



Effects of Higher Order Thinking Prediction Strategy of Probable Passage (PP) on Performance in the Content Skill of Secondary School Students' Essay Writing in Kano Municipal, Kano State

¹Sunusi Ibrahim Fagge ²Mairo Yahaya Abdullahi, ¹Hasiya Abubakar Babandi

¹Department of English,
Saadatu Rimi College of Education Kano State.

²Department of English,
Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State.

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find out the Effects of Higher Order Thinking Prediction Strategy of Probable Passage (PP) on Performance in The Content Skill of Secondary School Students' Essay Writing in Kano Municipal, Kano State. The study employed the quasi experimental non randomized research design. The population of the study was 237 SSIII students in the study area. The sample size of the study was 140 students for both the control and experimental group. The experimental group was exposed to treatment while the control group was taught using the conventional method of teaching English. The research instrument was the Probable Passage and Dictionary Usage Achievement Test (PPDUAT). Students were taught for four weeks consecutively and data were collected using the research instrument. Data collected was analysed using mean and SD for the research question and t-test of independent sample to test the null hypothesis. Findings of the study revealed that students that the experimental group performed better than the control group. It was recommended based on the finding of the study that English teachers should adopt the use of Higher Order Thinking Prediction Strategy of the Probable Passage (PP) on Performance in The Content Skill in Essay Writing.

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INTRODUCTION

Thinking permeates the lives of human kind. There are many studies about the teaching of thinking which all suggest a direction and general guidance about how to teach students to become critical and effective thinkers. A central goal of education and learning is the acquisition of the right strategies for critical thinking. Psychologists (Dewey, 1969; Piaget, 1969- in Sadiq, 2012) have pointed out the role that higher order or critical thinking plays in child development and have recognized the value of experiences that boost a learner's cognitive structures. It is a mental faculty believed by philosophers and psychologists that makes the difference between man and beast. Education, too, is replete with thinking: we read and digest or think over and react to what is read; we write our thoughts and feelings on paper. It is widely believed that thinking can be good or bad. In the scholarly realm, thinking- despite being

unresearched enough (Hyland, 2004)- has been classified broadly into two distinct categories: lower order thinking and higher order thinking; both have their accompanying skills that date back to the Socratic days up to the days of Bloom (1956), Marzano (1998) and many more.

This paper attempts to establish whether the higher order thinking prediction strategy of Probable Passage (PP) can refine the SS III students' performance in content writing skills in written composition.

English language teachers are intuitively aware that essay writing and reading comprehension form a type of exercise that students are less confident with. There are expert forms that require critical thought, understanding, processing and refined articulation to master. Students, in most classes, take a text that they do not know too much about, listen carefully to what the teacher says about the text, add in some thoughts from fellow students, then, as Buka (2014) stated



“regurgitate this into a written form that doesn’t always marry itself to the ideas produced. And all this (regurgitation) for an audience who helped them work out what to write in the first place” This rote learning represents a poor avenue for learning and yet many essay teachers’ style of teaching reading and the written word seems to strongly encourage regurgitation of facts, beliefs, or ideas.

Researchers have complained about the inability of students to read between the lines or write essays in English language coherently; scholars like Sadiq (2012), Olaofe (2018), and Adeyanju (2016) observed that students, when given a reading text hardly criticize, evaluate or infer meaning out of the passage as evident in their poor written responses. It is believed in some quarters that secondary school students could locate information in a text and perform computations but were unskilled in the higher order skills of applying and evaluating knowledge.

Research Question

1. How does the higher order thinking prediction strategy of Probable Passage (PP) affects performance in the content skill in secondary school students’ essay writing?

Research Hypothesis

H₀ Secondary school students who are taught by higher order thinking prediction strategy of Probable Passage (PP) perform better in essay writing content skill

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prediction means making a guess about what is going to happen next in a story or what a character is going to do or think (Bailey, 2019). Effective readers according to Bailey (2019), base their predictions on clues from the story or his/her own experiences. Shaywitz (2019) avers that most typical students make predictions as they read. These comments imply that the tests to be designed by the researcher must take into consideration this important higher order thinking strategy which, according to Shaywitz, (op.cit), closely resembles the inference strategy. The researcher views good performance in this strategy equals the mastery of both higher order skills.

The importance of stating predictions in writing holds so many pedagogic advantages that include: helping students become actively involved in writing thus helping to raise their interest; helping students ask questions while they are writing; encouraging students to skim through portions of the story for better understanding and faster recall of facts stated or implied in the text; providing a way for students to monitor their understanding of the material (Shaywitz, 2019. Bailey, 2019). In teaching the written word, as pointed out by Anderson (2016), predictions come from the questions asked by the reading comprehension passage and that one reads first, in heuristic circles, before writing.

The Probable Passage strategy has been reported in many quarters as one that improves the awareness of story structure and comprehension as well as increases vocabulary mastery. Even though its exact timing differs among scholars- with Wood (1988) recommending its suitability as a pre-reading activity and Waters (2010), Gunning (2010). Madison (2010) suggesting its employment at both pre-reading and during- reading stages, the fact remains that it is a potent strategy for teaching the higher order thinking skill of prediction (Anderson, 2016. Bailey, 2019). It is widely believed to be a strategy that helps students to focus their attention to key terms and helps them make predictions about the content of a text.

The Probable Passage higher order thinking strategy, to Beers (2003), encourages the anticipation of story content through categorizing a list of keywords according to how the words are perceived to function in a story. This anticipation could be aided by the use of a template using story map terminology to prod students to use their schema for ‘narrative story structure and background knowledge of the keywords chosen for categorization’ (Waters, 2010.); students then create written predictions in the form of a main idea. This strategy affords itself to be used as a pre-reading as well as an after-reading strategy. Waters, (op cit.) to compare prior perceptions with the real text.

At the ‘Modeling’ stage, Waters (op cit.) narrated using keywords from a poem by placing a ‘transparency on the overhead and asked the students to assist me in placing the keywords in the appropriate categories of characters, setting, problem, and outcomes.’ At



the 'Guided Practice' and the modeling steps, the rest of the activity would be completed by the students while the teacher goes round the class offering help as needed by the learners.

At the application step, copies of the Probable Passage template are distributed to the class and students are given a choice in selecting lists of words to be categorized from the selected passage; titles of the passages would not be revealed until after the completion of activity. Waters (op cit.) believes that giving students a chance motivates students to complete the activity. Furthermore, suggested the following steps:

- a. Giving the choice of eight to fourteen words or phrases from the story;
- b. writing on the board the selected words or phrases that reflect the characters, setting, problems, and outcomes;
- c. selecting and writing on the board some unknown words that are crucial to the theme of the passage;
- d. dividing the class into groups of three and presenting each with a probable passage worksheet that includes boxes labeled 'Characters'; 'Setting', 'Problem', 'Outcomes' and 'Unknown words';
- e. providing lines designated for writing a prediction statement, together with the boxes;
- f. providing the 'Question' section that requires students in each group to write down what they hope to discover during the reading;
- g. working as a group, the students discuss all the words and phrases to decide which box to put each word;
- h. writing the prediction statement together with the questions;
- i. sharing the finished worksheets between the groups for sharing the results and reading aloud their gist statement;
- j. brainstorming what they want to discover as a class when reading the passage;
- k. reading the text; and

- l. comparing the Probable Passage and discussing into what categories the author would have placed the words, students can discuss how using this strategy assisted in understanding the text.

METHODOLOGY

The research was a quasi-experimental non-randomize design. The population of the study was 231 with a sample size of 75 SS III students selected randomly. Four-weeks lesson on essay content writing using the Probable Passage higher order thinking strategy was conducted using the research instrument - Probable Passage and Dictionary Usage Achievement Test (PPDUAT) for both the experimental and control group. A similar number was selected from another SS III class, in the same school, to serve as the control group. The experimental group was taught 'The use of the dictionary' for three weeks and the control group was not. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary was used; altogether, a total of twelve contact hours was used for teaching both groups in the four weeks. Twenty monosyllabic and twenty polysyllabic English verbs were selected to be looked up and used to write a five- paragraph essay about any topic of the students' choice, using the appropriate headword(s) in the dictionary. The seventy- five respondents in both the experimental and control groups were timed and instructed not to exceed a minute per each word for the thirty-five-minute duration of the test. English language classes have a thirty-five- minute duration in the secondary school selected. Data collected were analyzed using the mean and SD to answer the research question and inferential statistics using t-test of independent sample.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of the research question and the hypothesis were statistically analyzed using t-test and are presented below:

Table I: Table showing the two groups' timed performances in Writing Essay Content

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	P value	Decision
Control	75	4.65	4.65	76	3.58	0.0013	$\alpha < 0.05$
Experimental	75	6.29	2.53				

Table one revealed that the mean score of both the experimental and control groups were 4.65 and 6.29 in favour of

experimental group. The SD of both groups were 4.65 and 2.53 for the control and experimental groups indicating better outcome



in the experimental group. The DF (76) t- value was 3.58 and the p-value 0.001 was < 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The twenty monosyllabic verbs in the test are: go, went, leave, left, see, saw, see, come, came, look, looked, have, had, is, was, were, must, bring, brought, and ate. The control group's mean score of 4.650 is lower than the 6.290 mean score for the experimental group; this suggests the control group's tardiness in looking up the monosyllabic words in the dictionary and the incorrect usage of the words in the control group's essays' this resulted in wrong expressions that fail to convey the actual content of the essays. 'Saw' and 'ate' were the two monosyllabic words with the most time wasted in the dictionary search by the control group (120 seconds). The average time spent looking up the other monosyllabic words was calculated at 77 seconds. For the experimental group, an average of 55 seconds was recorded for each monosyllabic word looked up by eighteen of the respondents while two respondents spent an average of 65 seconds to find each of the twenty monosyllabic words.

The polysyllabic words tested are: arrival, departure, leisure, longevity, kingdom, monosyllable, disyllable, polysyllable, conqueror, institution, appreciate, reference, dictionary, efficiency, competence, acquisition, successful, computerize, acclimatize, xenophobia. The control group had a mean score of 4.65 which is lower than the mean score of 6.29 for the experimental group. It would be safe to suggest here that the experimental groups' familiarity with using the head word contributed to their low scores in the timed test and that the experimental group's exposures to the dictionary use facilitated their impressive performances in the test.

The role that mastery of spelling plays in the experimental group's performance could not be ruled out altogether. The dictionary use lessons emphasized fluency in knowing alphabetical arrangements of dictionary entries as well- brainstorming seed to have no significant effect on both groups' essay content.

RECOMMENDATION

To use this method in the class, it is advised that students be divided into groups of

five students each as this would ensure more participation by the group members. Brainstorming should be kept to the barest minimum as most learners in this study failed to connect words with their contextual or collocative meaning.

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