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## Effects of Dialogic and Shared-Book Reading Strategies on Students' Achievement in English Language Reading Comprehension

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**Abstract:** The capacity to read and understand written material, commonly referred to as reading comprehension, is essential not only in an individual's personal life; it is a sine-qua-non for academic success in school. And in some African countries, particularly Nigeria, where the English language is the second official language, English language reading comprehension (ELRC) is the most important asset any student can possess. This is due to the fact that mastery of the various ELRC abilities improves learning of other courses that are often taught in English. What this means, therefore, is that success in other school subjects is dependent, primarily or most importantly, on proficiency in ELRC. The study employed a pretest–posttest quasi-experimental design. Ninety students from three complete classes from three government secondary schools in Ogun State's Ijebu North Local Government Area made up the sample. Purported sampling was used. Data was gathered using two measurement devices: reading comprehension achievement test consisting of 35 multiple choice comprehension questions ( $F = 0.607$ ). Reliability of the instruments gave an index of 0.70. The data obtained was analysed using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), multiple classification analysis (MCA) and Scheffé post hoc tests. The study's conclusions showed that children are exposed to dialogic and group book reading, which is both student-friendly and engaging. In light of the findings, it is recommended that dialogic and shared book reading strategies, as explored in this study, be employed as effective approaches to addressing gaps in English language reading comprehension in Nigerian senior secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Reading Comprehension, Dialogic Reading, Shared Book Reading, Effects, Students' Achievement

### Introduction

There is no gainsaying the fact that the ability to read is a very important asset in the life of an individual. This is because an individual who can read is open to and can seek information about any matter that is of interest to him/her. Suffice it to say that such an individual will not rely totally on information supplied by third parties (which may be misleading); he/she can investigate and/or corroborate any information. Reading, as noted by Radojevic (2009) is only a means, it is not an end. To put it another way, comprehension—that is, meaningfully comprehending what is being read—is the aim of reading. It is, therefore, an exercise in futility if one reads but fails to comprehend what is being read.

Against this background, therefore, reading comprehension, or the capacity to read and comprehend what is being read is not just important in the life of an individual; it is a sine-qua-non for academic success in school. In some African countries, particularly Nigeria, The most important ability a student may possess in an environment where English is both the official language and a second language (L2) is English language reading comprehension (ELRC). This is attributable to the fact that a solid command of English language reading comprehension skills facilitates the learning of other subjects that are predominantly taught in English. This implies that reading comprehension skills in the English language are crucial for success in other academic courses.

English language reading comprehension becomes considerably more important in senior secondary schools, which is our main focus in this study, than it was in the earlier

elementary levels because it forms the basis for a large amount of all learning. This is due to the fact that students in senior secondary school read to learn, as opposed to learning to read in elementary school. Therefore, students cannot attain outstanding academic growth and achievement without sufficient English language reading comprehension skills and the drive to read in order to learn.

This explains the reasons for massive failure rate recorded by senior secondary students in their final year examinations especially in English language. In fact, Nigerian examination authorities have expressed concerns about learners' performance, particularly in English, over several years. For instance, the 2018 Chief Examiners' Report from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) indicated that a large proportion of candidates demonstrated inadequate understanding of the prescribed reading comprehension and summary passages. Likewise, data from the National Examinations Council (NECO) in 2018 revealed that many candidates continued to exhibit limited awareness of essential reading comprehension skills, including those reliant on vocabulary recognition and knowledge.

This worrisome situation has led many observers to attempt a lasting solution. According to studies by Pressley (2006), Boadman, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexley, Murray and Kasanovich (2008), and Reed and Vaughn (2010), it is not that students do not read, the main problem confronting students is the problem of understanding what they have read. As a result, it is suggested that teachers focus more on the issue of English language reading comprehension. In order to improve students'

acquisition and mastery of English language reading comprehension, researchers and educators have devised and investigated a range of instructional strategies, including exit slips, semantic gradients, eclectic approaches and teaching-in-text methods, among others. Despite the useful insights provided by these methods, students are still deficient in English language reading comprehension. Hence, the need to introduce and try other methods is essential.

Students can occasionally learn more from one another than from the teacher, claim McDonough and Shaw (2003). Additionally, the social context of learning is incorporated into this teaching method (dialogic reading). People must undoubtedly cooperate in the classroom, which fundamentally means striking a balance between their personality and the dynamics of the entire group (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). Since the teacher must demonstrate the technique to the learners until they are able to do it on their own, it is ideally a cooperative setting. Yaden (1988) posits that shared reading constitutes a central instructional element within a comprehensive literacy programme. It serves as a means of teaching and modelling fluent, expressive reading, as well as demonstrating the use of effective strategies to improve comprehension and word decoding skills. Evidence from multiple studies suggests that shared reading generally contributes to higher levels of students' reading achievement.

### Objectives of the Study

To investigate the perceived effects of Dialogic and Shared Book Reading (DSBR) on students' achievement in English language reading comprehension, this study will focus on selected senior secondary schools within the Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State. Given that schools in the sampled area are not exempt from the general challenges previously identified, such as poor performance in English language reading comprehension, the primary objective of this research is to introduce DSBR strategies and evaluate their impact on students' performance.

Using Senior Secondary School II students in the Ijebu North Area of Ogun State as a case study, the principal aim of this research is to examine the effect of dialogic and shared book reading (DSBR) on Nigerian students' performance in English language reading comprehension (ELRC). More specifically, the study intends to:

1. Show how dialogic and shared book reading (DSBR) can be used to enhance/facilitate students' performance in (ELRC).
2. Make some recommendations on the need to incorporate DSBR into the teaching curriculum in senior secondary schools in Nigeria.
3. Serve as a very useful and reliable reference to stakeholders (i.e. students, teachers, educational authorities, etc) in the education sector and to also provoke further intellectual efforts on dialogic and shared book reading (DSBR) particularly and on the phenomenon of (ELRC) in Nigerian schools generally.

### Statement of the Problem

Making students comprehend written language is the aim of reading comprehension education. Proficient comprehension learners monitor their comprehension while reading and use remedial strategies, such as summarising or rereading, when comprehension falters. Additionally, by helping students make connections between new and existing knowledge, self-monitoring encourages increased learning. Nevertheless, a considerable number of adolescents experience difficulties in understanding written texts due to limited background knowledge, an inability to relate new information to existing knowledge, poor reading fluency, weaknesses in word decoding, difficulty maintaining focus on meaning during reading, inadequate use of comprehension strategies, metacognitive limitations—often reflected in a lack of awareness of their own misunderstanding—and challenges with vocabulary knowledge (Pressley, 2006; Boardman et al., 2008; Reed & Vaughn, 2010).

Gardill and Jitendra (1999) state that as students advance through the grades, their reading comprehension needs increase. They must be able to comprehend increasingly complicated and often concrete contents, which require both strong thinking abilities and the ability to apply pertinent prior information in a range of situations. Reading experts concur that helping students understand what they read can be achieved through a methodical, research-based teaching strategy that teaches the skills directly and explicitly (Almanza, 1997; Richeck, 1987).

Both teachers and students actively and continuously pursue meaning formation in the successful reading comprehension models. Regrettably, text-centred and traditional schools do not teach learners the techniques and abilities needed to understand texts (Tivnan & Hemphill, 2005).

It should be emphasised that reading comprehension is not peculiar to English language. Students' reading failure has the tendency to affect their performance in other subjects examined in English language (Komolafe & Yara, 2010). This is due to the fact that secondary school students read to learn, in contrast to elementary school students who learn to read. Given that it serves as the foundation for a significant portion of secondary school learning (Kirsch, Jong, Lafontane, McQueen, Mendelovits & Monseur, 2002), reading comprehension thus becomes more crucial in senior secondary schools than in the earlier elementary grades (Sweet & Snow, 2003).

Re-teaching comprehension in Nigeria is still thought to be as easy as giving students lots of chances to read a text and answer different questions. Hence, emphasis on comprehension sub-skills is neglected. However, studies and awareness have demonstrated that focussing on these is an essential element for effective reading comprehension instruction. Academic achievement, especially at the higher levels, depends on reading and comprehension abilities (Olaofe, 1989; Adeyanju, 1987). Given that students are expected to gain content-area knowledge, text comprehension is not only a crucial component of English performance but also a crucial "gatekeeper" competence (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

### Hypothesis

**Ho1** There is no significant main effect of treatment (dialogic and shared book reading on conventional) on students’ achievement in English language reading comprehension.

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant as it focuses on English language reading comprehension, which represents a fundamental—and arguably the most critical—component of language proficiency. This is due to the fact that without sufficient reading abilities, one cannot read efficiently, and without sufficient comprehension abilities, no one can comprehend what is being read in a meaningful way. This is due to the fact that reading is supposed to be an interactive process between the writer and the reader; if the reader is unable to completely understand what the writer intended (as well as to learn from written or printed material), the interaction cannot be meaningful.

The study is equally significant since it aims to comprehend and address reading comprehension, a significant issue that English language readers face. It has been highlighted that a significant portion of readers just read for pleasure. To put it another way, most people are unable to fully and/or meaningfully understand the messages or information that the writer is trying to convey through the print medium. The study's emphasis on second-year senior high school students is not just significant but also a positive development. This is due to the fact that it is the penultimate class before the final Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE), which is administered independently by the National Examination Council (NECO), the West African Examination (WAEC) and other authorised examination organisations in Nigeria.

That English language is a very important subject cannot be overemphasised: it is the only subject that must be passed before any candidate can be considered for admission into any tertiary institution in Nigeria. Besides, it is one of the two subjects that students fail most in Nigeria (the other being Mathematics). Therefore, conducting a research on this subject with the aim of providing useful information for stakeholders (i.e. teachers, students, and concerned educational authorities) on strategies and methods of facilitating reading comprehension, with particular focus on dialogic reading and shared book reading is not just topical but profoundly important. Suffice it to say that the study will reveal the effectiveness of teaching reading comprehension through dialogic and shared book reading thereby bringing improved performance in English reading comprehension.

Ultimately, this study goes beyond introducing English language teachers to dialogic and shared book reading as effective strategies for teaching reading comprehension and extends beyond merely contributing to the existing body of knowledge in this area. It also serves to advance scholarly engagement by encouraging further research and intellectual exploration into effective strategies and methods for teaching reading comprehension in school settings.

**Methodology**

This study employed a pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental design. A total of ninety (90) students

participated, distributed equally across three groups: Experimental Group I, which received instruction using the dialogic reading strategy (30 students); Experimental Group II, which was exposed to the shared book reading strategy (30 students); and a control group (30 students). The sample comprised forty-five (45) male and forty-five (45) female students, drawn from the nineteen (19) public secondary schools within the Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State, three public senior secondary schools were selected at random. Reliability analysis was verified using the test-retest approach, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.70. The data was analysed using multiple classification analysis, Scheffe post-hoc analysis, and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

**Findings and Discussion**

Table 1: The primary and combined impacts of gender and treatment on learners’ performance in English language reading comprehension

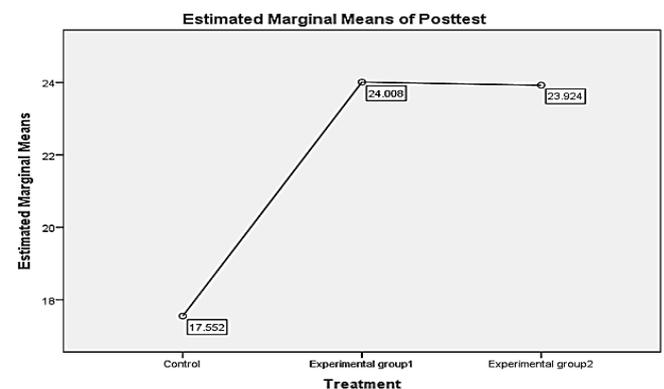
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	922.660 <sup>a</sup>	6	153.777	24.009	.000	.658
Intercept	1713.304	1	1713.304	267.501	.000	.781
Pretest	9.883	1	9.883	1.543	.218	.020
Treatment	741.753	2	370.877	57.906	.000	.607
Gender	55.226	1	55.226	8.623	.004	.103
Treatment * Gender	112.054	2	56.027	8.748	.000	.189
Error	480.364	75	6.405			
Total	39782.000	82				
Corrected Total	1403.024	81				

a. R Squared = .658 (Adjusted R Squared = .630)

Students’ performance in English Language Reading Comprehension is not significantly impacted by treatment. The F-value (57.906) in Table 1 is significant at 0.05. As a result, the treatment has a major impact on learners’ performance in English language reading comprehension. The large partial eta-squared value, indicating an effect size of 0.607, demonstrates that the treatment exerts a substantial influence. The treatment having the greatest impact is displayed in the post hoc table below.

Table 2: Tukey HSD post hoc test on the treatment

Treatment	N	Subset	
		1	2
Control	30	17.67	
Experimental group2	22		23.59
Experimental group1	30		24.17
Sig.		1.000	.686



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 15.26

The chart shows that while the marginal mean for control is 17.552, that of experimental group 2 is 23.924 and that of experimental group 1 is 24.008. Consequently, Experimental Group 1 demonstrates the greatest effect, with Experimental Group 2 following, whereas the control group records the lowest impact.

The study's findings show a substantial main influence on students' post hoc performance mean scores in reading comprehension across the three groups—Dialogic Reading, Shared Book Reading, and Control Groups. Students in the treatment groups outperformed those in the control groups by a wide margin.

This is as a result of being exposed to dialogic and shared book reading which is student-friendly and also makes learning interesting. In addition, students were made to participate actively and also comprehend the text to a reasonable extent. This correlates with the findings of Jacob (2016) which states that dialogic reading enhances students' extensive reading and also fosters achievement in comprehension.

Similarly, Aguilera (2019) claims that dialogic reading encourages students' ongoing exposure to rich literary texts and discussions that is pertinent not only for academic success but also for professional and social life. It also helps students employ a number of language and literary skills that are pertinent to the classroom. This also agrees with the findings of Pollard-Durodola, Gonzalez, and Simmons (2015) which emphasise that shared book reading integrates vocabulary instruction within the context of learning which are taught with informational text-reading content organised around various themes thereby facilitating retention of difficult words. Collaborative book reading has a good effect on young children's language development and skills, according to research by Noble, Sala, Peter, Lingwood, Rowland, Gobet and Pine (2019).

## Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrated the effectiveness of dialogic and shared book reading strategies in enhancing students' performance in English language reading comprehension. Notably, students instructed using these approaches achieved higher mean post-test scores compared to those taught through conventional methods. In other words, students exposed to dialogic and shared book reading techniques comprehend better due to the teaching-learning process associated with it; the interactive, participatory and cooperative manner with the assistance of competent peers and teachers which undoubtedly enhance better readability and comprehension of texts.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions are provided in light of the research's conclusions with a view to facilitating improved performance of students in (ELRC)

First and foremost, educators should adopt additional effective strategies for teaching English language reading comprehension within their classrooms. This is due to the clear

inadequacy of the conventional approach to teaching English language reading comprehension in contemporary classrooms. It is sufficient to say that the widespread failure in the English language SSCE has demonstrated the shortcomings and outdated nature of the traditional teaching approach. Consequently, there is a pressing need for more effective approaches that address the current learning needs of students in Nigerian senior secondary schools. This study examines dialogic and shared book reading as instructional strategies capable of bridging the gap in English language reading comprehension within this context.

Second, and related to the previous point, teachers occupy a pivotal position in the instruction and development of English language reading comprehension skills; therefore, it is imperative to equip them with adequate support to deepen their understanding of the diverse instructional approaches that can be employed to improve language teaching in general and the teaching of English reading comprehension in particular. Workshops, recurring seminars, conferences, and training courses—all of which are essential components of their ongoing professional development—can do this.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that teachers themselves should, as a matter of necessity, avail themselves of all opportunities to develop themselves academically. This position /recommendation becomes necessary due to the fact that while conducting this study, it was discovered that some teachers have not engaged themselves in any effort to meaningfully develop and improve their knowledge base thereby limiting their ability to improve on their teaching skills. Suffice it to say that teachers should inculcate the habit of being avid readers of developments in their fields (as well as other fields of human endeavour) thereby broadening their scope and instructional strategies.

Finally, stakeholders in Nigeria's educational sector—including policymakers, education ministries, school principals, and heads of departments—ought to actively encourage and facilitate the adoption of alternative, more effective instructional methods, particularly dialogic teaching and shared book reading, in the instruction of English language reading comprehension. Moreover, in efforts to enhance both the teaching and acquisition of reading comprehension skills in English, curriculum planners and educators should prioritise these innovative approaches, curriculum planners are encouraged to integrate dialogic and shared book reading strategies into curriculum design.

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