Two Modes of Engagement Strategy and Senior Secondary School Students Achievement in Prose Literature in Oyo Township

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Abstract

The study determined the effects of Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy (GIRS) and Round Robin Instructional Strategy (RRIS) on senior secondary two (SS 11) students' achievement in prose in Literature-in-English. It also examined the moderating effect of proficiency in English on the dependent variable. The study adopted the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design. The participants were 135 senior secondary school two (SS II) students drawn from three purposively selected secondary schools in Oyo Township. Achievement Test in Prose in Literature-in-English (r=0.79), English Language Proficiency Test (r=0.86) and Instructional guides were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant levels. Data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed significant main effects of treatment on students' achievement in Prose Literature ($F_{(2:125)}$ = 440, 489: P = .000<.05; ^{2} = .876). Students exposed to the two Engagement strategies performed better than those in Conventional method of instruction. Furthermore, Proficiency in English had no significant effect on students' achievement in prose literature ($F_{(2:125)}$ = .434; P = .649>.05; ^{2} = .007). There was no significant interaction effect of treatment and proficiency in English on students' achievement in prose literature ($F_{(4:125)}$ = 2.067; P = .089>.05; ^{2} = .062). It was recommended that teachers of Literature-in-English should employ these Engagement Strategies in teaching Prose Literature to students' in senior secondary schools.

Keywords: Guided inquiry reading, Round robin instructional strategy, Proseliterature, Student's achievement

Introduction

Literature is taught as Literature-in-English and English Literature in most countries where English language serves as a Foreign Language (EFL) and as a Second Language (ESL). It is one of the subjects on the school curriculum in Nigeria, and a very useful tool for education, literacy and instruction. Asides for its pedagogical and moral values, a credit pass in the subject is a requirement for students to gain admission to study Law, Mass Communication, Language Arts and other relevant courses in the university of their choice.

The teaching of Literature-in-English has equally attracted more interest among EFL/ESL teachers due to its functions. However, contrary to expectation, Students performance in recent year is low. Results from West African Examination Council (WAEC), released between 2012 – 2018 showed that majority of the studentsscored below credit pass. WAEC Chief Examiners Reports for Literature-in-English have consistently shown that a major weakness of candidates in the examinations is that of failure to read the prescribed texts. This is also contrary to the function performed by literature as a way of creating love for reading.

The focus of this study is on prose literature which supposedly is the easiest to read. Prose involves the use of straightforward language in paragraph forms. According to Fakeye and Bassey (2020) prose is the most typical of form of language, applying ordinary grammatical structure and natural flow of speech. Also, contrary to expectation, WAEC Chief Examiners Reports (2012 – 2016), indicated that students performed better in Drama and Poetry (Paper 2) than in Prose (Paper 3). Commenting on the weakness of candidates in the prose section (Paper 3) of the examination, the 2008 through 2014 reports, cited by Ezeokoli and Igubor (2016), show that candidates failed to focus on the demands of the questions asked.

The problem of low performance in Prose Literature which was evident in general poor performance ofstudents in Literature-in-English has been linked to deficiency in teaching and students' comprehension deficiency.WAEC Chief Examiners Reports (2014) observed that low quality of teaching and learning is responsible for candidates' poor response to questions. Other factors identified by scholars include the use of ineffective method, over reliance on 'key points', large class, insufficient time and lack of resources to use (Ezeokoli and Igubor, 2016, Aiyedun and Ogunnaike, 2018).

In other to find solution to this problem, various scholars in different studies have suggested the use of student-centered instructional strategies in literature classroom in line with modern approach to teaching and learning against the use of conventional lecture method. Also, scholars in their studies have reported significant main effects of engagement strategies on students' achievement and learning outcomes in prose literature (Ezeokoli and Igubor, 2016; Icheku, 2016; Ezeokoli and Okere, 2017). Teaching prose means teaching reading with comprehension. One of the objectives of teaching prose according to Anne Post (2018), is to guide students to better comprehension and engagement with texts. Lack of effective comprehension instruction in prose class had resulted into students' apathy to reading and their inability to comprehend prose text.

The use of engagement strategy in this study will lead to the attainment of the objective of teaching prose in Literature-in-English as stated above. One of the strategies that were suggested in order to foster comprehension and to promote engagement with text is inquiry reading strategy (Araromi, 2002). It is one of the strategies presented in the curriculum of prose in Literature-in-English and teachers are aware of its usage. Inquiry reading facilitates student's engagement with text. One way by which students' active learning can be promoted in literature classroom is by the use of engagement strategy (Ezeokoli&Igubor, 2016). In addition, it was found out that inquiry learning and reading comprehension instruction assumed the same process (Moreillon, 2014). However, an informal survey conducted by the researcher showed that there are challenges in implementing full inquiry reading in a conventional classroom.

Inquiry in the classroom or authentic inquiry encompasses the use of repertoire of cognitive strategies (questioning and explaining etc.), and a wide range of reading activities. Teachers involve the students in all the

levels of inquiry from guided to open inquiry. The process leads to the attainment of different learning outcomes (Buntern, Lee, Ng and Skrikoon, 2014). However, the quality and quantity of inquiry-based strategy to be employed in a conventional classroom depend on the amount of instruction given by the teacher (Moreno, 2004). It is demanding for teachers to maintain authentic inquiry settings, especially in upper grades (Crawded, 2007). Wiggins and McTighe (2005) call it the dilemma of "direct versus constructivist approach". According to Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chiun (2007) the teacher's support actually "plays a key role in facilitating the learning process".

Thus, considering the constraints in implementing full inquiry in a conventional classroom, the researcher in this study adopted guided inquiry reading strategy. Guided inquiry reading is a teacher – led, student centered approach to the teaching of literature. Guided inquiry reading promotes regular interaction between the teacher, the students and the learning resources. In addition, research findings are still in favor of guided inquiry approach (Bunterm, Lee, Ng and Srikoon, 2014). Guided inquiry reading favors the use of direct instructional guidance (Kirschiner, Sweller and Clark, 2006). This is in line with Aulls (2002) who reported that teachers whose students achieve all of their learning goals spent a great of their time in instructional interaction with students. Teacher's role in guided inquiry reading is to model appropriate inquiry strategies, especially with the use of support strategies and inquiry tools such as question matrix and I-chart. The role of the students implies practicing the skills modeled by the teacher using various activities embedded in the reading strategies.

The second reading comprehension strategy adopted in this study is Round Robin (RR) instructional strategy. Round robin option is a technique for generating and developing ideas in a group brainstorming setting (Kagan, 2007). According to Ontario Curriculum Unit Planner (OCUP, 2002), Round robin can be used to provide information and reflection on books, stories, experiences and understandings and to share learning. The strategy has affinity with other cooperative learning strategies such as Round Table, Rally Table (ocup.org.2002), Think-pair-share/Think-group share (Ohia&Ochuba, 2015 &Bateye, 2017). In affiliation with Think-pair-share/Think-group-share strategies, Round robin is also inspired by three stages. The first stage is where teacher provokes students' thinking with a question or prompt or observation. The second stage is grouping. Students are grouped into eight or ten to read a passage and talk about the question each comes up with. The third stage is sharing which comes up after students have discussed for a few moments.

Although there is little or none empirical evidence to support the use of round robin reading strategy in the teaching of prose in Literature-in-English, however, extant literature showed the effectiveness of collaborative learning (CL) on students achievement in reading comprehension (Ohia&Ochuba, 2015 &Bateye, 2018). Also research in science subject indicated that round robin produced significant effect on learning (Koya, 2014 &Ojo-Tolani, 2015). Koya (2014) revealed that round robin techniques are similarly effective than the open discussion brainstorming when used to teach learning concepts of HIV/AIDS.

Several studies have been carried out on the use of constructivist inspired strategies and engagement strategies in prose literature classroom (Ezeokoli &Igubor, 2016; Icheku, 2016; Ezeokoli&Okere, 2017), however, little attention is given to comparative effects of guided inquiry reading strategy and round robin reading strategy. There is also no research evidence showing how teachers implement the strategies in prose in literature classroom. Thus, this study examined the effects of guided inquiry reading and round robin reading strategies on senior secondary school (SS II) students achievement in prose in literature in English in selected secondary schools in Oyo township.

The moderating variable in this study is proficiency in English. Proficiency in English has been identified as a strong predictor of students' learning outcomes in all subject areas including Science, Mathematics and English Language learning (Adegoke, 2010; Lee & Buxton, 2013 &Fakeye, 2014). Also, there have been considerable number of research evidence to support the hitherto effect of proficiency in English on students learning outcomes in prose in literature in English (Icheku, 2016). Icheku(2016) noted that English language proficiency is a major factor that interacts with the teaching strategies adopted by teacher to influence students' achievement and attitudes. Thus, the researcher in this study wants to examine the influence of students' proficiency in English as they interact with the strategies used on their achievement in prose literature.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of Literature-in-English occupies an important place in the senior secondary school curriculum. However, reports from public examination bodies on yearly basis have indicated that majority of the students obtained low grade marks. Also, contrary to expectation, student's performance in prose in Literature-in-English is not better than other two genres of literature. Pedagogical practices in many literature classrooms reveal traditional teacher dominated instruction rather than engaging students in active reading of prose text. Research efforts aimed at improving students' achievement in prose in Literature-in-English has led researchers to suggest the use of engagement strategies. The focus of previous studies is on the use of practices aimed at engaging students' in literature lessons but without concentrating on how to involve them in active engagement with the text in order to gain deeper concentration and better understanding of the text as in the case of inquiry reading strategy and round robin reading strategy. It is against this background that the study investigated the effects of the two engagement strategies on students' achievement in prose literature. It also determined the moderating effect of proficiency in English on students' response to prose literature.

Hypotheses

Based on the stated problem, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in prose in Literature-in-English.

Ho_2: There is no significant main effect of proficiency in English on students' achievement in prose in Literature-in-English.

Ho_3: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and proficiency in English on students' achievement in prose in Literature-in-English.

Methodology

The study employed the pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental design with a 2 x 3 factorial matrix for the purpose of data analyses. The participants were 135 senior secondary Two (SS II) students drawn from three intact classes in Oyo East, Oyo West and Atiba Local Government areas of Oyo State. The instruments used were: (1) Achievement Test in Prose in Literature-in-English (r = 0.79), English Language Proficiency Test (r = 0.86), and Instructional guides.

The study was carried out in four stages as follow:

i. Identification of schools and training of research assistants.

ii. Administration of pretest and English Proficiency Test.

iii. Treatment: During the treatment stage, the experimental and control groups were exposed to different instructional strategies for eight weeks.

iv. Administration of posttest at the end of the exposure to treatmentwhile the two experimental groups were exposed to peer guided enquiry and round robin strategies, the control group were taught using conventional strategy.

The data were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

$H_0$1: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students'achievement in prose literature.

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Table 1: **Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Post-Achievement in Prose Literature by Treatment and Proficiency in English**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10717.648[a]	9	1190.850	120.841	.000	.897
Intercept	845.048	1	845.048	85.751	.000	.407
Pretest	1541.204	1	1541.204	156.393	.000	.556
Treatment	8681.750	2	4340.875	440.489	.000	.876
ProficiencyinEnglish	8.562	2	4.281	.434	.649	.007
treatment * ProficiencyinEnglish	81.474	4	20.368	2.067	.089	.062
Error	1231.834	125	9.855			
Total	144803.000	135				
Corrected Total	11949.481	134				

a. R Squared = .897 (Adjusted R Squared = .889)

Table 1 shows that there was significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in prose literature ($F_{(2;\ 125)}$ = 440.489; p=.000<.05; $?^2$ = .876). The effect size is 87.6%. This means that 87.6% variance in the post-achievement of students' in prose literature is accounted for by treatment, hence, there is a significant difference in the post-achievement of students. Thus, the null hypothesis 1 was rejected. In order to determine the magnitude of the significant main effect across treatment groups, the estimated marginal means of the treatment groups was carried out and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means for Post-Achievement in Prose Literature by Treatment

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy	41.057[a]	.481	40.104	42.010
Round Robin Strategy	30.328[a]	.439	29.459	31.198
Modified Conventional Strategy	19.915[a]	.529	18.867	20.962

Table 2 shows that the students in the Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy group had the highest post-achievement mean score (41.057) in prose literature, followed by the students in the Round Robin Strategy group (30.328) while the students in the modified conventional group has the least post-achievement mean score (19.915) in prose literature. The order is represented as GIRS>RRS>MCS.

Table 3: Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis of Post-Achievement in Prose Literature by Treatment

(I) treatment	(J) treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[b]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[b]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy	Round Robin Strategy	10.728*	.653	.000	9.144	12.312
	Modified Conventional Strategy	21.142*	.714	.000	19.409	22.875
Round Robin Strategy	Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy	-10.728*	.653	.000	-12.312	-9.144
	Modified Conventional Strategy	10.414*	.690	.000	8.739	12.088
Modified Conventional Strategy	Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy	-21.142*	.714	.000	-22.875	-19.409
	Round Robin Strategy	-10.414*	.690	.000	-12.088	-8.739

Table 3, shows that there was a significant difference between the post-achievement of students taught using Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy and Round Robin Strategy (Mean Difference = 10.728; p<.05); Guided Inquiry Reading Strategy and Modified Conventional Strategy (Mean Difference = 21.142; p<.05); and Round Robin Strategy and Modified Conventional Strategy (Mean Difference = 10.414; p<.05).

$H_0$2: There is no significant main effect of proficiency in English on students'achievement in prose literature.

Table 1 shows that there was no significant main effect of proficiency in English on students' achievement in prose literature ($F_{(2; 125)}$ = .434; p=.649>.05; $?^2$ = .007). Thus, the null hypothesis 2 was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in students achievement in prose literature based on their level of proficiency in English.

$H_0$3: There is no significant two-way interaction effect of treatment on students'achievement in prose literature.

Table 1 shows that there was no significant two-way interaction effect of treatment and proficiency in English on students' achievement in prose literature ($F_{(4; 125)}$ = 2.067; p=.089>.05; $?^2$ = .062). Thus, the null hypothesis 3 was not rejected. This implies that there was no significant differencein students achievement in prose literature based on the treatment group they were and their level of proficiency in English.

Discussion of Findings

The focus of this study was to determine the effects of two modes of engagement strategies on secondary school student's achievement in Prose Literature-in-English. The findings revealed significant main effect of Engagement strategies on students' achievement in Prose Literature-in-English. This shows that treatment significantly affected students' achievement in Prose Literature. This may be connected to the fact that engagement strategy has better advantage over the conventional classroom method. For instance, students' were able to apply reading strategies and were involved in activities that enhance comprehension of text. The teacher guided instruction and collaborative learning helped the teachers and the students to do a lot of activities and provided repeated opportunities for collaboration. This positionis in line with Aulls (2002), who reported that teachers whose students achieve all of their learning goals spent a great of their time in instructional interaction with students. This is also in line with Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chiun (2007) who reported that the teacher's support actually plays a key role in facilitating the learning process.

The findings of this study also revealed that students in the guided inquiry reading strategy group had the highest post achievement mean score in Prose literature. The result obtained might be linked to the fact that students are maximally guided to use inquiry tool. In addition students were presented with resources and tool to practice with. The use of hands-on resources makes reading to be a practice and a skill. This helped in strengthen students' involvement and helped them to discover deeper level of meaning. It is in line with the opinion of Araromi (2002) that inquiry reading promotes active learning and deeper understanding of text through greater involvement. Exline (2004) explained that the involvement leads to better understanding.

The findings of the study also showed that there was a significant difference between post achievement mean score of student in round robin strategy group and the modified conventional group. Students in modified conventional group had the least post achievement mean score. This might connected to the found that students' in round robin group interacted well together while engaging in cooperative activities and directed reading/thinking process. The students were able to apply strategies and skills that enhanced comprehension of text. The findings of this studyalso support the findings that classroom discussion helps students make sense of literacy texts (Ezeokoli and Okere, 2017). There is also a general belief that conventional method is teacher-centered strategy which does not encourage students' active participation. In

addition, several factors such as non-availability of resources, lack of expertise in the use of strategies and other, do affect active learning and practice in naturalistic classroom settings.

The findings further revealed that proficiency in English had no significant effect on students' achievement in prose literature. The result was contrary to Icheku (2016) who reported that English language proficiency is a major factor that interact with teaching strategies adopted by teachers. This might be connected to the fact the instructional strategies employed in the study appear to cater for the deficiency in learners' use of English. Again, the results showed that the interaction effect of treatment and proficiency in English was not significant. The implication is that teachers should adopt engagement strategies in teaching prose literature in-English and try to imbibe the steps involved in their use since they have proved to be effective.

Conclusion

The right selection and appropriate use of instructional strategies may result unto better achievement on the part of the students. The study has shown thatGIRS and RRIS were more effective in improving the students' achievement in prose in literature-in-English than the conventional method. Efforts should be geared towards making students learn how to be strategic readers, flexible and open-minded information seekers. This can be better done through effective implementation of the two engagement strategies adopted in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

a. To improve students' performance in Prose Literature, GIRS and RRIS are recommended to secondary school literature teachers.
b. Students should be encouraged to develop their skills with all instructional resources and support strategies embedded in GIRS and RRIS `for enhanced performance in literature-in-English.
c. Government should develop a manual for each of the strategy through the Ministry of Education, and should embark on in-service and re-training of teachers on the effective use of GIRS and RRIS.

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