EFFECT OF GROUP DISCUSSION ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT AND RETENTION IN KEFFI, NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of group-discussion on senior secondary school students' English language comprehension achievement and retention in Nasarawa state. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design which involves the non-randomized pretest, posttest, post posttest, control group design. The populations of the study consist of 24,545, SS 2 students duly registered in public secondary schools in 2018/2019 academic session in Nasarawa State and 140 SS2 English language students from 2 public senior secondary schools (80 males and 60 female) were used as a sample of the study using lottery method. A 30 items entitled "English Language Comprehension Achievement Test (ELCAT) was used for data collection. ELCAT was subjected to two expert's judgment for face and content validation. The logical consensus of the experts yielded 0.82 indexes, and the reliability of the instrument was determined using KR20 which gave r0.79 index. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while ANOVA and t-test were used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study reveal that students that were taught English language reading comprehension in group discussion method performed better than those taught in conventional teaching method, students in experimental group had more retentive capacity than their counterparts in conventional group and both male and female students in discussion group achieved higher than male and female students in conventional group. It was therefore recommended that: English language teachers should use group-discussion method to teach students in secondary schools especially during

reading comprehension and both male and female students should be encouraged to read in group in order to improve their reading culture and retentive capacity.

Introduction

The significance of English Language acquisition for proficiency in all school subjects cannot be overemphasized because most of the subjects in Nigerian schools instructional materials written in English Language, except Nigerian languages and Arabic language. The importance of this subject may have led the Nigeria Government to make it a compulsory subject at basic education and senior secondary school levels as well as prerequisite for admission into tertiary institutions (Nelson, Nwankwo, & Tochi, 2014). In Nigeria, English Language is one of the core subjects taught at all levels. Students read, write and express themselves in any given task through English language. The subject involves four skills, namely: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Comprehension is the goal of reading. Reading is an essential language skill that deserves much attention by both teachers and students. Reading has a lot of benefits for the individual and for national development (Lorkase, 2004 as cited in

Galadima, 2019). Reading is highly indispensable in all areas of human endeavours. This is because reading is not only valuable in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

Despite the importance of reading to humanity, students in Nigerian schools are often faced with

reading challenges. This is made manifest in their inability to read fluently and comprehend what reads. This ugly trend is often blamed on teachers' inability to teach reading comprehension effectively by using appropriate strategies. Besides, students themselves lack the knowledge that will aid comprehension of reading material and the time allocated to study English is limited to only five periods per week which may not be enough to comprehend the rudiments of learning English (Kolawole & Dele 2002 as cited in Galadima, 2019). According to Odudu (2014), reading is needed on a daily basis and virtually, people in all spheres of human endeavours need it. At home, reading is needed to be able to operate machines and electronics and to take drugs correctly. Travelers need to read sign posts for directions and students need reading to be successful in their studies. In spite of the numerous benefits derivable from reading, there is lack of good reading culture among Nigerians generally, and among students specifically. Ochogwu (2012) pointed out that scholars in Nigeria have often lamented the lack of reading culture among Nigerians, particularly students. Many children in school today would be at risk and except they are rescued through the acquisition of reading culture, the age of darkness might recur (Odudu, 2014). The poor achievement and failure of students in public examinations is generally traced to poor reading and comprehension ability. The West African

Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) consistently make the comprehension section of their papers compulsory in all their examinations. The acquisition of reading skills is therefore, fundamental in the understanding of all aspects of English Language. WAEC Chief Examiner's reports after different school certificate examinations have consistently highlighted persistent poor achievement of candidates in English Language attributed to factors such as inadequate qualified English language teachers, use of inappropriate methods in helping students to read and lack of interest on the part of the students, among others. WAEC and NECO May/June 2018/2019 academic session English language results in Keffi Local Government of Nasarawa State shows that less than (36% in WAEC, 21% in NECO) of the total students passed English language at distinction, good or credit level while more than (64% in WAEC, 79% in NECO) failed English language which is an indices of poor achievement..

Achievement can be defined as any effort which is of significance and value to a particular program, but averagely difficult, which is undertaken successfully through knowledge, skills and experience. Anekwe (2008) in Adejoh (2015) described achievement as something which has been accomplished through exertion, skills, practice and perseverance. An achievement test is an ability test designed to measure what the individual has learned to do as a result of planning instruction (Anikweze, 2015). He further argued that an achievement test could be a teacher-made test or standardized tests. A standardized achievement test (SAT) is one in which the procedure, apparatus and scoring have been fixed so that precisely the same testing procedures can be followed at different times in different place. The teacher made tests (TMT) are those achievement tests prepared by classroom teachers. Gender is defined as the behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2013). According to Galle, Atiku and Gado, (2019) stated that gender is a socially constructed term depicting the system of relations between males and females, and designates behaviours, attitudes, roles, status and other processes that govern the relationship among sexes in a given educational, socio-economic and political context.

Ochogwu, (2012) observes that students' attention decreases as lessons progress, especially when instead of being student–centered; the lesson rather becomes teacher–centered. Thus, lack of appropriate learning strategy that involves student–centered activities makes reading comprehension difficult. Grouped discussion learning could be one of the strategies that would help students participate in reading comprehension effectively. Igwebuike and Atomatofa (2013) study shows that they do not provide support for the superiority of the discussion method over fieldtrips in enhancing the achievement of students in integrated science lessons, but the effectiveness of the discussion, especially group discussion relevant

were retested by comparing the method with equivalent teaching methods.

Group discussion refers to a situation in which two or more students express, present, explain and argue their knowledge, experiences, opinions and feelings (Rahman, Khalil, Jumani, Ajmal, Malik & Sharif, 2011). Grouped-discussion method refers to small heterogeneous groups of students working together to learn while being responsible for their teammate's learning as well as their own (Dotson, 2001 as cited in Galadima, 2019). In a grouped learning group, gifted children are often placed with non-gifted children with the goal of having the gifted help the non-gifted children either directly (Odudu, 2014). In line with Odudu summation, Amali (2015) finding revealed that there is a significant difference between the male and female students taught with cooperative learning strategy and those students that were taught with conventional method of teaching. Also, Mutrofin, Degeng, Ardhana and Setyosari (2017) finding shows that learning outcomes of students taught by the lecture discussion method were different from those of students taught by the group discussion method with F test of 111.864, significant at p<.05 and the relatively strong effect size of .406. However, retention is the ability to possess, keep and reproduce past experiences or previously familiar materials. Ngwoke and Eze (2010) defined retention as the process by which a student stores information in his memory for use at a later period. Retention occurs when facts or experiences are stored in long term memory. Galle (2020) conducted a study on effect of computer-assisted instructional approach on economics

achievement, interest and retention in Nasarawa State secondary school, his findings shows that students in experimental group that were taught Economics using CAIA-course-lab 2.4 achieved better result than those taught using the conventional method, students in experimental has high retentive capacity mean scores than those taught using the conventional method and both male and female students achieved high scores in experimental than their counterparts in conventional group, as well there is a significant difference in the mean posttest interest scores. Nelson, Nwankwo and Tochi (2014) finding revealed that the participants exposed to cooperative learning strategies performed significantly higher in English language than their control group counterparts. A student may be able to memorize facts in the short term, but may not retain those facts over the long-term memory.

Thus, what has been retained in one's memory out of the total originally learnt material provides a measure of one's retentive power (Mangal, 2013 as cited in Galle, 2020). The use of innovative instructional tools such as grouped discussion method of teaching may promote the acquisition of meaningful skills, attitudes, values and knowledge, thereby facilitating the transfer of same to the long-term memory for storage permit economics students' achievement. Several literature review were discussed related to this present study but in isolation of this gap that the researchers focused on effect of group discussion on senior secondary school students

English language comprehension achievement and retention in Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, poor reading culture, lack of comprehension skills among senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Most of the students at this level cannot comprehend and retained what they read. Perhaps, this is the reasons why most of them do not appreciate reading culture. Students hardly engage in out-of-the class room involving going through a newspaper, a magazine or any relevant literature texts. It is therefore, not surprising that when a reading class is organized, a good number of students will be dosing, while the rest do not show interest in what is happening in the class. The use of inappropriate method of teaching toward reading comprehension could attribute to poor achievement and poor retention of concepts taught among students. Hence this study investigated the effect of group-discussion on senior secondary school students' English language comprehension achievement and retention in Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study.

1. What are the mean achievement scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using group-discussion method and those taught using the conventional method?

2. What are the mean retention scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using grouped discussion method and those taught using the conventional method?

3. What are the mean retention scores of male and female students taught English language reading comprehension using grouped discussion?

Statement of Hypotheses

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

HO$_1$: There is no significant difference in mean achievement scores of students taught English language-reading comprehension using group-discussion method and those taught using the conventional method

HO$_2$: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using grouped discussion method and those taught using the conventional method

HO$_3$: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students taught English language-reading comprehension using group discussion

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design which involves the non-randomized pretest, posttest, post posttest, control group design. This was considered suitable because

randomization of subjects was not feasible as intact classes constitute the two groups that were used for the study. This is in agreement with the view of Uzoechi, (2015) who postulated that the use of such designs that do not involve randomization is called the quasi-experimental design. The population of the study consist of 24,545, senior secondary two (SS II) students duly registered in public secondary schools in 2018/2019 academic session in 13 Local Government Area (LGA) of Nasarawa State (Nasarawa State Ministry of Education, 2019). The sample of the study consisted of 140 SS2 students from 2 public senior secondary schools (80 males and 60 female). Before obtaining the sample size of the study, a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was employed. Keffi Local Government area was dichotomized into three zones that is, Keffi north, Keffi south, and Keffi west. Lottery method was used to select Keffi south and two public senior secondary schools (GSS Keffi South and GSS Yelwa Keffi) in Keffi LGA of Nasarawa State. Then six public senior secondary schools in Keffi LGA were randomly selected through the lottery method replacement.

Then SS 2 students in the six public senior secondary schools selected in Keffi south in Keffi LGA of Nasarawa State were administered a pre-test and the results of the pre-test were used to identify two public senior secondary schools with similar ability. The SS 2 intact classes in each of the two public senior

secondary schools identified were clustered and randomly assigned to the Experimental and conventional groups. Specifically, the three intact classes were clustered and randomly assigned to the experimental group while the three intact classes were clustered and randomly assigned to conventional group. Students in the experimental group were exposed to the discussion teaching method while the conventional group students were exposed to the use of conventional teaching method.

The researchers developed an instrument entitled "English Language Comprehension Achievement Test (ELCAT) for data collection which contained 30 multiple-choice test items with four options A-D response format. ELCAT was subjected to two expert's judgment for faced and content validation. An expert from English Language department and the other one from Measurement and Evaluation unit, Nasarawa State University, Keffi validated the instrument (ELCAT) by checking for the appropriateness and relevance of the items in agreement with Bloom taxonomy of educational objective The logical consensus of the experts yielded 0.82 indexes. To determine the reliability of the instrument (ELCAT), KR20 was used which gave r0.79 reliability index.

Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions while ANOVA and simple pair t-test using were used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Research Questions/Hypotheses

Research Question 1: What are the mean achievement scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using group-discussion method and those taught using the conventional method?

Table 1: Means Achievement Score for Students ELCAT **in EG and CG**

Treatment Groups	No	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean Gain
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Experimental (EG)	73	13.43	7.11	51.48	11.57	38.05
Conventional (CG)	67	12.64	5.87	39.77	23.49	27.13

Table 1 shows the mean achievement scores of (EG) students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method had mean achievement gain (38.05) and those taught using the conventional method had mean achievement gain (27.13). This is an indication that ELCAT using DM has more effects on students' achievement in English language reading comprehension more than the Conventional teaching method.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in mean achievement scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using group-discussion method and those taught using the conventional method

Table 2: ANOV Result for Experimental and Conventional Groups

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected method	606.3939	2	303.196	33.156	.000
Intercept	1452.714	1	1452.714	158.862	.000
Pretest	1.761	1	1.761	.193	.662
Group	602.536	1	602.536	63.340	.000
Error	896.162	138	9.145		
Corrected Total	1502.55	140			

*Significant at 0.05,

Table 2 shows result of ANOVA for the groups, the F- value obtained was 63.340, P- value < .000, 1,138 degree of freedom (P<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected hence; there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method and those taught using the conventional method.

Research Question 2: What are the mean retention scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using grouped discussion method and those taught using the conventional method?

Table 3: Means Retention Score for Students ELCAT in EG and CG

Treatment Groups	No	Post-test		Post Post-test	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Experimental (EG)	73	51.48	11.57	61.24	12.67
Conventional (CG)	67	39.77	11.49	40.15	10.67

Table 3 shows the mean retention scores of students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method and those taught using the conventional method. The result reveals that students in the experimental group (using group discussion method) exhibited very stronger retentive capacity as reflected by the values before and after the treatment.

Experimental group post post-test mean score (61.24) and the conventional teaching method had a mean post post-test score (40.15). This implies that the retentive power of students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method was very higher than the retentive power of those taught using the conventional teaching method.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students' taught English language-reading comprehension using grouped discussion method and those taught using the conventional method

Table 4: ANOVA Result for Experimental and Conventional Groups

Source	Type III sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Corrected method	606.3939	2	303.196	33.156	.000
Intercept	1452.714	1	1452.714	158.862	.000
Pretest	1.761	1	1.761	.193	.662
Group	602.536	1	602.536	63.339	.001
Error	896.162	138	9.145		
Corrected Total	1502.55	140			

Table 4 shows the result of ANOVA test for the groups, the F- value obtained was 65.339, P-value < .001, 1,138 degree of freedom (P<0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected hence; there was a significant difference in the mean retention scores of students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method and those taught using the conventional method.

Research Question 3: What are the mean retention scores of male and female students taught English language-reading comprehension using grouped discussion?

Table 5: Mean Retention Scores of Male and Female Students in Experimental Group

Treatment Group	Gender	No of Cases	Post-test		Post Post-test	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	Male	42	51.48	12.57	61.12	12.67
Experimental						
	Female	31	48.62	11.57	61.04	12.47

Table 5 shows the mean retention scores of male and female students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion (experimental). The result indicates that both male and female students in experimental groups exhibited closely similar academic ability before the treatment as reflected by their relatively closed values of post-test mean scores of 51.48 and 48.62 for the male and female students. The result also reveals that male and female students in experimental group had relatively closed values of post-post-test means scores of 61.12 and 61.04 respectively.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students taught English language-reading comprehension using group discussion

Table 6: Paired Samples t-test for Male and Female Students in Experimental Group

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Male - Female	-18.06	5.96	1.07	-20.25	-15.87	-16.85	72	.000

Table 6 shows paired sample t-test result for the male and female students in experimental groups, t-value obtained at 2-tailed was -16.858, P- value < .000,72 degree of freedom (P<0.05). The null hypothesis was accepted hence; there is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion

Discussion of Findings

Findings with respect to research one show means achievement scores of (EG) students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method had mean achievement gain and those taught using the conventional method had mean achievement gain. This is an indication that ELCAT using DM has more effects on students' achievement in English language reading comprehension more than the Conventional teaching method. This indicated that discussion teaching method has more effects on students' achievement in English language reading comprehension more than the Conventional teaching method. Drawing inference from hypothesis one in Table 2 shows result of ANOVA for the groups, the F-value obtained, P- value < .001. The null hypothesis was rejected hence; there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method and those taught using the conventional method. The finding corroborated with the finding of Mutrofin, Degeng, Ardhana and Setyosari (2017) shows that learning outcomes of students taught by the lecture discussion method were different from those of students taught by the group discussion method significant. The group discussion method was proven to be more effective in improving the student learning outcomes than the lecture-discussion method.

Findings with respect to research two show that the mean retention scores of students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion and those taught using the conventional method. The result reveals that students in the experimental group (using group discussion method) exhibited stronger retentive capacity as reflected by the values before and after the treatment. Experimental group post post-test mean score and the conventional teaching method had a mean post post-test score. This implies that the retentive power of students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method was very higher than the retentive power of those taught using the conventional teaching method. This implies that the retentive power of students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method was very higher than the retentive power of those taught using the conventional teaching method. The test of hypothesis shows result that F- value obtained is P- value < .001. The null hypothesis was rejected hence; there was a significant difference in the mean retention scores of students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion method and those taught using the conventional method. The finding corroborated with the finding of Odudu (2014), Amali (2015) finding revealed that there is a significant difference between the male and female students taught with cooperative learning strategy and those students that were taught with conventional method of teaching.

Finding with respect to research question three shows that the mean retention scores of male

and female students taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion (experimental) was higher. The result indicates that both male and female students in experimental groups exhibited closely similar academic ability before the treatment as reflected by their relatively closed values of post-test mean scores for the male and female students. The result also reveals that male and female students in experimental group had relatively closed values of post-post-test means scores respectively. Drawing inference from hypothesis three shows paired sample t-test result for the male and female students in experimental groups, t- value obtained at 2-tailed, P- value < .000. The null hypothesis was accepted hence; there is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students' taught English language reading comprehension using group discussion. The finding corroborated with the finding of Galle (2020) that there was no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students taught Economics CAIA-course-lab 2.4 (experimental group) and those taught using the conventional method, as well there is a significant difference in the mean posttest interest score.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the learning achievement of students taught in group discussion method were different from those of students taught by in conventional teaching method group and there were no significant difference in the retentive capacity of male and female students in

experimental group (those taught English Language reading comprehension.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. English language teachers should use group discussion method to teach students in secondary schools especially during reading comprehension

2. Both male and female students in senior secondary school should be encouraged to read in group as this would improve their reading culture and retentive capacity.

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