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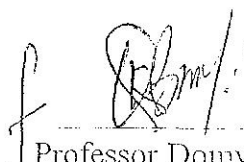
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Yours sincerely,



Professor Domwini Dabire Kuupole
Editor-in-Chief

**ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK STRATEGIES IN READING
COMPREHENSION LESSONS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation is a goal-oriented component of all decision-making activities and it entails the collection and analysis of relevant data so as to make progressive adjustment towards pre-determined goals. This study focused on analysing the evaluation and feedback strategies employed by teachers in reading comprehension in secondary schools in Ilorin, Kwara State.

The descriptive survey of the cross-sectional type was adopted for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 teachers from both public and private secondary schools in Ilorin central Kwara State Nigeria. The study found that most teachers preferred the use of multiple choice objective items as a strategy for evaluating comprehension passage and that cloze procedure evaluation strategy stimulates independent thinking in students. It was also found that gender, qualification and years of teaching experience did not significantly influence teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies. Based on these findings, it was recommended that teachers of English comprehension lessons needed to be trained in the use of other effective strategies for evaluating comprehension so as to improve their teaching effectiveness. The government at all levels should rise to the challenge of inadequate number of specialists handling the teaching of English language

KEY WORDS: Evaluation, Feedback Strategies, reading comprehension,

Introduction

Reading is one of the four basic language skills – listening, speaking reading and writing. It is an independent way of learning which introduces the reader to the immediate world. That is, the reader can view the ever-widening horizon and explore new areas in the world of things, people and events. It is a complex system of operations which involves the eyes, the brain, the nervous system and the ears.

Effective learning is rather said to take place when a learner confronts varied printed materials and he/she is able to concentrate and extract ideas and views from the pool of facts written by writers. In other words, reading can be described as an inevitable tool which a learner requires to make headways in the world of academics. It can also be seen as a process of re-creating the text in the reader's mind. That is, the reader matches the elements of the text against his own world structure, and modifies that structure accordingly (Cathering, 1989).

It is clear that reading is a complex exercise involving the deployment of many skills and co-ordinated system of human body. This is corroborated by Lawal (1991) and Kadri (1997) that reading is the ability to comprehend the thought and feelings of an author's mind via the medium of text. Such a definition includes both the cognitive and affective aspects of reading.

Further, Papalia (1987) postulated that reading comprehension entails more than knowledge of vocabulary and syntax. He believes it also requires ability to perceive the text nature of the passage being communicated. Comprehension, according to Lawal (1995), is essentially a product of the interaction between a person (the reader) and the text before him or her. In other words, reading as a means of exploring the world rests mainly on the reader's knowledge and experience. It is the reader's knowledge and experience that come to interact with the ideas, message, knowledge and experiences which the writer or author presents. This view is shared in Olajide (1997) that the psycholinguistic activity of reading by scholars submits that apart from the internal structure of language, the context of use of such language, as well as the reader's experimental background determine comprehension.

It follows then that recognizing graphic symbols or letters is only a subset of reading comprehension which involves a rather higher level of literary activities such as decoding the surface and deep meanings of words, their structural arrangement and grammatical integration thus giving rise to creativity on the part of the reader or learner.

Poor comprehension can be caused by poor language background, poor vocabulary, lack of training and practice in reading skills and failure to search for meaning in the written materials. Sometimes, it could be due to inappropriate materials or limited mental ability. Though comprehension skills underlie study skills, other abilities are required for effective studying. They include ability to locate materials, ability to use reference materials, ability to understand maps, graphs, schematics, charts, pictures and to read flexibly for one's purpose.

Evaluation is a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by pupils (Gronlund, 1976). Corroborating this position, Lawal (1985) posited that evaluation is a concept derived morphologically from the root "value" and the stem "evaluate". Thus, it can be generally defined as the process of passing judgment on the value or worth of an object, a person or an event, a thing or an understanding. Beyond this general conception however, evaluation is a goal-oriented component of all decision-making activities and it entails the collection and analysis of relevant data so as to be able to make progressive adjustment towards pre-determined goals.

In the educational context, therefore, it can be said that evaluation involves determining how satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily certain desired educational objectives have been achieved. However, Abiri (2007) identified different types of evaluation which are often influenced or informed by the goal or purpose of the evaluation process. Prominent among the types are - prognostic, summative, personnel, programme and institutional or organizational evaluation. Abiri explained that evaluation could also be categorized as either internal or external depending on its source, that is, whether the conducting agency is from within or outside the organization. An internal evaluation would normally be controlled and conducted by the teachers or the institution

concerned, while an external evaluation would be carried out by, or at the instance of an external body such as a particular level of government or an organization such as West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), National Examination Council (NECO), National Teachers' Institute (NTI), National University Commission (NUC).

Abiri (2007) explained that prognostic evaluation takes place before the beginning of an instructional programme, and its purpose is to discover how the pupils or learners stand -- entry standard, ability, strength or attainment of the learner with a view to place them accordingly. He added that evaluation is diagnostic when it is conducted at intervals within an instructional programme to explore learners' difficulties or academic challenges, while it is formative when it takes place through various stages of instructional programme with a view to finding out how well the particular intended goals are being achieved such that relevant changes can be made to achieve the goals.

Summative evaluation, according to Abiri (2007) takes place at the end of a programme of instruction and it is intended to generate a final statement of achievement or outcome of the instructional programme so examined.

Feedback is a process in which information about the past or present influences the same phenomenon in the present or future. It is part of cause and effect that forms a circuit or loop. In other words, feedback is the response, outcome or reaction emanating or evolving from an earlier action or prompting. In the educational context, it is learner's and teacher's reaction to instructional content and context.

Ramaprasad (1983) defined feedback generally as "information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter a gap in some way". In other words, feedback sets out to bridge the gap or vacuum between an ideal situation, anticipated reaction or outcome and a deficient or inadequate condition.

Philip (2010) defined feedback as “a communication that we give or get; sometimes feedback is called “criticism”. Philip further asserted that feedback is a way to let people know how effective they are in what they are trying to accomplish. When narrowed down to classroom situation, feedback would mean an essential condiment that both the teacher and the learner need in order to accomplish the learning outcome benchmarks. It serves as speed-breaker where the teacher is found to be on a high speed and it serves as an energizer where learners are found to be deficient and lagging.

Formative and corrective feedbacks are the two major types in the literature. Formative feedback was described by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as an on-going assistance focused on the process. It helps teachers to check the current status of their students’ language ability. This implies that teachers can know what the students know and what they do not know. Formative feedback gives students opportunity to participate in modifying or re-planning the upcoming classes. As indicated above, formative feedback guides both the teacher and the learners through a proper and well-structured planning of learning or instructional content.

Statement of the Problem

As significant as reading and reading comprehension are to the academic success of students, researchers and educationist are still of the opinion that the majority of secondary teachers still handle its teaching poorly (Olajide, 1991, Lawal 1994, Adebileye 2001). The implication is that the students have little or no ability to understand written texts. The effect of this is felt on the students’ inability to read fast, bring out facts from passages, separate relevant from irrelevant details, retain and recall what is read and maintain a strong vocabulary base (Unoh,1980). Moreover, most teachers lack the basic knowledge of evaluation strategy which is used by the teacher to provide feedback to students and to check for understanding in the teaching and learning process.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study:

1. What evaluation strategies do secondary school teachers in Ilorin use in their comprehension lessons?
2. What feedback strategies do secondary school teachers in Ilorin use in their comprehension lessons?
3. Does teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies have any influence on reading comprehension lessons?
4. Is there any influence of gender on teachers' use of evaluation and feedback strategies in their comprehension lessons?
5. Does teachers' qualification have any influence on the evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons?
6. Does years of experience have any influence on teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies in reading comprehension?

Research Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

- H0₁: Teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies have no significant relationship with reading comprehension lessons
- H0₂: There is no significant difference in the evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons among teachers based on gender.
- H0₃: There is no significant difference in the evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons among teachers based on qualification.
- H0₄: There is no significant difference in the evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons among teachers based on years of experience.

Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive survey of the cross-sectional type to explore the evaluation and feedback strategies in reading comprehension lessons among English language teachers in Ilorin.

The study covered all secondary school teachers in Ilorin East, South and West Local Government Areas (LGA). The 1,827 English language teachers of the 263 public and private secondary schools in Kwara State constituted the target population for the study. Ten (10) schools were selected from each of the three (3) Local Government Areas using the stratified random sampling technique based on the variables of the study.

Three (3) teachers were randomly selected from each of the ten (10) schools – public and private in Ilorin East and Ilorin South Local Government Areas, while four (4) teachers were randomly selected in each of the ten (10) schools – public and private in Ilorin West Local Government Area respectively. The teachers were selected using the purposive random sampling technique. In all, forty (40) teachers were sampled in Ilorin West Local Government Area, while thirty (30) teachers were selected in each of Ilorin East and South making a total of one hundred (100) teachers as respondents for this study.

The instrument used in the study was a researcher-designed questionnaire and observation technique. The questionnaire was divided into four sections A – D. Section A was used to elicit data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Sections B – D were used to gather data on knowledge of evaluation strategies, knowledge of feedback strategies and knowledge of reading techniques.

The responses to the section were on a four (4) point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained by experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Ilorin. The test-retest technique was used to ascertain the reliability co-efficient of the instrument by administering

the instrument on 10 teachers who were not involved in the actual study. Three weeks after the first administration, the instrument was re-administered using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and a value of .85 was obtained.

The data collected were analyzed using the percentage for the biographic data, research questions 1 and 2, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 alpha level.

Results and Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	34	34.0
Female	66	66.0
Total	100	100.0

The result presented in table 1 shows that 34 respondents were males, while 66 were females. This means that there were more female respondents (teachers) than male respondents.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents based on Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
NCE	21	21.0
B.A.	24	24.0
B.A (Ed)/PGDE/B.Sc (Ed)	45	45.0
Others	10	10.0
Total	100	100.0

The result presented in table 2 shows that 21 respondents had NCE Certificate, 24 had B.A., 45 had B.A. (Ed)/PGDE/B.Sc. (Ed), while 10 had other certificates. This means that majority of the respondents were those with B.A. (Ed.)/PGDE/B.Sc. (Ed.) Certificate.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents based on School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage %
Public	89	89.0
Private	11	11.0
Total	100	100.0

The result presented in table 3 shows that 89 respondents were from public schools, while 11 respondents were from private schools. This means that there were more public school teachers participating in the study than private school teachers.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What evaluation strategies do secondary school teachers in Ilorin use in their comprehension lessons?

Table 4: Evaluation strategy used by secondary school teachers in comprehension lessons

S/N	Items	Total	Level of Acceptance	Ranking
1.	The passage is too complex	227	56.75	6 th
2.	The story is not straight forward	233	58.25	5 th
3.	My students cannot understand the story	225	56.25	8 th
4.	The lexical items are intertwined	250	62.5	3 rd
5.	My students would prefer a simpler passage	269	67.25	1 st
6.	My students cannot read the unfamiliar words	242	60.5	4 th
7.	Its difficult to write the paragraph as sentences	226	56.5	7 th
8.	Meaning is confusing and not clear	203	50.75	10 th
9.	If asked, my students cannot fill-in missing words	219	54.75	9 th
10.	Multiple choice is the most appropriate test for the passage	257	64.25	2 nd

Table 4 above shows that majority of the teachers agreed to the fact that their students would prefer a simpler passages, while they disagreed that meaning is confusing and not clear.

Research Question 2: What feedback strategies do secondary school teachers in Ilorin use in their comprehension lessons?

Table 5: Feedback used by secondary school teachers in comprehension lessons

S/N	Items	Total	Level of Acceptance	Ranking
1.	Students don't have to read out the passage	255	63.75	3 rd

2	Decoding meaning helps comprehension lesson	292	73.00	1 st
3	I score only the right answer to comprehension passage	271	67.75	2 nd
4	My students read fluently without errors	223	55.75	7 th
5	My students ask questions outside a comprehension passage	253	63.25	4 th
6	My students rewrite passage about personal experience	228	57.00	6 th
7	Grammar is the main focus of reading comprehension	246	61.50	5 th
8	My students quote other books or reading texts.	218	54.50	8 th
9	Feedback is not important in reading comprehension	204	51.00	9 th

Table 5 above shows that majority of the teachers agreed to the fact that decoding meaning helps comprehension lesson, while they disagreed that feedback is not important in reading comprehension lesson.

Research Hypotheses

H0₁: Teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies has no significant relationship with reading comprehension lessons

Table 6: Teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies with reading comprehension lessons

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1285.797	18	71.433	3.504	.00
Within Groups					
Total	2936.9120	99			

The result presented in table 6 shows that the significant level was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis which states that teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies has no significant relationship with reading comprehension lessons is hereby rejected. This implies that teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies had a significant relationship with reading comprehension lessons.

H0₁: Gender does not have any significant relationship with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehensions

Table 7: Gender and Teachers' Evaluation and Feedback Strategies with Reading Comprehension Lessons

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
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Between Groups Groups	4.948	18	.275	1.273	.228
Within Groups	17.492	81	.216		
Total	22.440	99			

The result presented in table 7 reveals that the significant level was 0.228 which is greater than 0.05 significant levels. The hypothesis which states that gender does not have any significant relationship with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehension lesson is hereby accepted. This means that gender does not have a significant relationship with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehension lessons.

H0₃: Teachers' academic qualifications have no significant relationship with evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons

Table 8: Qualifications and Teachers' Evaluation and Feedback Strategies with Reading Comprehension Lessons

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups Groups	24.108	18	1.339	1.735	.050
Within Groups	62.532	81	.772		
Total	86.640	99			

The result presented in table 8 above shows that the significant level was 0.05 which is equal to 0.05 significant level. The hypothesis which states that teachers' academic qualifications have no significant difference with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehension lessons is hereby rejected. This means that teachers' qualifications had a significant difference with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehension lessons.

H0₄: Years of experience does not have significant difference with evaluation and feedback strategies used in reading comprehension lessons

Table 9: Years of Experience and Teachers' Evaluation and Feedback Strategies with Reading Comprehension Lessons

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents based on Year of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 5 Years	31	31.0
6 – 10 years	25	25.0
11 – 15 Years	23	23.0
16 Years and Above	21	21.0
Total	100	100.0

The result presented in table 3 above shows that 31 respondents had 0 – 5 years teaching experience, 25 had 6 – 10 years teaching experience, 23 had 11 – 15 years teaching experience, while 21 had spend 16 years and above in teaching. This means that majority of the teachers were those with 0 – 5 years teaching experience

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that respondents above 10 years of teaching experience were 44 (the largest in the group of respondents). If this group is in the majority, it goes to confirm the position of Tijani (2001) and Okon (2005) that reading comprehension challenges are caused by lack of experience. Since most of the experienced teachers are leaving the service, English comprehension lessons are now at the mercy of young, inexperienced teachers in most schools, especially public schools.

The finding also revealed that 24 out of the respondents were teachers with First Degree in English, Social Sciences and core sciences which they had acquired for a long time in the past. Ultimately, such academic stagnation and inadequate experience about feedback and evaluation strategies in reading comprehension class cannot but leave the teachers with the choice of using stereotype and obsolete teaching methods.

On the type of evaluation strategies deployed by teachers in reading comprehension lesson, majority of the teachers agreed that their students would prefer a simpler passage. Equally, many teachers agreed that their students cannot fill-in missing words if asked. This is another glaring evidence that the teachers hardly employ the use of a veritable evaluation strategy like cloze procedure as postulated by White (1985). Perhaps this is one reason learners are not properly groomed to face different evaluation strategies in public examinations, hence their performances.

Interesting, majority of the respondents agreed that decoding meaning helps comprehension lesson. Kamhi and Catts (1999) and Tunner and Cole (2001) both subscribed to decoding meaning as a veritable feedback strategy in reading comprehension class. In as much as it is good, it cannot be over-used at the expense of other feedback strategies. Kamhi and Catts (1999) are of the opinion that an integrated model of instruction assists learners to simultaneously use and integrate lower level skills like word recognition with higher level linguistics like phonemic awareness, word formation rules and sentence structure. Thus, teachers are not using or exploring the feedback and evaluation strategies central to a successful reading comprehension lesson known to them.

Further, the result of classroom observation reported in chapter four revealed that teachers of English comprehension lessons are not doing enough to equip students for comprehension exercises. Most often, this might not be unconnected with the mammoth classroom population evident in most public schools; aside from other factors like inadequate knowledge and inadequate structure for capacity building as well as regular intervention in the training of teachers.

The result of hypothesis one shows that teachers' evaluation and feedback strategies have a significant difference with reading comprehension lessons. Gronlund (1976), Lawal (1997) and Kamhi and Catts (1999) have in their studies buttressed the inherent benefits of a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by students' evaluation; and the need for remediating reading comprehension challenges at various levels of teaching reading comprehension in schools. For this, teachers cannot but employ the use of appropriate feedback and evaluation strategies in a comprehension class. Conversely, few teachers realize this fact that they relegate it to the base thus, taking its toll on their lesson delivery and students performance in reading comprehension lesson.

On hypothesis two, the results revealed that gender had no significant difference on the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers of English comprehension lesson. Both Lawal (1991) and Abe (1991) shared this position in their studies that, gender had no significant influence on academic performance. Although, as reflected in Table 1, there are more female English

teaching reading comprehension in schools, it is not a yardstick for the type of strategies used by both male and female teachers in the classroom.

In the same vein, the results of hypothesis three points to the fact that teachers' academic qualification had no significant difference with the type of evaluation and feedback strategies they use in reading comprehension lesson. Lawal (1997) and Okon (2005) both submitted that performance is a function of individual's ability and their commitment to the lesson at hand.

The result of hypothesis four revealed that teachers had no significant difference with the evaluation and feedback strategies used by teachers in reading comprehension lessons. Though that is the result of the study, it may be arguable going by existing studies like Okon (2005) which proved that inexperienced teachers may lack the fitness and experience to handle a reading comprehension lesson as an experienced teacher will do. This of course will be a function of exposure - background and personal ability.

In all the literature reviewed in this study, the profound use of varying strategies in the evaluation and feedback of reading comprehension lessons are not only apparent but appealing. If in the course of evaluating reading comprehension teachers could endeavor to apply the use of cloze procedure, summary writing, pre-reading, probing questions, schemas, pictures and diagrams, multiple choice questions, evaluation will be well-grounded. A teacher may not need more than two or three of these strategies in a lesson.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that most teachers preferred the use of multiple choice as a strategy for evaluating comprehension passage using cloze procedure and other evaluation strategies that stimulate independent thinking in reading comprehension class.

It has also established that teachers' academic qualification is not a yardstick for the use of effective evaluation and feedback strategies in reading comprehension lesson; just like gender is

not a parameter for the use of better evaluation and feedback strategies in reading comprehension class.

The study equally established that largely owing to the poor state of infrastructure, over-crowded classrooms coupled with under-staffing and short supply of specialist to teach core subjects including English language, performance in both internal and external examinations are repeatedly poor and uninspiring.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings of the study, it is recommended that teachers of English comprehension lessons needed to be closely supported and monitored to be more dynamic and move with time in their evaluation and feedback strategies. It is also imperative that reading comprehension teachers engage students more in creative writing during comprehension lessons rather than just lifting words from a comprehension passage and using multiple choice to evaluate comprehension all the times.

There is the need for the government (federal, state and local) to rise to the challenge of inadequate number of specialists handling the teaching of English language in public schools as this would go a long way to forestall learning deficit and equip students with relevant skills to excel both in internal and external examinations. Along with this, concerted efforts of all stakeholders in education should be channeled toward provision of relevant infrastructure and instructional materials in public schools as in private schools for better results in teaching reading comprehension. Efforts should also be made to ensure that teachers keep records and track the progress of individual students in comprehension class through the use of a myriad of evaluation and feedback strategies including those identified in the existing studies reviewed in this study.

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