Intercultural Competence, Access to Native Speakers and Students' Achievement in Literature in English in Ogun State, Nigeria

Ajayi, Adeshina Olayinka Ajayi & Prof. D. O. Fakeye
Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan.

Abstract
This study investigated intercultural competence and access to native speakers as predictors of students' achievement in Literature in English in Ogun State, Nigeria. This study adopted the survey research design of the correlational type. Simple random sampling technique was used to select six senior secondary schools from sixteen Senior Secondary schools enumerated in Abeokuta Local Government Area of Ogun State. Fifty students were randomly selected from each school, making a total of 300 students. In all, 300 students participated in the study. Three instruments will be used to collect data in this study: Ranking Scale on Students' Access to Native Speakers (r=0.74), Ranking Scale on Students Intercultural Competence (r=0.76) and Literature in English Achievement Test (r=0.78). Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and Multiple Regression Analysis. Findings of the study revealed that relationship existed between the independent variables (students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence) and achievement in literature-in-English. The result indicates that students' access to native speakers (r = .316) and intercultural competence (r =.297) had positive relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English. Also, it showed that the joint contribution of the students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence to achievement in literature in English was significant ($F_{(2; 297)} = 17.976$; Adj. $R^2 = .102$; $p = .000 < 0.05$). It revealed that students' access to native speakers ($\beta = .215$) and intercultural competence ($\beta = .135$) had relative contribution to achievement in literature in English. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that teachers should improve the level of proficiency of students. Towards this end, supplementary books that can help to boost students' language proficiency could be recommended to them. Periodically, schools should make arrangements to take children on an excursion or to go on field trips to regions, states, cultural sites that will enhance their cultural understanding of other places other than their immediate environment.

Keywords:

Introduction

Literature is a tool for the literate to express their cultural heritage. This definition sees literature as the possession of the literates. This is not always the case because evidences abound that literature predates the literate times. It is appreciation of themes, plot, styles and messages. Ogunba (1996) is of the view that literature is imagination and this is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited but imagination encircles the world. Akinsulire (2012) also perceived literature as an expression of the feelings, emotions, events, views and experiences of the people of the world. Iwuchukwu (2010) looked at literature as an imaginative work of art, which uses language, plot, characters, and settings and so on to give us a picture of life. Fakeye (2015) asserted that literature lacked a precise definition unlike some science subjects which are precise in their definitions. In its most general sense, literature is taken to mean everything in print which has to do with knowledge or information that is written or which exits in printed form. Nchikogwa (2003) said that literature is the field of human studies that man comes in contact with right from birth to death because it embodies the people's culture, mores, religion, arts and mores. This presupposes that literature is needed at all times and that literature is relevant in all ages.

Literature in English as a vital instrument for moral and intellectual development of the individual and society dates back to ancient times when literature in the forms of poetry, songs, drama or oral prose, served as an instrument of entertainment, relaxation and education. Literature also plays an important role as a subject in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary institutions Tertiary institutions in Nigeria require the students to get a credit pass in Literature-in-English to gain admission to study courses like Law, English, Theatre Arts, Mass Communications, Classics, Linguistics and other art courses (JAMB Brochure 2018). This testifies to the fact that literature prepares learners for literacy and goes a long way to equip them with skills ranging from critical thinking, creative and lifelong learning. It is therefore a subject that is crucial in e enabling students come to full actualisation of their potentials.

According to Obichukwu (2009), the different characters portrayed in literary works are reflections of people in true life situations. The experiences of these characters and the way they react to life's issues help learners to have a deeper understanding of human nature. Similarly, Osisanlu (2012) points out that literature enables students to have an insight into human behaviour as mirrored by the events, characters and Situations portrayed in literary works and therefore help students to become well-adjusted people who are able to interact freely with different manners of people, thus enabling good social interaction. This will to a large extent leads to the actualisation of the Nigerian philosophy of education which is for citizens to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom and justice.

The Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria is proposing that, all students, irrespective of their areas of specialization (Arts, Science or Commercial), should offer Literature-in-English. This is because it has been perceived that reading culture is waning among students, consequently they find it difficult to express themselves fluently in English, which is the language of instruction in institutions of learning in Nigeria. It is expected that Literature-in- English texts will afford the students the opportunity to experience the use of the English Language in its varied forms which is expected to positively influence their expression (FME, 2009).

The current West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) Literature in English syllabus (2021-2025) is designed to enrich students with literary appreciation skills as an important part of their overall educational process. This is to enable students cultivate critical skills as a tool for independent

assessment of human issues and develop their competence in understanding literary texts at different levels of meaning, such as surface and implied meaning. This is because its objective is to make students generally enjoy the study of any literature. It is also intended in moulding and forming students' character morally and intellectually. Another objective of the syllabus is to enable students to learn genres of literature, their distinctive characteristics, techniques, composition and mode of appeal.

Despite the invaluable contributions of literature to the overall development of human beings, evidence from the Nigerian education; several studies have shown that students' performance in Literature-in-English at public examinations is poor. Besides, the security of lives and property as well as peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups that make up the Nigerian nation have come under severe threats as exemplified by boundary disputes and all forms of altercations currently witnessed in Nigeria,. The poor performance of students in Literature-in English is affirmed by the statistics of students' performance in Literature in English at WASSCE from 2009-2015 revealed that in the seven years, only about 42% of Literature in English students who sat for the external examination passed at credit level , 33% had a bare pass, while the failure rate is 25%. The small number of students who got credit scores throughout the seven years under consideration, necessitates those teachers and other stakeholders in the teaching and learning of the subject to intervene in order to curb the trend of poor academic performance.

The implication of such poor results are that if the negative trend continues, the nation will lack students who will possess the required knowledge and skill in literature in English that will qualify them for admission for courses where credit pass is in Literature in English is demanded. Factors responsible identified as being responsible for students' poor performance in Literature-in-English, according to scholars such as Ademola (2005) and Amokeodo (2012) include lack of motivational on the part of students and large class size. Some other factors identified by Nsubuga (2013) are lack of proper instructional techniques and in conducive school learning environment. Chief Examiner of WAEC (2015) reported that very few candidates performed excellently in the senior school certificate examination. Amidst the factors pointed out are shallow knowledge, insufficient understanding of the selected texts, wrong interpretations of questions, inability to make references to texts, little or no knowledge of literary appreciation, inability to express answers in good English, dependency on summarized texts. Thus, it was summarized that the numbers of students that obtained credit were abysmally low. Thus, the national objectives and goals of education will not be achieved. The identified factors by scholars on students' persistent poor performance in Literature in English have provided bases for scholars to introduce teaching strategies to enhance Literature in English.

Literature in English as a school subject that is capable of exposing readers through other people's customs and cultural practices. It can be engaged as a tool for propagating cultural values and ideas and the development of literary competence. Literature in English should not only be taught in schools for therapeutic purposes and linguistic purposes but also for under functions such as the creation of cultural awareness moral development and fostering of intercultural competencies. This implies that Literature in English should be taught in a way that it will project different cultures and foster intercultural competence in the student. Abbey (2009) stressed that the teaching and learning of Literature in English should be maximised maximally to project different cultures that will promote national unity and civil tolerance among the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Access to native speakers is an opportunity given to a nonnative speaker to interact with a native speaker both within and outside of the classroom. It is indeed significant to note that native speakers are linguistic models and can provide appropriate feedback. A study observes that second language learners who have no extensive access to native speakers are likely to make slower progress, particularly in the oral/aural aspects of language acquisition. In the field of theoretical linguistics, the native speaker is the authority of the grammar of his or her native language who knows what the language is and what the language is not (Chomsky, 1995). According to this logic, a native speaker is an individual who is infallible and has perfect command of his or her language. This testifies to the fact that there will be insufficient understanding of a typical non-African text if the students fail to have access to the native speakers of that language (Chomsky, 1995).

Communication with native speakers of a target language can be of benefit to language learners as a means of practicing their productive and receptive skills. Such communication not only may improve learners' own language skills, but can also motivate them to pursue further language learning. (Ogino, 2015). Additionally, he believes that access to native speakers is of importance in Non-African text. This is because culture expressed in those novels is at variance with that of their local culture. The manner of expressions of a native speaker in a literary text is often divergent with that of the expression they are more used to.

Yilmaz and Ozkan (2015) reported that access to native speakers encouraged classroom participation and classroom management leading to students' active involvement in learning activities is one of the factors that influence students? attitude, to Literature-in-English. Yilmaz and Ozkan (2015) argue that access to native speakers engage students in meaningful class activity, making learners enjoy the lesson and effectiveness in explaining facts to learners help to boost their grades and improve achievement. This means that class participation could be well organised to help learners interact more with learning material and to aid assimilation of facts presented in a subject. Onwunde (2005) reported students' class participation as helping teachers to determine students' learning interests, developing students? oral skills and their feeling of confidence. Amokeodo (2012) reported a positive influence of access to native speakers on students' achievement in Literature in- English.

On a broader view, cultural competence also known as intercultural competence is a range of cognitive, affective, and behavioural skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures. Intercultural or cross-cultural education is terms used for the training to achieve cultural competence. “Intercultural competence is the ability to communicate effectively in

cross cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts." (Bennett, 2004). This implies that intercultural competence is the ability of an individual to communicate appropriately and effectively with people coming from different cultural backgrounds. Students that lack intercultural competence may not be able to comprehend African and Non-African literary texts.

Godwin-Jones (2013) affirmed that intercultural competence helps literature students become more empathetic and flexible. Godwin further declared that empathy helps us understand others and see the world from their perspective, as well as to be sensitive to their needs. On the other hand, Flexibility focuses on knowing how to behave in changing environments, dealing with a wide range of social situations and being able to adapt using appropriate behaviours. Having known this truth, it is therefore true that for a student to do well in literature in English, he needs to have intercultural competence and cultural awareness of other cultural backgrounds and milieu. Furthermore, recent approaches to English literature teaching shows that learning a literature should not just involve linguistic competence but also include intercultural competence. Intercultural competence helps learners to acquire skills that enable them to explore cultural complexity and enhance cultural understanding. It is widely acknowledged that literature texts may offer learner's opportunities to develop critical reading skills that help them understand other cultures (**Godwin-Jones,** 2013). Ajayi (2004) pointed out that intercultural competence is really needed for students to do well in Non-African texts, plays and poems.

There are studies that examined students' intercultural competence on particular aspects of Literature-in-English rather than the subject as a whole. Olaniran (2008) investigated students' intercultural competence and academic achievement in African Literature, while Osisanlu (2012) investigated the extent to which method of teaching influences students? attitude to poetry and Ezenandu (2011) examined the influence of teaching methods on attitude to prose Literature-in-English. This shows that only selected aspects or genres of Literature-in-English have been looked into. Again, none of the studies examine the extent to which the variables in this study would predict achievement in Literature-in-English. This necessitates further investigation of these student-related variables with a view to finding out the extent to which they could predict achievement in Literature-in-English. This study therefore, investigated students to native speakers and intercultural competence as a predictor to student achievement in literature in English among students in Abeokuta South and North Local Government Areas of Ogun State.

Statement of the Problem

Literature in English is an important subject in the Senior Secondary School Curriculum, which is offered for its numerous benefits to learners. In addition to being a prerequisite subject for studying courses like Law, English, Mass Communication, Linguistics and other humanities courses at tertiary institutions, literature also contributes to moral and social development of the society. Despite the importance attached to Literature in English in the senior secondary school curriculum in Nigeria, students' performance in the subject yearly is below average. Results from WAEC and NECO have shown that students' persistent poor performance in Literature in English is alarming. As a way of addressing this problem, several studies have been carried on methods, approaches, strategies of teaching Literature in English, and several intervention studies have also been carried out but with little emphasis on access to native speakers and intercultural competence as predictors of students' achievement in Literature in English. Thus, this study investigated access to nonnative speakers and intercultural competence as a missing gap in previous researches and which is a major predictor to students' achievement in Literature in English. Therefore, this study investigated the extent to which students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence could predict achievement in Literature-In-English in Abeokuta Local Government Areas of Ogun State.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What relationship exists between the independent variables (student's access to native speakers and intercultural competence) and achievement in literature in English?
2. What is the relative contribution of students' access to native speakers, intercultural competence and achievement in literature in English?
3. What is the joint contribution of students' access to native speakers, intercultural competence and achievement in literature in English?

Significance of the Study

The study investigated the extent to which the following variables (access to native speakers and access to intercultural competence) predicted students' achievement in Literature in English. This study provided the required means through which students could best succeed in Literature in English. Also, teachers will be acquainted on how to simplify literary texts to the students. The result of this study would be of benefit to students, teachers, authors of literary texts, educational administrators, and curriculum planners as well as add to knowledge base. Students would discover the need to study literature in English along with the language in which the texts are written. Finally, this study would serve as a reference text for authors intending to embark on research work of this nature in future. Results from this study would enable stakeholders in education to get insight into the extent to which the independent variables in this study could predict students' achievement in Literature in English. Findings of this study would add to the pool of research on solution to the poor performance of students in Literature in English.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design of the correlational type. Simple random sampling technique was used to select six senior secondary schools from sixteen Senior Secondary schools enumerated in Abeokuta Local Government Area of Ogun State. Fifty students were randomly selected from each school, making a total of 300 students. In all, 300 students participated in the study. Three instruments will be used to

collect data in this study: Ranking Scale on Students' Access to Native Speakers (r=0.74), Ranking Scale on Students Intercultural Competence (r=0.76) and Literature in English Achievement Test (r=0.78). Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages and Multiple Regression Analysis.

Results

RQ 1. What relationship exists between the independent variables (students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence) and achievement in literature in English?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of the relationship between the independent variables (students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence) and achievement in literature in English

Variables	Achievement in literature in English	Students' access to native speakers	Intercultural competence
Achievement in literature in English	1		
Students' access to native speakers	.316 (.000)	1	
Intercultural competence	.297 (.000)	.753 (.000)	1
N	300	300	300
Mean	9.14	15.79	16.61
Standard Deviation	3.47	8.30	9.31

Table 1 shows that relationship that exists between the independent variables (students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence) and achievement in literature-in-English. The result indicates that students' access to native speakers (r = .316) and intercultural competence (r =.297) had positive relationship with students' achievement in Literature-in-English. This implies a direct relationship, such that an increase in students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence resulted to an increase in students' achievement in literature-in-English and vice versa.

2. What is the joint contribution of students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence to achievement in literature in English?

Table 4.2: Summary of the Regression Analysis of the joint contribution of students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence to achievement in literature in English

Model 1
R = .329
R Square =.108
Adjusted R Square = .102
Std. Error of the Estimate = 3.28

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Remarks
1	Regression	388.307	2	194.154	17.976	.000[b]	Significant
	Residual	3207.813	297	10.801			
	Total	3596.120	299				

Table 2 shows that the joint contribution of the students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence to achievement in literature in English was significant ($F_{(2; 297)}$ = 17.976; Adj. R^2 =.102; p =.000<0.05). This implies that the two independent variables, when pulled together, significantly contributed to an increase in students' achievement in literature-in-English. The Adjusted R Square = .102, which implies that 10.2% variance in students' achievement in literature-in-English could be accounted for by the joint contribution of the two independent variables while the remaining 89.8% variance was due to other factors not included in this model.

3. **What is the relative contribution of students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence to achievement in literature in English?**

Table 3: Summary of the Regression Analysis of the relative contribution of students' access to native speakers, intercultural competence and achievement in literature in English

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Rank
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	6.888	.421		16.373	.000	
	Access to Native Speakers	.090	.035	.215	2.581	.010	1st
	Intercultural Competence	.050	.031	.135	1.616	.107	2nd

Table 3 shows that students' access to native speakers (β = .215) and intercultural competence (β = .135) had relative contribution to achievement in Literature in English. This implies that the two independent variables individually contributed to students' achievement in literature-in-English.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 revealed that achievement in Literature in English had a positive relationship with access to native speakers and intercultural competence. The outcome of this finding could not have happened by chance. It could then be deduced that the positive relationship which exists between students' access to native speakers and intercultural competence could be as a result of the fact that Literature-in- English texts are divided into two aspects which are African texts and Non-African Texts. This finding corroborated the findings of Ademola (2015) who asserted that literary texts are not read in a vacuum but are understood when taught and appreciated within a cultural milieu.

Table 2 revealed that the two independent variables when pulled together contribute significantly to an increase in students' achievement in literature in English. The result is in correlation with the research findings of Ogunyinka (2011) who asserted that access to native speakers and intercultural competence contributed significantly to student achievement in literature in English**.** This could have been as a result of the fact that examination questions are set from the recommended Literature-in-English texts. It therefore follows that students that are made to interact with native speakers either directly or indirectly and students who have intercultural awareness are likely to understand better and answer questions more accurately than those who are not and their level of achievement will also increase positively.

Table 3 indicated that access to native speakers and intercultural competence had relative contribution to students' achievement in literature in English. This finding is similar to the study carried out by Smith (2010) that the knowledge of intercultural competence will to a large extent facilitate the comprehension of literary texts. In a separate study, Adegbile (2015) reported a positive relationship between access to native speakers and their achievement in Literature in English. This finding is in line with the finding of Ademola (2015) who revealed that access to native speakers contributed to students' achievement in literature in English.

Conclusion

The study was conceived out of the need to provide better understanding of some of the variables that are responsible for students' poor achievement in Literature-in-English. The independent variables (access to native speakers and intercultural competence) were found to be good predictors of the dependent variables (students' achievement in Literature-in-English). Therefore, it could be concluded from the study that student-related variables are as important as teacher related and pedagogical variables when trying to solve the problem of poor performance in teaching and learning of Literature-in-English. Based on the findings, this study has provided a better understanding of access to native speakers' intercultural competence as predictors of achievement in literature in English among senior secondary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the finding of the study:

i. Teachers should improve the level of proficiency of students. Towards this end, supplementary books that can help to boost students' language proficiency could be recommended to them.

ii. Periodically, schools should make arrangements to take children on an excursion or to go on field trips to regions, states, cultural sites that will enhance their cultural understanding of other places other than their immediate environment.

References

Abbey, E. (2009). The digital curriculum: A conceptual framework of technology integration for a 1:1 school. Johnston, IA:Heartland Area Education Agency 11. Retrieved from http://jenniferhigdon.wikispaces.com/file/view/TheDigitalcurriculum31f3935ECBABA.pdf

Adegbile, R. F. (2015). Participation in literacy club activities, study habit, text possession and utilisation as predictors of students' learning outcomes in Literature-in-English in Ondo State, Nigeria. Ph.D Thesis of the University of Ibadan.

Ademola, F. C. 2005. Investigating cause of students? unwillingness to read prescribed prose texts in some schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. An M.Ed. Project, Department of Teacher Education of the University of Ibadan.

Ajayi, S.A. (2004). Teachers and the techniques of teaching. Ibadan: University Press.

Amokeodo, O. O. (2012). Classroom participation and study habits as predictors of achievement in Literature-in-English in selected schools in Ibadan North Local Government in Oyo State. An Unpublished M.Ed Project, University of Ibadan.

Akinsulire, Y.P. (2012). Effects of narrative text structure awareness on students' achievement in
prose literature in English in some secondary schools in Ondo West Local Government.
An unpublished M.Ed project, University of Ibadan.
Bennett, M.J. (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J.S. Wurzel (Ed). Toward
multiculturalism. A reader in multicultural education, Newton, MA: Intercultural
Resource Corporation.
Challot T. (2011). Knowledge of English Language as a predictor of students? cognitive
achievement in senior secondary school mathematics. *European Journal of Educational*
Studies 3(2).
Chief Examiners' Report (2015). West African Senior Certificate Examination Literature-in-
English May/June.
Chomsky (1995). Research studies on access to native speakers and its implication for ESL
Classroom.
Ezenandu, P.E. (2011). Effects of literature circles and scaffolding strategies on senior secondary
school students? attitudes to and achievement in prose literature-in-English. Post-field
seminar paper. Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan
Fakeye, D.O. (2015). School-related factors as predictors of senior secondary school students'
Literature in English achievement in Ibadan metropolis. International Journal of
Education. Retrieved on September, 2018 from www.macrothink.org.
Federal Ministry of Education. (2009). Senior Secondary Education Curriculum, English
Language for SS 1-3, Nigerian Educational Research and Development. (NERDC). Lagos.
Godwin-Jones, R. (2013). Integrating intercultural competence into language learning through
technology. Language learning & technology. 17 (2), 1-11.
Iwuchukwu, O. (2010). The perception of English literature students on examination and online
(web-based) learning. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*. Vol.15, No. 1
Nchikogwa, J. O. (2003). The mastery of literature. Macckho-Ricckho Press and Publishing Co Ltd.Lagos, Nigeria.
Nsubuga, H. 2013. Factors affecting the quality of Literature-in-English teaching in secondary schools in Uganga: a case study of Entebbe Municipality. Martyrs University-Nkozi,Uganda.
Obichukwu, O. G. (2009). Elements of Literature: Lagos Treasure Publishers Limited.
Ogino, M. (2015). Strategies of advocacy for Japanese language. Paper presented to the 21st
Biennial New Zealand Asian Studies Society (NZASIA) Conference, Christchurch, New
Zealand
Ogunba, O. (1996). Shakespeare in Nigeria. *Nigerian English Studies Association Journal.* 5(2)
Ogunyinka, J. (2011). Text possession and utilisation in Literature-in-English in selected senior secondary schools in Egbeda Local Government Area, Ibadan, Oyo State. An M.Ed Project, University of Ibadan.
Olaniran, S. F. (2008). Secondary students? attitude and their performance in the study of non-
African Literature texts. An Unpublished M.Ed Project, Department of Teacher
Education. University of Ibadan.
Onwunde, P. N. (2005). A study of methods and activities in poetry lessons in some senior
Secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis. An Unpublished M.Ed Project, Department of
Teacher Education of the University of Ibadan.
Osisanlu, O. T. (2012). Effects of three methods of teaching poetic literature on students'
achievement and attitude to poetry in some secondary schools in Ibadan. An M.Ed
Project, Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan.
Smith, S. (2010).The reasons why a student should study English literature. Hong Kong: ITS Educational News.
Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination Brochure. (2018). Joint Admission Matriculation Board
West African Examination Council. Regulations and syllabuses for West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) 2021-2025. 8, 13-16; 24 and 306
West African Examination Council. Statistics of results and performance in May/June West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) 2014-2017 Literature in English. Test Development Division, Ogba, Lagos.
Yilmaz, I and Ozkan, Y. (2015). The perspectives of English language teachers on intercultural awareness at a university pre-school in Turkey. Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 3(3), 258-281.