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Instruction in Text-Structure as A Determinant of Senior Secondary School Students' Achievement in English Narrative Text in Ido Local Government Area, Oyo State

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Abstract

The study determined the effectiveness of instruction in text-structure on achievement of students in English narrative text. The pretest-posttest control group quasi experimental design was adopted for the study. The participants were 120 students in intact classes from four purposively selected senior secondary schools in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. Data were collected using English Narrative Text Achievement Test ($r=0.86$) and instructional guides. Three null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. Data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance and Estimated Marginal Means. Findings revealed that treatment had significant main effect on students' achievement in English narrative text ($F_{(2,117)}=15.725$; $P<.05$; $\eta^2=.107$). Students exposed to instruction in text structure obtained higher posttest mean

score ($\bar{X} = 10.68$) than their counterparts in the conventional strategy group ($\bar{X} = 2.70$) groups. It is therefore recommended that the strategy should be adopted in teaching English narrative texts for better results.

Introduction

One of the most fundamental skills in second or foreign language learning context is reading. It is one of the skills that should be mastered by learners of a foreign language. The ability to read is a key factor in living a healthy, happy and productive life. In fact, the ability to read recently has been declared the “new civil right” on the website of the National Right to Read Foundation (2001). Without the ability to read, a child cannot fully access his or her democratic rights. Non-readers and poor readers cannot fully consider political positions and issues; they cannot take complete advantage of available societal or governmental institutions for themselves or thoroughly access their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Reading is a process of communication from the writer to the reader involving the recognition of letters, words, phrases and clauses and a process of negotiating between the reader and the writer. Knowledge (including knowledge of language) experience and a particular purpose of reading influence the meaning a reader derives from a text (Rice, 2013). Reading enlightens the mind, makes the intellect sharper and makes an individual travel far without motion (Onvughe, 2012). Reading is the bedrock of most forms of learning activities cumulating in literacy. One of the most important factors in education is the ability to read, understand and critically comprehend the text (Onvughe, 2012).

Comprehension is the ultimate outcome of the act of reading (Paris and Hamilton, 2009; Pearson, 2010). Reading comprehension is the heart and goal of reading, since the purpose of all reading is to gather meaning from the printed page. Reading without comprehension is simply word calling. Comprehension is critical to learning. Wilkison and Son (2011) claimed that comprehension is a complex set of processes that involves the encoding of facts, the activation of knowledge and the generation of inferences in ways that make it understandable and memorable.

Reading comprehension is tested in English Language paper one of West Africa Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and National Examinations Council (NECO)'s Senior School Certificate Examinations which is made up of essay writing, comprehension and summary. A student who is not competent in reading comprehension and does not understand the features and structure of a particular text type cannot pass paper 1 of English Language examination because 70 of the 120 marks obtainable in the paper are allocated to the two sections. (WAEC, 2012). In other words, reading comprehension determines to a great extent the success or failure of students in English Language examination at the senior secondary level.

Roberts (2009) noted that as important as success in comprehension are, they often prove difficult to many candidates because they are not properly prepared or taught by teachers. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that students find the teaching and learning of reading comprehension difficult. Secondary school students in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State are not left out of deficiency in reading comprehension. A preliminary survey conducted by the researcher revealed that like their counterparts in other local government areas in Oyo State, students in Ido exhibit reading failure due to their poor language development. Consequently, explicit teaching of lexical and grammatical features of reading passages might help learners overcome this deficiency.

Reading comprehension passages can take the form of any four basic text types namely, narrative, expository, descriptive and argumentative. According to Haris (2010), narrative texts are written to entertain. It is a type of text that is proposed to amuse and to deal with actual and vicarious experience in different ways. Narrative texts also deal with problematic events which lead to a crisis or turning points of some kind which in turn find a resolution. The main purpose of narrative texts is to tell a story, it has a beginning, middle and an end; characters, plot or conflict, and setting. Usually, narrative texts are written from the author's imagination. The narrative text has a structure that includes a set up, complication/conflict and resolution (Duke et al., 2011). Narrative would not be a narrative without characters, humans or human-like beings whose actions are an essential part of the progress of events in time-place. Duke et al further stated that the narrative text is a type of text that structurally organizes the action, thought, and interactions of its characters into pattern of plot.

Generally, narrative texts could be categorised into the fictional narrative or imaginary, the non-fictional narrative, or combination of both. A Fictional Narrative presents an imaginary narrator's account of a story that happened in an imaginary world. It includes fairy tales, folklore or folktales, horror stories, fables, legends, myths, and science fictions. On the other hand, a non-fictional narrative (also factual narrative) presents a real-life person's account of a real-life story. It includes historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, and personal experience. The generic structure of narrative text focuses on a series of stages that propose to build a story. In traditional narrative the stages include (1) Orientation: the introduction of the characters who involve in the story, time and the place where the story takes place. (2) Complication: a series of events in which the main character attempts to solve the problem (3) Resolution: the ending of the story containing the problem solution. There are some features that writers should recognize in writing a narrative text. These include: (1) Plot: What is going to happen? (2) Setting: Where will the story take place? When will the story take place? (3) Characterization: Who are the main characters? What do they look like? (4) Structure: How will the story begin? What will be the problem? How is the problem going to be resolved? (5) Theme: What is the theme/message the writer is attempting to communicate? (Haris, 2010).

Another type of reading comprehension text is expository. Expository or informational text is a type of non-fiction in which “the primary purpose is to convey information about the natural or social world” (Massey,2014:23). Expository texts are texts that are used by the authors to give information, to explain, to describe, or to persuade (Heyderi and Mustapha, 2009). The main purpose of expository text is to inform or describe. Authors who write expository texts research the topic to gain information. Spenser (2005), also posited that expository text is the one which is used to explain or give information about a topic. It gives facts, explains ideas, or defines conditions. The information is organized in a logical and interesting manner using various expository text structures.

Expository or informational texts (e.g., essays, reports, summaries, word problems) can include one or a combination of structures, including description, compare and contrast, sequential/procedural/chronological, cause and effect, and problem-solution. Expository or Informational texts are framed as answers to questions, either explicitly or implicitly given in the text. The expository text can be challenging to young readers because of the unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary it presents (Duke et al., 2011). Most expository texts are structured to facilitate the study process for prospective readers. These texts contain structural elements that help guide students through their reading. Authors of expository texts use these structures to arrange and connect ideas. Students who understand the idea of text structure and how to analyze it are likely to learn more than students who lack this understanding (RAND, 2002).

Expository text is less familiar to the child in both content and format. The text structure differs dramatically from narrative text at the same time; the content of expository text is filled with many words and concepts the child has never seen before. (Reutzel, 2007; Heydari and Mustpha, 2009) have organized five basic expository basic expository text structure: which are Descriptive, Sequential, Causation, (Cause/Effect), Problem / Solution and Comparison, (Compare and Contrast). In order words, expository text relate to science subject matter, therefore, it requires logical thinking to give exact meaning. This is because it contains new topics which the readers are not familiar with and new information usually makes comprehension of the text difficult for the readers. The fact presented to the readers often contains more concept density in the scene that, they are new and unfamiliar to the readers. In giving meaning of an expository text, there is no room for readers’ personal meaning, because it has no relation to readers’ life or interest or experience. In essence, readers can only give meaning of expository text based on the information provided by author of the text alone, hence once they have problem in decoding the terms used in the text, they would not be able to comprehend the text accordingly.

Another text type is descriptive texts. Descriptive texts present the appearance of things that occupy space, whether they are object, people or buildings or cities. Syahputra (2013). Descriptive text is the way of picturing images in verbally or written form and arranging those images systematically. Gerot and Wagnall (1995) also argue that, descriptive text is a kind of text with a purpose to give information. The context of this kind of text is the description of particular thing, animal, person, or others, for instance: our pets or a person we know well. It differs from Report which describes things, animals, persons, or others in general. The social function of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place, or thing. Furthermore, Siahaan (2013) defined descriptive text as a text which is intended to describe a particular person, place or thing.

From the argument above, it can be inferred that descriptive text is a text which describes characteristics of particular place, person or thing. As the other text types, descriptive text has a special characteristic in form of generic structure and linguistic feature. The generic structure of descriptive text consists of two parts. The first part is called identification. Identification part identifies the phenomenon (person, place, or thing) to be described. The second part is called description. Description part describes part, qualities, and characteristics of phenomenon being described. Similar to other text types, besides the generic structure, descriptive text also has language features. In general, descriptive text has five language features: (1) Focus on specific participants. (2) The use of adjectives and compound adjective. (3) The use of linking verbs. (4) The use of attributive has and have (5) The use of simple present tense. Descriptive writing is all about diction and figures of speech. The writer strives not only to portray as vivid an image as language can conjure up, but also create sensations in the reader using as many senses as possible, including the reader's emotions (Hammond, 1992; Wadirman, et. al, 2008; Syahputra 2013).

The fourth basic text type is argumentative. Argumentation is a verbal and social activity of reason aimed at increasing (or decreasing) the acceptability of controversial standpoint for the listener or reader, by putting forward a constellation of proposition intended to justify (or refute) the standpoint before a rational judge (Philip and Hakim, 2014). Wingate (2012) posited that typical arguments occur in the context of a discussion and it attempts to persuade, defeat, negotiate, consult, debate, and resolve differences of opinion. It is a type of text used to discuss a controversial subject where the writer attempts to persuade the reader or change his/her mind (Levin, 2001). Argumentative text is difficult for many students because of the many cognitive demands it makes on the reader (Mochales and Moens, 2011).

Effective argument is as much a matter of organization as content or creativity and constructing meaning involves developing rhetorical steps. Thus, to argue is to express ideas in a particular way. The argumentative text structure, as described by

Hyland (1990), is characterized by a three-stage structure which represents the organizing principle of the genre: Thesis, Argument and Conclusion. The Thesis stage introduces the discourse topic and advances the writer's proposition or central statement. It consists of five moves, only one of which is mandatory- The Gambit, Informing move, The Proposition, An Evaluation and, The Marker. Each of these moves are realized by lexical and grammatical means. Here, the opportunity for variety arises. The argument stage presents the infrastructure of reason which characterizes the genre. The stage consists of a possible four-move cycle repeated indefinitely in a specific order-The marker, A restatement of the proposition in some form (optimal), The Claim and the support move. The Conclusion stage serves to consolidate the discourse and retrospectively affirms what has been communicated. There is a possible four-move sequence to this stage – The Marker (optional), The Conclusion, The Affirmation (optional) and The Close (optional). Narrative is the text type selected for this study because it is the common text type in schools (Haris ,2010). For example, the WAEC Chief Examiner's reports have frequently shown that students prefer answering questions on narrative text type but such attempts are largely unsatisfactory (WAEC 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012).

In order to improve the teaching and learning of comprehension in secondary school many strategies have been introduced by scholars. These include: Graphic Organizers (Adelabu, 1998), Read-Think-Pair-Share (Adediran,2014) Exit Slip (Aiyede, 2014) and Anticipation Guide (Bateye,2015) to mention a few. A close look at these studies reveals that they focused on reading comprehension generally. Besides, the strategies earlier mentioned do not afford the students the opportunity to understand the features and structure of each text types. There is the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning of reading comprehension by exposing learners to instruction in text structure. Many scholars have reported the benefits of using instruction in text structure in the reading comprehension classroom. For example, Erlinder (2008) pointed out that with this strategy, teachers are better equipped with an accessible way to teach the organisation and structure of the whole text. Derewianka, (2003) argued that it is necessary to provide students with an explicit teaching of text structure so they will be provided with insights into how to control a particular text type, and become equipped with important resources for constant and effective written texts.

According to Erlinda (2008) text structure instruction is based on the result of text type analysis. There are three characteristics of text structure instruction namely, social, generic structure, and lexico-grammatical features. The first examines the structural pattern of a certain text to achieve the communicative purpose and the roles of the writer and the audience of the target text and the context in which the text is used (social function). The second examines the particular linguistic features in a specific text. The third examines lexico-grammatical features of a specific text to identify the

linguistic features chosen in a specific text type. The results from analyzing a text structure serve as the instructional materials.

Specifically, text structure analysis is a tool to examine (1) the structural organization of text by identifying the moves and strategies, and to understand how these moves are organised in order to achieve the communicative purpose of the text; (2) the text patterning or textualization in order to show a particular linguistic feature; (3) the lexico-grammatical features to identify the linguistic features chosen by expert users of the text type to realise the communicative purpose, and to explain these choices in terms of social and psycho-logical contexts; and (4) the communicative purpose of the target text type, the roles of the writer and the audience, and the context in which the text type is used (Sedeghi et al ,2013).

Apart from teaching strategies, gender is also a factor that affects the performance of students in English language reading comprehension. Lin (2010) found that female students have a significantly higher performance than their male counterparts. Ana (2014) also looked at the sex of learners as being a very good predicting variable on their academic performance. Nowell (1998) opined that gender differences on academic achievement in literature shows that girls have registered higher achievement scores than boys.

Halpern (1996) opined that effect of gender on academic achievement in prose literature class is extensive and some findings have shown that females usually score higher on average than their male counterparts on test of verbal ability and that male score higher on average than females on test of mathematics ability, spatial abilities and on test of stereotypically male vocational information and aptitude, while Brantmeier (2002) reported that boys achieve higher scores than girls. Shokouhi and Perveresh (2010) in their study found no significant difference in the degree of preparation of male and female students towards important examination. In view of these conflicting submissions, this study therefore determined the moderator effect of gender on students' achievement in reading comprehension when instruction in text structure is used.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is an important literacy skill and it is a tool for learning. However, reports revealed that students experience reading failure due to poor comprehension. Previous efforts at addressing the problem had led scholars to work on strategies such as Exit Slips, Anticipation guide, Graphic organizers and Read-Think-Pair-Share. Despite the fruitful insights provided by these studies into the teaching and learning of reading comprehension, they have not translated to significant improvement in students' achievement in Reading comprehension. This perhaps is due to the fact that these strategies did not expose students to instruction in structure of different text types.

Studies have reported the effectiveness of this strategy in improving students learning outcomes in English reading comprehension with little emphasis on narrative and expository texts especially in Ido Local government area of Oyo State. Therefore, this study determined the effects instruction in text structure on students' achievement in English narrative and expository texts in Ido Local Government area of Oyo State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance:

- H₀₁:** There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in narrative texts
- H₀₂:** There is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in narrative texts
- H₀₃:** There is no interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in narrative texts

Scope of the Study

The study determined the effect of instruction in text structure on senior secondary school students' achievement in narrative and expository texts. The study focused on SS 2 students in four selected secondary schools in Ido Local Government area of Oyo State. It also determined the moderating effect of gender on students' comprehension.

Significance of the Study

The study has revealed the effectiveness of teaching reading comprehension through instruction in text structure thereby students' achievement in English reading comprehension. It also exposed English Language teachers to instruction in text structure as a strategy for teaching reading comprehension. In addition, the study will add to the pool of effective strategies for teaching reading comprehension in schools

Methodology

The pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. Four senior secondary schools were purposively selected in Ido Local Government Area, Oyo state for the study. The criteria for selecting the schools were based on a purposive sampling. The schools must be public schools. The schools that are co-educational schools must have been presenting students for senior secondary school certificate examination for at least five years, the schools that have professionally qualified graduate teachers of English Language for the senior secondary school two classes, the schools must be willing to participate in the study, especially the students and the English Language teachers.

From each of the schools, one intact class was selected, making four intact classes. The intact classes were randomly assigned to experimental treatment such that two schools were for the experimental group and the other two for the control group. A total of 120 students participated in the study. Five research instruments were used for data collection. They are: Students' Achievement Test in Narrative Text ($r=0.86$) and Teachers' Instructional Guides.

The training of the research assistants was carried out for two weeks, during which they were exposed to the content and step by step procedure of presenting text-structure instruction. Thereafter, pre-test of narrative text was administered to the students, this was followed by treatment of six weeks on instruction in text structure of narrative and expository texts. Thereafter, posttest was administered. A total of ten weeks was spent on data collection. The data collected from the study were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Estimated marginal means was computed to show the difference in the mean of the groups. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Ho_{1a}: There is no significant main effect of treatment on achievement in reading comprehension.

Table 1: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Achievement scores in Narrative Text by Treatment and Gender.

Source	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta
Corrected Model	768.581	6	128.097	33.138	.000	.431
<u>Main Effect:</u>						
PreNARRATIVE	617.991	1	617.991	159.872	.000	.378
Treatment Group	121.568	1	60.784	15.725	.000*	.107
Sex	61.948	1	61.948	16.026	.120	.057
<u>2-way Interactions:</u>						
Treatment x Sex	25.521	2	12.761	3.301	.138	.024
Error	123.063	112	7.322			
Total	2431.015	117				

* Significant at $P<.05$

Table 1 shows that there is significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in narrative texts ($F_{(2,117)}=15.725$; $P<.05$; $\eta^2=.107$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant main effect of treatment on achievement in narrative texts is rejected.

Table 4.2 shows the estimated marginal means of achievement by the experimental and control group in narrative texts.

Table 2: Estimated Marginal Means of achievement in Narrative Texts by Treatment

Treatments	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Instruction in text types	10.68	728	9.236	12.117
Conventional Strategy	2.70	613	1.480	2.906

Table 4.2 showed that students exposed to instruction in text types obtained higher posttest mean score ($\bar{X} = 10.68$) than their counterparts in the conventional strategy group ($\bar{X} = 2.70$) groups.

Table 4.6 shows that students taught with genre-based strategy had higher mean score ($\bar{x}=9.212$) than students in the control group ($\bar{x}=6.011$) in narrative and expository texts. This might be as a result of the fact that exposing students to text-structure instructional strategy involves looking at the underlying structure of a particular text type, where they are taught the features and structures of each text type and how language is used in them. This agrees with the findings of Fitrawati (2010) who carried out a study on genre based strategy in reading comprehension and concluded that the strategy enabled students to comprehend easily. It also agrees with Sudarat (2012) who in a study of EFL tertiary context in Thailand concluded that the strategy helped students to develop a better understanding of text.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant main effect of gender on students' achievement in narrative texts.

Table 1 shows that there is no significant main effect of gender on students' comprehension in expository texts ($F_{(1,118)} = 16.026$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant main effect of gender on students' comprehension in narrative and expository texts is not rejected. This might be

connected to the fact that instruction in text types is a gender friendly strategy that allows both male and female to benefit equally and maximally. This corroborates the findings of Shokouhi and Parvaresh (2010) who compared the effects of two different kinds of post-adjunct reading comprehension assessment on a group of high school and pre-university students of gender-neutral authentic and non-authentic expository texts found no significant difference in learners' comprehension of the texts. It also supports Yazdanpanah (2007) who found no significant difference in the overall reading ability of males and females in using genre-based instructional strategy.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' comprehension of narrative texts.

Table 1 shows that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in narrative texts. ($F_{(2,117)} = 3.301, P > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' achievement in narrative texts. is not rejected. The findings agree with Minaabad and Khoshkholgh (2012) who investigated The Effect of Genre-Based Pedagogy on English for Specific Purpose Learners' Reading Comprehension, and discovered that there is no interaction effect of gender on students' achievement in reading comprehension. However, this negates the findings of Brantmeier (2003) who found significant interactions between readers' gender and passage content comprehension.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that giving comprehension instructions through the structure of various text types could demystify the teaching of reading comprehension of narrative texts; students comprehend better when they are exposed to structural feature of texts

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

- Teachers of English language in general and reading comprehension in particular should adopt text-structure-based instructional strategy when teaching reading comprehension.
- Teachers should be exposed to periodic workshops, seminars, conferences where they could be acquainted with the procedural steps of genre-based instruction for teaching various texts as well as other effective strategy of teaching reading comprehension.

- The curriculum designers and planners should incorporate genre-based strategy for implementing reading comprehension component of English language.

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