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TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TO POETRY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF AN EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLOR

Key Words: Poetry, Teaching, Techniques, genre, attitudes

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Abstract

Literature and Language teaching are two sides of a coin. Literature, the habitation of the genres of drama, prose and poetry however relies on language to thrive. Of the three genres in question, poetry has been blackmailed in the elementary and advanced academic circles as the most difficult. The role of the counselor cannot be overemphasized, especially in helping individuals to develop the right attitude to different professional responsibilities in the society. This observation provided a basis for examining teachers' attitude to poetry in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis and the role of the counselor. To carry out this study, questionnaire items drawn to reflect the Four-Point Likert scale types was employed to harvest the varying attitudes of Literature teachers in some selected secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. The t-test and Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) statistical methods were used in calculating the values of the responses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The results showed that there were no significant differences in teachers' attitude to poetry based on gender, length of service and educational qualification. It was concluded therefore

that the dwindling performance of students in English language, literature and other related school subjects would record a positive turn around when the specialists in Language studies and school counsellors form a consortium that would look into the attitude of teachers and students to poetry and come out with strategic policies that would not defy implementation

Introduction

In the secondary school curriculum, Literature-in-English is one of the elective subjects offered by students. It is a subject that exposes both the teachers of the subject and students to different cultures, history and societies. Owing to its rich as well as inter and intra-cultural tenets, the subject integrates teachers and students properly into both their immediate and distant vast world of reality. This exposure enables them to compare cultures and make value judgments. However, total integration of man into his society appears to be one of the goals of education in Nigeria. By society is implied the immediate community, the Nigerian society and the world (NPE, 2007).

Literature plays a very crucial role in achieving this goal because it exposes students to diverse literary experiences aimed at broadening their general knowledge. Apart from students, the teachers or lecturers of poetry as a genre of literature also exhibit very appalling attitude to the genre. This repulsion is planted in the minds of the very smart and discerning young folks who easily read their teachers and rather than understand the course would understand the fact of its difficulty.

The Federal Government of Nigeria, having envisaged the various challenges which both the teachers and students would encounter in school subjects and other aspects, endorsed the intervention of Guidance Counsellors in correcting attitudes to school subjects (National Policy on Education, 2004). It is therefore the responsibility of the counselor to ensure that teachers, right from the level of receiving training in preparation for the job and while on job, are guided to develop the right attitude to teaching every school subject. Attitudes toward poetry may develop as a reflection of individual's personality; it could generate from low self-concept and as well as poor aptitude. Whichever might be true, the management strategies are within the purview of counseling.

The client-centred approach of Carl Rogers printed out that individual's positive disposition to a particular phenomenon is determined by the type of attitude one has, which in turn is product of self concept (Lefton,

1996). Thus, the kind of attitude that teachers may have towards poetry may not be unconnected with in relation to the phenomenon (poetry). It is this knowledge that informed the intention of this study which was carried out in some selected secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis. The paper examines the attitude of teachers to poetry in secondary schools and the role of a counselor in this direction.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study is to examine both the attitudes of poetry teachers as well as their choices of techniques used in teaching poetry in Senior Secondary Schools in Ilorin, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is also aimed at finding out whether the gender, experience and qualification of the teacher has any effect on his/her attitude to teaching of poetry and finding out whether these variables determine their attitudes to the teaching of poetry. In addressing the above stated issues, the study sought to find out the role of a counselor in re-orientating these innocent teachers with a view to making a school counselor relevant in the educational system and building values in the growing generation of Nigerians.

Study Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formed to give the study a sense of direction.

- There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers to poetry in secondary schools
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers to poetry in secondary schools based on length of service
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers to poetry in secondary schools based on educational qualification.

Methodology

The main instrument used for this study is a questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire were designed by the researchers and tagged *Attitude of Teachers to Poetry Questionnaire (ATPQ)*. The validity of the instrument was decided through the efforts of test experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin while the reliability was established by using the test-retest method. After subjecting sets of the scores to the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient formula, a value of 0.73 was obtained, which suggests that the instrument is reliable. The responses on the

questionnaire were patterned in 4-point Likert Scale format in order to give the respondents freedom to express their attitude in degrees. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 150 respondents (teachers) who participated in the study while stratified sampling technique was adopted to categorise them into various groups desired. The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to test the null hypothesis formulated for the study. Equally, the frequency counts and percentage were used to analyse demographic data.

Values in Literature

The study of literature is vital. It is through the subject that students learn to examine thoughts and actions. The FRN (2004) states that the following goals can be attained through the study of literature in secondary schools:

- Catering for the different talents, opportunities and roles open to students after their secondary school education.
- Raising a generation of people who can think relatively for themselves.
- Helping students to appreciate and understand Nigerian culture as well as the world's cultural heritage
- Encouraging students to develop a desired achievement, continuous self-education and self improvement both in school and later life
- Fostering clear communication of thought and making relevant judgment (p. 10)

Literature propagates and projects the history, culture and politics of the society thereby widening the scope of experience of its audience about different people and cultures of the world (see Williams 1990, p. 266). It serves as a means of informing the society by pointing out the bad aspects of the institution of the society, so as to pave way for reformation which is the pivotal aim of education. While all genres of literature have been studied with respect to the exploration of language in literary texts, prose and drama have been the predominant forms, given their 'closeness to the everyday language experience of the people (Odebunmi 2006, p. 154)'. The different genres of literature themselves have different purposes. Poetry, the focus of this paper is an embodiment of language economy and richness. In the words of Williams (ibid) 'the main purpose for teaching poetry is to make students aware of the richness and beauty of language. Poetry is also read for the pleasure it affords, representing language at its most perfect states, spoken, written and listened to by all conditions of men in all works of life.

As expatiated in the Nigerian Policy on Education (2007) literature

is to offer a distillation of human experience. It is vital at the secondary and post-secondary school levels because it is at this formative stage of life that students learn to evaluate different modes and codes of conduct. Literature also deepens and extends their consciousness of the richness of life. Literature permeates thoughts and emotions and thus makes an impact on the reader. For example, some books shape children's thoughts while some influence their actions. In fact, some books influence the actions of children and others continue to educate them throughout life.

Literature is a product of a series of ideological phenomenon. In its attempt to correct the lapses in the society, it is often said that literature entails all printed materials that are graphically presented for reading. All disciplines or human areas of study including History, Religion, Geography, Science and Technology belong to literature as long as they are graphically presented.

Counselling is based on the assumption that no individual in any society is supernaturally endowed to be all sufficient. In the words of Idowu (2004), 'every individual ...has had, is having and will have a problem...that he alone could not solve'. Thus, a counselor helps an individual become more fully aware of himself and the ways in which he is responding to the influences in his environment. An individual is assisted to establish some personal meaning for his behavior and to develop and clarify a set of goals and values. Consequent upon this premise of the roles of the counselor, the Federal Government of Nigeria prescribed counseling service for all secondary schools in Nigeria (FRN, 2004). According to Idowu (2004), there is a close relationship between counseling activities and the instructional process because the former makes teaching activities to be more relevant and meaningful to the needs of students. By implication, counseling is for everyone including students and teachers.

Reviewing Literature

Alabi (2002) cited by Abdulsalam (2011, p. 4) describes literature as part and parcel of culture which is a dynamic process. The old and new can be rooted in the same tradition. In this respect, Olaoye (1998, p.6) believes that literature is a window on the world and through this window, the literary mind sees various problems of mankind. Ogunjimi (1994) submits that literature is a field of study that delves into imaginative creativity. This imaginative creation centres on the use of communicative devices and styles that ensure that the mind yields ideas and experiences that have been gathered from around the creative writer. Therefore, literary creativity depicts the individual man and his environment in such colours that are best suited to the world.

Over the years, it is being taught in schools that literature is divisible into three genres, which include: poetry, prose and play or drama. Of the three genres, however, poetry has been looked upon as the most complex of the various genres of literature. Students in secondary schools today seem not to understand that a good understanding and appreciation of poetry is a catalyst to intensive comprehension of not only English language and its literature, but also enhances their overall performance in all fields of learning.

Poetry is a component of literature in Africa. It is classified into two: African and non-African poetry. This classification is based on the themes of the poems and the focus. Most well-written poems are expected to carry a specific thematic preoccupation. It has been observed that reading a poem to digest its theme, style, diction, narrative techniques and overall appreciation and criticism of the poem as the case may demand may be difficult tasks to both teachers and students of literature in secondary schools. A number of reasons have been given for the dread for literary appreciation. The style, choice of words and the use of figures are few of the likely reasons.

Despite the seemingly difficult nature of poetry as a component of literature, it exposes its students to different types of culture, situations and societies. Poetry is a genre of Literature which integrates students fully to their immediate society and the world at large. It thus gives them the opportunity to decipher the good, the bad and the ugly of the societies, situations and cultures. It therefore empowers them to make value judgements. (see Abdulsalam 2011).

As documented in the Federal Government's Policy on Education (FRN 2007), one of the goals of education in Nigeria is the literary and intellectual development of the citizenry on the use of English Language as national and international language of communication. This calls for intensive development of the communicative skills of the students through the study of poetry to meet the challenges of effective communication in English language.

Poetry is a vehicle of imaginative creativity (see Ogunyemi 1972, Ogunjimi 1994, Abdulsalam 2011) among others. This imaginative creation centres on the use of communicative devices and styles that ensure that the mind yields ideas and experiences that have been gathered from around the creative writers. Poetry is classified into two parts in the course of classroom study; seen and unseen poetry. This is to explore the themes of poems and focus of the poets.

Recent development in the performance of students of Senior Secondary Schools in the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) and

the National Examinations Council (NECO) examinations is a pointer to the ugly trend in the country's education sector. Little wonder why Barrister Mrs. Sholanke, one of the honorary awardees (of Doctor of Literature, honoris causa) at the 63rd convocation ceremony of the Post-Graduate Students of the University of Ibadan advocated in her response that 'History and Literature be made compulsory in the secondary school curriculum'. The date of the event was 17th November, 2011. The likely reasons for the difficulties have been suggestively attributed to be the techniques employed in teaching poetry in secondary schools. The table below paints the actual picture of students' performance in the WASSCE.

Table 1: Performance of WASSCE Candidates in Literature- in-English

	Total Cand	A ₁	B ₂	B ₃	C ₄	C ₅	C ₆	Total Credit 1-6	D ₇	E ₈	Total Pass 7-8	F ₉
May/Jun e 2008	251,01 5	146 0.5	339 0.13	3709 1.47	2761 11.09	7091 2.83	2423 9.82	38284 15.25	3310 13.18	6442 25.66	97530 38.85	11520 45.89
2009	308,50 2	119 0.3	311 0.10	4951 1.60	6322 2.04	1141 3.70	3453 11.19	57625 18.68	4332 14.04	6569 21.29	10901 35.33	12755 41.65
2010	328,75 1	534 0.16	116 0.35	1293 3.93	1407 4.28	2221 6.75	5496 16.71	10589 32.20	6890 20.96	6188 18.82	13079 39.79	82159 24.90
2011	357,51 1	633 0.17	159 0.44	1813 5.07	1842 5.15	2827 7.90	6606 18.87	13312 37.23	7143 19.40	5865 16.40	13010 36.39	82114 22.96
2012	384,12 7	303 0.80	360 0.93	2446 6.36	2183 5.68	3263 8.49	7503 19.53	16066 41.82	7912 20.59	6149 16.00	14062 36.60	72818 18.95

Meanwhile the role of a counseling educator cannot be swept under the carpet considering the trend of failure recorded in the past six years in the WASSCE. Certain fundamental factors appear to have been vacating the literature educational scene so much that performance of students in the English language, particularly, may soon call for a complete overhauling of the educational system. Teaching of English studies may be requiring the service of a counselor who himself must have a positive attitude to the Use of English programme in schools. Of course in this study the role of counselors on the fields are investigated from their attitudes to poetry. However, the varying attitudes could be influenced by some variables.

Social Variables in Education

Certain variables feature as influences on peoples' attitudes and behaviours. The few recognized in this study serve as the basis on which teachers' attitudes could manifest. They include age, gender, experience, length of service, school type and exposure among others. On gender, opinions are divided on whether male teachers have more positive attitudes to poetry than the female teachers. The divers opinions are in support of either gender. While some research findings (Baker and Macintyre 2000) have proven that women perform better in Literature, some researchers are of the opinion that men perform better than women (Salaam, 2003, D'ailly 2002, Hassan 2003, Oyewumi 1997 and Elegbeleye 1995).

The third category of researchers is of the middle group who are of the opinion that no significant difference exists between the performance of males and females in second language acquisition (Adeniyi, 2004, Tunde-Awe, 2003, Bamidele 1998, Adebileje 1995 and Jegede 1994).

It was gathered from the literature reviewed that the school type has a significant effect on learner performance. Specifically, the proprietor of the school greatly influences the performances of the entire school. Issah (2004), Awoade (2003) and Salaam (1997) are of the opinion that private schools perform better than the public schools. Although this study investigates all the possible techniques used in teaching poetry in secondary schools, the literatures reviewed in this study have contributed immensely to the results on the attitudes of teachers to not only the techniques used in teaching Literature but also their attitudes to poetry in particular as a genre of Literature.

In view of the imminent role of a counselor, Olayinka (1972) describes counseling as the process in which one person assists the other person in a person-to-person or face-to-face encounter. This assistance may take many forms; it may be educational, vocational, social, recreational, emotional and or moral. In addition, Makinde (1985) defines counseling as an enlightened process whereby people help people by facilitating growth, development and positive change through an exercise of self understanding.

Analyses of Questionnaire

The questionnaire items consist of a Four-point Likert scale which requires responses to questions such as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 2 points and Disagree (DA) = 1 point. The questionnaires were distributed to sixty four men and eighty six women. The questionnaire on the whole has fifteen items in all.

Results

The study investigated attitude of teachers to poetry in secondary schools and the role of a counsellor. The required information was gathered from the respondents with use of questionnaire tagged, Attitude of Teachers to Poetry Questionnaire (ATPQ). The results are presented below.

Demographic Data

The first table below shows the distribution of respondents according to gender, length of service and highest educational qualification.

Table 1: Variables by Gender, Service and Qualification

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	64	42.7
Female	86	57.3
Total	150	100.0

Length of Service		
1-10 years	54	36.0
11-20 years	84	56.0
Above 20 years	12	8.0
Total	150	100.0

Higher Educational Qualification		
OND/NCE	72	48.0
HND/FIRST DEGREE	65	43.3
POSTGRADUATE	13	8.7
Total	150	100.0

The results above reveal that the number of females that participated in the study is more than those of the males. The teachers who have worked for a period of between 11 and 20 years are also more in number when compared with those of the other groups, while teachers with OND/NCE formed the highest number of respondents against those with HND/First Degree and Postgraduate.

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value of respondents on the basis of gender

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Male	64	40.92	5.75	148	-.66	1.96
Female	86	41.59	6.63			

The results on the table above revealed that the null hypothesis tested was accepted. Thus there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers to poetry. This judgement is based on the fact that the calculated t-value (-.66) is less than the critical t-value (1.96).

Table 3: ANOVA results on Attitude of respondents to Poetry based on length of service

Sources	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	Calculated f-value	Critical f-value
Btw groups	2	83.04	41.52	1.06	3.00
Within groups	147	5748.86	39.11		
Total	149	5831.89			

The results on table 3 show that the calculated F-ratio (1.06) is less than the critical F-value of (3.00). Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers to poetry in secondary schools based on length of service was acceptable.

Table 4: ANOVA results comparing respondents based on highest educational qualification

Sources	df	sum of squares	mean	calculated F	-ratio	critical F
Between grps	2	1188.85	94.43	0.99	3.00	
Within groups	147	19671.03	95.72			
Total	149	20859.88				

The results on Table 4 show that the calculated F-ratio (0.99) is less than the critical F-value of 3.00. Thus, the null hypothesis tested was accepted; there is no significant difference in the attitude of leaders to poetry on the basis of highest educational qualification.

Discussion and Implication for Counselling

Based on the results gathered from the study, it is apparent that the attitudes of both male and female teachers are similar. This agrees with the previous study of Alabi (2002) where male and female respondents expressed similar interest in learning literature in English. It is therefore important for educational counselors to organise seminars for both male and female teachers in secondary schools on the needs to develop interest in the teaching of poetry. It is equally important to organize seminars for both male and female teachers into groups where they could meet and discuss how to improve their skills in the teaching of poetry. In accordance with Client-Centred Approach, the counselor needs to emphasise on positive self-concept among the teachers so that they can build positive attitudes to poetry. The approach stated that people ignore activities (e.g. teaching a particular subject) that are inconsistent with their self-concept. Thus, the counselor should prescribe different methods that will enhance positive self-concept of the teachers especially towards teaching of poetry. Such methods may include self statement modeling, shame attacking and cognitive restructuring.

The study also revealed that variations in the length of service have no significant influence on the attitude of teachers to poetry. The findings corroborate the earlier study of Olaoye (1998). Thus, irrespective of the number of years that the teachers have been in the teaching service, their attitude to poetry is similar. By implication, the counselor working in educational institutions should bear in mind that while rendering placement service, especially on the teaching of poetry, the length of years in service would not be a significant factor to determine how well a teacher may achieve. Other factors could therefore be considered above length of service.

Furthermore, variation in the educational qualifications of secondary school teachers does not play significant role on their attitude to poetry. Thus, it is imperative to emphasise that attitude of teachers to poetry appears to be a personal factor. This is not influenced by any external force. One may expect that the views and attitudes of people differ on the basis of dissimilarity in their educational status but the present study has proved it wrong. However, Ogunjimi (1994) earlier established that the more educated an individual is, the more the knowledge and experience he or she is likely to exhibit. These attributes in turn influence his or attitude to scholarly activities such as the reading, appreciating and criticizing of poetry, the issue at hand. In order to reorder the mindset of students of literature in favour of poetry as the seemingly most difficult genre of literature, it is therefore the role of the counselor to ensure adequate orientation is given to teachers across different

educational qualifications on the importance of poetry in secondary schools. This could be done by putting in place training and retraining programmes for (especially language) teachers in secondary schools

As a matter of fact, any individual who is able to interpret any figuratively loaded poem will easily demystify the most difficult reader passages for comprehension tests. The peak of any implicature for inference is found in poetry. The counselor would achieve greater feat by forming a synergy that reflects the representation of stakeholders in the education industry, to discuss how to not only improve the teaching and learning of poetry in schools but also to make the subject interesting by ways of providing the synthesis of education and entertainment which in other words means 'edutainment'.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated what appears to be an abstraction in the field of education when considering other viable fields that can be perused for concrete results. In other words, a study of attitudes is criticized in the humanities as presenting more often, subjective standpoints and manipulated results from researchers. In this study however, the very common scientific instrument, questionnaire, was adopted and its validity was confirmed as earlier stated in the methodology section of this paper. It has been foreground that poetry cannot be overemphasized considering its influence on other aspects of the English language and literature curricular.

Nevertheless, the dwindling performance of students in English language, English literature and other related school subjects would not record a better change unless both the specialists in Languages and counseling education could form a consortium that would look into the attitude of teachers and students to poetry and come out with useful recommendations. Some specific counseling techniques were recommended to help enhance teachers' attitude to the teaching of poetry in secondary schools. These include self-statement, modeling, shame attacking and cognitive restructuring.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SEQUENCING MODES AND ATTITUDE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Key words: Instructional sequencing modes, Hearing impairment, Academic performance, Attitude, Social studies.

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Abstract

The study examined the effectiveness of instructional sequencing modes and attitude on academic performance of secondary school students with hearing impairment. A 3 x 2 factorial quasi-experimental design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling method was used in selecting 58 participants, where the experimental groups were subjected to pre- test and post- test, a group was controlled for the study. Social studies Performance Test ($r = 0.87$) and students' Attitude towards social studies Questionnaire $^{\circledR} = 0.78$ were used to collect data. Analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data. The results from the study reveal that instructional sequencing modes and attitude had significant effects on the academic performance of students with hearing impairment in social studies. Based on the outcome of the study, it is therefore recommended that instructional sequencing modes should be utilized by special educators in imparting the knowledge, and values of social studies.