

Cascades, Journal of the Department of French and International Studies

Cascades : Revue Internationale Du Departement De Français Et D'études Internationales

ISSN (Print): 2992-2992; E-ISSN: 2992-3670

www.cascadesjournals.com; Email: cascadejournals@gmail.com

VOLUME 3; NO. 1; APRIL, 2025 ; PAGE 89-96



## Exploring the Challenges Teachers Face in Using the Integrated Approach in Teaching Language in Junior High Schools in HOHOE Municipality

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing the integrated approach to language instruction in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality. The primary element influencing this study was the inadequate academic performance of students in the English language. The integrated method is essential in English language instruction and facilitates the enhancement of learners' linguistic abilities. The research was founded on the principles of Basil Bernstein's theory and reinforced by Theodore Frick's Integrated Education Theory. The research employed a qualitative methodology, utilising interviews with 10 circuit supervisors, 10 department heads, and 10 English teachers in Junior High Schools. It sought to furnish a thorough comprehension of a research topic by initially gathering qualitative data for elucidation. This strategy enabled researchers to attain a more profound comprehension of the research problem via qualitative methodologies. In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers, department heads, and circuit supervisors. Interview questions for Heads of Departments (language) focused on the solutions implemented to address the obstacles faced by teachers in instructing the English language. The study revealed several challenges, including inadequate teaching materials, a classroom environment that occasionally hindered teachers from engaging students in discussions or oral interactions, and the impact of vernacular languages that frequently disrupted English instruction. The study indicated that the curriculum content was often comprehensive and necessitated significant time allocation, which was insufficient in the current context, presenting a challenge. The study advised that to guarantee the efficient implementation of an integrated approach to English instruction in classrooms, educational stakeholders must establish policies and oversee teachers. Government authorities must to engage with educators to comprehend the difficulties encountered in executing an integrated approach within educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Challenges, teachers, students, English Language, Hohoe Municipality,

### Introduction

The obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the integrated approach to language instruction in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality. Yeboah (2014) identified that inadequate teaching and learning resources, excessive class sizes, misallocation of instructional time, incomplete English syllabi, teachers' limited English proficiency, students' negative attitudes towards English, and insufficient supervision contributed to poor student performance in the Sunyani Municipality of Ghana. Furthermore, Siaw (2016) asserts that training teachers in Ghana on pedagogical methods is regarded as one of the most significant factors that boost student outcomes. Furthermore, Torto (2017) indicated that educators in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana were unable to implement the curriculum as mandated due to pedagogical challenges. According to Akowuah, Patnaik, and Kyei (2018), in addition to the challenges posed by mother tongue, other factors contributing to low performance include inadequate teaching methods, a lack of textbooks, insufficient language resources, and a deficiency in teacher professionalism and development. Nketsia (2016) asserts that Ghana was unprepared to use this teaching style due to inadequate educational

environments, insufficient instructional resources, societal perceptions, and a lack of governmental impetus.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) contended that educators have numerous problems while implementing the integrated approach to student instruction. This study utilised the obstacles encountered by English teachers as the intervening variable. Webster and Son (2015) assert that the implementation of integrated education influences learning, as educators prioritise the English language over literature. Language is characterised by its diversity and complexity, as it expresses an individual's views and emotions. Originally spoken in numerous African nations, English posed a problem in its instruction as a second language (Razzak, 2015). Anstrom et al. (2017) examined the challenges associated with combining texts and the language background of learners. The Basic Education Certificate Examination indicates that the performance in English at Junior High Schools in Hohoe Municipality ranged from 6 to 9 points between 2017 and 2021, as shown in Table 1.1. The table below presents the BECE results from 2017 to 2021, detailing performance in the English Language for Junior High Schools in Hohoe Municipality, along with the grade points for five consecutive years.

**Table 1.1 BECE Performance in The English Language For Junior High Schools In Hohoe Municipality**

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Average Points	9	9	7	6	8

*Source: Basic Education Certificate Examination (2021)*

Table 1.1 presents the grade points for five successive years, spanning from 2017 to 2021. The findings revealed that Junior High Schools in Hohoe Municipality exhibited subpar performance in the English Language. In Ghana, the examination authority assesses pupils on a scale of 9, where Grade 1 denotes exceptional performance, Grade 2 signifies very good, Grade 3 indicates good, Grade 4 reflects ordinary, Grade 5 represents a pass, and Grades 6 to 9 correspond to failure, indicating the lowest performance (Akowuah, Patnaik & Kyei, 2018).

### **Problem Statement**

The performance of students in the English Language from 2017 to 2021 has been subpar in the majority of Junior High Schools within Hohoe Municipality (Akowuah, Patnaik & Kyei, 2018). The average scores in English language performance ranged from 6 to 9 between 2017 and 2021. A score of 6 points or lower shows inadequate performance. The subpar performance in English Language in junior high schools in Hohoe Municipality has elicited several concerns from educational stakeholders, including the government, district directors, and parents. Education stakeholders questioned whether teachers engaged students in class activities to facilitate understanding of the material, whether they employed appropriate teaching methods, whether they possessed sufficient content knowledge of the language, or whether they were incompetent (Torto, 2017). Nonetheless, the calibre of learners' accomplishments remains a paramount concern for educators because of the significance of education. The syllabus (MoE, 2012) mandates that English teachers employ an integrated approach to English Language instruction. It is essential to enquire: What problems do teachers encounter while employing the integrated method to teaching English Language in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality? This study examines the challenges teachers have while employing the integrated approach to teach Language in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality.

### **Study Objectives**

The objective of the study was to explore the challenges teachers face in using the integrated approach in teaching Language in junior high schools in Hohoe Municipality.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical framework

The performance of students in the English Language from 2017 to 2021 has been subpar in the majority of Junior High Schools within Hohoe Municipality (A kowuah, Patnaik & Kyei, 2018). The average scores in English language performance ranged from 6 to 9 between 2017 and 2021. A score of 6 points or lower signifies inadequate performance. The inadequate performance in English Language in junior high schools in Hohoe Municipality has elicited several concerns from educational stakeholders, including the government, district directors, and parents. Education stakeholders questioned whether teachers engaged students in class activities to facilitate comprehension of the material, whether they employed appropriate teaching methods, whether they possessed sufficient content knowledge of the language, or whether they exhibited incompetence (Torto, 2017). Nonetheless, the quality of learners' achievements remains a paramount concern for educators because of the significance of education. The syllabus (MoE, 2012) mandates that English teachers employ an integrated approach to English Language instruction. It is essential to enquire: What challenges do educators encounter while employing the integrated approach to teach the English language in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality? This study examines the challenges instructors have while employing the integrated approach to teaching language in junior high schools within Hohoe Municipality.

### Empirical Review

#### Challenges of teachers using the integrated approach in Teaching English Language

Salamonson claims that one of the difficulties English teachers encounter when teaching English is class management and the fast rise in classroom size inhibits teachers to involve students in talks and social networking. Moreover, Yen and Halili (2015) showed that since a teacher of English cannot reach all of them before time, class size would deter him from utilising strategies that fit a given topic successfully. Yang (2015) claims that the syllabus presents another difficulty for teachers applying the integrated approach since of its weighted nature. Apart from that, Dorle Ku (2013) investigated studies to prove the impact of different educational approaches and performance in Ghanaian border cities. The 41-specific goal of the study was to ascertain teaching strategies adopted by teachers in the Junior High Schools, identify the effects of the teaching methods on learners' academic success, and evaluate students' involvement or participation in the class and point out effects influencing students's success in the schools. The study made advantage of the descriptive research methodology. From a sample of 365 children, 12 teachers, and four head teachers carefully selected four schools built close to the Ghana-Togo border, the data was acquired via questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Based on qualitative data, teachers chosen from the used schools applied several instructional strategies. The findings also revealed that teachers in Hohoe Municipality battled with incorporating language learning and literature. Teachers thus required greater instruction and help to be competent in their work. Macharia (2017) investigated the solutions teachers in the Kiambu East region, central Kenya, had embraced to handle the difficulties of an integrated approach. With regard to adopting the idea of mixing and challenging information, using teaching materials and syllabus coverage, and knowing the teaching style, the study specifically aimed to find how teachers manage these problems. Descriptive survey analysis was the approach of the study. The researcher chose 34 secondary schools in Kiambu East for her population. The individuals were chosen by means of intentional sample. According to the study's results, most teachers who applied strategies went to seminars 42 and spoke with other colleagues. The survey also revealed that most institutions borrowed from surrounding universities and were driven to distribute the limited resources. The study also found that most respondents used extra lessons in leisure time to help with time management issues. According to the study, department heads inspired respondents who had negative opinions of the integrated program while they attended seminars and workshops. The survey revealed no difference in the approaches used by respondents with degrees of experience. Following Macharia (2017), the present study looked at teachers' difficulties applying an integrated approach to teach the English language. Researching the challenges of implementing integrated learning in Kenyan high schools, Barasa, Omulando, and Oseno (2014) saw the research conducted to highlight and suggest solutions for problems they were encountering. One used a descriptive survey. The study applied both methods and handled the data using descriptive and inferential statistics. According to the studies, during the use of the integrated strategy all institutions encountered the same issues. The study revealed that the key challenge for combining targeted preparation and time management with other issues include lack of time and surplus pupils in class preventing more efficient learning. The present study, however, sought to ascertain

whether the curriculum, teachers' topic expertise, and class size could provide difficulties for them applying an integrated strategy of English language instruction.

In 2016, Nketsia looked at issues influencing Ghanaian schools' application of the integrated approach. From the outcomes, Ghana was not ready for the roll-out of the integrated approach due to contextual constraints including inadequate facilities, lack of enough preparation, scarce resources, social beliefs, few government schools, and absence of a political will. More importantly, the survey also exposed the fact that many educators lacked the necessary experience to begin their careers. The study revealed a conceptual gap since it looked at issues affecting the realisation of the integrated strategy in Ghana. Torto (2017) looked at how Ghanaian students used English in Cape Coast Metropolis. The study followed a descriptive research model. The target population came to be 477 elementary schools. The choice was based on a basic random sampling technique. Every selected school had all primary 1 to 6 teachers specifically selected for the study. 288 teachers thus assembled a sample for the study. Twelve teachers were chosen and interviewed according to their experience. The linked literature helped the study identify some of the issues that teachers of English encountered in general. The present study concentrated especially on the integrated strategy to teach and learn English language. More involved in teaching and more focussed studying can be allowed by an educational strategy emphasising a solitary language expertise at a time. Furthermore, the two teachers and students have been known to resist expertise reconciliation in several localities and civilisations where the assistance in discrete language skills is highly appreciated (Richards & Rodgers, 2021). In such environments, coordinated guidance could not be suitable for the non-industrial nations like Ethiopia given absence of sufficient resources. In this regard, the continuous review looked at the problems EFL teachers encounter when displaying language competency holistically. Likewise, complex coordinated guiding with numerous language abilities tended to in turn more remarkable requirements on both the educator and the pupil. Though much as would be reasonable, the instructor expects to be well-prepared and competent. Simultaneously, educators can be anticipated to offer additional time and energy to getting ready materials suited for included instruction. In numerous areas all over the planet notably poor nations where educators are expected to demonstrate exceptionally big classes, the instructing of coordinated abilities may not be a incredibly useful decision (Hinkel, 2016). Another weight of coordinated instruction is students' uneven development of the four major scale talents (Hinkel, 2016; Harsh, 2013). For example, second language learners from English-speaking countries may have more grounded skills in tuning in and speaking than in reading and writing. English as unknown dialect students are most likely going to be favoured readers and authors in actuality over audience members and speakers. Therefore, the teaching of coordinated language skills can get confused when educational resources and practice have to reflect a significant change in students' capacities (Richards, 2005). For this review, an endeavor was created to investigate educators' opinions on the benefits and disservices of the integrated language teaching technique. The upsides of utilizing the integrative technique to deal with show language skills can be raised and its burdens can be lessened presuming the two educators and understudies genuinely release their appointed responsibilities and obligations.

### Research Methodology

This study utilised an explanatory research design. The research targeted a population of 1,382 individuals, comprising 10 circuit supervisors, 10 heads of department, and 10 English teachers throughout 55 Junior High Schools. It sought to furnish a thorough comprehension of a research topic by initially gathering qualitative data for elucidation. This strategy enabled researchers to attain a more profound comprehension of the research problem via qualitative methodologies. The procedure entailed performing interviews or observations to gather qualitative data (Lam et al., 2023). In this study, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers, department heads, and circuit supervisors. Interview questions for Heads of Departments (language) focused on the solutions implemented to address the obstacles faced by instructors in instructing the English language. The investigator documented the interview session via a mobile device. Due to the circuit supervisors' demanding schedules, the researcher conducted interviews at the respondents' convenience by initiating phone calls and coordinating data collection at their available times. The qualitative data from the interviews and observations was examined by content analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Challenges encountered by teachers in implementing the integrated approach to English language instruction in junior high schools within the Hohoe Municipality. The interview session with the form three teachers indicated that "some challenges in employing an integrated approach to teaching English include being time-consuming." The activities designed to conceptualise integrated English, focussing on students and time allocation, are insufficient for effectively teaching the principles of integrated English. The overcrowding in the classroom is a significant impediment for teachers, hindering their ability to effectively oversee pupils during class sessions due to the excessive time required. The educators asserted that the obstacles associated with employing an integrated approach in English instruction may be surmounted via their diligent efforts to effectively include this methodology. Furthermore, the form three educators indicated that instructional resources must be provided to facilitate an integrated approach to teaching English throughout the institution. Furthermore, the incorporation of additional English texts was essential for fostering an integrated approach to English instruction in the school, as stated by three educators. The study concluded that the challenges of teaching integrated English in schools could be mitigated by implementing effective initiatives, such as utilising diverse teaching textbooks and motivating students regarding the importance of the integrated approach in education. Furthermore, during the interview session with department heads, they stated, "we implemented procedures to ensure the syllabus was covered on schedule." The scheme of work encompasses the syllabus and the guide. Additionally, educators are encouraged to prepare the notes beforehand. We coordinate the staff and deliberate on instructional methods while reviewing prior teachings before advancing to the subsequent concept.

Furthermore, the discussion with the department leaders revealed that the teachers maintained a good attitude despite the problems faced. "Educators convened consistently to strategise their instructional approaches." The negative disposition of instructors occasionally arises from their absence of ongoing professional development courses. The survey revealed that department heads attributed the favourable attitudes of teachers to the information they possessed. Similarly, the department heads disclosed that they conducted workshops for the educators to assist them in overcoming their attitudes to teach English effectively. "A fundamental assessment is conducted with English educators alongside the enhancement of instructional materials."

The department facilitated collaboration among instructors to exchange ideas and provided ongoing refresher courses. The investigation revealed that the department heads consistently communicated with the headmaster to request funds for purchasing books and for photocopying services. The photocopying facilitated the pupils in obtaining book copies essential for addressing matters that could not be accomplished without the texts. The research additionally revealed that department heads facilitated collaboration between school management and headmasters. Additionally, the educators were permitted to supply the knowledge and resources they deemed necessary for effective instruction. The study revealed that department heads motivated teachers to conduct research utilising additional pertinent materials.

The research revealed that department heads urged teachers to employ familiar methods to address the concept of integration and the challenging material in the JHS English textbook. Furthermore, the department heads engaged the teachers in developing additional strategies to improve English language instruction. The department leaders exchanged views when a specific syllabus issue was not properly understood by the teachers. Similarly, the department heads asserted that they optimised the utilisation of scarce resources. Furthermore, the department heads requested their counterparts in other departments to instruct on certain facets of the English language. The survey revealed that department heads indicated teachers must comprehend their responsibilities, as local languages hindered the instruction of English. Teachers must let children to utilise other local languages and consequently should encourage the use of additional languages. The lecturers should do additional translations to facilitate a better understanding for the students. Teachers should consistently attend class and monitor punctuality. The department heads also recommended that educators employ appropriate teaching approaches and engage in additional revision to address areas inadequately covered in the past. An organisation of in-service training is necessary.

Additionally, the discussion with the circuit supervisors revealed that they implemented measures to assure timely syllabus coverage by checking teachers' schemes of work each term. Additionally, the circuit supervisors conducted weekly inspections of the covered units and motivated teachers to exert effort. The supervisors additionally urged teachers to utilise syllabuses as reference resources to ensure adherence to the content scope. Teachers' syllabuses were subjected to regular monitoring. The study additionally revealed that circuit supervisors periodically organised training workshops to enhance the human resource competence of instructors and administrators.

The circuit supervisors evaluated the outcomes of the new curriculum by collaborating with teacher groups to tailor the curriculum to accommodate the needs and capabilities of various student demographics, while simultaneously aligning it with state and national standards. The survey identified additional strategies among circuit supervisors that included the promotion of good teaching and learning in primary schools. They also elucidated educational policies for educators and assisted them in comprehending the aims of these policies. Additionally, they promoted efficient school administration and facilitated in-service training for the professional advancement of educators. The circuit supervisors consistently evaluated the accomplishments and performances of students and staff, and devised work schedules for the District Director of Education's approval. Consequently, the obstacles faced by educators in teaching integrated English were inadequate teaching materials, an excessive number of students in the classroom, and the impact of vernacular languages. The classroom setting, in certain instances, hindered teachers' ability to engage pupils in conversation or spoken contact. Furthermore, an additional challenge in adopting the integrated approach was the broad scope of the curriculum, which necessitated significant time allocation.

The findings aligned with Salamonson, Everett, Koch, Andrew, and Davidson (2018), who identified class management and the swift escalation of classroom dynamics as significant issues for English educators. Moreover, Yen and Halili (2015) demonstrated that a big class size impeded an English teacher's ability to employ a strategy suitable for a certain topic, as it was not feasible to engage all students within the allotted time. Yang (2015) identified issues affecting English language instruction, including insufficient teaching resources and a high student-to-teacher ratio in classrooms. Barasa, Omulando, and Oseno (2014) identified class size, teachers' content understanding, and the syllabus as problems encountered by educators in employing an integrated approach to English language instruction. Nketsia (2016) similarly observed that insufficient facilities, inadequate planning, limited resources, and a lack of political will were obstacles hindering the successful integration of English.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study examined the challenges faced by teachers employing an integrated strategy to teaching the English language in junior high schools situated in the Hohoe Municipality. The study identified challenges encountered by educators in employing the integrated approach to English Language instruction, notably the absence of teaching materials for English. Furthermore, teachers reported that the classroom setting occasionally hindered their ability to engage pupils in conversation or oral engagement. The impact of vernacular languages has occasionally significantly disrupted the instruction of English. The curriculum's breadth was occasionally wide and necessitated significant time allocation, which was insufficient in the present context.

A further problem that impacted the instruction of integrated English was the demanding content within the curriculum. The implementation of an integrated method in English language instruction required considerable time for some students to comprehend the concept, necessitating teachers to focus extensively on facilitating their understanding. Similarly, another problem noted was that certain topics were not addressed through an integrated method.

Another difficulty was classroom congestion, as one teacher noted there were 36 children in a single classroom. The overcrowding in the classroom hindered the teachers' ability to monitor the kids during the class session. The study revealed that the difficulties associated with the learning materials were hindering comprehensive instruction in integrated English. The research indicated that department heads frequently communicated with headmasters to request funds for purchasing books and making photocopies, which were occasionally not provided punctually. The photocopies were intended to provide

students with copies of books essential for completing tasks that could not be accomplished without them. The obstacles faced by teachers utilising the integrated approach included the extensive content to be addressed. The instructors addressed extensive material in accordance with the curriculum standards within a brief timeframe, hence enhancing student engagement.

The study identified the problems encountered by educators in employing the integrated approach to teach the English language. Challenges included inadequate teaching materials, a classroom environment that occasionally hindered teachers from engaging students in discussion or oral interaction, and the significant interference of vernacular languages on English instruction. The study determined that the curriculum content was occasionally substantial and necessitated significant time allocation, which was insufficient in the current context, presenting a challenge. The study concluded that classroom congestion impeded the actual implementation of the integrated strategy. The congestion in the classroom posed a significant impediment for teachers, hindering their ability to circulate and oversee students throughout class sessions due to the time-consuming nature of the task. The study indicated that the schools lack sufficient learning materials essential for English instruction. In certain instances, the schools made photocopies to provide students with book copies necessary for completing tasks that could not be accomplished without the texts. To guarantee the efficient implementation of an integrated approach to English instruction in classrooms, educational stakeholders must establish policies and oversee teachers. Government authorities must to engage with educators to comprehend the difficulties encountered in executing an integrated approach within educational institutions. The syllabus created by the government must prioritise the integration of literature and language to enhance the efficacy of class discussions. Educational stakeholders must ensure that schools possess an adequate supply of English publications to foster favourable perceptions of the integrated approach among students and teachers.

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