A Survey of Current Practices in the Teaching Methods of Reading Comprehension Among Junior Secondary Schools in Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

The consistent failure rate in English language by students at the Senior Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSCE) is largely traceable to the teaching methods employed by the teachers (conventional teaching method). This study explores sets out to explore the current practices adopted by English teachers in the teaching of reading comprehension. Two research objectives guided the study while two research questions were raised and answered. The population for this research comprised the entire public Upper Basic II Education Students in Lagos State. A total of 159 students were sampled using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a standardized test items titled "Students' Achievement Test on Reading Comprehension" (SATRC). The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistic means, frequency count, standard deviation and multiple Analysis of Co-Variance (MANCOVA). Results revealed that students have been taught in schools with the conventional teaching method. It also revealed that the performance of students is highly related to their acquisition of knowledge based on the teaching method (conventional teaching method) they were exposed to. It was concluded on the recommendation that government educational stakeholders should implement more result oriented teaching methods. Also,, that constant seminars/ trainings be organized for teachers towards keeping them abreast of the current teaching methods..

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Introduction.

The importance of education to the general well-being of mankind cannot be overemphasized. Education is a fundamental human right. The relationship between education and development has been established, such that education is now internationally accepted as a key development index United Nation Development Programme (2016). The perspective of education in Nigeria is wrapped in the philosophy of education as it is spelt out in the National Policy on Education. In the 6th edition of the National Policy on Education published in (2013), one of the main goals of education is the development of permanent literacy and numeracy. According to Akinkuotu and Olufowobi (2019) "literacy skills represent the secondary skills of language; hence, a person who is literate is the one who in the language he speaks, can read with understanding anything he would have understood if it had been spoken to him and can write so that it can be read and understood by another who understands the language."

Okebukola (2019) sees literacy as involving active participation at work and for leisure. Okebukola (2019) connected the concept of literacy to language where she sees language as a vehicle that helps children understand whatever knowledge is being imparted to them. No matter the type of literacy -- information literacy, technological literacy, scientific literacy, legal literacy and a gamut of others --, language is the backbone of any literacy endeavor. In many multilingual countries like Nigeria, teachers, families and government know that the way language is used in education is not working. They are aware that many children learnt very little because they do not understand the language used in teaching or reading. (Okebukola 2019). Following the result of the research conducted by Okebukola (2012) as reported in Okebukola (2019), one could say empirically that language learning is not the major challenge of these learners; rather comprehension, which forms the basis of any learning process.

The task then lies on teachers to teach students how to understand what is being taught.

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2013) acknowledges the value of language in education and encourages the use of both English and indigenous languages. The language policy in Nigeria encourages multilingualism. Since its imposition on Nigerians by the colonial administration edict, English language has held a dominating place as the official language and in certification (Owolabi & Okebukola, 2009). The policy states that local languages are utilized as the Language of Instruction (LOI) in the first three years of primary school (primary 1-3), while English is taught as a subject (i.e English Language Teaching -ELT). English language becomes the LOI throughout the remaining years of the child's education, that is, from primary 4 onwards, and the local language is taught as a subject (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), 2013).

This implies that at the secondary school level, students should be able to understand written or printed symbols, receive, recognize, retain, recall or remember ideas or information from any piece of writing. In other words, they must have attained considerably high level of competence in reading to thrive academically both in language arts and content-area instruction that is, other subjects in the school curricula (Muhid et al., 2020). Reading competence is the most important instrument for mastering any subject. It is the ability or potential to read, and it suggests that a student has the aptitude and capacity to decode or make logical sense of written content (Dickens & Meisinger, 2017). Reading competence is therefore a quality that secondary school students must possess in order to operate and succeed academically in all subjects. A good reading competence will make secondary school students to stand at an advantage position to be motivated to read and

learn because they are making meanings from the printed text in Economics subject (Gbadegesin, 2019; Okebukola et al., 2013).

English language is considered a second language and the language of instruction for the purpose of formal dealings. It is compulsory after the first three years of a child's education with learners' prior knowledge of their indigenous languages. Okebukola (2019) puts it that "the teaching of English language in Nigeria is more important because performance of students in other subjects is based on their performance in the English. She puts it further that a credit passes in English language is compulsory for students to be admitted to the higher institution and lectures are delivered in the English language. However, the rate of success in the final examinations such as West African Senior Secondary Examination (WASSCE) is quite low and alarmingly calls for serious concern considering different personal and government intervention in this regards in years past and till present through organized conferences and seminars. For example, the percentage of students that scored credit passes in five subjects including English and mathematic at the WASSCE May/June from 2010--2023 examinations often range between 20.4% -79.81% as shown in the table below.

S/N	Year and month of exam	Percentage of candidates who passed with five credits and above including mathematics and English Language.
1	May/ June 2010	20.4%
2	May/ June 2011	36.07%
3	May/ June 2012	37.97%
4	May/ June 2013	29.17%
5	May/ June 2014	29.27%
6	May/ June 2015	38.58%
7	May/ June 2016	53.65%
8	May/ June 2017	46%
9	May/ June 2018	52.58%
10	May/ June 2019	69.81%
11	May/ June 2020	60.55%
12	May/ June. 2021	81.74%
13	May/ June 2022	76.36%
14	May/June 2023	79.81%

Source: West African Examination Council (2024)

In spite of the fact that the English language is dominant as an official language and medium of instruction in the educational system, evidence abound that performance of students in their final external examination (the West Africa Senior Secondary Examination) has shown a sharp fluctuating trend in English language including other major subjects. This claim is empirically established with the statistical data as presented above where student' performance remain largely unsatisfactory. The fluctuating trend has been attributed among other things to students' lack of competence in reading and writing (Okebukola, 1994). According to Clement (2019), "the result of WASSCE in English revealed that students failed English relatively on a large scale".

The reasons for the failure according to the chief examiners' report (2022) include, Ignorance of the features of essay and letter writing, Improper use of punctuation marks, Insufficient use of capital

letters, Wrong use of different words and tenses, Inability to restate the main ideas in a passage, Inability to identify the different parts of speech, Wrong use of concord, Inappropriate use of tenses, Failure to identify difference between phrases and sentences, Poor knowledge of grammar and, Illogical conclusion.

As stated in the English Chief Examiners' Report (2022), despite the fact that the standard of the paper was at par with those of previous years…, the questions were unambiguous and were within the scope of the syllabus, candidates' weakness identified and highlighted. These weaknesses identified include, Poor paragraphing' Poor expression as a result of wrong concord, poor punctuation marks….Failure to grasp the requirements and demands of some questions attempted. Indiscriminate lifting of portions of set passages as answers, Inability to state meaning of expressions. Etc.

The Chief Examiners' Report (2022) further suggested remedies for the candidates and teachers. Some of the suggestions for candidates include that candidates should: endeavor to improve on their vocabulary and grammar of the English language through extensive reading. And also, take time to understand the exact demand of questions before attempting to answer them.
For teachers, some of the suggested remedies include that teachers should spend more time in teaching comprehension skill and summary skill. From the reports highlighted above, it becomes pertinent that the teaching of reading comprehension becomes paramount for teachers of English language if performance of students must improve.

According to Okueso and Oduneye (2021) reporting Chen, Teng, Lee and Kinshuk, (2011) Reading activity is the foundation of acquiring new knowledge and gaining new skills, whereas comprehension is the "heart" of reading. Okueso

and Oduneye (2021) opined further that although comprehension is desirable, achieving it proves challenging to English Language teachers. It is important to note that comprehension is the end product of every reading activity which in itself is the major aspect of reading proficiency. As a matter of fact, there are three levels of reading comprehension: the literal reading comprehension, the inferential reading comprehension and the evaluative/judgmental reading comprehension.

Okebukola (2018) unravels opinions on these levels of reading comprehension noting that literal reading comprehension is also called factual level which refers to the understanding of the printed words on the reading page. Explaining further, Apari (2018) puts it that both knowledge and comprehension are involved in this stage. At the literal level of comprehension, the reader is expected to recall specific facts, details and ideas from the passage. This implies that understanding at this level is text dependent. At the literal comprehension level, the reader must have a basic understanding of the facts, details and ideas in every sentence and paragraph. More so, the reader may demonstrate such by giving examples or by paraphrasing the information.

The inferential reading comprehension, as explained by Okebukola (2018) is also known as the interpretative comprehension level of reading comprehension in that the reader comprehends the meaning that is not expressed in so many words in the passage. This involves a higher level of thinking than literal comprehension because the reader is required to use the information given in the passage in combination with his or her own relevant background of experiences and get meanings that are not directly stated but are implied. To do this, the reader needs to "read between the lines" or receives messages deeper than those at the surface level.

The third level of the reading comprehension is the evaluative reading comprehension which involves reading beyond the lines. Okebukola (2018) refers to this level of reading as the most complex level. According to her, the level requires that during the process of recovering meaning from the text, the reader must utilize the literal meanings and the inferential meanings in the text and relate them to the concepts beyond what is given in the passage. Since reading holds the key to educational attainment and success in school, teachers need to find ways to make its teaching insightful, interesting, and productive. If this is done, students will most likely develop proficiency and interest in reading on their own. Interest therefore, is an important factor in teaching and learning.

Rotgans and Schmidt (2018) considered interest as one of the qualities that students bring into their learning tasks. Interest in learning or in school subjects also relates to students' academic achievement (Kpolovie, Okoto, & Joe, 2014; von Maurice, Dörfler & Artelt,(2014). The more interested students are in a subject, the more likely they will spend time in learning it. Therefore, if students find reading interesting rather than boring, they will spend more time reading. However, because reading is not an easy task, it is the duty of the teachers to find ways of teaching it to boost students' interest. This can be achieved if they diversify their methods of teaching reading comprehension. Rotgans and Schmidt (2018) believed that when students lack interest in a particular school subject, the teacher can use instructional intervention to offset their lack of individual interest and consequently rouse their situational interest.

The teaching of how to read in English is a dual activity. It involves the cognitive knowledge and the pedagogical competence of the teacher. A teacher may be good at the content area of what to teach but adopting a wrong teaching method may end up jeopardizing the primary objective of teaching a learner how to read. Amidst the teaching methodologies available to teachers in the classroom include the traditional teaching method otherwise known as the lecture method or the expository teaching method or Conventional Teaching Method. Muodumogu (2012) posited that most teachers of reading employ the conventional teaching method in the teaching of reading in the classroom and it remains a common teaching method among Nigerian teachers. This method of teaching, according to Muodumogu (2012) de-emphasizes the concept of reading as an interactive, purposeful, and constructive process of meaning-making. If students are to be helped to develop an enduring interest in reading, there is a need to find alternative ways to enhance teachers' pedagogical practices. Thus, Enighe and Afangideh (2018) recommended that teachers should diversify their instructional strategies when teaching reading to help learners develop reading proficiency and that they need to move from the conventional method of teaching reading.

Jimoh (2014) posits that students' academic achievement in reading comprehension could be met if instructional strategies that emphasize students' active involvement and give opportunities to communicate, interact, reason and develop self-confidence to solve academic problems as they are required, are put in place. This situation leads to the intensive search for more effective instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension as an aspect of language studies.

Research Question
What teaching methods do teachers employ currently in the teaching of reading comprehension at all levels?

Review of Literature
According to Kolb (1974) experience learning is a process by which knowledge results from different combinations of grasping and transforming

experiences. We grasp experience in two different ways: through concrete and abstract conceptualization. People can then transform experience in two ways: through reflective observation or active experimentation and this process is often portrayed as a cycle. Kolb's experiential learning theory works on two levels: a four-stage cycle of learning and four separate learning styles. Much of Kolb's theory is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes. Kolb states that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations. In Kolb's theory, the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences. "Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984)

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb's experiential learning style theory is typically represented by a four-stage learning cycle in which the learner 'touches all the bases:
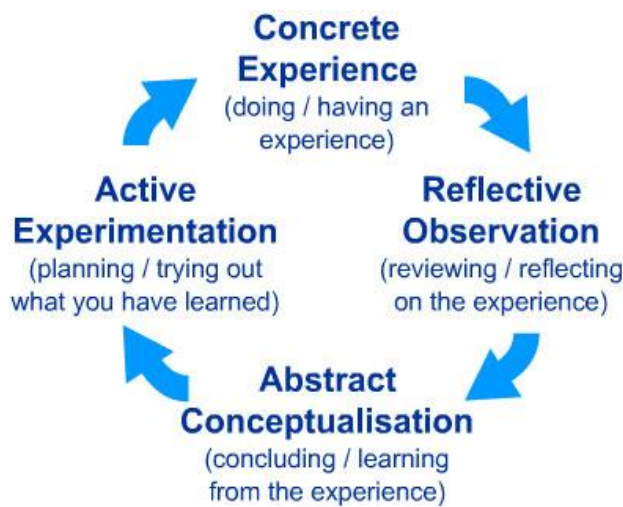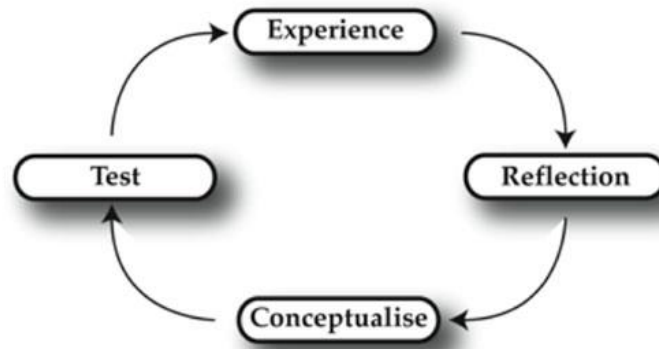

Kolb's four stage learning cycle (Source: Kolb, 1984).

1. Concrete Experience - a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience.
2. Reflective Observation of the new experience: Of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.
3. Abstract Conceptualization: Reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept.
4. Active Experimentation: The learner applies them to the world around them to see what results.

Effective learning takes place when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages of:

(1) having a concrete experience followed by

(2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to

(3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then

(4) used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

Figure 2.2: Kolb effective learning through a four-cycle stage (source: Kolb, 1974)

Kolb (1974) views learning as an integrated process with each stage being mutually supportive of and feeding into the next. It is possible to enter the cycle at any stage and follow it through its logical sequence. However, effective learning only occurs when a learner can execute all four stages of the model. Therefore, no one stage of the cycle is effective as a learning procedure on its own.

Educational Implications

Both Kolb's (1984) learning stages and cycle could be used by teachers to critically evaluate the learning provision typically available to students, and to develop more appropriate learning opportunities. Educators should ensure that activities are designed and carried out in ways that offer each learner the chance to engage in the manner that suits them best. In addition, individuals can be helped to learn more effectively by the identification of their lesser preferred learning styles and the strengthening of these through the application of the experiential learning cycle. Ideally, activities and material should be developed in a way that draw on abilities from each stage of the experiential learning cycle and take the students through the whole process in sequence.

Relevance of Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory encourages and supports learning through experience and the learner's internal cognitive processes. It is more specifically on 'learning through reflection on doing' not only that, Kolb and Fry (1975) made it known that adult learn best through active participation and reflection.

1. Experiential learning can be very powerful because students have the life experience and cognitively ability to reflect, develop new ideas, and take positive action. It provides students with the real-world experience, the need to place their new ideas about how to implement their skills especially when real-world skills are taught in a classroom context.

2. Experiential learning is participative, interactive and applied. It allows contact with the environment and exposure to processes that are highly valuable and uncertain. It involves the whole person

3. Experiential learning experiences help to complete students' preparation for their chosen careers, which reinforce course content and theory. Students learn through students–centered rather than instructor-centered experiences by doing, discovering, reflecting and applying.

4. Through experiential learning, students develop communication skills, self-confidence and gain decision-making skills by responding to and solving real world problems together with their mates.

5. Experiential learning theory enables the teachers to critically evaluate the learning provision typically evaluable to students and to

develop more appropriate learning opportunities.

On the basis of the relevance highlighted above, this study has tapped its direct link from Kolb's Experiential theory upon which it succinctly dwells. The theory itself depicts the involvements of learners in getting a task done. This is in consonance with Muodumogu (2012) who de-emphasizes the concept of reading as an interactive, purposeful, and constructive process of meaning-making. If students are to be helped to develop an enduring interest in reading, there is a need to find alternative ways to enhance teachers' pedagogical practices. And also, the claims of Enighe and Afangideh (2018) who both recommended that teachers should diversify their instructional strategies when teaching reading to help learners develop reading proficiency and that they need to move from the conventional method of teaching reading.

Methodology
The study adopted pre-test, post-test, control group and quasi experimental research design. All Junior Secondary School students of English language formed the population of the study while 159 respondents from six schools in three selected districts (Districts I, V and VI) formed the sample and sampling techniques. It also adopted three research assistants. The instrument adopted was validated by experts in the relevant field who tested the consistency of the test items.

Results and Discussions.
Research Question: What teaching methods do teachers employ currently in the teaching of reading comprehension at all levels?

To answer this research question, the data collected from the field were subjected to descriptive statistics of means, frequency counts and standard deviation. The result of the descriptive statistics of means, frequency counts and standard deviation is presented in table below.

Table: Perceptions of Students on Reading Comprehension on the Basis of Teaching Methods

Treatment	SD, (%)	D, (%)	A, (%)	SA, (%)	Total, (%)
Think-Share-Pair Method	5, (3.1)	47, (29.6)	77, (48.4)	30, (18.9)	159, (100)
Conventional Method	19, (11.9)	0, (0)	135, (84.9)	5, (3.2)	159, (100)

Table 1 reveals that 135 students representing 84.9% perceived conventional method as the best, while the other method (Think-Share-Pair) is perceived by 77 (48.4%) students next to the conventional method.

Discussions.
The study examined a survey of current practices in the teaching methods of reading comprehension among the junior secondary school student in Lagos State.

From the descriptive survey, when answering the research questions, it was discovered under the research question as shown in table above that the students perceived conventional method to be the most current teaching method in the teaching of the reading comprehension among all other methods in Lagos Education Districts I, V and VI. The descriptive statistical means, frequency counts and

standard deviation was performed to test the raised question. The implication of the result generated on the basis of the statistical tools used is that students were more conversant with the conventional method in the learning of the oral comprehension. Noticing specifically a section in a page picked where the frequency count and percentage of the responses of the participant result to 135(84.9%) and 5(3.2%) for the conventional teaching method, 130 (81.8%) and 7 (4.4%).

These findings are consistent with the statement of Adkins (2005) that students develop positive attitudes toward learning as result of learning the strategies. When students are explicitly guided to these strategies before reading, they are equipped with tools to navigate the text with meaning, thus, reducing the cognitive load of the text (Chou & Chan, 2016). Moreover, RT strategies are considered comprehension fostering and monitoring fostering. Therefore, when students become more controlling of the process and self, their perception of their learning enhances and they develop more positive attitudes. Adkins (2005) was in favour of teaching RT as it promotes self-regulation through the natural dialogue in practicing summarizing, predicting or questioning. In this study, clarifying was found the most beneficial strategy for fostering understanding and summarising was found difficult strategy to practice. This finding coincides with the results of many researches 135 in strategy teaching field. For instance, this was consistence with Lestari (2016) who concluded that clarifying provides learners with opportunities to interact and construct the meaning cooperatively.

Which more, clarifying provides other peers help in making logical inferences, finding the meaning of difficult words and explaining the difficult ideas. That may create an encouraging environment especially for the poor readers. When it comes to summarising or retelling the idea, students are challenged in their vocabulary store and their ability to write coherent paragraph. Summarising is considered challenging to poor readers, regardless to the teaching method implemented. This was also fostered by the findings of Murray (2010) who stated that students' reading achievement affected their ability to determine the main idea. The high-level readers were significantly found stronger in identifying the main idea in a reading. In contrast, low-level readers are stronger in problem identification than the high-level readers. Students of Komariah et.al (2015) preferred predicting and questioning. Yet, summarizing was found challenging to them. Questioning according to Ciullo & Billingsley (2013) is a fundamental strategy of comprehension monitoring, keeping students on task and increasing the chances of correct responses

The result of the present study also revealed same. Although, while the study of Ginga (2019) rated reciprocal teaching method as the best and followed by the think-pair-share, the outcome of the present study shows that the think-pair-share rates as the best teaching method. The study however sees the conventional teaching method as being the less appreciable when compared with the think-pair-share. On the basis of the result shown, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference the experimental variable (think-pair-share teaching methods) and control variable (conventional teaching) on reading comprehension in English of junior secondary school students as measured at literal, inferential and evaluative levels is therefore rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study explored a survey of current practices of teaching methods on reading comprehension among the junior secondary school students. From the analysis of the gathered data and the results obtained from the study, it could be concluded that Think-Pair-Share is more effective in achieving instructional objectives in reading comprehension of the English language.

On the basis of the findings from the study, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Teachers should try to improve themselves on more dynamic and result oriented teaching methods so as to ascertain improvement in the learners.

2. Teachers are encouraged to build the learners to having self-realization acumen. This will help the learners to think independently and come up with refined ideas during classroom experience.

3. Teachers are to foster the concept of deep learning that encourages the understanding of key concepts in students.

It is also recommended that:

4. School administrators and education managers should encourage teachers to use relevant teaching methods that can accommodate speedy learning in students.

5. School administrators and education managers should organized trainings and seminars for teachers so as to keep them abreast of the current teaching methods.

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