Effect of Pre-Reading Discussion on Students Achievement in Prose Literature in Selected Schools in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study determined the effect of pre reading discussions (previewing and brainstorming) on students achievement in prose Literature in some selected schools in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. The pretest posttest control group, quasi-experimental design was adopted. The participants were SS2 students in three intact classes from three senior secondary schools in the local government areas. The instruments used were Prose Literature Achievement Test (r=0.78) and Instructional guides. Treatment lasted six weeks. The result showed that students' taught using previewing had the highest mean score of 18.16, followed by the students taught using Brainstorming (17.75) and students taught using the conventional strategy (16.45). This implies that students' achievement was enhanced with the adoption of previewing and brainstorming strategies, although the difference was not significant. The study concluded that the two pre-discussion strategies were effective for teaching prose Literature-in-English. Arising from the findings, it was recommended that previewing and brainstorming strategies should be adopted as viable strategies for teaching and learning prose Literature-in-English.

Keywords: Pre-reading discussions, Previewing, Brainstorming, Prose Literature, Students' Achievement

Introduction

Literature in English in secondary schools has long been one of the core important subjects that accouter students with language development, vocabulary knowledge and communication skills. Literature is an expression of cultural experience of a people and language is part of this cultural experience. To know a people's language, literature is highly indispensable. Literature is an art of language and words are the essential ingredients of language.

Generally, literature is taught to broaden students' cultural awareness and knowledge of healthy human values to enhance their language skills; expose them to the beauty and potentials of language; and equip them with the necessary skills for independent thinking and creative writing. According to Ugwu (2022), one of the general objectives of Literature is to adequately prepare students for standardized examinations needed for work and for further studies. For the specific objectives, literary appreciation is intended to help students develop critical sensitivity to literature and be able to independently assess prose, poetry, and drama. Through drama instruction, students learn basic dramatic techniques, develop the skills of acting, and become able to relate drama to real life. The goal of poetry instruction is to expose students to the richness of poetic expression and to gain experience in writing their own poems. Lastly, the objective of teaching prose is to enable learners to recognize the values embodied in fiction (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council [NERDC] 2009, p. iii–v). Based in the foregoing, the genre of literature is basically grouped into three These are drama, poetry and prose. This study largely focus on the genre of prose. The purpose is to examinethe effect of Pre-reading discussion on students achievement in prose literature.

Prose is the form of written language (including written speech or dialogue) that follows the natural flow of speech, uses a language's ordinary grammatical structures, or follows typical writing conventions and formatting (thus including academic writing). It differs from traditional poetry, where the format consists of verse: writing in lines that follow rhythmic metre or a rhyme scheme. The word "prose" first appears in English in the 14th century. It is derived from the Old French prose, which in turn originates in the Latin expression prosa oratio (literally, straightforward or direct speech).

In literature, the basic purpose of prose in writing is to convey an idea, deliver information, or tell a story. Prose can vary depending according to style and purpose. There are four distinct types of prose that writers use. These are Nonfictional prose, Fictional prose, Heroic prose and Prose poetry.

Students studying prose literature face several challenges. According to Dowall (2022), these challenges include difficulties in understanding and interpreting literary texts, low language proficiency, lack of comprehension, and disengagement from the subject matter . Teachers also face challenges in teaching prose literature, such as the need to incorporate multifaceted competencies, outdated teaching strategies, and broad module content . Additionally, the teaching and learning process is hindered by factors such as poor learning environments, shortage of textbooks, misconceptions about the value of prose literature, heavy workloads, and lack of parental support . Furthermore, students and early career academics encounter challenges in engaging with academic literature, including difficulties in choosing a practical approach, designing an efficient search

strategy, locating relevant literature, and synthesizing and critiquing the literature. These challenges highlight the need for effective teaching strategies, updated curriculum, and interventions to support students in studying prose literature. Having identified these numerous challenges, this study seeks to examine the effect of pre reading discussions on students' achievement in prose literature.

Pre-reading discussion encompasses all the activities that are undertaken before one starts reading so as to increase his or her capacity to understand the material (to be read). In many cases, taking just a few minutes to learn more about what one is about to read can dramatically increase one's reading comprehension and retention. Pre-reading activities are meant to give students the background knowledge they need in order to better understand a text when they interact with it. Pre-reading discussions are the activities that students are taken through to enable them to acquire skills for actual reading. Therefore, they are designed to prepare beginners for formal reading. Johnson et al. (2010) state that pre-reading discussion are a series of activities students are exposed to, as a way of preparing them for formal reading. For this reason, they can be viewed as essential tasks that should be carried out to activate learners' schema and avoid any failures in text comprehension and actual reading. Students familiarize themselves with the subject, vocabulary, or challenging structures in the passage through the use of pre-reading discussion. Pre-reading exercises are particularly useful in fostering a love for reading and in introducing important cultural ideas. According to Ping (2014), pre-readin discussion are essential to students' later applications in school activities. They are exercises that give pupils the chance to decide whether to read more of a text in order to discover more intriguing ideas from it (Ghamrawi, 2014), bring about success in students' comprehension (Malikhatul, 2019), has key impacts on reading comprehension (Jamilah, 2018).

Osei et al. (2016) averred that pre-reading activities are essential for giving students the fundamental knowledge they need about texts, piquing their interest in reading texts, and keeping them in a reading environment throughout their formal learning stage. According to Hasan (2011), students' schemata can be triggered during the pre-reading phase before the real reading stage, and this can improve their comprehension of written material. It is clear that pre-reading discussions are very important in the reading class and have a good impact on students. Pre-reading discussions, according to Tsadidey (2002), include a variety of games, comparative picture studies, and picture-storytelling exercises that are typically helpful in assisting children in developing the reading abilities necessary for formal reading. These activities are enabling activities which give young readers the thorough grounding they need to plan activities and understand the reading material (Kim & Quinn, 2013). In this view, pre-reading activities uncover and elicit prior knowledge, and the purpose(s) for reading, and develop a knowledge foundation required for dealing with the content and structure of the contents provided (Suggate et al., 2013).

Pre-reading discussions set up and strengthen students' foundation for reading materials, demonstrating the critical function pre-reading discussions have in strengthening students' focus and attention on the reading materials they will be reading (Franceschini et al., 2013). Without a doubt, the discussions allow the student to gradually test out his emotional self, calm himself through emotional expression in a range of reading situations, and more easily pick up pre-reading skills (Abdulai, 2014). Pre-reading activities have drawn a lot of attention as the cornerstone techniques for introducing children to reading and maintaining their interest in texts (Suggate et al., 2013) and by employing these discussions, readers are better prepared for the reading activities when they are motivated to read the text, which is a result of pre-reading discussions. Additionally, because of their increased confidence, students are better able to complete the discussion without expending too much effort, and they are more eager to participate in it. Furthermore, pre-reading discussions add excitement to the reading text, give the students a reason to read, and give the teacher an opportunity to assess how well the text can be understood with the aid of the discussions assigned before/after reading (Osei et al., 2016) hence, by providing pre-reading discussions, teachers can help learners become successful readers (Dickson, 2022). The application of the pre-reading technique is effective in improving reading comprehension of narrative text (Mujahidah & Ramli, 2019) and increases reading performance (Nesrim, 2020). Pre-reading discussions have positive effects on students' performance in reading ÿþ comprehension (Rondon & Tomitch, 2020; Asgar, 2016) and can have positive effects on all students whether high-level or low-level, and all learners can benefit from the techniques (Hashemi et al., ÿþ 2016). They are motivational (Nahid &Asgar, 2016), and improve students' comprehension of texts because pre-reading discussions activate students' prior knowledge and facilitate students' comprehension ability of the target text (Al Akremi (2016).

Therefore, the wise use of pre-reading discussions is one primary step in ensuring efficient comprehension and a more successful reading (Febrianti et al. 2022). Having established the influence of pre-reading discussion, this study seeks to examine the effect of pre-reading discussions on students achievement in Prose Literature.

Prose is one of the literary genres and it has undergone a long history from its coming into being to its present development. As a literary genre, its development is inseparable from that of novel. And it can be said that novel originates from prose. In seventeenth century, the novel started to rise as an independent literary genre with John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress as the pioneering work (Wang, 1998:51-53).It is widely read among various walks of people, and differs from poetry in the sense that only the well-educated people with certain knowledge of literature can have access to it. Thus it may be said that to some degree, it is because of such easiness of understanding and comprehending that prose enjoys great popularity. Contrary to its popularity is that the study of it is scanter compared with that of other literary genres, such as fiction, drama and poetry.

Prose is used in various ways for various purposes. It's a concept students need to understand since one of their goals as a literature student is to master the literary form. Before we dive in, it's important to understand the prose definition and how it is distinguished from other styles of writing. In writing, prose is a style used that does not follow a structure of rhyming or meter. Rather, prose follows a grammatical structure using words to compose phrases that are arranged into sentences and paragraphs. It is used to directly communicate concepts, ideas, and stories to a reader. Prose follows an almost naturally verbal flow of writing that is most common among fictional and non-fictional literature such as novels, magazines, and journals. Prose follows a structure that makes use of sentences, phrases, and paragraphs. This type of writing follows a flow more similar to verbal speech and communication. This makes it the best style of writing to clearly articulate and communicate concepts, events, stories, and ideas as opposed to the figurative style of poetry. Arguably, the most basic function of prose as stated by twinkl (2023) is to deliver information to the reader in the form of a story. Prose is the avenue through which the writer walks the reader through the story with its different characters, settings, points of conflict, and plot lines, all culminating in the final resolution. It is a very straightforward type of writing, and does not mess around with additional factors like rhyme and form. As it mimics speech, it can be great for persuasive writing, as it encourages familiarity between the writer and reader. Twinkl (2023) further revealed that another basic function of prose is to create a sense of familiarity between the reader and the text. Generally speaking, prose is fairly conversational, although this will change depending on the writer. The laid-back familiarity of prose allows readers to become comfortable with the story and the characters involved. This, as a result, makes them feel more connected to the story and, thus, more invested in its outcome.

Prose basically refers to all types of writing that use the normal linguistic apparatus, marked by plain sentences, paragraphs and chapters, as distinct from drama and poetry. It is unique as a form of story telling art characterized by a subject matter. Prose means an ordinary form of spoken or written language. It is arranged in verses and rhymes. It comes, in sentences form through dialogue and conversation, the sentences are added together to make paragraphs. Prose is a genre(s) of literature which is one of the subjects in the school curriculum. It explains, describes and narrates events. Prose is organized in paragraphs and they have important elements of fiction. They are plot, character, theme, setting, the point of view, style, and figures of speech. These components together create a complete literary work, whether a novel or a short story. It is not necessary to have all elements in a piece of prose. The elements of fiction assist the teacher to explain the content in an effective manner with literary insight.

Teaching the prose of a language is basically a tool on which language learning revolves. Therefore, teaching of prose has a lot of responsibilities attached with it. It is the most important tool in the hands of a teacher to achieve the possible outcome. Teaching prose actually means teaching reading with comprehension. All the four skills of language learning are to be developed by teaching prose. The main aims of teaching prose are literary aim and subject matter aim. Both these aims have to be fulfilled by teaching prose. Teaching prose should be intensive as well as extensive depending upon the need, the class and age of the students. It includes the teaching of structures, the vocabulary, grammar, language in general and the ability to achieve mastery on all the four skills of language learning. In order to aid the teaching and learning of prose, the students are expected to be exposed to pre-reading of prose material. Spies and Wilkin (2014) showed that before each class, the students who were responsible for reading a legal case displayed a greater understanding of the learning materials than students who were not expected to prepare for a

pharmacy law course. Chiu and Lee (2019) considered that a pre-class video viewing of the lecture content and hands- on laboratory activities in class enhanced the learning of high-school students' basic image processing. Chen (2018) showed that pre-reading helped learners capture key points and incomprehensible concepts before class, so they could focus their attention on the parts of the lecture related to those key points and concepts previously not fully understood.

The findings in the Chung and Fan study (2017) showed that when a teacher requested that students pre-read before class and did not plan activities well to stimulate pre-reading, it was found that some students did not attain good learning readiness for the lecture and did not perform well on exams. Sun and Huang (2015) conducted an experiment with an experimental group and a control group, employing traditional instruction with or without asking for pre- reading Web-based learning materials. The results indicated that the pre-reading group received significantly higher scores than the group that did not pre-read.

This study acknowledged that there are different ways of aiding the students pre-reading discussions in Prose. Millington, a veteran English teacher in (2016) identified ten pre-reading discussions which are speed chatting, discussion, brainstorming, the title, storytelling, short conversation, pictionary, purpose and videos. Yusuf (2011) identified previewing activities, pre-reading discussions via group work and brainstorming as the pre-reading discussions used by teachers in senior secondary schools. Meylana (2019) observes that techniques and strategies such as previewing, scanning and skimming enable the students comprehend the reading text in the advanced reading course in Indonesia. Solomon et al (2023) citing Wallace de Sousa (2012) identifies two types of pre-reading activities: those which consist of questions to which the reader is required to find the answer in the text and, tasks focused on preparing the reader for likely linguistic difficulties in the text. Pre-teaching vocabulary and brainstorming fall in the latter group since they are among strategies that "encourage students to use prior knowledge, experiences, careful thought and evaluation to help them decide how to practically apply what they know to all reading situations (Unal, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Prose Literature-in-English contributes enormously to the linguistic, holistic and humanistic development of readers. Through exposure to prose Literature in English texts, readers get to understand themselves and the world in which they live and acquire those traits that enable the building of a peaceful and united society. Over the years, students' performance in Literature-in-English (comprising prose, poetry and drama) in West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) has been poor. The poor performance has also hindered the development of values derived from the study of prose, such as tolerance, patriotism, social adjustment, self-understanding and understanding of other people. It has also deprived students the opportunity to pursue their desired careers, especially those that require a credit pass in Literature-in-English as a prerequisite for higher studies. Students' declining performance in prose literature has been traced to not utilising effective instructional strategies for teaching prose-Literature texts. Previous studies on ways of improving learning outcomes in prose Literature-in-English have mostly focused on text structure and teacher competence factors. These past studies focused less on adoption of pre-reading discussion strategies such as pre-viewing and brainstorming strategies. This study was carried out to determine the effect of previewing and brainstorming strategies on achievement in prose Literature-in-English among public senior secondary school students in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

This study set out to:

1. determine the significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in prose literature
2. examine the difference in the achievement of students taught prose-Literature-in-English using previewing, brainstorming and conventional strategies.

Hypotheses

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

2. Ho: There is no significant difference in the achievement of students taught prose-Literature-in-English using previewing, brainstorming and conventional strategies.

Scope of the Study

This research work basically focused on determining the effect of pre-reading discussions specifically, previewing, brainstorming, group discussion and scanning on students achievement in Prose Literature. This study covered Obafemi Owode Local Government Area in Ogun State.

Significance of the Study

The findings have shown that pre-viewing and brainstorming strategies were effective in teaching and learning prose-Literature-in-English thereby opening the eyes of teachers to effective strategies to be adopted in teaching prose-Literature-in-English. The finding would be useful to students studying Literature in English as it will help the students to perform better in this genre of literature. The study will serve as a reference point for future research on the teaching and learning of prose Literature-in-English.

Methodology

The study adopted the pretest posttest control group quasi-experimental design. This is schematically represented as follows:

Experimental Group 1 O_1 X_1 O_4
Experimental Group 2 O_2 X_2 O_5
Control Group O_3 X O_6

Where O_1, O_2 and O_3 represented the pretest observations of experimental 1, 2 and control groups respectively. O_4, O_5 and O_6 represented the posttest observations for experimental groups one, two and control groups respectively.

X_1 is Previewing Strategy.
X_2 is Brainstorming Strategy.
X_3 is Scanning Strategy.

The participants were 60 SS2 students in three intact classes from three public senior secondary schools in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria The selected prose reading material for this study is Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen.* The instruments used were Prose Literature Achievement Test (r=0.78) and instructional guides for previewing and brainstorming strategies and conventional strategies. Data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance, Estimated Marginal Means and Bonferroni post-hoc analysis. At 0.05 level of significances.

Results

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

Table 1 : Summary of ANCOVA of Students' Post - Achievement in by Treatment and Home background

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	436.370[a]	9	48.486	3.595	.001	.370
Intercept	296.359	1	296.359	21.972	.000	.285
Pre-Achievement in Prose Literature	194.525	1	194.525	14.422	.000	.208
Treatment	17.462	2	8.731	.647	.527	.023
Error	741.845	55	13.488			
Total	21489.000	65				
Corrected Total	1178.215	64				

Table shows that there is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in drama ($F_{(2; 55)}$=.647; p>0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis one is hereby not rejected. However, the result shows a partial eta square of .023, which implies that the treatment had 2.3% effect size, despite the fact that it is not significant. Hence, 2.3% variance in students' post-achievement in drama was accounted for by the effect of the treatment.

$H_0$2: There is no difference in the in the mean scores of students taught prose Literature-in-English with previewing, brainstorming and conventional strategies**.**

Table 2 below shows the estimated marginal means of the students' post-achievement according to treatment.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means Post-Achievement by Treatment

			95% Confidence Interval	
Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Previewing	18.146[a]	.712	16.719	19.573
Brainstorming	17.754[a]	.754	16.243	19.264
Conventional	16.446[a]	1.246	13.950	18.943

Table 2 shows that students taught using Previewing had the highest mean score of 18.16, followed by the students taught using Brainstorming (Mean =17.75) and students taught using the conventional strategy (mean =16.45). This implies that students' achievement increased with the use of previewing and brainstorming, although the difference was not significant.

Discussion of Findings

Main effect of treatment on students' achievement in prose literature.

Treatment had no significant main effect on students achievement in prose literature. The study shows that students' taught using previewing had the highest mean score, followed by the students taught using brainstorming and students taught using the conventional strategy. In previewing instructional strategy, students work in collaboration with their teacher. The brainstorming strategy offers a classroom environment that encourages modeling, observation and corrective feedbacks during instruction. These allow students the opportunity to participate actively and relate directly with their classmates which leads to improved performance. Similarly, the high level of students involvement in previewing and brainstorming group encouraged interactions and active participation, through tasks, in classroom activities and this led to an improvement in students achievement in prose literature. This finding also supports the submission of Ibrahim (2012) and Lawrence (2015) that the teaching of prose, using a wide range of pre reading discussions such as brainstorming and previewing had positive effects on improving secondary school students participation in dramatic literature.

Difference in the in the mean scores of students taught prose Literature-in-English with previewing, brainstorming and conventional strategies.

The result shows that students taught using previewing had the highest mean score of 18.16, followed by the students taught using Brainstorming (Mean =17.75) and students taught using the conventional strategy (mean =16.45). This implies that there were differences in students' achievement prose literature across the three groups.

Conclusion

The results of the study have shown that both previewing had brainstorming instructional strategies are more facilitative in enhancing students' achievement in prose literature than the modified conventional strategy. It can therefore be concluded that pre-discussion strategies have the potential of mitigating students problem in prose literature.

Recommendations

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

1. Previewing and brainstorming strategies should be adopted as viable strategies for teaching and learning rules and concepts in prose since they involve students' participation in their learning process.
2. Teachers of prose literature should be exposed to periodic in-service training programmes, seminars, workshops, and conferences for teachers to keep them abreast of innovative strategies such as previewing and brainstorming instructional strategies
3. The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) and Nigeria Prose Writer Association should organize regular conferences and seminar using previewing and brainstorming instructional strategies for prose literature teachers.

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