. 17-18).

Nigeria can learn from India's approach by adopting a more integrated model of language teaching that respects indigenous languages while strengthening English proficiency. Furthermore, investment in professional development for teachers and digital resources can help overcome challenges related to outdated teaching methods and limited access to materials. Vincent et al. (2021) argue that improving English teaching in Nigeria requires a shift from rigid grammar-translation methods to more dynamic, communicative approaches. Teachers must function as both artists and scientists, using creativity to engage students and assessment tools to monitor progress, thus fostering a more effective learning environment. However, the current lack of facilities and teacher preparedness in Nigeria remains a significant barrier to adopting these progressive teaching methods (pp. 224-225).

In addition to this, Ezech et al. (2022) emphasize the critical role of dictionaries as learning tools in English as a Second Language (ESL) environments. The authors highlight how dictionaries can help students overcome language challenges such as vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and writing skills development. They advocate for the integration of dictionary-based exercises in classroom activities to foster student independence and deeper engagement with the English language (p. 109). This suggests that Nigerian tertiary institutions should consider embedding dictionary skills training in their pedagogical strategies, enabling students to refine their language abilities and develop autonomous learning habits. By training students to effectively use both traditional and electronic dictionaries, educators can improve students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and overall communicative competence, thus enhancing their readiness for global challenges.

Conclusion

To address the challenges facing English language teaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions, adopting alternative approaches such as Krashen's Input Hypothesis and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach is essential. These frameworks emphasize real-world language use, student interaction, and exposure to comprehensible input, which can significantly improve students' language proficiency. The integration of these approaches into the current curriculum

can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, preparing students for both academic and professional success in a globalized world. However, successful implementation will require investments in teacher training, technological resources, and updated curricular models that prioritize communicative competence over rote memorization. By aligning the teaching of English with global best practices, Nigerian institutions can produce graduates who are not only proficient in English but also equipped with the necessary skills for leadership and innovation on the global stage.

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Research Journal Of English (RJOE)

An International Peer-Reviewed English Journal Impact Factor: 8.16(SJIF)Vol-9, Issue-4(Oct-Dec),2024
Indexed in: International Citation Indexing (ICI), Cite factor, International Scientific Indexing (ISI),
Directory of Research Journal Indexing (DRJI) Google Scholar, Cosmos and Internet Archives.

Communicative Achievement.” *European Scientific Journal ESJ* 16.13
2020: 134–145. <URL:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1904>>.

How to cite this article?

Aminu Suleiman,” Enhancing English Language Teaching in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions:
A Pathway to Global Competence” *Research Journal Of English (RJOE)*9(4),PP:312-333,2024,
DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2024.9.4.333