



Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles as Correlates of Achievement in Reading in Secondary Schools in Ido LGA, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined teachers' qualification and questioning style as determinants of senior secondary students' achievement in reading comprehension in Ido LGA, Nigeria. Studies have shown that several teacher-related factors, especially subject mastery, experience, qualification, and questioning styles contribute to students' learning outcomes in ESL classrooms. Hence, there is the need to conduct this study. The study adopted a correlational type of descriptive research design. Four research questions were raised and 20 English language teachers were randomly selected to participate in this study. Two research instruments were used: Teachers' Questionnaire on Pedagogical Factors in Teaching (TQPFIT) ($r = 0.74$) and Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT) ($r = 0.71$) were used for data collection. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between the independent variables and students' achievement in reading comprehension. Also, there were no relative and composite contribution of teachers' qualification and questioning styles to students' achievement in reading comprehension. However, questioning styles predicted students' achievement higher than teachers' qualification. Based on these findings, it was recommended that teachers should develop and adopt quality questioning styles during lesson delivery to stimulate learners' interest, engage them in the learning task, and improve students' achievement.

Key words: Teachers' qualification; Questioning styles; Reading; Achievement; English language

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INTRODUCTION

The English language plays different roles in Nigeria: the first official language, language of instruction in schools, law, mass media, politics and so on. English language is the official language of administration, education and business in a multilingual setting like Nigeria (Olagbaju, 2009). Apart from its role as the language of instruction within the school system from the fourth year of primary education, the English language is also considered as one of the core subjects in the Nigerian educational system. Therefore, a minimum of a credit pass in English is a strong requirement for admission into any of the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria.

The English language is indispensable to education in Nigeria, and this is underlined by the teaching and testing of the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in the Nigerian school system. In spite of the importance of English language to students' academic advancement in Nigeria, many students still find the language difficult as attested to by mass failure usually recorded in the subject, especially in the public examinations. Poor performance in English language at both internal and external examinations is a confirmation that most students find the subject very difficult to learn.

Other scholars (Atanda & Jaiyeoba, 2011; Olagbaju & Jimoh, 2020) have attributed students' poor performance in English language to the poor knowledge and anxiety in the learning of the four language skills - speaking, listening, writing and reading - which are taught and tested as part of English language curriculum in Nigerian

schools. Of all the language skills, the reading skill has been singled out as the foundation and most crucial factor in students' achievement because it is an indispensable skill for general literacy. Reading is central to access, discovery and accumulation of knowledge, and academic success in any formal education setting.

The importance of reading as a language skill notwithstanding, students' achievement in this aspect of English language has been particularly poor. For example, the WAEC Chief Examiner's Report (2020) identified students' inability to read and comprehend the comprehension passage(s) effectively as one of the factors responsible for poor performance in this aspect of English language. Several factors have been attributed to poor performance of students in reading. These factors include poor knowledge of vocabulary and punctuations, teachers' incompetence and other dynamics such as questioning, students' participation, quality of students' interaction with the learning object/material in the process of lesson delivery such wrong choice of instructional strategies in teaching the different language skills. Other problems associated with reading among students include their socio-economic background, and teacher-related factors such as teaching styles, teachers' subject mastery, experience, qualification and questioning styles.

Reading entails the ability to decode, extract, comprehend or retrieve information from written texts. The goal of reading is comprehension of the text, that is, the ability to make meaning out of a written text. Reading comprehension is tested in the English language Paper I at both West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) - conducted examinations and it has been described as one of the problem areas for students in the English language examinations (Adebisi, 2012; Olagbaju & Babalola, 2020). Therefore, language teachers need to ensure that reading is properly taught in schools. Adebisi (2012) submitted that a teacher's instructional delivery is very essential because it plays a vital role in advancing students' learning outcomes in reading. For example, qualified teachers who are highly skilled at using questions during the course of instruction are capable of improving students' achievement in and attitude to reading comprehension.

Teachers' qualification refers to the level of education of the teacher or the size of knowledge of the subject matter that a teacher has acquired in terms of certificates, awards or other educational achievements. Questioning skills have been identified as an integral aspect of quality teaching because teachers with effective questioning styles will be able to effectively manage the classroom, motivate learning, involve learners and elicit feedback during the process of instruction (Olagbaju, 2020). Therefore, there is need for effective and active teaching of reading in English language classrooms by teachers who are qualified and can adequately deploy questioning

to facilitate summative and formative evaluation and improve students' learning experience.

Olagbaju & Ayedun (2021) averred during contact sessions in the classroom, the teacher often directs, coordinates or facilitates all the learning activities in the class. Studies have established that no student or nation can perform beyond the quality of the teachers within the system. Bangbade (2004) reported that students with teachers that possess poor subject mastery, poor communication ability, emotional instability, and inability to properly organize instruction do not perform like others whose teachers possess these attributes. In spite of these findings, students' achievement in reading comprehension has not improved significantly. This could be because most teachers emphasize the reading of the text during the process of instruction without giving much attention to the construction of comprehension or the analysis of the passage through thorough and systematic questioning.

In addition, teachers' qualification has been found to largely contribute to the quality of their lesson delivery. Highly qualified teachers are often knowledgeable with regards to methodology, subject mastery, and classroom management. Fakeye and Ayede (2013) reported that teachers' quality has significant effects on the students' academic achievement in English language. Findings of several studies showed that there is a positive relationship between teachers' qualification and students' achievement in learning. Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) reported that there is a significant relationship between students' perception of teachers' knowledge of subject matter and students' academic performance. The relationship between teachers' qualification and students' achievement in reading comprehension has not received enough research attention in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. Therefore, this study examined the relationship between teachers' qualification and students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Questioning styles, on the other hand, refer to the nature and manner an individual asks questions in the course of lesson. Questioning is a viable skill and an integral aspect of teaching that allows teachers to involve students, elicit responses, and ascertain students' current or previous knowledge. It is an important aspect of classroom interaction capable of improving students' level of participation during the process of instruction. Questioning skills are pivotal to effectiveness in teaching and the formative cum summative evaluation of what has been taught (Olagbaju, 2020). Questions are often engaged during pedagogy to enquire, develop and motivate students' interest to become actively involved in lessons, evaluating students' preparation and check on homework or class work completion, developing critical thinking skills and inquiring attitudes. Others include reviewing, summarizing previous lessons, and assessing achievement of instructional goals and objectives and stimulating students to pursue knowledge on their own.

In modern pedagogical processes, questioning has become a two-way tool and an active exchange of information or ideas to unravel the mystery surrounding the concept to be learned. It is a mutual negotiation of meaning through probing, curiosity, and systematic inquiry. Questioning is part and parcel of the teaching and learning process because it provides real-time corrective feedback to both the teacher and learners. Scholars have investigated the relationship teachers' questioning styles and students' achievement in different subject areas. Fakeye and Ayede (2013) reported a strong relationship between teachers' questioning styles and students' achievement. However, the relationship between teachers' questioning styles and students' achievement in reading comprehension has not been investigated in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State and this is one of the reasons that necessitated this study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PERSONALITY TRAIT THEORY

Personality trait theory started with the research work of Gordon Allport (1897-1967) who is often called the father of personality theory. This theory has its root in the field of psychology and the trait theorists believe in the individuality and uniqueness of the person and that people have consistent personalities. Trait theorists are primarily interested in the measurement of traits which they defined as habitual patterns of behaviour, thought, and emotion. The combination and interaction of various traits forms a personality that is unique to each individual. Trait theory is focused on identifying and measuring these individual personality characteristics. This study focuses on trait; Gordon Allport (1937) was the first trait theorist to raise an issue that began a long debate within personality theory. Personality traits are expressed in individual's characteristics and some of these are reflected in the pedagogical factors such as subject mastery, instructional organisation, questioning behaviour and assessment practices, which can predict certain learning outcomes. Personality traits are capable of enhancing or hindering teachers' effectiveness in the use of instructional strategies. With reference to this study, a teacher's personality traits could influence their questioning styles because all forms of activities during teaching are influenced by the characteristics and attributes that are peculiar to the teacher.

STUDIES IN TEACHERS' QUALIFICATION, QUESTIONING STYLES, AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

The success of any teaching and learning process among other things depends on the effectiveness and efficiency

of the teachers. Olagbaju (2020) opined that effective teaching involves effective planning, creativity, and the stimulation of students' interests in the object of learning. Duyilemi and Duyilemi (2002) averred that no country can perform beyond the quality of her teachers. When a nation has high number of qualified and trained teachers within the system of education, the quality of instruction in school will be high, and this will eventually lead to an improvement in students' achievement. Qualified teachers often display sound knowledge of subject mastery and teaching methodology. According to Fakeye and Ayede (2013), a teacher's knowledge of the subject matter, learners, methodology, and techniques of imparting knowledge are great attributes which have significant effects on the students' academic achievement. Fakeye (2012) conducted a study to determine teachers' qualification and subject mastery as predictors of achievement in English language and found a significant relative contribution of teachers' qualification and subject to students' achievement.

Similarly, Hariss and Sass (2008) reported that teachers' subject mastery, years of experience and qualification has a significant effect on students' achievement in English language. Other studies by Strauss and Vogt (2001) found that teachers teaching qualification and experience are strong determinants of student academic achievements. Further still, Ojo (2008) reported that teachers' qualification and experience among others affected the performance of the students in English language. They explained that, the more the teacher is qualified and experienced, the better his or her students are likely to perform. However, Makinde and Tom-Lawyer (2008) found no significant relationship between student academic achievement and teachers' qualification. Atanda and Jaiyeoba (2011) submitted that of all the factors that could be responsible for the poor performance of students in English Language, teachers' competence, and not qualification, is the most prominent.

Questions, on the other hand, are viable tools used by teachers to assess the effectiveness of their instruction and monitor students' progress during the course of the instruction. Shen and Yodkhumlue (2012) opined that the investigation on teacher's questioning styles has been an important issue in the language classroom. This is because it is evident that a question can arouse students' interest, sustain their attention or focus on task, help them to learn and think better. The relationship between teachers' questioning styles and students' achievement has been of great interest to several researchers. For example, Hu (2004) found that teachers' questioning behavior in the classroom had a significant relationship with learning outcomes in oral communication.

A study by Fakeye and Ayede (2013) determined teachers' questioning behavior and instructional organization as correlates of students' achievement in English language and the results revealed that English

language teachers questioning behavior is a mixture of display and referential questions. Wilen (1991) found that majority of teachers' questions were on the lowest cognitive level and not higher level thinking. Shen and Yodkhumlue (2012) examined the influence of teachers' questioning styles and students' critical thinking (CT) in EFL reading classroom in China and reported that the two independent variables contributed positively to students' achievement and attitude to reading in a foreign language. Their study also found that questioning built better interaction channel between the teachers and the students as the learners become active participants in the teaching and learning process. Mustapha (2012) reported that there was no relationship between teachers' questioning behavior and students' achievement in English language. However, this study did not examine the relationship between teachers' questioning styles and students' attitude to learning. In addition, Fakeye and Ayede (2013) reported that there is a strong relationship between teachers' questioning behavior and students' achievement in English Language. Questioning can be used to influence the development and guidance of the thought processes within students.

Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is important to success in any examination because students' ability to read and comprehend any given text is a requirement for academic success. Reading is not being properly taught in schools as most teachers rely on read-aloud instructional procedures and other conventional forms of instruction. Several studies have established that students' achievement in reading can be improved significantly with an improvement in the quality of teachers' instruction. However, the relationship between factors such as teachers' qualification and questioning styles and achievement in reading comprehension has not been examined. Efforts to address this problem have made researchers shift attention to teacher-related variables in classroom instruction. Although studies involving these variables report them as having significant link with academic success in general, the predictive properties of the two variables on students' achievement in reading comprehension have not been examined in any study, especially in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions formulated for this study:

- Is there any significant relationship between the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) and students' achievement in reading comprehension?
- Is there any relative contribution of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) to students' achievement in reading comprehension?

- Are there composite contributions of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) to students' achievement in reading comprehension?

- Which of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) predict students' achievement in reading comprehension more?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey research design of correlational type to determine the relationships between the independent and dependent variables in the study.

Variables of the Study: Two categories of variables were used in the study, namely: independent and dependent variables. The independent variables are teachers' qualification and questioning styles and students' achievement in reading comprehension is the dependent variable.

Population: The population of the study comprised all the Senior Secondary School Two (SSII) students in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Procedure: The participants were drawn from the public senior secondary schools in Ido LGA. Four senior secondary schools were randomly selected for the study. The study made use of intact classrooms of SSII students in the selected schools. SSII students participated in the study because the SSIII students were considered as finalists who were preparing for their external examinations, while SSI students were considered to not have received enough instruction or acquired enough mastery of the subject.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two research instruments were used in the collection of data, and these are:

Teachers' Questionnaire on Pedagogical Factors in Teaching (TQPFIT)

The instrument was self-designed to evaluate pedagogical factors in instruction in reading comprehension in the senior secondary school. It contained 20 items which covered the two variables of interest (Teachers' qualification and Questioning Styles) investigated in the study. A total of 10 items were assigned to each of Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles. TQPFIT was administered to a total of 20 English language teachers (five teachers per school) from the selected schools. The instrument contained 20 statements showing different attributes that could affect the quality and effectiveness of the teachers' instruction. The instrument was scored using a rating scale range of 4 - 1 with the items as Frequently (4), Occasionally (3), Rarely (2) and Never (1). The instrument was administered on 30 SSII students in Ido LGA who were not part of the participants of the

study, to determine the appropriateness of language and difficulty levels of each item. Some of the items were reworded while others were completely removed. The reliability of TQPFIT was determined using Cronbach Alpha with a co-efficient of 0.74. Therefore the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

Reading Comprehension Achievement Test - (RCAT)

RCAT is a past WAEC question for 2019 adopted from the section on reading passages in the students' recommended textbooks studied as part of the English language curriculum in the senior secondary school system. It was administered to test students' ability to read and comprehend. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using the test retest method, and a reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained. RCAT was scored using the following parameters:

The test was graded over 20

Question on grammatical names and function, if answered correctly, was scored 2 and 1 respectively.

Question on words to replace as used in passage, if answered correctly, was scored 1 mark each. When more than an answer is given and either of the answers was incorrect, the student was scored 0.

Any answer lifted from the passage and did not make a complete sense shall be scored 0.

Questions on the use of figurative expressions, not answered or spelt correctly, shall be scored 0.

Half mark will be deducted for every word not spelt correctly.

Table 1
Correlation of the Independent variables and Students Achievement in Reading

		Students Achievement in Reading Comprehension	Teachers' Qualification	Teachers' Questioning Style
Students achievement in reading comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	-.117	.311
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.623	.182
	N	205	20	20
Teachers' qualification	Pearson Correlation	-.117	1	-.312
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.623		.181
	N	20	20	20
Teachers' questioning style	Pearson Correlation	.311	-.312	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.182	.181	
	N	20	20	20

Table 1 shows that students' achievement in reading has a negative insignificant relationship with teachers' qualification ($r = -.117$; $p > .05$) and a positive insignificant relationship with teachers' questioning style ($r = .311$; $p > .05$). This implies that none of the two independent variables (teachers' qualification and questioning style) was significantly related to the achievement of students in reading comprehension.

Research Question 2: Are there composite contributions of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) to students' achievement in reading comprehension?

Table 2 shows that the two independent variables (teachers' qualification and questioning styles) had no significant joint contribution to students' achievement in reading comprehension ($F(2; 17) = .916$; $\text{Adj R squared} = -.009$; $p > .05$). This implies that the two independent variables, when put together, did not significantly contribute to students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher proceeded to seek and obtain the consent of the principals, teachers and SSII students of the participating schools. The teachers were informed about the purpose of the research and what was expected of them. Also, sessions were organized to give the students a brief on what they are expected to do. Administration of the questionnaire covered a period of four weeks because of the Covid-19 restrictions in most of the schools used for the study. Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT) was administered to the students while Teachers' Questionnaire on Pedagogical Factors in Teaching (TQPFIT) was administered to the English language teachers that participated in the study. The two instruments were administered to the participants in each school on the same day.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentage. Also, Linear Multiple Regression Analysis was used to find out the combined and relative contributions of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) and students' achievement in reading comprehension?

Research Question 3: Is there any relative contribution of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) to students' achievement in reading comprehension?

Table 2
Regression Analysis of the combined independent variables on students' achievement in reading comprehension

Model 1
 R = .312^a
 R Square = .097
 Adjusted R Square = -.009
 Std. Error of the Estimate = 3.50188

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	22.476	2	11.238	.916	.419b
Residual	208.474	17	12.263		
Total	230.950	19			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Questioning Style, Qualification

Table 3
Regression Analysis of the Relative Contribution to the independent variables to students' achievement in reading comprehension

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	5.699	2.576		2.213	.041
1 Qualification	-.019	.208	-.022	-.091	.928
Questioning Style	.039	.031	.304	1.255	.226

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension

Table 3 shows the relative contribution of each independent variable to students' achievement in reading comprehension, as expressed in the Standardized coefficient beta weight. The result indicates that teachers' qualification ($\beta = -.022$; $p > .05$) and questioning styles ($\beta = .304$; $p > .05$). This implies that none of the two independent variables had a significant relative contribution to students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Research Question 4: Which of the independent variables (Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles) predict students' achievement in reading comprehension more?

The result in table 3 indicates that teachers' questioning style ($\beta = .304$) had a higher relative contribution than teachers' qualification ($\beta = -.022$) because the beta weight of questioning style was greater. This implies that teachers' questioning style is the variable that could predict students' achievement in reading comprehension.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study imply that the two independent variables (teachers' qualification and questioning style) were not significantly related to the achievement of

students in reading comprehension. The result disagrees with the findings of Strauss and Vogt (2001) and Ojo (2008) that variables such as teachers' qualification and experience are strong determinants of students' achievements. Although it is logical to assume that qualified and experienced teachers are likely to inspire students' interest and improve achievement, the findings of this study showed that there are other factors apart from teachers' qualification and questioning style that can contribute to students' achievement. In contrast, the findings of the study supports Makinde and Tom-Lawyer (2008) and Adegbile and Adeyemi (2008) that there is no significant relationship between student academic achievement and teachers' qualification. The results is in line with the findings of Atanda and Jaiyeoba (2011) that other factors such as teachers' competence, and not qualification, is responsible for the poor performance of students in English Language in most schools.

The study also found that the composite contribution of the two independent variables (teachers' qualification and questioning style) did not significantly contribute to students' achievement in reading comprehension. The findings of this study is at variance with Hu (2004), Fakeye and Ayede (2013) and Olagbaju (2020) that found that teachers' questioning behavior in the classroom had a significant relationship with learning outcomes in oral communication and English language respectively. The result also disagrees with findings of similar studies by Shen and Yodkhumlue (2012) that reported a significant relationship between teachers' questioning styles and students' achievement and critical thinking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in China.

However, the findings of this study support Mustapha (2012) that there was no relationship between teachers' questioning behaviour and students' achievement in English language. The result of this study is also in support of Wilen (1991) that, more often than not, teachers' questions were on the lowest cognitive level and not higher level thinking. Therefore, such questioning styles neither stimulate students' interest nor improve their achievement. The findings of this study could be because most teachers ask questions with lower thinking order.

In addition, the study found that the two independent variables (teachers' qualification and questioning styles) had no significant relative contribution to students' achievement in reading comprehension. The findings of this study disagrees with Fakeye (2012) who carried out a study to determine teachers' qualification and subject mastery as predictors of achievement in English language and found a significant relative contribution of teachers' qualification and subject to students' achievement. The study is also at variance with the findings of similar studies (Strauss & Vogt, 2001; Hariss & Sass, 2008, Olagbaju, 2020) that teacher-related variables had a significant effect on students' achievement in English language. The study agrees with the findings of other

studies (Mustapha, 2012; Adebisi, 2012) that there are other factors within the classroom that contribute to students' achievement apart from teachers' qualification and questioning styles.

In conclusion, the findings of the study reveal that teachers' questioning style as a variable can predict students' achievement in reading comprehension. The result agrees with the findings of similar studies (Fakeye & Ayede, 2013) that there is a strong relationship between teachers' questioning behavior and students' achievement in English Language. The study also supports the findings of Olagbaju (2020) that effective and consistent questioning in the course of teaching had significant impact on students' learning outcomes in English language. The findings of this study reveal that teachers with good questioning styles are often able to provide quality formative and summative evaluation use during the process of instruction thereby improving students' achievement.

CONCLUSION

The study examined Teachers' Qualification and Questioning Styles as determinants of students' achievement in reading comprehension in Ido LGA, Nigeria. The contributions of the two independent variables of teachers' qualification and questioning styles to students' achievement in reading comprehension were examined on students' achievement. The sample size consists of 20 English language teachers randomly drawn from Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The study made use of four research questions using an ex-post-facto correlational type of descriptive research design. Two instruments were used to collect data, and the key findings of the study are many.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers' qualification and questioning styles had no significant relative and composite contribution to students' achievement in reading comprehension. Although teachers' questioning style predicted students' achievement higher than teachers' qualification, it was found that most teachers do not use questioning well enough. In conclusion, the findings established relationships between the predictor variables (teachers' qualification and questioning styles) which consequently had predictive influence on students' achievement in reading comprehension.

Implication of the study

The primary objective of the study was to examine the extent to which teachers' qualification and questioning styles predict students' achievement in reading comprehension. The two independent variables were found not to have significant relative and composite contributions to students' achievement in reading comprehension. The result also showed that teachers'

questioning style can predict students' achievement better than teachers' qualification. Therefore, the implication of the findings for teaching and learning of reading comprehension is that teachers should improve their questioning skills and vary their questioning styles in classroom instruction.

Recommendations

The influence of teachers' qualification and questioning styles has consolidated strong teaching skills gains. It is therefore recommended that:

- English language teachers should ensure that their questioning skills are updated for enhanced teaching.
- Language teachers should ensure continuous use of questioning during the process of instruction for positive reinforcement of the concepts taught and to improve students' achievement.
- Teachers should consider continuous use and practice of questioning to sustain good teaching skills.

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