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### Effect of Effective Teaching on Students with Spelling Problems in Secondary Schools in Mfou Sub-Division of the Center Region of Cameroon

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#### Abstract

This study was designed to investigate the effect of effective teaching on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools in Mfou Sub-Division of the Center Region of Cameroon. Two objectives were coined for the study: to find out the effect of teaching materials on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools, and to investigate how class size effect students' with spelling problems in secondary schools. The study adopted a convergent research design. A questionnaire with closed ended items and an interview guide were used to collect data. The instruments were validated by experts. The overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.881 calculated using Cronbach Alpha. The sample population for the study was fifty (50)

form three students with spelling problem selected using the purposive sampling techniques and 20 teachers selected using the simple random sampling techniques. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that: teaching materials has a positive significant effect on students' spelling problems ( $P=0.041, <0.05$ ). Findings equally affirmed that class size has a positive significant effect on students' spelling problems ( $P=0.003, <0.05$ ). Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers should use diverse materials and manage their classrooms appropriately to overcome students' difficulties in spellings in secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Effective Teaching, Teaching Materials, Class Size, Spelling Problems

#### Introduction

Spelling problem is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. The World Health Organization, International Classification of Disability 2010 defines spelling problem as a disorder manifested by difficulty learning to read despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence and socio-cultural opportunities. Learners who suffer from spelling problems may have accompanying weaknesses in short term memory, sequencing and the speed at which they process information. These are skills that everyone needs if they are to learn effectively in a busy classroom (Torgesen, 2000)<sup>[42]</sup>. Spelling problems as a specific learning difficulty, can impact an individual's ability to break words down into their component phonemes, a crucial skill involved in reading, writing and spelling. Students with spelling problems have conspicuous problems with spelling and writing (International Dyslexia Association, 2017)<sup>[21]</sup>. In spite of being capable in other areas and having a normal amount of classroom instruction as most students, students with spelling problems find it difficult to learn to read fairly well, as such cannot properly spell. The consequence is that the students ends up perform poorly in English Language.

Learners with spelling problems may be able to spell a word one day and not the next day and cannot find high frequency service words. Any language consists of different skills including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Likewise, spelling is an important part of language. These researchers have discovered that many students have a clear weakness in spelling in our classrooms; students make a lot of spelling errors and are incapable of performing even basic writing task. Students do not respect the spelling rules, and English sounds recognition but instead spell words from their pronunciation with respect to their national language or from French background. This and other factors contribute to the falling standards of English Language in Cameroon.

#### Statement of problem

Every year English Language teachers in various schools organize seminars to share considerable knowledge, skills expertise

in teaching, provide information, clarify grey areas, introduce new approaches, method and above all identify areas of difficulties like spelling, reading and others. It was observed that students face a lot of spelling problems especially in forms one, two and three. Most students' essays, report writing, writing exams and reading assignments are rife with several spelling errors, many of which have become a problem to both the teachers and the learners leading to poor academic performance. Spelling problems limit student's productivity in academics. In our classrooms little is being done to handle spelling problems because greater effort is focused on reading problems rather than spelling problems. Some of these spelling problems include omission of sounds, substitution which is putting or placement of wrong letters in a word or statement, and transportation which is reversing the position of letters in a sentence.

Although spelling is an important skill for learners to master at school, it is often neglected by many educators who believe reading is more important than spelling thereby leading to falling standards in our education, failure in classroom examination and public examinations. Teachers of English language do penalize learners who spell wrongly during examinations through deduction of marks but this alone cannot really affect learners in such a way that they can sit up. Literature has revealed that, the absence of appropriate use of teaching methods, instructional materials, large classroom sizes and biological factors might contribute to learners spelling problems. Teacher's failure to identify and handle these students with spelling problems have exposed teachers to difficulties when correcting scripts and the end results is poor performances of students. As a result, our society keeps witnessing a drop in the standards of English Language and the rise in wrong spelling sign post, public and private buildings in Cameroon. This poor performance and declining standards is being attributed to spelling problems and other factors such as lack of motivation on the part of the learners, the influence of Pidgin English, French, national languages, pedagogic and socio-psychological factors such as inadequate teaching/learning resources, negative influence from the learning environment, overcrowded classrooms and classroom management. It is against this backdrop that these researchers sought to investigate the effect of effective teaching on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools in Mfou Sub-Division of the Center Region of Cameroon.

### Research objectives

- To find out the effect of teaching materials on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools.
- To investigate the effect of class size on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools.

### Research hypotheses

The hypotheses are stated in the null form

1. There is no significant relationship between teaching materials and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools.
2. There is no significant relationship between class size of students and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools.

### Review of related literature

Theoretically, the dual-route model of learning to read and write informs this study. Dual-Route Models present approaches to cognitive development in which children learn to read and write. Reading is the processing of written materials to speech. Reading occurs in two ways (Rapcsak, Henry, Teague, Carnahan & Beeson, 2007) [32]. The new and unknown words can be read letter by letter but the familiar words can be read by merely looking at them without first sounding up the letters. Therefore, reading occurs through pronunciation by applying grapheme-phoneme rules or letter sound correspondence rules. Children test their hypotheses against the writing that they see, discarding or modifying some hypotheses and developing others. One hypothesis that young children are thought to construct, according to this model, is that letters in printed words stand for syllables in spoken words.

Furthermore, Bandura's Social learning theory also informs this study. The theory suggests that people learn from one another, through observation, imitation, and modeling. The theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. People learn through observing others' behaviour, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors. Most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. Bandura's Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. Bandura (1993) [6] believed that teachers who perceive themselves effective will spend more time on students' learning, support students in their goals and reinforce intrinsic motivation.

### Teaching materials

Instructional resources are defined as all materials designed to support the instruction of a subject or course including but not limited to textbooks, library books, newspapers, magazines, printed materials, charts, recordings, videotapes, pictures, exhibits, slides, transparencies, online resources, speakers and other personnel resources and all technology-based materials (Abdullahi, 2010) [2]. The power of teaching materials in enhancing learning may best be captured in the Confucian saying: "If we hear, we forget; if we see, we remember and if we do, we understand" (Muvango, 2013) [29]. For children with spelling problems, teaching materials are very important because it assists them in practicing how to spell well and also breaks down difficult concepts for more understanding which makes the teacher succeed in the teaching process. What bridges the gap between theory and practice are teaching materials. Teaching materials are print and non-print items that are rested to impact information to students in the educational process. Teaching materials play a very important role in the teaching and learning process by enhancing the memory level of students with spelling problem. With the use of appropriate teaching materials, education has spread widely to students with disabilities and children without. On this ground, Oral teaching cannot be the key to successful pedagogy; therefore, the teacher has to use teaching

materials to make teaching and learning process interesting to the learners. According to Abdullahi (2010)<sup>[2]</sup>, teaching materials are tools locally made or imported that help to facilitate the teaching/learning process view them as materials that can enhance the learning achievement.

Tavosanis (2007)<sup>[41]</sup> argue that different learning contexts might require different instructional techniques and teaching materials and thus teachers need to consider analyzing learners' spelling errors in order to design special activities that can respond appropriately to learners' diverse learning needs. Smedley (1983)<sup>[40]</sup> suggested that individual learners keep personal records of their spelling demons in order to practice them individually thereby help in improving spelling difficulty. A great deal of research on spelling development supports the idea that the phonological, orthographic, and morphological knowledge and strategies that children acquire follow a sequence of stages that are characterized according to the pre- dominant information and strategies used during that stage of development (Obanga, 2005)<sup>[31]</sup>.

Students pass through distinct developmental stages in their progression of spelling ability (Nassaji, 2007)<sup>[30]</sup>. Gentry's 1982 developmental stages is most commonly accepted and widely used. The developmental continuum consists of five qualitatively different stages. The type of spelling errors reflects the stages at which the learners are. The developmental stages described by Nassaji (2007)<sup>[30]</sup> provide a sense of the stages learners pass through. The ages given for each stage in the parentheses overlap between stages and only represent a rough guide.

Although educational stockholders agree that instructional adaptations are desirable (Integra, 2009)<sup>[22]</sup>, there is very little information on how teachers adapt their instructional materials to meet students' needs. Outstanding literacy teachers deliver a common curriculum to all students but adjust their teaching within this framework to meet students' individual needs, especially for those experiencing difficulty. These teachers provide considerable individualized instruction to learners. We concentrated specifically on these students because their spelling difficulties put them at greater risk for writing problems and because they are less likely to benefit from the potential positive impact of spelling on reading due their slow rate of spelling growth.

Also, according to Berry and Buktenica (1997), they explained that teaching materials are very important in education. Teaching materials are aids used by the teacher in classroom to supplement the transmission of knowledge with a view to emphasizing clarification of instructions. Instructional materials can be in three forms of which are audio, visual and audiovisual and they help a great deal in improving teacher's effectiveness.

In teaching students with spelling problems, it is important to use teaching materials that are adequate and appropriate to the learners to provide the learners with a situation near to reality of real life. Writing concepts are made concrete when pupils see and do some activities using real objects like models or other real materials. Studies indicate that people learn 25 to 30 per cent more when visual aids are used in teaching because they pay attention and children are motivated to take an action which increases the permanence of learning, make the job of teaching easier and create interest (Muvango, 2013)<sup>[29]</sup>. The availability and utilization of instructional materials for the teaching of any subject in

the school curriculum is very crucial. However, not all schools are able to provide all the materials needed for instruction and as such teachers have to develop teaching materials from the local environment through improvisation to facilitate their effectiveness in teaching.

According to Afolabi (2006)<sup>[3]</sup>, teaching can only be effective when adequate and relevant teaching materials are used. Many educators and researchers have reported the importance of teaching materials in teaching. Grant (1978)<sup>[16]</sup> noted that teaching and learning cannot be effective without adequate and relevant use of instructional materials. Schramm (1977)<sup>[36]</sup> referred to teaching materials as basic channels of communication (of ideas and concepts) in the classroom for the purpose of bringing about effective teaching and learning. There is a need to establish the relationship between teaching materials used in secondary schools and how effectively they are used by the teachers to upgrade the teaching learning process. This in a nutshell might positively affect the learners spelling skills in English Language.

### Class Size

Class size refers to the number of individuals assigned to a particular class. According to Horning (2007)<sup>[18]</sup>, a small class is made up of 15 or fewer pupils. Slavin (1989)<sup>[37]</sup> defined a large class as being an average of 27 students. The introduction of free primary education in Cameroon witnessed an influx of learners in the primary schools thus increasing the class size (Locastro, 2001)<sup>[25]</sup>. The challenges of handling large classes compounded by the acute shortage of teachers puts a strain on the teachers' ability to provide quality language work to the learners because the teacher-learner ratio is not proportional. Moreover, the policy in Cameroon demands of inclusive learning poses a challenge in the already swollen classrooms since it compromises individual attention because of the diverse needs of the learners' vis-à-vis teachers' workload (Glasson, 2009). Heppner (2007)<sup>[17]</sup> views large classes as a small business which should be set up and handled carefully. Generally speaking, experienced English teachers in general and teachers beginning teaching in particular find it onerous to manage a class with a greater number of students with various levels and different personalities. Interestingly enough, teachers in general and English in particular always favour small classes and believe that students in small classes learn better than their counterparts in large classes as more practice and activities are employed. In larger classes, more time is needed for non-academic activities related to administrative and organizational procedures and to the management and control of discipline. Reductions in the quantity of learning opportunities constrain English teachers from achieving the necessary pace, depth and breadth of curriculum coverage as class size increases and improving on teaching of spelling to students using different approaches and materials.

Indeed, when teaching large classes, teachers usually have to encounter many challenges that affect their teaching processes. Locastro (2001, p. 494)<sup>[25]</sup> thinks that having a large class prevents teachers from doing what they wanted to do to help learners make progress in developing their spelling skills.

" She groups the difficulties that teachers faced into three kinds of problems: pedagogical, management and affective problems. She says, for example, teachers of English find it

difficult to carry out language skill tasks; teachers of large classes might not have proper attending to all the students in their class, and they find it hard to facilitate learning to all students, provides an activity that helps build a good relationship between the teacher and students”.

Teachers in large classes also find it uneasy to monitor students' learning progress and giving students feedbacks on time after performing an activity. Individualization work cannot be done. Brown (1990)<sup>[5]</sup> recognizes that with a large class it is very difficult for class management and effective teaching. He says some teachers feel uncomfortable when they have to face hundreds of eyes in a large class. A large class is often noisy that affects its teaching process and neighboring classes. Many teachers hold a preconception that when faced with large classes, they might be tempted to give up, thinking that there is no chance of getting so many students to learn (UNESCO, 2006)<sup>[43]</sup>. Class size does matter and can affect the quality of student learning and spelling ability. The increased prevalence of large class in the teaching and learning environments unarguably adversely affects the quality of the educational experience along with student performance, spelling ability, motivation and engagement.

In Cameroon the class size of every secondary school is to be 60 students in a class, but looking at our class room situations today, some schools do not respect the class size and have close to 70 or 75 students in a class which makes it difficult to teach such a vast class without complications. In this class room situation, students with spelling difficulties are found because the teacher does not have time in meeting each student's needs. This therefore, stands as a challenge for teachers in teaching students with spelling problems. This slows down their effectiveness writing sentences in examinations that make sense and hence resulting to students' poor academic performance (Horning, 2007)<sup>[18]</sup>.

### Spelling problem

The term spelling problem is also known in special education as dyslexia. Dyslexia comes from the ancient Greek word, 'dys' which means 'difficulty' and 'lexis' means 'words). Therefore, spelling problem simply means difficulty with written words (Bolton & Snowball, 1993; International Dyslexia Association, 2010)<sup>[8, 20]</sup>. Children who cannot read and write at an intermediate phase are a concern for both parents and teachers. Such children cannot cope or respond to the complex literacy demand of school subjects. It is difficult for them to recognise words in the text and to comprehend them. Several researchers refer to this language difficulty as spelling problems (Brosseur-Hock, Hock, Kieffer, Biancarosa & Deshler, 2011)<sup>[9]</sup>. Spelling problem is a language-based learning disability. Spelling difficulties has been considered as one of the challenging tasks that most learners face in secondary schools. Various studies have been carried out to investigate the reasons that cause this problem and researchers like (Hughes & Searle, 2000)<sup>[19]</sup> indicate that spelling is crucial to make the writer's message and voice comprehensible for the reader. In addition, Bolton and Snowball (1993)<sup>[8]</sup> assert that poor spelling has a negative effect on the content and makes it unintelligible for the reader. Therefore, it should be taught in a way like other language skills that is reading, writing, listening and speaking. Correct spelling is a sign of education; a spelling mistake is a solecism that betrays carelessness or plebeian origins. Spelling is thus a crucial

factor in the way people present themselves (Cook, 1997)<sup>[11]</sup>. Spelling problem also refers to a generic term that describes students with reading and writing difficulties in spite of other intellectual domains in an educational system (Castle, 2006)<sup>[10]</sup>.

Educationally, students with spelling problems tend to be viewed as lazy and somewhat slow to grasp the subject content, rude, stubborn and open to ridicule from both teachers and peers. Students with spelling problems cannot participate actively in class nor have confidence to read or spell in class (Alexander-Passe, 2007)<sup>[4]</sup>. Sometimes teachers may react positively to the condition while some may be negative about it labeling the students.

Students with spelling problems have poor phonemic awareness where they are unable to break words into phonemes and to rhyme words in sentences. Learners with spelling problems also have problems in letter sounds relation especially in vowels and consistent-sound relation such as break, seat and weak (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2010)<sup>[23]</sup>. According to Griffiths (2002)<sup>[15]</sup>, dyslexic students have an alliteration problem. Alliteration is the occurrences of the same letter or sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words (Soaness & Stevenson, 2009)<sup>[39]</sup>. These students also have linguistic problems and normally construct short sentences. They do this to avoid writing long sentences without punctuation marks because they are confused as to when and where they can write them even though teachers are assisting them. Students with spelling problems also experience handwriting problems. They are unable to show the impression of neatness and at the end it becomes difficult to read what they write (Meehan, 2007)<sup>[26]</sup>.

The size of the letters will be too big or too small and it becomes a challenge for teachers because time is needed to help these students to write (Landsberg et al., 2010)<sup>[23]</sup>. This means that teachers must be determined to give themselves enough time to assist these students to construct sentences and to explain to them about the size that can be used for easy intelligibility. Parental support to dyslexic students may also be a challenge. Since the needs of non-dyslexic students are totally different from the needs of dyslexic learners, balancing the needs of two distinct learners is often a challenge. According to Alexander-Passe (2007)<sup>[4]</sup>, the presence of dyslexic children in a family affects the social and emotional development of siblings. Some parents view dyslexic students as those who cannot carry out instructions and students who are always confused due to the memory problem.

This disorder cuts across all socio-economic classes and exists in all cultures though the prevalence may vary from one language to another depending on how transparent the language is and ranges from a low to high prevalence (Wright, 2000)<sup>[44]</sup>. Learners with spelling problems may be disruptive in class and in some instances even adopt an anti-academic attitude as a way of dealing with the feelings of frustration that result when students with spelling problems are being labeled as lazy, slow or even “not good” at reading. Spelling problem is identified in childhood and persists through adolescence to adulthood. Ediger (2001)<sup>[13]</sup> opined that students with spelling problems usually experience difficulties with other language skills, such as spelling, writing, and pronouncing words.

Students with spelling problems are susceptible to stress because they may withdraw from school activities, manifest

anxiety and confusion. The students may sweat when instructed to read. The dyslexic students may overreact to stress because they are seen as having a negative attitude, they manifest outrageous behaviour, they may be aggressive at school in order to curb teachers as well as other learners bullying and humiliating them (Rowcliffe, 2002) <sup>[35]</sup>. This implies that teachers should always have a positive attitude and be able to inspire them to work hard and at the same time avoid focusing on their weaknesses. Teaching dyslexic students in a poorly resourced school is a challenge. The problem worsens in school environments that lack resources. Schools that are in rural areas are the ones usually seriously affected. As such, the issue of poor school conditions and facilities poses a serious challenge in the teaching and learning of dyslexic students (Rowcliffe, 2002) <sup>[35]</sup>.

### Causes of Spelling Problem or Difficulty

According to Snowling (2000) <sup>[38]</sup> spelling problem is caused by various factors such as biological and neurological factors.

**Biological Factors:** Spelling problem is considered as highly heritable. Different studies such as family adoption as well as twin studies suggest that it is imperative to consider genetic factors when studying spelling problem (Levy, Clakin, Yeomans, Schott, Wasserman & Kernberg, 2006) <sup>[24]</sup>. However, reading difficulties are biologically based. Spelling problem tends to run in families and can also be inherited from one member of the family. For example, if there is a dyslexic child in the family there is a possibility or high chances of spelling problem in another member (Snowling, 2000) <sup>[38]</sup>. Those children or students who have a first degree relative who are dyslexic, are at genetic risk as their parents are dyslexic. That means if one or both parents have spelling problem, there is a high chance of their children to have spelling problem as genes play an important role in the inheritance of such a condition. As such, when the teacher notices that the child is dyslexic, it is better to ask about the historical background of that individual child. It will help the teacher to use a variety of teaching techniques knowing the background of the learner.

**Neurological Factors:** The brain can also be considered as a contributing factor for reading and writing as everything is processed and stored in the brain. The brain is said to be divided into two hemispheres, namely the left and the right hemispheres which are composed of different hemispheres. The left region has four regions that are involved in different areas of language such as language processing, language comprehension and speech production (Snowling, 2000) <sup>[38]</sup>. For a person to read, the text is first processed in visual cortices which are situated at the back of the brain. It is further suggested that the differences in the left hemisphere brain are the ones responsible for speech perception and speech production and have the possibility of being affected. That is a clear indication that it could be the area where phonological representation is confined which is responsible for reading development (Snowling, 2000) <sup>[38]</sup>. The functioning of the brain and brain structure between dyslexic and non-dyslexic develop early during birth, which is where there are chances of being at risk of being a dyslexic (Snowling, 2000) <sup>[38]</sup>. Spelling problem can be diagnosed early when the child is still young. Teachers

should always monitor the child's reading and writing in order to help children to acquire appropriate reading skills.

**Phonological Core Deficits:** Students with spelling problem have phonological deficit. Phonological deficit entails difficulties in making use of phonological information when processing written or oral language (Melton, 2007) <sup>[27]</sup>. Therefore, the phonological processing and reading ability are closely related. Phonological processing refers to the use of information structure of language in a written input. That means the letter we write is the sound of our daily language. As such phonological deficit disturbs the correspondence between spelling and sounds which serves as an important step in reading acquisition (Dockrell & MaShane, 1993) <sup>[12]</sup>.

**Memory Deficit:** Memory plays an important part in reading as it helps children to recall and decode what has been read. In reading there are three memories involved, that is the working memory, long term memory as well as short term memory. In this issue, eyes play a casual role as they receive sent information in a form of pictures and written word, whereas the ears receive information such as a speech sound. The received information will be sent straight to the working memory where it would be stored temporarily, before the long-term memory receives it as the working memory has limited capacity where the verbal information cannot be retained for a long time. The temporary storage of information helps when a child is performing cognitive tasks such as comprehension, reasoning and learning, thereafter the meaning of words will be analysed and transferred to the permanent long-term memory (Riding, 2002) <sup>[33]</sup>. Dyslexic children store information in the short-term memory.

Their short-term memory stores recorded information for a short period. This weakness causes forgetfulness and an inability to keep several things in mind. When dyslexic children learn long words from lists of irregular words and syllables or when asked to recall syllables after some few hours or minutes it becomes a burden. It is difficult for them to grab new knowledge as it is associated with the existing one, their short-term memories hinder them on these tasks (Aaron & Joshi, 2012) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Teachers have the task to train learners to revive their memories always. Teachers should give learners a chance to repeat the same thing. However, children learn better when they are involved in learning processes through play. Play encourages children to actively participate in the content. Play enables children to remember the relationships, to construct knowledge, to understand concepts and helps them to think critically (Rosenberg, 2003) <sup>[34]</sup>.

### Signs and Symptoms of Spelling Problem

It is crucial to be able to recognize the signs of symptoms of spelling problem. The earlier a child is evaluated, the sooner he or she can obtain the appropriate instruction and accommodations he or she needs to succeed in school (Moats, & Dakin, 2008) <sup>[28]</sup>. General problems experienced by people with spelling problem include the following: Learning to speak, learning letters and their sounds, organizing written and spoken language, memorizing number facts, reading quickly enough to comprehend, keeping up with and comprehending longer reading assignments, spelling, learning a foreign language and correctly doing mathematics operations.

**Methodology**

The study adopted a mixed methods research paradigm. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected based on the two types of instruments that were used for the study. Qualitative data was obtained through interview. Quantitative data used a correlational survey design and a questionnaire was used to collect the data. Thus, the design used for this study was a convergent mixed research design. The purpose of this design was to complement findings from each design to give a solid solution to the research problem. This leads to triangulation of instruments. The target population of the study was made up of students with spelling problem and their teachers of four secondary schools (two Public, one Denominational and one Lay Privet Secondary School) Government Bilingual High School Mfou with a population of 2900 students, Government Secondary Schools Mfou with a population of 1300 students, Catholics College Pere Monti with population of 2425 students and Complexe Adolph Kolping Secondary School with a student population of 130 selected from Mfou Sub-Division. The accessible population

of this study was made up of form three students with spelling problem and teachers teaching these students with spelling problem selected from Government Bilingual High School Mfou, Government Secondary Schools Mfou, Catholics College Pere Monti and Complexe Adolph Kolping Secondary School. The sample of the study was made up of fifty (50) form three students with spelling problem selected using the purposive sampling techniques and twenty (20) teachers teaching these students drawn using the simple random sampling techniques. The instruments that were used for data collection was a questionnaire and an interview guide. The instruments were validated by experts and key informants. The overall reliability of the instrument was 0.881 which was above the recommended threshold of 0.7 thus, implying that the students were consistent in their response thus, making the instrument reliable and valid for the study.

**Presentation of findings**

**To find out the effect of teaching materials on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools**

**Table 1:** Students' Opinion on their Teachers' Use of Teaching Materials

S. No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N
1	My teacher uses charts in teaching me so it helps me perform well in class.	3 (6.0%)	18 (36.0%)	22 (44.0%)	7 (14.0%)	50
2	My teacher writes clearly on the chalk board for me to see well and write the right things.	10 (20.0%)	28 (56.0%)	8 (16.0%)	4 (8.0%)	50
3	I keep personal records of my spelling problems thereby improving my spelling difficulty.	15 (30.0%)	19 (38.0%)	12 (24.0%)	4 (8.0%)	50
4	I have textbooks for all my subjects which help me learn how to spell correctly.	17 (34.0%)	16 (32.0%)	15 (30.0%)	2 (4.0%)	50
5	My teacher manages his/her chalk board appropriately by organizing work well on the chalk board in order to avoid spelling difficulty.	4 (8.0%)	31 (62.0%)	10 (20.0%)	5 (10.0%)	50
6	Our teacher does not use teaching materials when the teaching.	3 (6.0%)	8 (16.0%)	12 (24.0%)	27 (54.0%)	50
Multiple Response Set (MRS)		76 (25.3%)	124 (41.4%)	75 (25.0%)	25 (8.3%)	300 100%

**\*Coding reverse during the calculation of MRS**

The overall findings from multiple response set (MRS) showed that 33.3% of the students indicated that teaching materials are not being used during teaching learning process while 66.7% of the students indicated that teaching materials are used.

**Testing of Hypothesis One**

**There is no Relationship between Teaching Materials and the Effective Teaching of Students with Spelling Problems in Secondary Schools.**

**Table 2:** Teaching Materials and Students with Spelling Problems

		Teaching materials	Effective teaching of students with spelling problems
Pearson test	R-value	1	.290*
	P-value		.041
	N	50	50

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings showed that teaching materials has a significant and positive effect on students' spelling problems

( $P=0.041, <0.05$ ). The positive sign of the correlation value ( $R= 0.290^*$ ) implies that the teaching of students' spelling problem is more likely to be effective when teachers teach using teaching materials. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between teaching materials and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a relationship between teaching materials and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools was accepted.

**To investigate the effect of class size on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools**  
**Students' Opinion on Class Size**

Below table shows the overall findings from multiple response set (MRS) showed that 62.6% of the students indicated that class size affect students spelling ability negatively while 37.4 % of the students disagreed to this assertion.

**Table 3: Students’ Opinion on Class Size**

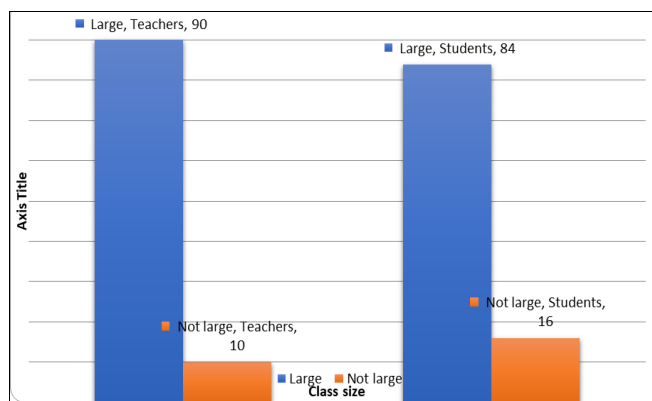
S. No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N
1	Large class prevents teachers from doing what they wanted to do to help learners make progress in their spelling skill.	22 (44.0%)	18 (36.0%)	7 (14.0%)	3 (6.0%)	50
2	My spelling problems are not checked to ensure I write well due to large class size.	11 (22.0%)	16 (32.0%)	21 (42.0%)	2 (4.0%)	50
3	My teacher meets my needs in the classroom to ensure my demands are appropriately met.	5 (10.0%)	23 (46.0%)	15 (30.0%)	7 (14.0%)	50
4	We have an overcrowded classroom which hinders the teacher from meeting me one on one.	22 (44.0%)	14 (28.0%)	10 (20.0%)	4 (8.0%)	50
5	There is enough space in our class for movement which helps the teacher easily reach out to every student in class with spelling problem.	6 (12.0%)	23 (46.0%)	16 (32.0%)	5 (10.0%)	50
6	In our class, we are more than 70 students.	30 (60.0%)	12 (24.0%)	3 (6.0%)	5 (10.0%)	50
Multiple Response Set (MRS)		97 (32.3%)	91 (30.3%)	87 (29.0%)	25 (8.4%)	300

**Teachers’ Opinion on their Class Size**

**Table 4: Teachers’ Opinion on their Class Size**

How is your class size			Is your class size a problem to your Teaching		
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Large	18	90.0%	Yes	18	90.0%
Not large	2	10.0%	No	2	10.0%
Total	20	100%	Total	20	100%

Findings showed that 18 (90.0%) out of 20 of them accepted that their class size is large and again, 18 (90.0%) of them indicated that their class size is a problem to them when teaching which are all those who indicated that their class size is large. The figure shows in summary, teachers and students’ opinion on class size.



**Fig 1: Teachers and Students Opinion on Class Size**

Findings showed that majority of the teachers 18 (90.0%) and students 42 (84.0%) indicated that their class size is large thus, affecting students spelling abilities negatively.

**Testing of Hypothesis Two**

**There is no relationship between class size of students and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools.**

**Table 5**

		Class size	Effective teaching of students with spelling problems
Pearson test	R-value	1	.409**
	P-value		.003
	N	50	50

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings showed that class size has a very significant and positive effect on students’ spelling problems (P=0.003, <0.05). The positive sign of the correlation value (R= 0.409\*\*) implies that the teaching of students’ with spelling problem is more likely to be effective when the class size is small and less effective when the class size is large. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no relationship between class size and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a relationship between class size and the effective teaching of students with spelling problems in Secondary Schools was accepted.

**Discussion of findings**

**To investigate the effect of teaching materials on students’ with spelling problems in secondary schools**

The findings showed that teaching materials has a significant and positive effect on improving students’ spelling problems. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that the teaching of students’ with spelling problem is likely to be improved when teachers teach using appropriate teaching materials. With the use of instructional material, education has spread widely to students with disabilities and children without. On this ground, Oral teaching with the use of appropriate instructional materials cannot be the key to successful pedagogy; therefore, the teacher has to use instructional materials based on the students’ disabilities to make teaching and learning process interesting to the learners. Eshiet (2013) [14] summarized the role of teaching aids as follows: It promotes meaningful communication and effective learning. Afolabi (2006) [3] confirmed that teaching can only be effective when adequate and relevant instructional materials are used. Muvango (2013) [29] found that, in teaching students with spelling problem it is important to use instructional materials that are adequate and appropriate to the learners to provide the learners with a situation near to reality of real life. Writing concepts are made concrete when pupils see and do some activities using real objects like models. This finding is also in congruence with Eshiet (2013) [14] who confirms that teaching materials play a very important role in the teaching and learning process by enhancing the memory level of students with spelling problem. Abdullahi (2010) [2] also attest that, instructional materials are tools locally made or imported that help to facilitate the teaching/learning process view them as materials that can enhance the learning

achievement. Researchers like Tavosanis (2007) <sup>[41]</sup> added that different learning contexts might require different instructional techniques and teaching materials and thus teachers need to consider analyzing learners' spelling errors in order to design special activities that can respond appropriately to learners' diverse learning needs.

### **To investigate the effect of class size on students' with spelling problems in secondary schools**

The findings revealed that class size has a significant and positive effect on students' spelling problems. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This is because when the class size is too large, the students' teacher ratio becomes very weak. Teachers find it difficult to meet with the students to identify the specific aspect of spelling problems they are facing. Generally speaking, experienced English teachers in general and teachers beginning teaching in particular find it onerous to manage a class with a big number of students with various levels and different personalities. Interestingly enough, teachers in general and English teachers in particular always favour small classes and believe that students in small classes learn better than their counterparts in large classes as more practice and activities are employed in small classes. In larger classes, more time is needed to the management and control of discipline and reductions in the quantity of learning opportunities. This constrains teachers from achieving the necessary pace, depth and breadth of curriculum coverage due to this large class size. UNESCO (2006) <sup>[43]</sup> opined that the policy demands of inclusive learning poses a challenge in the already swollen classrooms since it compromises individual attention because of the diverse needs of the learners vis-à-vis teachers' workload.

Westwood (2008) <sup>[45]</sup> stipulated those major problems that other researchers have highlighted when teaching large classes. Watson says teachers of large classes with spelling problem students often face problems in: Teaching strategies, Management skills, Ways to build good student-student interactions and friendly student-teacher relationships, teaching feedback and evaluation and marking students' papers. Locastro (2001) <sup>[25]</sup> also suggested that having a large class prevented teachers from doing what they wanted to do to help learners make progress in developing their spelling skill.

The findings of this study are in line with the study carried by Blatchford, Russell, Bassett, Brown, and Clare (2007) <sup>[7]</sup> who found that there was more individual attention in smaller classes, a more active role for pupils, and beneficial effects on the quality of teaching.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought out to investigate the effect of effective teaching on students' with spelling problems in Mfou Sub Division in the Center Region. Descriptively, findings showed that sufficient teaching materials are not been used by teachers during the teaching and learning of spelling in secondary schools. Secondly, the findings showed that majority of the teachers indicated that the class size negatively affect students' learning problems in secondary schools. This is because their class size is large, they find it difficult to follow up the students, it slows down the progression of lesson, too much noise making and easy distraction of students and lack of adequate control of the students.

### **Implications of Findings to the Special Education**

This study has contributed to knowledge regarding the various instructional materials which teachers need to use to improve upon students' problems and how large class size negatively affect students with reading problems. In this light, it should be remarked that this study is resourceful especially in our present context as we turn to have many students with spelling problems.

### **Recommendations**

We recommended that teachers should encourage students to buy appropriate teaching materials like textbooks, work books, dictionaries and other reading materials that they can try to read at home and master the right spelling of words. Furthermore, teachers can teach using rhyming patterns, pronouncing sounds and words appropriately so that student can easily spell, and teach using simple words. Teachers should also pay attention to their class size so as to know the kind of materials and methods to be used in teaching students in an inclusive classroom. Teachers are encouraged to used remediation during the process of teaching spellings. Students with spelling problems can collaborate with their teachers by expressing their difficulties which could be difficulties in spelling a word or understanding a word or phrase so that their teachers could clarify them or correct them when need be. Students at the individual level should constantly do reading and spelling exercise, familiarize themselves on sounds and word building so as to improve on their spelling skills. It is further recommended that students should engage in rewriting of words they spell wrongly in class and constant speaking of English in school and at home.

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