

Effects of Teaching Strategy on Secondary Students' Learning Outcomes in English Language Reading Comprehension in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The study employed a research design followed a 3- stage methodological and procedure. All Public Secondary School Students in southwest, Nigeria constituted the population for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select four 4 classes in each of the selected schools (two from JSSII and two from SSS II) making twenty-four. Stage 4: twenty (20) students were selected from each class. This rose to a total of 480 students as the sample size of this study. Five instruments were developed and used to collect relevant data. The instrument was given to experts for the review of the final version before using it in the study. The test-retest procedure was used for duration of two weeks at a time to establish reliability. After applying Pearson Product Correlation analysis to correlate the results of the two tests, a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was discovered. The researcher's Attitude Questionnaire, which has fifteen (15) items of the 'Like' type and four scales of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, was used to gather information on students' attitudes toward reading comprehension. Graphical representations and descriptive statistics that included frequency counts, percentages, averages, and standard deviation scores were used. They were utilised to categories the participants based on the educational style, parent education level, and gender. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) test, which employed pre-test scores as covariance, was the inferential statistic that was used to evaluate all of the hypotheses that were developed. The significance level for the analysis was 0.05. Findings revealed that English is considered as the, language of socio-economic and political development by Nigerians. A good grasp of the language skills give room for smooth progress and development in the one's endeavour in the nation today. However, reading is almost neglected in schools, thus resulting in many students' inability to study, let alone comprehend simple English passage. The increasing failure of students in reading comprehension may be dime to the methods or strategies employed in teaching. The study recommended that Schools should engage parents through literacy support and awareness to boost students' attitudes toward learning.

Keywords: *Attitude, Achievement, Comprehension, Strategy, Reading*

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Background to the Study

Reading is a process is fundamental for actualizing the core subject of language, communication and exchange of ideas, reading both as an act and skill acquisition is an indispensable medium of exchange across different strata of human life. One of the most universally accepted languages of official discourse is English. Whether spoken or written, English plays a significant role in many spheres of human life including business, medicine, and engineering and of course education. English has been playing a significant role in human capacity development. Importantly, reading as a receptive skill, is interconnected in a way that drives the actualization of proficiency in language in both the learners and native speakers. For instance, the success of learning writing as a productive skill will depend on how well reading is learned as a receptive talent. The success of learning a language is greatly influenced by one of the linguistic skills, reading. The first step in learning is reading. In addition to providing readers with independent access to information in a society that is becoming more and more information driven, reading is significant because it is a potent tool for learning, a way of creating meaning and learning new information. To be able to read to learn, students must be proficient readers. Students' chances of succeeding in the learning setting are already hampered if they have not fully grasped this learning tool.

Reading as a major skill in linguistics, guides a learner to develop the content of learning and ease the acquisition of basic skills in literacy. When this is achieved, the learner finds it easier to effectively produce intelligible thoughts in communication across different situations and circumstances. Reading is a major means of gaining and advancing the course of knowledge. It is important to note that one fundamental purpose of basic or early life learning is to instil a long-lasting ability in literacy, numeracy and the individual's capacity to communicate effectively. It appears that the federal government of Nigeria has recognized this (FRN, 2014). The essence of reading is comprehension because it is a process of readers in combining information of a text and their prior knowledge to construct the meaning. Kucer, (2017) explained that reading comprehension is the ability to build meaning of a written or printed text, according to him reading comprehension is not a stagnant competency, it varies based on the purposes of reading and the passage of the text read. Reading becomes and evolving relations between the background knowledge of the reader and passage of the text.

The task of engaging in reading for comprehension and constructive engagement is seen as an increasingly important skill needed for various jobs and other complex tasks. In the case or situation where minimal reading tasks exist, the overall expectation is that a very insignificant development will occur in the individual's linguistic proficiency. Bright McGregor (2008) states this opinion in their commentary on the importance of reading at the post-primary level of education. Therefore, the purpose of reading comprehension passage is to measure the student's ability to find appropriate equivalent for selected words and phrases, understand the factual content; make interpretations from the content of the passages respond to uses of English expressions to reveal reflect sentiment, emotions, attitude, identify and label basic grammatical structures, words, phrases, or clauses and explained their functions as they appear in the context, identify and explain basically literally terms and expressions, recast phrases or sentences into grammatical alternatives.

Adegbite (2020) regrets that reading comprehension in secondary school classrooms has been misinterpreted as a talent learned by simple rigorous individual work in which students read textual passage aloud or silently and then given mostly literal questions to measure their comprehension. Since reading and writing are the primary means of evaluating students' school work constructively, every learner of English Language is expected to possess the ability to read and understand adequately, especially the core content that is expected. Research has shown that when student's encounter texts written in a language that is not familiar to them, they tend to struggle with the linguistic problems associated with such texts and Nigeria student are not excepted (Elliot 2015, Lawal 2020) by this the problem facing the student as a second learners' is learning to read a comprehension passage in a language in which they have limited proficiency on and this problem can frustrate the actualization of the purpose of teaching reading comprehension in junior secondary schools.

According to Elliot (2015), Hydris and Wilhelm (2017) innovative teacher are moving away from teacher centred approaches where meaning is imposed on students to the activities that encourage personal response students to activities that encourage personal response to the text with this, teachers can use a variety of strategies to ensure student's active engagement with the passage reading text they are reading and make personal responses to the text too. Palinscar and Brown (2013) emphasize strategies that allow children to learn by doing and take ownership of their learning through opportunities that lead to freedom of choice and social interaction. By inference, researchers are advocates of child-centred and socio-cultural strategy that promote students' active participation in the meaning.

Reading comprehension is expected to promote reading for understanding and encourage the development of reading skills. However, many students in secondary schools do not possess the necessary cognitive and effective skills needed to read and understand text in reading comprehension. Hence, students' performance in /WAEC in English reading comprehension examination has not been to reckon with several factors affect students' performance in reading comprehension in English language. They include factors associated with learners' parent level of education, home background and low level of interest in reading, poor language proficiency, poor comprehension skills, vocabulary knowledge and the instructional strategies used by teachers. This study therefore investigated the effect of basic reciprocal teaching on secondary school students' achievements and attitude to English reading comprehension. It also determined the moderating effects of parent level of education and gender on the two dependent variables.

Objective of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to assess effects of teaching instructional strategy on secondary schools' students' learning outcomes in English language reading comprehension in south west Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the effect of reciprocal teaching on achievements in the reading comprehension of secondary school students in the study area.
- ii. Investigate the transformation in the attitude of secondary school students regarding reading comprehension when using reciprocal teaching methods.

- iii. Examine the place of gender difference of secondary school students' academic achievement and attitude towards reading English comprehension passages.
- iv. Analyse the impacts and effects of parent's level of education on the achievement and attitude of secondary school students on reading English comprehension passages.
- v. Assess the reading habits of the students in the study area.
- vi. Identify the various instructional materials used for the respondents in the study area.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What are the personal characteristics of the students in secondary schools?
2. Does the parent level of education and home related issues affect academic performance of students in secondary schools?
3. Does the teachers' effectiveness/ strategy affect academic achievement of secondary schools' students?
4. Does availability of school facilities affect academic performance of students in secondary schools?
5. Does availability of instructional materials contribute to academic performance of students in secondary schools?
6. Does reading habits of the students affect academic performance in secondary schools?

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho1a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment and Gender on the achievement of students.

Ho1b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment and Gender on the attitude of students.

Ho2a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Parental literacy level and Gender on the achievement of students.

Ho2b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Parental Literacy level and Gender on the attitude of students.

Ho3a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment, Parent Educational Level and Gender on the achievement of students.

Ho3b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment, Parent Educational Level and Gender on the attitude of students.

Methodology

The research design followed a 3- stage methodological, procedure as follows: 1. Preliminary stage: this involves visitation to the study area, identification of existing structures related to research and selection of specific class in the schools. 2. Testing of research instrument: the

instrument was subjected to preliminary test in order to test the consistency and reliability of the instrument. The instrument was validated by the experts in the field of education and sciences.³ Field survey data analysis employed involved the collection of the primary data in all selected schools and subsequent analysis of the data. All Public Secondary School Students in southwest, Nigeria will constitute the population for the study. Sampling techniques and sample size is in stages which are: stage 1: the first stage will involve random selection of 3 out of 6 states in the southwest geopolitical zone. Stage 2: this will involve random selection of 2 secondary schools from each of the selected states in southwest, Nigeria. This will give rise to 6 schools. Stage 3: Simple random sampling technique will be used to select four 4 classes in each of the selected schools (two from JSSII and two from SSS II) making twenty-four. Stage 4: twenty (20) students will be selected from each class.

This will be rose to a total of 480 students as the sample size of this study. Five instruments were developed and used to collect relevant data. These were made up of three measuring and two procedural research instruments. The measuring instruments were: Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (SRCAT). Attitude to Reading Comprehension Questionnaire (ARCQ). Parental Educational Level Assessment Form (PELAF). The procedural instruments comprised: Reciprocal Teaching Instructional Guide (RTIG). Conventional Method Instructional Guide (CMIG). The Students' Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (SRCAT) was used to assess students' knowledge of reading comprehension based on the Junior Secondary Education Curriculum for English Language (SSII) developed by the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2014). The instrument consists of two parts. The first part (Section A) sought background information of the respondents. The second part (Section B) initially consisted of three comprehension passages with 20 multiple choice objective test items with four options per item, which were drawn from a pool of past questions from the State Unified Promotion Examination Question in SSII Reading Comprehension Passage for the last five years. The researchers subjected the instrument to the opinions and recommendations of English Language professors and Test and Measurement experts at the Federal College of Education Abeokuta, in order to ensure the face and content validity of the SRCAT. Some of the items were revised and enlarged based on their comments.

The instrument was given to experts for the review of the final version before using it in the study. The reading comprehension test was given to forty (40) SS 1&2 students in a secondary school in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area, outside the study's sample, to determine the reliability of the SRCAT. The test-retest procedure was used for duration of two weeks at a time to establish reliability. After applying Pearson Product Correlation analysis to correlate the results of the two tests, a reliability coefficient of 0.88 was discovered. The researcher's Attitude Questionnaire, which has fifteen (15) items of the 'Like' type and four scales of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, was used to gather information on students' attitudes toward reading comprehension. Following is how the items were scored. For positive items, the ratings were Strongly Agree 4, Agree 3, Disagree 2, and Strongly Disagree 1, whereas for negative things, the numbers were the opposite. There are two sections: the first collects data on the demographics of the students, including their schools,

classes, ages, and sexes. The second component obtains information about students' attitude to reading comprehension. Language educators and specialists in evaluation from Federal College of Education Abeokuta, tested the face and content validity of the study's data on students' attitudes towards reading comprehension.

In the light of their applicability to the issues being studied, helpful recommendations and comments about the instrument's language and substance were made. Twenty (20) SS I & II students who were randomly chosen from two secondary schools not included in the study's sample participated in a pilot study to gauge the questionnaire's validity. The study did not employ the chosen students. There were two administrations of the survey. After applying Pearson Product Correlation analysis to correlate the scores, a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The instruments administered during the fieldwork were scored by the researcher, coded and presented for analysis. Using the proper statistics, the study's data were both descriptively and inferentially evaluated. Graphical representations and descriptive statistics that included frequency counts, percentages, averages, and standard deviation scores were used. They were utilised to categories the participants based on the educational style, parent education level, and gender. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) test, which employed pre-test scores as covariance, was the inferential statistic that was used to evaluate all of the hypotheses that were developed. The significance level for the analysis was 0.05. The magnitudes of the post-test mean achievement and attitude scores according to the two levels of instructional strategy, the two levels of gender, and the three levels of parental education are calculated using the multiple classification analysis (MCA) tests that accompany them. The source and direction of significant effects are explained using the Scheffe pair-wise comparison test as the post-hoc analysis, and significant interaction effects are explained and disentangled using graphical representations.

Results

Demography of the respondents

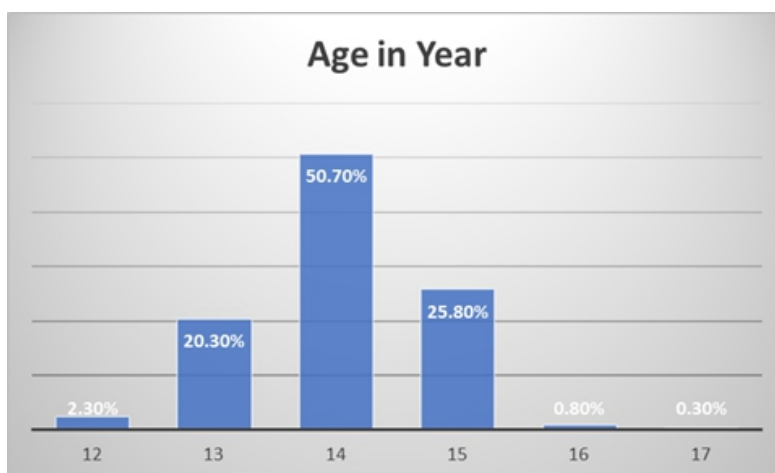


Fig 1.

The age distribution of the respondents shows a clear concentration around early adolescence. A majority of the students (50.7%) were 14 years old, indicating that more than half of the participants were at this critical developmental stage. This is followed by 25.8% who were 15 years old, and 20.3% aged 13 years. Together, these three age groups (13–15 years) account for over 96% of the total sample, suggesting that the study focused largely on junior secondary school students or those within the early phase of senior secondary education. A very small proportion of students were either younger or older than this range, with 2.3% aged 12, 0.8% aged 16, and just 0.3% aged 17. This suggests that outlier ages were minimal.

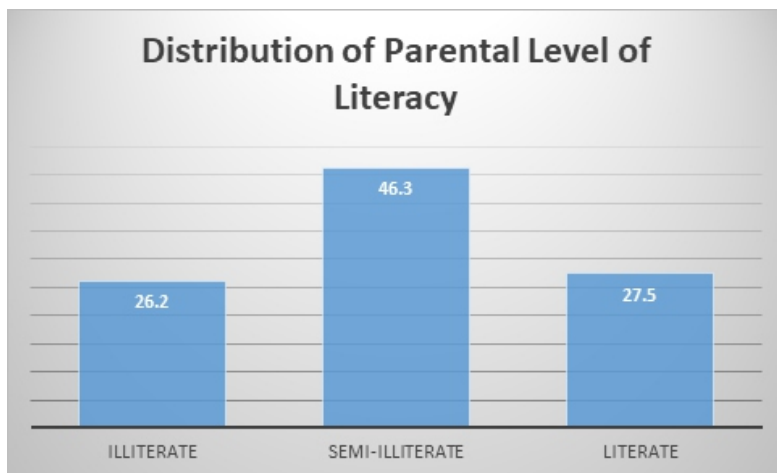


Fig. 2

The analysis of parental education levels offers insight into the home learning environment and socio-educational context of the respondents. Of the valid responses (N=397), 46.3% of the students came from semi-illiterate households. This group represents parents who may have limited formal schooling, such as basic literacy without completing primary or secondary education. Following closely, 27.5% of the students had literate parents, defined as those who have likely completed secondary education or higher. Meanwhile, 26.2% of the students were from illiterate homes, meaning their parents had no formal education at all. Combined, over 72% of students came from homes with limited or no formal educational background, suggesting that a significant portion of the sample came from educationally disadvantaged environments. This trend has important implications for interpreting the impact of the reciprocal teaching method, particularly given that students from illiterate homes benefited most from the intervention.

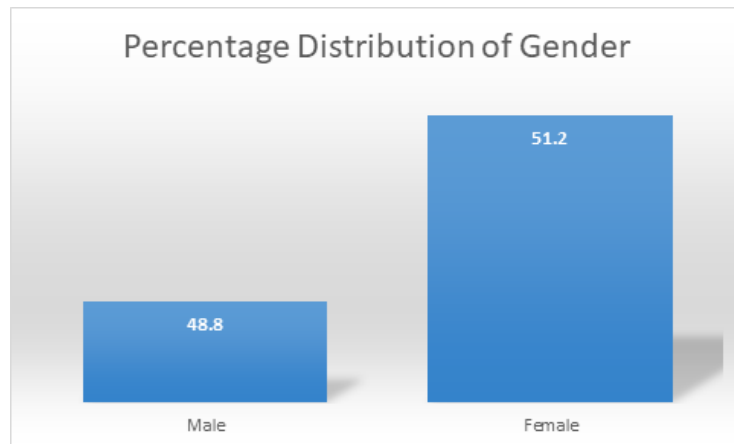


Fig. 3

The gender composition of the student sample was relatively balanced, with 51.2% female and 48.8% male. This near-equal distribution ensures a fair representation of both sexes in the analysis and strengthens the generalizability of any gender-related findings. It also suggests that the school or study setting provides equal access to educational opportunities for both boys and girls. The balance further justifies the interpretation of non-significant gender differences in achievement and attitude, as any observed effects are not likely due to sample imbalance.

Ho1a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment and Gender on the achievement of students.

The analysis revealed no significant interaction between the treatment and gender ($F(1,384) = 0.000$, $p = .991$). This indicates that the effectiveness of the treatment was consistent across both males and females, suggesting that it did not exhibit any differential impact based on gender differences. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho5a is not rejected. The interaction effect of treatment and gender is not significant.

Ho1b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment and Gender on the attitude of students.

The interaction between treatment and gender was marginally non-significant, $F(1,384) = 3.814$, $p = .052$, partial eta squared = .010. This weak trend suggests a possible slight variation in treatment effectiveness by gender, but the result is not strong enough to be conclusive. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho5b is not rejected. Therefore, the treatment and gender have no significant main effect on the attitude.

Ho2a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Parental literacy level and Gender on the achievement of students.

The interaction between parental literacy level and gender on the achievement of the students is not significant, $F(1,384) = 0.00$; $p = 0.991$. This implies that the treatment and gender have no significant main impact on the learners' achievement. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho6 is not

rejected. This implies that the interaction effect of parental literacy and gender has no significant effect on achievement.

Ho2b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Parental Literacy level and Gender on the attitude of students.

The interaction between parental literacy level and gender on the attitude of the students is not significant, $F_{(1,384)} = 3.81$; $p = 0.052$. This implies that the parental level of literacy and gender have no significant main impact on the learners' attitude. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho6 is not rejected. This implies that the parental level of literacy and the gender of students do not interact significantly to affect their achievement.

Ho3a: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment, Parent Educational Level and Gender on the achievement of students.

The three-way interaction among treatment, parental educational background, and gender was marginally non-significant ($F(2,384) = 2.800$, $p = .062$, partial eta squared = .014). This suggests a weak trend that the treatment effects across parental education levels may slightly vary by gender. Still, the evidence is not strong enough to confirm a statistically significant interaction. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho7a is not rejected. Therefore, treatment, parental literacy and gender have no significant interaction effect on the achievement of students.

Ho3b: There is no significant Interaction effect of Treatment, Parent Educational Level and Gender on the attitude of students.

The three-way interaction among treatment, parental educational background, and gender was marginally non-significant ($F(1,384) = 0.21$, $p = .81$, partial eta squared = .001). This suggests a weak trend that the treatment effects across parental education levels may slightly vary by gender. Still, the evidence is not strong enough to confirm a statistically significant interaction. Hence, the null hypothesis Ho7b is not rejected. Therefore, treatment, parental literacy and gender have no significant interaction effect on the attitude of students.

Discussion of Findings

Teaching had a significant effect on students' achievement. Students taught with teaching strategy had significantly higher post-test achievement scores than those in the control group ($F(1,384) = 1320.560$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .775$), indicating a very strong impact on academic performance. Teaching had a significant effect on students' attitude. The treatment led to significantly more positive attitudes towards learning ($F(1,384) = 51.634$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .119$), indicating a moderate effect on attitude. Parental literacy level had no significant main effect on achievement. This was in consonance with the study of Ayanniyi (2009) who was of opinion that, aside the problem of understanding, the comprehension passage, methods and instructional strategies have also been identified as being responsible for the recurrent failure of students in reading comprehension. When considered independently, parental literacy did not significantly impact achievement ($F(2,384) = 2.202$, $p = .112$). Significant interaction effect between treatment and parental literacy on achievement. The impact of reciprocal teaching on achievement varied significantly by parental literacy level ($F(2,384) = 7.109$, $p =$

.001, $\eta^2 = .036$), with students from illiterate homes benefiting the most. This was in line with the study of Lawal (2020) that observes that, students at this stage have poor background in reading, some of these students are not exposed to extensive reading at the primary school and this constitutes a barrier to their reading comprehension at the junior secondary school. Parental literacy had a significant main effect on attitude. Students' attitudes varied significantly based on the literacy level of their parents ($F(2,384) = 18.788$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .089$), with literate parents' children showing the most positive attitudes.

Gender had no significant main effect on achievement or attitude. This align with the study of Okedara (2002) who observed that, no statistically significant differences were found between male and female students in achievement ($p = .565$) or attitude ($p = .069$). No significant interaction between treatment and gender. Treatment effectiveness was consistent across gender for both achievement and attitude. No significant interaction between parental literacy and gender. The combination of parental literacy and gender did not significantly affect either achievement or attitude. No significant three-way interaction (Treatment $\times$ Parental Literacy $\times$ Gender). There was no significant interaction among treatment, parental literacy, and gender for either achievement or attitude.

Conclusion

The study conducted a comprehensive examination of the effects of reciprocal teaching on students' academic performance and their attitudes toward learning. The results demonstrated that reciprocal teaching serves as an effective instructional strategy, significantly enhancing both students' academic achievement and their overall attitude toward education. Interestingly, while the literacy levels of parents alone did not show a direct correlation with student achievement, the interaction between parental literacy and the application of reciprocal teaching produced meaningful distinctions. Notably, students from illiterate homes exhibited substantial improvements in their academic performance when engaged in reciprocal teaching methods.

Recommendations

1. Educational interventions using teaching strategy should be targeted especially at students from low-literacy backgrounds.
2. Schools should engage parents through literacy support and awareness to boost students' attitudes toward learning.
3. Gender-inclusive teaching strategies should continue as teaching benefits to both male and female students equally.

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