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## The use of the mass media in teaching English language in secondary schools in Obingwa Local government area of Abia state

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### Abstract

The need to concretize or give physical form to classroom lesson through a method that will appeal to more than one sense of the student; make lesson solid, real, or specific is the problem this study. The use of the teacher centered method which makes teaching and learning boring and unattractive to both the student and the teacher has been modified through the technological advancement with the introduction of other media of communication such as television, radio, and social media with attendant advantages. The research is on the use of the mass media in teaching English language in secondary schools in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State. Research questions were raised to help the researcher in the execution of the work. Questionnaire for teachers and students were used for the study. The researcher employed the frequency table and simple percentage in data analysis to ensure clarity and precision. The result of the finding shows that mass media are effective when used in the class room. Additionally, it was proved that mass media when used in the English language classrooms are suitable for developing all language skills. Again, the English teachers regard them as a useful tool for teaching English language and for the motivation of students. The study therefore recommends that teachers should be encouraged to use mass media in teaching, not only English language but other subjects. The study recommends that students should be motivated to learn through varying the methods of teaching to eliminate boredom. Furthermore, government should provide enabling environment through making mass media (television, radio, and internet) available in our secondary schools and provide adequate training for the teachers in the use of teaching.

**Keywords:** Mass media, teaching, language skills, methods

### Introduction

“Teaching is communication” (np) as it involves the transmission of ideas from the teacher to the students. Part of this process which occurs in the classroom accommodates the three major parts of communication, namely, the sender of the information or idea, (teacher) the lesson message or information being translated and the receiver who is the student. This process is supposed to be interactive; a give and take situation between the teacher and the student. This will enhance the interest of the student and thus make assimilation and recall easier. Teaching becomes easier when appropriate teaching materials are used as they aid the teacher in the dissemination of information/ idea/lesson and the student in the assimilation and retention of such information or lesson for future recall. Teaching materials which impact on the cognitive, (intellectual), affective, and psychomotor domains of the student and enhances the student’s power or rate of assimilation, retention and recall is most needed in the teaching and learning process.

It is in this respect that the role of the mass media in teaching generally and the teaching of English language in particular become very crucial. Technological advancement has made the use of one medium (textbook) in the teaching of English language obsolete. Herein lays the need to combine many media as to reduce boredom, appeal to more senses or domains of the student and actively involve him in the teaching and learning process which is the main aim of this study.

The Encarta dictionary ([www.Microsoft.com](http://www.Microsoft.com)) defines mass media as “communications media in general: all of the communications media that reach a large audience, especially television, radio, and newspapers” similarly, A.S. Hornby, defines mass media as sources of information and news such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television that reach and influence large number of people” (913) These media, when effectively used in the classroom, equip and motivate the students.

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This is because; they help to engage the student who feels he is learning the real language. When a student listens to a lecture on radio or watches the same lecture on television, the enthusiasm it builds in the student is exceptional. This further bridges the gap between the classroom and the real world as well as prepares the student to face the real world. According to V. Tafani (<https://dppd.ubbcluj.ro/adn/article>), “Media provide huge information, they motivate students to speak and help them integrate listening, reading, talking and writing skills, through various kinds of activities”. Concluding, he affirms that the use of mass Media in teaching “is important because it develops students’ creative powers for those images, words and sounds that come to the students from various Media”.

The process of learning any language (English inclusive) starts with the mastery of listening skills. According to Oshinaike and Adekumisi in Emmanuel Iroh, people “remember 20% of what they see, 40% of what they see and hear, but about 75% of what they see and hear and do simultaneously” (19). Consequently, a combination of seeing, hearing and doing promote better learning, hence, the need for the adoption of more than one medium in teaching, especially English language.

This statistics explains the importance of listening skills”, and further underscores the need for the use of the mass media in teaching English language where the students are offered the opportunity to listen to the language and that too by authentic speakers of the language. Listening according to Encarta dictionary means to “concentrate, pay attention on hearing somebody or something”. This entails listening critically, evaluating and selecting verbal clauses, interpreting, further evaluating and retaining such information for future use.

In Nigeria, English is accepted as the official language and used in all official transactions. That is to say that English language is the official and accepted language of commerce, law, government and education. The national policy on education support that English language be used in our schools for teaching and learning while urging learners to learn one of the three major languages of either Igbo, Hausa, or Yoruba, outside of their native language. Though “Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic communities with their cultures and native languages” (Uka 3), English is the preferred language. It is generally spoken, accepted and understood across board. It has therefore become one of the potent factors in our national development and unity as major documents and national broadcast are done in English language.

Since English is very important in our national unity and development, the medium of teaching the subject in our schools is very important as to realize the objectives and fully tap the benefits. Therefore, the teaching of English language through the mass media will be highlighted in this study.

Mass media which incorporates television, radio, internet and social media, when effectively used in the classroom not only takes care of the multi composition of the students in the class but also takes care of their learning abilities as it gives them the opportunity of maximizing their potentials. The television, a combination of sound and vision can provide language context more realistically than sound alone. This is because it draws the attention of both the eye and the ear. It has sight, sound, motion and colour. According to Hiebert, “the television uses its power of

communication not merely to convey other people’s images but rather to create out of its potentialities, its own genuine statement. Television is a mass entertainer, mass informer, mass persuader and mass educator” (312-313).

Also, Iroh (83) opines that Television, a very important medium of mass communication helps to conscientize the public. According to him, “its availability in almost every house hold in Nigeria makes it a willing tool for the education and ‘conscientization’ of the populace. Again, it has become a part of our everyday life”. Concluding, he submitted that “the principal quality of television which combines sound and images greatly help viewers to convey meaning”. The use of television in teaching and learning has gained much attention. In the teaching and learning environment, television is an effective tool in expressing abstract concepts or ideas which are produced and conveyed through sound, words and vision.

Another mass medium is the Radio. Radio is an inexpensive medium widely available and easily accessible to all. The radio brings the world into the classroom thus making the teaching learning process more attractive and inspiring for both the students and the teacher. Radio is the most commonly used medium in the formal, informal and non formal education and has successfully used in bridging curricular gaps as well as providing new approaches and methods of teaching. Radio also helps in publicizing new innovations and methods in the educational sector.

Educational lessons can be recorded from radio and played through another medium in either the classroom or outside the classroom. Radio is best for teaching English language topics especially listening, comprehension, vocabulary expansion, pronunciation as well as bringing listeners closer to native speakers. The programmes of the Open University of Nigeria whose lectures are broadcast on radio channels across the country succeeded because of the wide spread and availability of the radio in the remotest parts of Nigeria. Social media according to Kplan, Andreas and Michael, is a media which is through various electronic and rechargeable devices like mobile phones, computer tablets and so many other ways to facilitate the people while sharing their ideas with other in a easy and systematic way. The medium is mainly used for communicating and sharing of knowledge and creating awareness around the world. Furthermore, Voyce, (voyce.li@polyu.edu.hk) observe that the social medium provide “opportunities for English language learners to improve their writing, reading, and similarly to read new text and phrases to improve their vocabulary. This is because, social media provide different on line games which improve the vocabulary of the English language learner in a relaxed and flexible atmosphere devoid of stress and tension.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Mass according to Encarta dictionary ([www.Microsoft.com](http://www.Microsoft.com)) is a “collection of many individual parts” (np). It is a fusion of many separate parts into one for a unified purpose, while Media is collectively “television, newspapers, and radio: the various means of mass communication considered as a whole, including television, radio, magazines, and newspapers, together with the people involved in their production”. Therefore, the use of mass media in teaching and learning (education of the child) simply means using these media as a means of transmitting and receiving messages or information by teachers and learners in the

classroom for the realization of set objectives. There are basically eight different major types of mass media. They include radio, television, film, books, sound recordings, newspapers, magazines and the internet. These eight media listed above have the largest audiences, employ the most people and have the greatest impact. People are also most familiar with them. Other types include billboards, comic books, posters, direct mail, matchbooks and buttons.

According to UNESCO, media education deals with all communication media and includes the printed word and graphics, the sound, the still as well as the moving image, delivered on any kind of technology. It enables people to gain understanding of the communication media used in their society and the way they operate and to acquire skills using these media to communicate with others. It further ensures that people learn how to analyze, critically reflect upon and create media texts; identify the sources of media texts, their political, social, commercial and/or cultural interests, and their contexts; interpret the messages and values offered by the media.

France pioneered the use of media technology in education in the early 1920s in Paris. As early as in 1922 the first national conference of the regional departments of film education (Offices regionaux du cinema educateur) was held in France. At one of the congresses on education it was suggested to prepare the cinema educators in universities (Martineau, 28). In 1936 the French League of Education initiated the creation of the movement for "Cinema and Youth" (*Cine-Jeunes*), which united children, participating in film discussions, developing their critical thinking and artistic taste, creative skills (Chevallier 9).

The history of media education in Great Britain is also a few decades old. Similar to many other countries, this movement began from film education, and then embraced a wider spectrum (press, radio, television, video, advertisement, Internet). There are several organizations in the UK that deal with various problems of media education. The British Film Institute (BFI), founded by the government in 1933 stands out among them. The educational department has conducted conferences and seminars, workshops for teachers, accomplished amplitudinous research, published books, textbooks, and teaching manuals for many years.

The history of Russian Media Education goes back to the 1920s. The first attempts to instruct in media education (on the press and film materials, with the vigorous emphasis on the communist ideology) appeared in the 1920s but were stopped by Stalin's repressions. The end of the 1950s - the beginning of the 1960s was the time of the revival of media education in secondary schools, universities, after-school children centers (Moscow, Petersburg, Voronezh, Samara, Kurgan, Tver, Rostov, Taganrog, Novosibirsk, Ekaterinburg, etc.), the revival of media education seminars and conferences for the teachers. France and Britain dominated media education until the late 1950s and 1960s. However, in 1968, the first organization known as the united Canadian media educators - Canadian Association for Screen Education (CASE) was established. A year later it held the first big national conference in Toronto. Like their British colleagues, Canadian media educators of that period relied mainly upon the aesthetic (discriminatory) theory of media education (Moore 9; Stewart and Nuttall 5).

Media and ICT education in the USA has to some extent existed in the form of separate directions since the 1920s (film education, media education on the material of press

and radio). Thus, film education became the first step for modern media and ICT education as schoolchildren and students, guided and supervised by a teacher, made short documentaries and future films on the 8mm film. This activity became possible due to the fact that comparatively inexpensive, compact amateur film cameras, corresponding film, and chemicals for its developing came on the market, followed by the rapid growth of the net of laboratories (including the school and university labs) for developing and printing films. At that time the first Association for Screen Education was organized.

The contributions of H. Lasswel and M. McLuhan to the spread of media studies through their theories is worthy of note. M. McLuhan was the first to support the argument for importance of media literacy in the 'global village' (McLuhan 31-36), into which according to him, our planet would turn after the unbound distribution and mass consumption of a wide spectrum of media texts in all parts of the world. Furthermore, UNESCO significantly promoted the development of media and ICT education. In the mid 1970s UNESCO proclaimed not only its support to media and ICT education, but included media education in its list of priority directions for the next decades in the 1972 media education policy. This singular act revolutionized media education as France in 1975 included media education into the program documents of the Ministry of Education leading to the establishment of the Institute of Training for Film Culture Development (*L'Institute de formation aux activites de la culture cinematographique - IFACC*), thus, reviving the process of media education in universities. This trend has been followed by Britain, Canada, America Australia and other nations affiliated to the United Nations till date.

### **Instructional Resources of the Mass Media,**

Television as an instructional resource is grouped under audio-visual because it sensitizes both the sense of hearing and sense of sight. Instructional television is a term used to differentiate the educational function of a television from its entertainment function. Nwana, describes educational television as "an electronic medium which presents moving pictures with sound thereby stimulating both aural and visual senses simultaneously" (251). It includes all those programmes whose primary functions is to educate rather than entertain. Again, Iroh agrees that educational television can be used to mold, build, orient and reorient the child towards becoming a useful citizen, hence its usefulness as a teaching technique cannot be overemphasized" (np).

### **Merits of Instructional Television**

- a. Large number of students can view a television programme at the same time
- b. It stimulates the students' interest and this invariably motivates them to learn
- c. It allows for recording of programme using video-tape and recorder, this can be stored and effectively utilized at a convenient time
- d. A carefully produced and wisely used television programme makes for high visual impact
- e. Closed circuit television is used in extending a class or lecture to the wider audience in different classrooms and for demonstration
- f. Television programme encourages multimedia approach to instruction this is because it can incorporate other media and techniques such as motion pictures, charts, diagram, chalkboards presentation etc.

**Demerits of Instructional Television**

- a. It is one way traffic communication device, hence non-interactive.
- b. Television is an expensive form of educational media. The cost of purchase and maintenance is high; consequently many schools may not afford it.
- c. One cannot stop a speaker in a television programme to ask questions. The speaker also moves at his own pace. The individual differences of the learners are not taken care of

Radio plays a significant role in informing, educating and enlightening our everyday public life. It also performs entertainment role through music, drama, talk shows, live sports and other soft angles that appeal to such societies. Thus, Nwana says “it is the most extensively used of the electronic media in education. This is because it is a hybrid in electronics in the sense that, in the absence of electricity, battery can be used on it as a source of energy to function” (244). Radio is one of the cheapest sources of education. The contents are cheap to produce and cheap to broadcast and more accessible to a larger population than any mass medias well as influences the lives of people of all ages in many ways”. (Ullah and Khan, np).

**Merits of the Radio**

- a. Radio is a relatively cheap form of educational media which can be affordable to many schools and teachers as one expert can teach the whole state or nation at the same time
- b. Through the radio teachers and learners can get up to date information about word formation and correct pronunciation of words
- c. It enables students to acquire listening skills as they listen attentively to radio broadcast and to follow-up-class discussion.
- d. Radio broadcast reaches the audience much wider and faster than television broadcast
- e. It has emotional inputs on the listener because the listener feels the presence of the presenter.
- f. Radio can be used to bring the exact words and voice of the expert teacher into the classroom.

**Demerits of the Radio**

- a. Just like the television, radio broadcast is not interactive because it is one way communication and lacks face to face interaction between the presenter and the learner.
- b. It appeals only to the sense of hearing, hence it may not facilitate comprehension and retention
- c. The pace of the radio presenter may differ with the listening capacity of the learner as there may also be disparity between radio broadcast time table and the operational time-table in the school. However, this problem can be resolved by recording the programme on a cassette tape and playing back later.

**Table 3:** What are the positive roles of mass media in the education of a child?

What are the positive roles mass media in the education of the child?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	71	79%
No	19	21%
Total	90	100%

In table 3, is the result of research question 3 which shows that 71 respondents representing 79% agree (YES) to the

The use of social media in teaching has exponentially increased. According to the Pearson Learning Solutions and Babson Survey Research Group, as recorded by Voyce, L, the use of social media in teaching has grown 21% from 2012 to 2013 in the United States. Voyce further admits that the Percentages of the use of social media personally and for teaching were 70% versus 41%. Wikis and Blogs were found to be the most popular tools used in teaching, and Facebook was commonly used for personal use.

**Analysis and Results of the Teaching Experiment**

The following research questions were raised for the analysis of data collected for this study which involved (90) respondents in all.

- 1. What are the importance of mass media in teaching English language in our schools?
- 2. What are the difficulties involve in the use of mass media in teaching?
- 3. What are the positive roles of mass media in the education of a child?
- 4. To what extent does the use of mass media arouse the students’ interest in teaching?
- 5. What are the negative effect of mass media when used in teaching English language?
- 6. How could the teacher use mass media to bridge the gap between what is taught and what to learn?

**Table 1:** What are the importance of mass media in teaching English language in our schools?

Importance of mass media in teaching English language	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	89%
No	10	11
Total	90	100%

Table 1 is the tabulation of the first research question: What are the importance of mass media in teaching English language in our schools? 80 respondents representing 89% agree (YES) that mass media is necessary in the teaching of English language while 10 respondents representing 11% are in the negative (NO).

**Table 2:** What are the difficulties involved in the use of mass media in teaching?

What are the difficulties involved in the use of mass media in teaching English language	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	46	51%
No	44	49%
Total	90	100%

Table 2 is on the difficulties involved in the use of mass media in teaching English language. 46 respondents, representing 51% are in the affirmative (YES) while 44 respondents representing 49% are in the negative (NO).

positive role mass media play in the education of the child, while 19 respondents representing 21% of the respondents

do not agree (NO) that mass media play any significant role in the child’s education.

**Table 4:** To what extent does the use of mass media arouse the students’ interest in teaching?

To what extent does the use of mass media arouse the interest of the students during English language lessons?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	74	78%
No	16	22%
Total	90	100%

Table 4 is on the role of the mass media in arousing the interest of the child. 74 respondents representing 78% of the respondents agree (YES) that mass media arouse the interest of the students when used in teaching English language while 16 respondents representing 22% do not agree (NO) that mass media arouses the interest of the students when used in teaching.

**Table 5:** What are the negative effects of mass media when used in teaching English language?

What are the negative effects of mass media when used in teaching?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	43	48%
No	47	52%
Total	90	100%

Table 5 sought to know if there are any negative effects in the use of mass media in teaching. 43 respondents representing 48% of the respondents agree (YES) while 47 respondents representing 52% disagree (NO).

**Table 6:** How could the teacher use mass media to bridge the gap between what is taught and what to learn?

How could the teacher use of mass media to bridge the gap between what is taught and what to learn?	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	56	62%
No	34	38%
Total	90	100%

Table 6 is the tabulation for research question 6 which sought to find out if mass media helps in bridging the gap between what is thought and learnt. 56 respondents representing 62% of the respondents agree (YES), while 34 respondents of the respondents representing 38% of the population do not agree (NO).

**Discussions**

Six tables were used to tabulate and compute the results of the data as they affect the questions. Table 1 is the result of research question 1: What are the importance of mass media in teaching English language in our schools? An observation from the table shows that (80) eighty respondents representing 89% of the population said yes while ten (10) respondents representing 11% of the population said No. The result indicate that mass media is necessary in the teaching of English language while table 2 is the result of research question on the difficulties involved in the use of mass media in teaching. 46 respondents representing 51%

are in the affirmative (YES) while 44 respondents representing 49% are in the negative (NO). It is observed from the above data that the margin is not big. However, the implication is that teachers experience some level of difficulties in the use of mass media in teaching and learning of English language.

Table 3 shows that 79% agree (YES) to the positive role mass media play in the education of the child, 21% of the respondents do not agree (NO) that mass media play any significant role in the child’s education. The data from the above table reveals that mass media play very important roles in the teaching of English language. Similarly, Table 4 is on the role of the mass media in arousing the interest of the child. 78% of the respondents agree (YES) that mass media arouse the interest of the students when used in teaching English language while 22% do not agree (NO) that mass media arouses the interest of the students when used in teaching. Again, the results show another importance of using mass media to teach English language. Table 5 sought to know if there are any negative effects in the use of mass media in teaching. 43 respondents representing 48% of the respondents agree (YES) while 47 respondents representing 52% disagree (NO). The above table shows that, the number of No respondents are higher than the Yes answers. Again, though the margin of acceptance by the respondents who agree that there is no negative effect in the use of mass media in teaching is separated by a marginal 5%, it is nonetheless accepted that there is negative effect in the use of mass media in teaching English language. Finally, table 6 is the tabulation for research question 6 which sought to find out if mass media helps in bridging the gap between what is thought and learnt. Simply put, does it help in recall? 62% of the respondents agree (YES), while 38% of the population does not agree (NO).

**Summary and Conclusion**

The aim of the thesis is to explore the use of the mass media in the teaching of English language in our secondary schools. The objectives include to popularize the many advantages in the use of the mass media in teaching English language in particular and teaching generally as well as to highlight the importance of the mass media in the teaching of English language; expose the advantages of mass media in teaching and learning to both the teacher and the student and suggest some solutions towards making the use of mass media in the teaching of English language. Mass media were represented by the television, radio, the mobile phones or smart phones, computers, notebooks or tablets with the Internet and the interactive whiteboards. Others include printed media such as textbooks, newspapers and magazines or books and by the electronic media such as audio recordings or films and videos.

The choice of our instructional materials is important to what we teach. This is because they help to clarify the lesson and thus make for easy understanding and recall. This work investigated the use of mass media in the teaching of English language in secondary school. 90 persons, made up of 50 teachers and 40 students from 10 secondary schools in Obingwa LGA of Abia State were used as the population for the study. They were selected through a simple random sampling which gave all the schools in Obingwa Local Government Area equal opportunity of being selected. Review of related literature

was carried to find out what has been done in this topic by other researchers. After careful collection and analysis of data through a simple percentage and use of table for interpretation, the result revealed the usefulness of mass media when used to teach English language.

From the above, it was found out that the secondary school teachers of English language use a variety of media in their classrooms and that mass media are effective when used in the classroom. Additionally, it was proved that mass media when used in the English language classrooms are suitable for developing language skills and language systems. Again, the English teachers regard mass media as useful tool for teaching English Language and for the motivation of students.

### Recommendations

The following are hereby recommended based on the result of the study:

The teacher should be encouraged to use the mass media in teaching, not only English language but other subjects.

Students should be motivated to learn through varying the methods of teaching to eliminate boredom. One of such methods is the use of mass media in teaching.

That government should provide enabling environment through making mass media (television, radio, and internet) available in our secondary school and provide adequate training for the teachers in the use teaching.

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