

English Summary Writing Instruction: Boosting Students' Achievement with Collaborative Strategies

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Abstract

The study determined the effects of reciprocal teaching and direct reading and thinking activities strategies on English summary achievement of 300 SSII students in six intact classes in senior secondary schools in Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. English Summary Achievement Test ($r=0.87$) and instructional guide were the instruments for data collection. Treatment lasted six weeks. Findings revealed that the two strategies improved students achievement in English summary writing, but gender had no significant main and interaction effects on achievement. Teachers of English are enjoined to adopt both strategies in teaching English summary writing.

Key words:

Introduction

The English language in Nigeria is used primarily as an international language, it is the language of business, science, legal, and politics and academic communities. English language is the most widely used language, it is been spoken nearly everywhere and has come even more prevalent since World War II, with the global reach of America power. A lot of roles have been assigned to English in Nigeria. English language is the language of international relations and diplomacy, national symbols as the National flag, the national anthem and so on are designed in English and all of which asserts that English is the foundation of the magnificent structure called Nigeria. If English is removed, the whole nation automatically crumbles. The roles of English language in the education sector in Nigeria cannot be underestimated, it is the language of instruction for instance, it is the language used in running errands, students take notes in schools in English language in Nigeria.

English is the life blood of the educational sector at all levels. The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that English Language is the medium of instruction right from the upper primary school to the highest level of education in Nigeria. In order to derive maximum benefits from our educational system, one should acquire a reasonable level of communicative competence in English Language. English Language is so

important to the extent that failure in it means particularly at the senior secondary level is to inculcate in learners permanent literacy in English and to lay a solid foundation for academic success at the higher level of education which include both internal and external examinations.

In Nigeria English Language is so important that no student can proceed to the higher institution without at least a credit pass in the subject but students' general performance in the subject is very poor. Failure of students in English Language generally may be as a result of their failure in the paper one aspect of the subject, paper one carries 120 marks and out of 120 marks. 70 marks is allotted to the comprehension and summary aspect, being the fact that 70 marks is a larger share of the marks, failure in these aspects results in the failure of students in English Language generally. Due to this problem researchers have worked in recent years on how to improve the performance of students in these aspects but the situation remains the same. This may be as a result of the student's ability to summarize which is giving a brief account of what has been read or heard (Akano, 2002). This is very essential if students will perform well in English Language. Summary is a long text distilled to its essentials, the key point worth nothing, will examples and details. The specific form, the sentence and the vocabulary have changed, but, the main idea remains.

As important as English Language is in Nigeria, students' performance in English:- Language at public examinations has been on a decline. This is revealed in the performance of student in English Language in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. WAEC Chief Examiners Report (2009) stated that: The passage set here was quite easy and the answers were also easy to identify. However, the candidates found it difficult to summarize. All they did was to give the details back to the Examiners as if they were answering comprehension questions. Thus they performed woefully. Candidates need to be reminded that summary is an advanced comprehension which requires deep understanding of the passage and the skill to paraphrase. Furthermore the WAEC Chief Examiner reported for May/June 2011 stated that: Candidates still find summary. Many of them performed poorly in this Section. They engage in mindless lifting or coping of portions from the passage. Many of the candidates could not interpret the question appropriately. They ended up writing twelve sentences instead of six sentences as the question demanded. This is probably because the question is a departure from the conventional one which the candidates were used to.

There was a recommendation that teachers should pay attention to this aspect of English. If the students are not adequately exposed to the skills of summary writing; they will continue to have problems with summary questions. The students should also be taught to follow the rubrics of any examination paper. If they understood the questions and if they had sound knowledge of summary writing, they would not have had any problem putting the 'steps' and 'reasons' together in sentences. In an attempt to deal with these issues many researchers' have worked on it. Ashade (2001) says that learners must be able to understand how to pick out the real points out from examples and illustrations and finding an acceptable method of writing out their answers. Also before writing a summary, one has to identify the topic, all the main ideas, major supporting details of the original work. These researchers emphasized the need for effective summary strategies which are essential for effective paraphrasing of the text.

Many strategies have been adopted by scholars for examples, Jigsaw, previewing, and collaborative writing, paragraph shrinking in order to ensure the effective teaching of Jmmary, despite the method used, the performance of students in summary writing is still on a decline due to the fact that these strategies have failed to take into consideration the active participation of the students in predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing the given ext, it also engages students in cooperative learning.

Learners problems under summary have to do with how to understand the usually long and seemingly incomprehension passages; picking the real points out from examples and illustrations and finding an acceptable method of writing out their answers. It must be noted that a lot of things have been brought together to from the summary passage, these things must be recognized and these make it easy to know which is useful and which is not. The things that will be found in the passage are: firstly, example, in trying to drive home a point. A summary passage written usually give examples. What is an example? It only shows almost the same things as the point, but an example is not something true or real, it is something only assumed for instance. "On week days, such as Monday or Friday". Here Monday or Friday is an example of week Days. (Ashade. 2011).

Secondly, illustrations will be found in the passage. An illustration is stronger than example. Illustrations is a point used in supporting what has been said, unlike an example, ii is something real and practical, for example. I like the wet season much and I usually do a lot of farming than last June, I planted some yams. So last year I planted some yams is an illustration of the liking I have for the wet season. Also, the main points will he found in the passage, these are the ideas which examples and illustrations are only trying to bring to reality. Therefore, in the illustration given above, "I like wet season" is the main point. The main point may be supported with numerous examples and illustrations. Students must be able to recognize the things that make up summary passage that is Examples, illustrations and main points so as to be able to know which is useful and which is not. (Ashade, 2011).

A summary is a condensed version of a large piece of writing usually one quarter of the

original. Before writing a summary, one has to identify the topic, thesis, all the main ideas and the major supporting details of the original work. A summary is a condensed version of a text presenting the essence or the pulp of that specific story. It is usually brief, to the point, discarding a lot of not so significant details.

Also, a summary is a piece of writing in which the original material is reduced to its main points and key supporting details. It is a condensed version of someone else's writing in your own words. Summary is so important that student cannot afford to perform woefully in the summary aspect of the English Language because it improves reading skills as students pick out the main ideas of reading; it is useful for students throughout their academic careers; it helps the vocabulary skills as students paraphrase a reading altering the vocabulary and grammar as they do so; critical thinking skills are improved as students decide on the main ideas of the reading to include in the summary; writing and editing skills are improved as students draft and edit the summary; students can also work with pieces throughout the writing and revision process so it also helps with co-operating learning. Summary is an aspect of the English Language that is important and useful throughout ones lifetime. Students' learning of summary is of great concern for secondary schools teachers. English Language learners and their teachers, therefore, face a particular challenge in this regard.

After all, the ability to acquire appropriate summary skills will determine the success of learners in English Language paper one, yet English Language learners face challenges in recording any great achievement in the summary aspect of English Language. The inability of the students to read and understand the passage as well as lack of skills to paraphrase make them to fall short of public examination standard for example. WAEC, and NECO and JAMB. Therefore, teachers must recognize that students cannot summarize effectively without understanding the passage and with the lack of the knowledge of the skills to paraphrase.

Nowadays, many secondary school English Language Learners struggle with academic reading due to the fact that they find it difficult to read, understand and analyze the

summary message. In this regards this study will investigate some of these challenges and suggest the strategies that teachers can use to assist students to overcome them successfully. Since the methods of teaching summary writing before now have failed to yield the desired result, there is the need to search for more effective strategies that are likely to improve the ademic achievement of summary learning in Secondary Schools.

Reciprocal learning is a cooperative learning instructional method in which, natural dialogue models and reveals learners' thinking processes about a shared learning experience. Teachers foster reciprocal teaching through their belief that collaborative construction of meaning between themselves and students leads to a higher quality of learning (Allen, 2003) students take ownership of their roles in reciprocal teaching when they feel comfortable expressing their ideas and opinions in open dialogue during learning experiences (Connors, 2003). The leaders follow these four steps in this specific order:

Predicting: The prediction phase involves readers in actively combining their own background knowledge with what they have gathered from the text. With an informational text, students predict what they might learn or read about in subsequent passages. Predicting involves combining the reader's prior knowledge, new knowledge from the text and the text structure to create hypotheses related to the direction of the text and the author's intent in writing. Predicting provides an overall rationale for reading to confirm or disconfirm self-generated hypotheses. (Doolittle et al., 2006).

The predictor can offer predictions about what the author will tell the group next or if it's a literacy selection, the predictor might suggest what the next events in the story will be. As (Williams, 2010) points out predictions don't necessarily need to be accurate, but they need to clear.

Questioning involves the identification of information, themes, and ideas that are central and important enough to warrant further consideration. The central or important information, themes, or ideas are used to generate questions that are then used as self-test for the reader. Questioning provides a context for exploring the text more deeply and assuring the constructing of meaning. (Doolittle, Hicks, Triplett, Nichols Young, 2006).

Clarifying involves the identification and clarification of unclear, difficult, unfamiliar aspect of a text. These aspects may include awkward sentence or passage structure, unfamiliar vocabulary, unclear references, or obscure concepts. Clarifying provides the motivation to remediate confusion through re-reading, the use of context in which the text was written and or read, and the use of external resources (e.g dictionary or thesaurus) (Doolittle 2006). The clarifier will address confusing parts and attempt to answer the questions that were posed.

Summarizing is the process of identifying the important information, themes, and ideas within a text and integrating these into a clear and concise statement that communicate the essential meaning of the text. Summarizing provides the impetus to create a context for understanding the specifics of a text (Doolittle 2006).

The summarizer will use his own words to tell the main ideas of the text. This can happen anywhere in the story, and it should happen often for those students who are at risk. It can happen first at sentence level, the paragraphs, then to the whole text. The directed reading thinking activity is associated with (DR'TA) developed by Stauffer. (1969). It is a lesson plan which involves preparation readiness/motivation for reading a lesson, silent reading, vocabulary and skills development, silent and /or oral reading; and follow-up or culminating activities.

This is a usual plan for some reading lessons and is essentially synonymous with the basic lessons of the elementary grades Tierney. Readance & Dishner. (1990). The directed reading thinking activity is a much stronger model building independent readers and learners, Almasi. (2003) stated that the goal for using the directed reading thinking activity is to foster student's independence when reading. It engages students in an active process where they must use their reasoning abilities and their own ideas.

The value of directed reading thinking activity is to make predictions before reading each section. Requiring students to make predictions encourage the use of context clues and tablishes a purpose for reading and develop their question ability. Verifying predictions while reading extend thoughts and promotes interactive learning, the power of the directed reading thinking activity

strategy increases when the teacher guide students to check their predictions after reading Allen, (2004).

Considering gender as a variable that could influence students' academic achievement, research on gender in social studies reveals that in elementary. Grades as cited by Crocco, (2008) has analyzed students understanding of cultural universals and interpreted his data according to gender, socio-economic status, and grade level. He studied 216 students in the early elementary years in three predominantly white but socio-economically diverse communities, overall, his findings do not show any statistically significant difference between Boy's and Girls' knowledge. For example, boys knew more about heat, water and light. Girls and boys have a different understanding of the utility of clothing. In looking at shelter, girls were more likely to offer a color for their ideal future home than boys. Synthesizing across these disparate results however shows no statistically different patterns according to gender. Brophy and Alleman's findings of macro-similarities between boys and girls, with micro-level difference at the item level, are paralleled by several other studies exploring high school student's knowledge of history.

Statements of the problem.

English summary writing is a compulsory aspect of English Paper 1 WASSCE and NECO/SSCE, but reports on yearly basis from these public examination bodies reveal that students are not doing well in summary writing. Previous studies have examined teacher and student factors as well as strategies that could improve achievement in summary writing with little attention paid to Reciprocal teaching and Directed Reading- Thinking Activity Instructional Strategies. Studies have confirmed the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing students learning outcomes in reading comprehension, Social Studies and Mathematics. However, their effects on students' achievement in summary writing have not enjoyed much research attention especially on Oyo township, Nigeria. Therefore, the study determined the effects of Reciprocal teaching and Directed Reading- Thinking activity strategies on students achievement in summary writing in selected

Senior Secondary Schools in Oyo township Oyo State. The moderating effect of gender was also examined.

Hypotheses.

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀1: There is no main effect of the treatment of reciprocal teaching strategy and directed, reading thinking Activity Strategy on achievement in summary.
- H₀2: There is no interaction effect of treatment and gender on the achievement of students.
- H₀3: There is no interaction effect of treatment and gender on the achievement of students in summary writing.

Scope of the study

This study determined the effects of reciprocal teaching and directed reading Thinking activity strategies on the learning outcomes of Senior Secondary students, in summary writing in Iwo Local Government area of Osun State. The study covered six Senior Secondary Schools in Iwo Local Government.

Significance of the study

This study is significant in that reciprocal teaching strategy and directed reading thinking Activity Strategy will enhance the teaching and learning of summary writing. Therefore, it is expected that students performance in summary writing will be improved. It will also help professional teachers in choosing a method of teaching that is capable of improving the performance of students in summary writing. It will help the curriculum planners to design the summary aspect of the English Language to help both the students and the teachers. It will help the writers of textbooks on English Language to write textbooks particularly on the summary aspects in a way that will improve the students performance in summary writing.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is the pretest-posttest control group quasi experimental design with a 3 x 2 factorial matrix. Six senior secondary schools were randomly selected from Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State. In all, a total of 300 Senior Secondary Students in six intact classes of SSII (one per school) were involved in the study. The schools were randomly assigned to experimental and control group. The passages taught in this study were selected from New Oxford Secondary English Course for Senior Schools two by Ayo Banjo (2013) which is different from the one used in the schools involved in the study. The passages are six in numbers and they are used for both the experimental and control groups. The instruments used were Students Achievement Test in English Summary (17) and instruction guides. In the first week, the researcher collected an introductory letter from the department and took it to the principals of schools where the study was to be carried out. The principal then handed the researcher over to the Heads of Language Department. The heads of departments then introduced the researcher to the English Language teachers of the S. S. S two classes. She also trained research assistants. In the second week, the researcher identified the arms of SS2 classes to be used through random sampling and administered the pretest to students in the control and the experimental groups. Treatment took place in week three to eight, lasting six weeks. In the ninth week, administration of posttest on both the experimental and control groups was done. The data collected were analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA); Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) and Scheffere Posthoc test to determine the main effect of treatment and gender as well as the interaction of gender and treatment. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H₀: There is no significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing

Table 1: Summary of ANCOVA of Posttest Achievement scores by treatment and Gender in summary writing

Source	Sum squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	Eta
Corrected model on Effect	4316.712	6	719.452	117.541	2.000	.706
Pretest achievement in summary writing	1610.689	1	1610.689	263.148	.000	.473
Treatment group	2834.782	2	1417.391	231.568	.000*	.613
Gender	3.379	1	3.379	.552	.458	.002
2-way interaction	66.984	2	33.492	5.472	.005	.036
Treatment x gender	1793.408	293	6.121			
Error	6110.120	299				
Total						

*significant at $p < .05$

Table 1 shows that there is significant effect of treatment on student achievement in summary writing ($F(3,30) = 231.57, p < .05$). Hence, the null hypotheses that state that there is no significant main effect of treatment on a achievement in summary writing is rejected. In other to see how each group faired with the strategies. Multiplication classification Analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Multiple Classification Analysis of posttest Achievement scores by treatment and gender in summary

Variable +Category	Grand mean	N	Unadjusted variation	Eta	Adjusted for independence +covariates deviation	Beta
Treatment group	8.86					
(1) Reciprocal teaching strategy		100	2.97		3.58	
(2)Directed reading-thinking activities strategy		100	1.06		.53	
(3)Control group		100	-4.03	65	-4.10	
(1) Reciprocal teaching strategy		161	-68			
(2)Directed reading-thinking activities strategy		139		14	-10 12	
(3)Control group Gender						
1 male						70
2 female						02
Multiple R- squared						696
Multiple R						834

Table 2 shows that students in the Reciprocal teaching strategy group had the highest adjusted mean score (x= 11.83) followed by - Directed Reading thinking Activity instructional

strategy group (x = 9.92) and the control group (x= 4.83) respectively. In other to know the source of significant difference in students post achievement score, Scheffe post hoc table is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Scheffe Post-Hoc on achievement test in summary writing by Treatment

Treatment	Mean	Reciprocal	Directed reading	Treatment Control
(1) Reciprocal teaching instructed strategy	11.83		*	*
(2) Directed reading thinking activity strategy	9.92	*		*
(3) Control	4.83	*	*	

Pairs significant different at $p < .05$

Scheffe Post hoc in table 3 shows that the reciprocal teaching instructional strategy (x= 11.83) significant differs from directed reading thinking instructional strategy (x= 9.92). Also, Directed Reading thinking instructional strategy (x 9.92) differs significantly from the control group (x = 4.83). These significant pair wise difference were therefore responsible for the significant effect of treatment on students achievement in summary writing.

HO₂: There is no significant main effect of gender on achievement in summary writing from table 1 there is no significant main effect of gender on students achievement in summary writing (F (2,297)=.552, P = 7.05). On this basis hypothesis 2 which states that there is no significant main effect of gender on achievement on summary writing is not rejected.

HO₃: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on the achievement of student in summary writing (F (6,293) 54.72, P<.05). Hence hypothesis 3 which states that there no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on the achievement of student in summary writing rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Main effect of Treatment on students' achievement in summary writing.

The finding revealed that there is significant main effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing. This implies that the students taught summary writing using Reciprocal teaching instructional strategy and Directed Reading thinking activity instructional strategy performed better in summary writing than the students who were taught using the conventional method. Reciprocal teaching instructional strategy and Directed Reading thinking activity strategies are both effective in the sense that it involves active participation in the learning process. It is learner centered, students are actively involved in the learning process. Also, in Directed Reading thinking Activity instructional strategy students were able to activate their prior knowledge, focus on the topic, make predictions and finally check the accuracy of predictions. The students were able to discuss together and generate meaning for themselves. The findings of this study agree with the study carried out by Palincsar and Brown (1986) and, Oczkus (2003) who reported in their findings that students exposed to Reciprocal teaching instructional strategy and Directed Reading thinking Activity strategy performed better than students in the control Group in summary writing.

Main Effect of Gender on Achievement in Summary Writing.

The result however showed that there was significant main effect of gender differences in summary writing. This result negates the report of Olaboopo (1999) which says that females performed better than males in language learning. Hawker, (2000) and Kolawole, (2002) also affirm that female outperformed males in language. However, the finding supports the view of Oyinloye, (2007) Olagunju, (1998) and Okoye, (1981) who argued that both boys and girls can perform brilliantly provided they are exposed to the same learning opportunities.

Main Interaction Effect of Treatment and Gender on Students' Achievement in Summary Writing.

Findings revealed that there was significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on achievement in summary writing. This implies that gender was sensitive to treatment. Female performed better than males in the summary writing achievement test probably because they were excited with the new instructional strategies. The high female performance may also be due to the students' active participation in the classroom. The findings is in support of Jegede, (1994) who found that if students were adequately motivated, the students are capable of mastering English, not considering the Sallasbas, (2008) in his research found that female performed better in reading comprehension than male.

Conclusion

From the results of the study, it could be deduced that summary writing is improved through the use of Reciprocal teaching and Directed Reading thinking activity instructional strategies. These instructional strategies have proved to be more effective in the teaching and learning of summary writing than the conventional teaching method.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended.

Reciprocal teaching and Directed Reading Thinking Activity strategy should be adopted by

the English Language teachers so as to bring about improved performance of students in summary writing. Teachers of English language should be sent to regular workshops and, seminars by the government so that they could be trained on the use of these strategies properly to improve students performance in summary writing. The curriculum designers should ensure that effective strategies such as Reciprocal teaching and Directed Reading Thinking activity instructional strategies are included in the curriculum, the purpose of which is to improve students performance in summary writing. Universities and colleges of education and other higher institutions that are training teachers should include these strategies in their methodology courses so that students under training will be familiar with these strategies and they will be able to use them for the improved performance of students in summary writing when they are eventually employed as teachers.

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