Teacher Questioning Skills and Students' Achievement in English Reading Comprehension in Oyo Town, Nigeria

[1]Adebimpe O. Adebanjo and [2]Prof. D. O. Fakeye
[1]*Department of English, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo*
[2]*Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate teacher questioning skills as determinant of students' achievement in reading comprehension. The two instruments uses were teacher questioning skills rating scale (r=0.82) and students reading comprehension achievement test (r=0.76). Descriptive statistics of mean, frequency counts and percentage were used to answer the research questions. Also, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship that exists between teacher questioning skills and students achievement in reading comprehension. Findings revealed that teacher questioning skill is low, students' performance in reading comprehension is low, teachers questioning skill has no significant relationship with students' achievement in English reading comprehension. Based on these findings, teachers should horn their questioning skills to enhance students achievement in English reading comprehension.

Keywords: Questioning skill, achievement, reading comprehension

Introduction

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and derive meanings from a given text. It is a complex skill that involves word knowledge as well as critical thinking. It is a multi-faceted process which involves thinking, predicting, questioning, evaluating, defining and re-defining. The academic success of any student depends on his/her level of reading comprehension which could be at frustration level, dependent level or independent level. At the frustration level, a student does not comprehend at all; at the dependent level, he or she is able to comprehend with the aid of an assistant while at the independent level, the candidate reads and understands with ease.

Kolawole and Adelabu (2006) viewed reading comprehension as a function of writer-reader contact. It means that a reader should be able to grasp the pattern of thinking intended and structured in the author's writing. When a reader comprehends a writer's thought as an organised whole, the reader would be able to relate the main ideas to illustration, elaboration and other supporting details. Hence, it is crucial that each student is skillful in reading comprehension; that is, knowing how to read and deriving maximum meaning from a text.

Reading comprehension becomes more important in senior secondary schools because it provides the basis for a substantial amount of learning outcome (Kirsh, et al., 2002). Reading comprehension assists students to gain information about the text they have read thereby increasing their vocabulary, their familiarity with the written language as well as developing their concepts of the print. Adediran (2011) remarked that English reading comprehension is important and it requires understanding not only the meaning of the words but of their relationships in sentences, paragraphs and messages. In this sense, comprehension is rooted in and synonymous with intelligence, that is, ability to make thorough logical analysis on conceptual or cognitive relationship. Adediran further stated three basic stages that are involved in reading comprehension as: reading, understanding and answering, with one stage leading to another. When reading, there should be proper understanding on the part of the reader in order to retain the concepts or the ideas read. A reader might try to interprete what he/she has read using his/her own native language in order to aid retention. Once the concepts are retained, they would be recalled successfully when the need arises.

Fakeye (2018) asserted that failure in writing summary and reading comprehension is one of the causes of failure in English Language. It means that students have to perform excellently in WAEC English Language Paper 1 which involves reading comprehension in order to pass English Language. Despite the importance of reading comprehension to academic achievement, Nigerian students still perform below expectations in reading comprehension (Awolere, 2016). Likewise, the WASSCE Chief Examiners reports in English Language in year 2021 revealed that the failure rate in English Language is predominant in the aspect of reading comprehension. This indicates that students are yet to master the skills of reading comprehension which hinges on word recognition and vocabulary knowledge.

In the same vein, Olagunju (2020) stated that deficiency in students reading comprehension contributed to low performance in Prose Literature. This implies that reading comprehension has been identified to have a strong influence on students' learning outcomes in all subject areas, be it Science, Mathematics or English Language (Adegoke, 2010;

Lee & Buxton, 2013; Fakeye, 2014; Adeyinka, 2020).

Reading comprehension goes beyond recalling information explicitly stated in a text. In developing reading comprehension skills, ability to read fluently and possess a good command of vocabulary should be encouraged; the more the vocabulary a reader has at his or her possession, the higher the level of comprehension. Brandon (2021) suggested three basic strategies that could assist students to comprehend effectively while reading; they are predicting, making connections to prior knowledge and visualising. Predicting deals basically with what the student see, hear or read in relation to their books cover, titles, pictures, drawings, table of contents and headings; students are made to proceed from known to unknown by applying their previous knowledge and experiences to new ideas or concepts. To enhance reading comprehension, teachers should guide the students to make text-to-self, text-to-text and text-to-world connections before, during and after reading. The last stage is visualising which requires that the students create in their minds the mental images of what they read. These three stages would enhance the understanding, the retaining, and the recalling of the ideas or the concepts being read.

Goddiess (2021) averred that reading comprehension is a skill which is learnt throughout schooling and it is integrated into each subject and everyday lesson. It implies that reading comprehension is not peculiar to English Language, successes in other school subjects depend on students' proficiency in reading comprehension. The visual processing, processing speed, logic and reasoning skill do affect the comprehension level of a reader. As teachers, students should be prepared for linguistic, cultural or conceptual difficulties they are likely to face with English comprehension text. This could be done by exposing students to reading activities that would activate their existing schematic knowledge.

Fakeye (2006) asserted that when teachers of English Language teach reading comprehension carelessly and uninterestingly as a routine, students seem to find it boring thereby developing negative attitude towards reading comprehension exercises. Fakeye then recommended student-centred strategy rather than teacher-centred strategy in the classroom settings. The teacher-centred strategy has also been faulted by researchers like Ojedokun, (2010); Ogunleye and Babajide, (2011); Olagbaju, (2012) and Akinsowon, (2014). Unfortunately, the conventional method of teaching English reading comprehension is still widely used in most schools in Nigeria.

Several attempts have been made in the past to address the issues of students' proficiency in English reading comprehension. Khalid and Azeez (2012), Osikomaiya (2012), Akinsowon (2014), Awolere (2016) and Bateye (2017) research on constructivist theory-based such as paragraph shrinking, scaffolding and context cueing, Oladoyinbo (2018) focused on students and home related factors while Awolere and Muraina (2020) examined interaction effects of home literacy environment of pupils on their self-concept as means of enhancing English reading comprehension with less emphasis on teacher questioning skills.

Teacher questioning skill in teaching and learning process is sometimes taken for granted but it is a skill that needs conscious development by teachers in order to be effective. In the classroom, the teacher could make use of formative or summative questioning types. The formative questioning type takes place before and during the classroom discussion while the summative type is usually used at the end of classroom discussion. Georgina (2018) listed eight essential questioning techniques which could be applied successfully in the classroom setting: closed question also known as polar question; open-ended question which encourages wider discussion and elaboration; probing question which digs deeper and provides a full picture about a subject; leading questions which are meant to build positive discussions towards an outcome that serves one interest; loaded questions which are majorly use by professionals; for instance, lawyers and journalists to trick their interviewee into admitting a fundamental truth they would otherwise be unwilling to disclose; funnels questions begin on a broad basis before narrowing to a specific point or vice versa; recall and process questions encourage critical thinking and in-depth evaluation of a subject and lastly, rhetorical questions which do not require any answer. An effective teacher should know when, where and how to apply each of the questioning techniques in order to ascertain how best the students are coping in teaching/learning process in the classroom.

Questioning skill is a guide to gaining information and it is required in interpersonal communications. Politicians, reporters, celebrities and entrepreneurs are successful based on their questioning skills. Teacher questioning skills refer to a teacher's ability to assess effectively his or her students. Students understanding of the concepts being taught are enhance when a teacher uses appropriate questioning techniques, this implies that the way teachers ask questions could make or mar students' achievement in English reading comprehension. During the classroom activities, the teacher is the sender, the students are the receivers. The responses given by the students and the teachers are the feedbacks. When the students' performance is encouraging, then, it affirms that the teacher applies the right type of questioning techniques.

Patzer (2020) was of the opinion that when a teacher improves his/her questioning skills, it prompts discussion and through dialogue, students understand better. It was further recommended that teachers should always reflect on their practices to measure their effectiveness; they should gain a deeper understanding of the questions and how to use them and develop a classroom culture that usually welcome mistakes. It implies that teachers should always self-examine themselves in order to discover the areas in which they are lagging behind and improve on their performances. Likewise, they should form the habit of encouraging students even when their responses are not correct because condemning students outright would discourage their participation in the classroom discussions.

Researchers such as Fakeye and Ayede (2013), Olagbaju (2020), Jire-Alao (2021), Olagbaju and Akinsola (2021) and Olatunbosun (2021) have shown that teacher questioning skills enhance students achievement. However, the extent to which teacher questioning skills would predict achievement in English reading comprehension among SS II students in Oyo town has not been established.

Statement of the problem

Reading comprehension is an important aspect of English Language in the Senior Secondary School Curriculum. However, evidence available from the past results of West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and her Chief Examiners reports revealed that students' performance has not been encouraging in English reading comprehension due to the difficulties encountered by students when answering examination questions. Scholars' efforts to address this problem influenced research on the use of different strategies such as exit-slip, semantic-gradient, scaffolding instruction, differentiated instruction, peer inquiry among others with little emphasis on influence of teacher questioning skills on students achievement in English reading comprehension in secondary schools which have been reported in the studies to have influence on students' performance in all school subjects. Hence, this study investigated teacher questioning skills as predictor of students' achievement in English reading comprehension.

Research questions

1. What is English Language teachers' rating in questioning skill?
2. What is the level of achievement of students in reading comprehension?
3. What relationship exists between teacher questioning skills and students achievements in English reading comprehension?

.**Significance of the study**

The finding has revealed the predictive capacity of teacher questioning skills on students' achievement in English reading comprehension thereby helping to reduce poor performance in English reading comprehension in schools. This study would serve as intellectual source for future researchers, education policy makers and curriculum planners in English reading comprehension who are in constant search for potent factors that could improve students; performance in English reading comprehension.

Methodology

The correlational research design was adopted. to examine the relationship that exists between teacher questioning skills and students' achievement in reading comprehension. The three local government areas in Oyo town were enumerated. From each of the local government areas, purposive sampling was used to select two senior secondary schools making a total of six (6) schools. From each of the schools, one intact class of SSII students was randomly selected, making a total of six intact classes. A total of 240 students and six English Language teachers participated in the study. The instruments used were students' achievement text in reading comprehension (r=0.76), teacher questioning skills rating scale (r=0.82).Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Answering of Research Questions

Research Questions 1: What is English Language teachers' rating in questioning skills?

Table 1: English Language Teacher Rating in Questioning Skills

S/N	Items	Very Good(%)	Good (%)	Fair(%)	Poor (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The teacher asks questions to activate prior knowledge before new lesson	4(66.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.33	.52
2	The teacher uses questions to evaluate the topic taught	6(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.00	.00
3	The teacher uses questions to shield light on the important point of the lesson	6(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.00	.00
4	The teacher asks students whether they have different ideas	2(33.3)	4(66.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.67	.52
5	The teacher modifies the question when it is not understood by the students	4(66.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.33	.52
6	The teacher asks higher order questions	0(0.0)	3(50.0)	1(16.7)	2(33.3)	2.00	.89
7	The teacher asks lower order questions	6(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.00	.00
8	The teacher encourages students to ask questions	4(66.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.33	.52
9	The teacher allows enough wait time for students to think on special questions before response	6(100)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.00	.00
10	The teacher asks questions that match the students level of intelligence	0(0.0)	4(66.7)	1(16.7)	1(16.7)	2.83	.98
11	The teacher does involve in cold calling when asking questions	2(33.3)	3(50.0)	0(0.0)	1(16.7)	2.50	.84
12	The teacher asks questions from those students that are intelligent	1(16.7)	0(0.0)	4(66.7)	1(16.7)	2.00	1.09
13	The teacher scolds any students that does not rightly answer the question	3(50.0)	3(50.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.50	.55
14	The teacher asks open-ended questions	4(66.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.33	.52
15	The teacher asks questions randomly to keep students active throughout the classroom activities	4(66.7)	2(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1.33	.52
	Grand mean= 1.64, Threshold = 3.0						

Table 1, item 1 revealed that four (04) out of the six participants were very good at asking questions to activate students prior knowledge while two (02) of them were good with the mean score of 1.33; standard deviation of .52. Item 2 showed that all the participants (06) were very good at using questions to evaluate the topics taught with the mean score of 1.00; standard deviation of .00. Item 3 indicated that all the participants were rated very good at using questions to shield light on important with mean score of 1.00; standard deviation of .00. Item 4 revealed that two (02) of the participants were very good at asking their students whether they had contrary opinions, the remaining four (04) were rated good with the mean score of 1.67; standard deviation of .52. Item 5 showed that four (04) out of the six participants were rated very good at modifying questions for better understanding while two (02) others were good with the mean score of 1.33; standard deviation of .52. Item 6 indicated that three (03) participants were rated good at asking higher order questions, one (01) rated fair while two (02) were rated poor with the mean score of 2.00; standard deviation of .89. Item 7 revealed that all the participants were very good at asking lower order questions with the mean score of 1.00; standard

deviation of .00. Item 8 showed that four (04) out of the six participants were rated very good at encouraging students to ask questions while two (02) were rated good with the mean score of 1.33; standard deviation of .52. Item 9 revealed that all the participants were rated very good at given students enough time to think with the mean score of 1.00; standard deviation of .00. Item 10 showed that four (04) of the participants were rated good at matching questions with the intelligence level of the students, one (01) of them was rate fair while the other one (01) was poor with the mean score of 2.83; standard deviation of .98. Item 11 indicated that two (02) of the participants were very good at cold calling when asking questions, three (03) were good while one (01) of them was poor with the mean score of 2.50; standard deviation of .84. Item 12 revealed that only one (01) of the participants was very good at asking questions from those students that appeared intelligent, two (02) participants were rated fair while one (01) was rated poor with the mean score of 2.00; standard deviation of 1.10. Item 13 showed that three (03) of the teachers were rated very good at scolding students that gave wrong answers while the remaining three (03) were rated good with the mean score of 1.50; standard deviation of .55. Item 14 revealed that four (04) of the participants were rated very good at asking open-ended questions while the remaining two (02) were good at it with the mean score of 1.33; standard deviation of .52. Item 15 showed that four (04) of the participants were rated very good at asking questions randomly to keep the students active while two (02) were good it with the mean score of 1.33; standard deviation of .52.

The grand mean is 1.64. This implies that teachers questioning skills is below average when compared with the threshold 3.0.

Research Question 2: What is the level of students' achievement in English reading comprehension?

Table 2: Level of students' achievement in English reading comprehension

	Students' scores
N Valid	240
Mean	4.48
Standard deviation	2.33
Minimum	0.00
Maximum	11.00

The students mean score in English reading comprehension achievement is 4.48 out of maximum of 20 marks, which indicates that students' achievement in ERC is low.

Research Question 3: What relationship exists between teacher questioning skills and students' achievement in English reading comprehension?

Table 3: Teacher Questioning Skills and Students Achievement in English Reading Comprehension

Pearson Production Moment Correlation		**Students English Reading Comprehension**
Teacher questioning skills	R	.088
	Sig.	.869
	N	6

Table 3 indicated that there is no significant relationship between teacher questioning skills and students achievement in English reading comprehension ($r = .088$, $n = 6$).

The results showed that teacher questioning skills is below average with the grand mean of 1.64 as against the threshold of 3.0. This could be due to lack of work experience or low level of subject mastery on the part of the teachers. This agrees with the findings of Jire-Alao (2021) and Olatunbosun (2021). It could be observed that there is no proper communication between the teacher and the students, feedback is being undermined. Likewise, the students' English reading comprehension level is too poor. This could be attributed to the low level of questioning skills exhibited by the teachers. Also, negative attitude of students towards English comprehension could contribute to the poor performance. The result is in consonance with that of Awolere (2016) and Fakeye (2018) who revealed that students' performance in English reading comprehension is very low. Again, it was revealed that no significant relationship exists between teacher questioning skills and students achievement in English reading comprehension. This implies that there are other factors that could enhance reading comprehension which are yet to be explored. The finding in this study disagreed with the findings of Olagbaju, (2020); Jire-Alao, (2021) and Olagbaju and Akinsola, (2021) that revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between teacher questioning skill and students achievement.

Conclusion

From this study, it could be concluded that teacher questioning skills are vital determinants of students' achievement in English reading comprehension in the study area. There is need to develop and implement effective intervention programmes towards eliminating poor English reading comprehension.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

Teachers should be made to go through refresher courses, workshops and seminars to horn their questioning skill.

References

Adediran, O. A. 2011. Fostering English language, comprehension achievement of pupils with intellectual disability using audio-typed and individualised instructional strategies in special schools in Ibadan, Nigeria.Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Adegoke, B. A. 2010. Effects of integrative teaching approach and students' level of proficiency in English language on students achievement in senior secondary school Mathematics. *African Journal of Educational Research.* 5.1. pp. 30-42.

Adeyinka, A. O. 2020. Vocabulary knowledge and class size. Influence on summary writing instruction in Iwo L.G.A, Osun State. *African Journal of Educational Research,* 23.pp 1-6.

Akinsowon, F. I. 2014. Effects of paragraph shrinking and partner reading instructional strategies on pre-service teachers' achievement in classroom participation in summary writing in South/West Nigeria. Ph.D. Proposal, Department of Teacher Education, University of Ibadan.

Awolere, O. O. 2016. Effects of differentiated and scaffolding instructional strategies on students learning outcomes in reading comprehension in Oyo township, Nigeria. Ph. D Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Awolere, O. O. and Muraina, K. K. 2020. Demystifying reading comprehension among environment.*African Journal of Educational Research* 23, 18-22.

Bateye, O. R. 2017. Effects of schema activation and think-group-share instructional strategies on senior secondary students' achievement in and attitude to English reading comprehension in Owo, Nigeria. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Brandon, D. 2021. The importance of reading comprehension. Retrieved Sept.02, 2021,from https://www.aces.edu> blog > topic

Fakeye, B. 2018.Contextual redefinition and vocabulary self-collection as determinants of students' learning outcomes in English vocabulary and reading comprehension in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Fakeye, D. O. 2006. Effect of componential and rhetorical strategies on students' achievement in essay writing. Ph. D. Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Fakeye, D. O. 2014. English proficiency as a predictor of academic achievement among EFL students in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice* 5:9 www.jiste.org

Fakeye, D. O. and Ayede, E. 2013. Teachers questioning behaviour and instructional organisations correlates of students achievement in English Language. *Global Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences, Linguistic and Education* 13,2, 13-22.

Georgina, G. 2018. The 8 essential questioning techniques you need to know. Retrieved Oct.13, 2021,from .

Goddiess, S. 2021. What is reading comprehension skills? (with examples). Retrieved Aug.1, 2021, from ...

Jire-Alao, E. O. 2021. Classroom practice factors and learning outcomes in English Studies among public primary school pupils in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria.Unpublished post-field seminar, Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Khalid, A. and Azeez, M. 2012. Constructivist and traditional: effective instructional approach in teacher education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2. 5:171-192.

Kirsch, I., de. Jong, J., Lafontaine, D., McQueen, T. Mendelovits, J., and Monseur, C. 2002. Reading for change: performance and engagement across countries. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Kolawole, C. O. O. and Adelabu, B. 2006. A basic text on the use of English. Ibadan: Ibadan Cultural Studies Group, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Lee, O. and Buxton, C. A. 2013.Integrating science and English proficiency for English Language learners. *Theory into practice* 52. 1: 36-42 DOI:10. 1080/0735/690. 2013. 743772.

Ogunleye, B. O. and Babajide, V.F.T. 2011.Generative instructional strategy enhancement in senior secondary school students' achievement in Physics.*European Journal of Educational Studies* 3. 3: Retrieved Sept.20, 2021 from https://www.oze/academy.com

Oladoyinbo, D. I. 2018. Peer influence and self-efficacy as predictors of students' achievement in English reading comprehension. M.Ed. Project, University of Ibadan.

Olagbaju, O. O. and Akinsola, M. A. 2021. Teachers' qualification and questioning styles as correlates of achievement in reading in secondary schools in Ido Local Government Area, Nigeria. *Studies in Literature and Language* 33,1, 72-79. Retrieved Jan. 4 ,2022, from https://www.csramada.net/index.php/sII /article/view/12257

Olagbaju, O. O. 2012. Explicit and generative instructional strategies as determinant of senior secondary school students' learning outcomes in summary writing in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria. Unpublished ASE 812: Advanced Research Seminar on Language and Language Education. Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan.

Olagbaju, O. O. 2020. Teacher-related classroom factors as predictors of students' achievement in English Grammar in Gambian Secondary Schools.*Hindaw*i: *Education Research International*, 2020. D0i.https://doi.org/10. 1155/2020/8897719.

Olagunju, T. O. 2020. Two modes of engagement strategy and senior secondary school students achievement in Prose Literature in Oyo township. *African Journal of Educational Research* 23:57-62.

Olatunbosun, O. C. 2021. Teacher-related variables and students' learning outcomes in English language among senior secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. Unpublished Post-field seminar, Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ibadan.

Ojedokun, R. I. 2010. Literature circle, semantic mapping and senior secondary school students' learning outcomes in summary writing in English Language. Ph.D.Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Osikomaiya,O. M. 2012. Scaffolding, context cueing instructional strategies and secondary school students' achievement in and attitude to English reading comprehension. Ph. D Thesis University of Ibadan.

Patzer, R. 2020. Questioning in the classroom: how to improve your skills. Retrieved Oct.25, 2021, from https://blog.irisconnect.com> how-t…