

EFFECT OF INTEGRATING COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD AND MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT AND RETENTION IN POETRY IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

The 21st century better known as the technological and information age is witnessing a paradigm shift in pedagogical practices. This paper explored the effect of integrating cooperative learning method and multimedia technology on senior secondary school two students' achievement and retention in poetry in Zone C Education Zone of Benue State. Quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. It used pretest, posttest non-equivalent control group design. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to arrive at the target population during the 2021/2022 academic session. Literature-in-English (LAT) developed by the researchers was used for data collection. Three experts in the Department of Arts and Social Education and Measurement and Evaluation, Benue State University validated the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson Correlation which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.93. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that the integration of cooperative learning method and multimedia technologies significantly increased students' achievement and retention of poetry when compared to traditional lecture method. Therefore, recommendations were made such as additional time for planning lessons that integrate cooperative learning and multimedia technologies and further professional capacity building in technology use.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning, Multimedia, Integration of Technology, Poetry, Literature-in-English.

Introduction

Rapid evolution of technology and modern methods have changed language pedagogy as well as perspectives on language teaching and learning, leading to strategic changes in the literary classroom. Perhaps, the best innovation practice that English Language teachers have imbibed is integration of technologies in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms to improve and increase self-directed learning, learners' motivation, integrated language skills and self-learning environment (Durga, 2020). In the 21st century, the integration of multimedia technology and cooperative learning methods are in vogue in ELT online and offline classes.

In this study, integration of technologies in language education simply refers to the use of technology to enhance the students' learning experience. Also, technology integration in the ELT classroom denotes the enhancement of the education environment with technology (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018). So then, the use of modern technology in ELT is broadly understood to encompass an innovative application of methods, tools, materials, devices, systems and strategies which are directly relevant to ELT and lead to the achievement of the desired goals (Mofareh, 2019). One of such tools employed in this research is multimedia technology.

Multimedia technology has been advancing the development of second language learning and teaching over the past two decades (Ruofei & Di, 2021). Multimedia refers to channels, gadgets and content that uses a combination of different modes such as texts, audios, images, animations, videos, graphics and interactive content to transmit information to learners. Multimedia is a sharp contrast with media that applies only rudimentary computer displays such as text-only or traditional forms of printed or hand-produced material. Over the years, research has shown that people remember 20% of what they see, 40% of what they see and hear, but 75% of what they see, hear and do simultaneously (Krishnasamy,

2016). With multimedia, the transmission of information can be done in a more effective manner and it can also be a veritable instructional medium for delivery of learning materials and information.

Integration of multimedia presentation has made ELT a subject of research from technological point of view. Ruofei and Di (2021) reported that multimedia technology has been extensively investigated and applied as facilitative in second language education. The following are some empirical researches of multimedia technology in ELT.

In a research to determine the effects of contemporary interpretation of epic poems on the attitudes of students towards computer mind maps in Serbia, Laketa (2018) found that there was a significant differences between the mean achievement of students taught with multimedia technology compared to those taught with traditional method. More specifically, students in the experimental group (multimedia strategy) achieved higher than those in the control group (traditional lecture method). Additionally, Yi, Zhijin, Shaoying, Dandan and Jing (2021) conducted a research on the effects of emotional design on multimedia learning and appreciation of Chinese poetry. One hundred and sixty-six participants in China (14-15 years old) were randomly assigned to one of four conditions created by two factors (external emotion induction and internal colourful design). The results showed that the combination of external emotion induction and internal colourful design promoted positive emotions, retention and transfer performances of learners. These findings indicated that emotional designs in multimedia facilitated the learning performance of middle school students in Chinese poetry. No doubt, all these revealed the benefits of multimedia technology to learning.

There are many benefits of integrating multimedia technology in ELT classroom. According to Djoko, Sri and Maria (2021), one of the ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching and learning is to promote students' motivation and learning interest which can be a practical way to get them involved in the learning of the target language. Judging from these contributions of multimedia technology to ELT classroom, it can be seen that its application not only provides concrete learning experience but also helps the learners integrate the experience to real life situation. As noted earlier in this discourse, by combining technological and pedagogical knowledge, English language learners stand a chance of having a good command of the target language. One of such methods of teaching is cooperative learning method.

Cooperative learning method is an instructional method in which students work in small groups to accomplish a common learning goal under the guidance of the teacher. According to Omenka (2018), cooperative learning is a student-centred, teacher-facilitated instructional method in which a small group of students are responsible for their own learning and the learning of all group members in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal. In this method of teaching, students work in groups to complete tasks collectively towards academic goals by capitalising on one another's resource and skills (by asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work and so on).

A good number of scholarly researches, articles and studies have lauded the positive significant contributions of cooperative learning method and its effect on students' achievement and retention in second language learning and teaching (Vitalize, Fred & Bernard, 2020). For instance, Esin and Ali (2016) observed that cooperative learning method seem to significantly increase students' academic achievement, interest and retention compared to traditional lecture method. Similarly, Page (2017) established that cooperative learning activities had many functions in learning activities. For example, it gave learners a lot of chance to operate incohorts, work and discuss in groups and ensured that all team members did everything from lesson planning and solving difficult challenges together. In addition, Sharon (2018) found that learner's collaboration promoted constructiveness and inspired students to learn, unlike in competition strategies. Apart from that, meta-analytic studies conducted on cooperative learning method supports the effectiveness of the method on students' long-term achievement, motivation and retention in literary classroom (Eric, 2021). Some empirical studies on cooperative learning method indicated that it has significant effect on students' task achievement and academic achievement and retention in poetry.

For example, Vitalice (2018) conducted a study on the effects of cooperative learning approach on the students' achievement and attitude toward oral literature genres in selected secondary schools in Kisii, Kenya. The results showed that students taught with cooperative learning method had higher achievement mean scores than students taught with conventional method. Also, Omenka (2018) did a study on the effect of cooperative learning method on students' achievement and retention of poetry in senior secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The result revealed that cooperative learning method significantly increased students' academic achievement and retention of poetry when compared with the traditional lecture method. In summary, cooperative learning method increases target language uses, improves communication skills, retention of poetry, enhances academic achievement, builds confidence and stimulates learners' autonomy.

Despite the benefits and significant studies supporting the use of active learning methods in the classroom, Costouros (2020) opined that second language teachers continue to use traditional lecture method as their primary teaching method. Though statistics have shown that 75% to 95% of students who adopt modern means of learning second language learning and teaching achieve higher results in their attainment than students who were taught by traditional means (Mofareh, 2019). Hence, poor achievement and retention of Literature-in-English could be due to the instructional method used.

Literature-in-English may be defined as fictional and imaginative creative writings as well as spoken or sung texts (poetry, prose and drama) that are especially distinguished in form, expression and emotional power. According to Ighile and Nwodo (2013), Literature-in-English is an art made realizable in imaginative expression or a special use of language. Literature-in-English and language are closely related. In fact, Literature-in-English is constituted by language and it represents one of the most recurrent users of language. It helps the student develop the basic skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) (Koutsompou, 2015). More specifically, Literature-in-English furnishes the language learner with genuine, authentic samples of language and also with real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers.

In spite of the aesthetic value that Literature-in-English affords, students' achievement in the subject has been very low. Fakeye (2010) agreed that the poor achievement of students in Literature-in-English has resulted in declining enrolment in the subject because the subject has been perceived as a difficult one from which students run away. The trend of poor achievement of senior secondary school students in Literature-in-English has also been confirmed by the West African Examination Council (WAEC). The WAEC Chief Examiner's reports have consistently revealed that candidates who sit for the examinations performed poorly in poetry. At least, for a decade 2010 - 2020, candidates who sat for paper 3 of Literature-in-English have recorded low achievement in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). For example, the WAEC report of 2017 lends credence to this fact. The Chief Examiner's Report stated that the standard of the paper compared favourably with those of the previous years in both content and requirement. However, candidates achieved poorly and very much below standard. In his words, the Chief Examiner highlights candidates' poor achievement in poetry: "As usual, candidates were weak in poetry and question on style because they lack the skills of expression of thoughts and gave answers out of context" (WAEC, 2017, P. 7).

Several reasons could account for senior secondary school students' low achievement and retention in poetry. Probably, the most significant of these reasons is the use of inappropriate method of teaching poetry. Therefore, integration of multimedia technology and a modern method of teaching like cooperative learning that are learners-centred could be the way to address the poor achievement and retention of students in poetry. Apart from integrating multimedia instructional technology and cooperative learning method in ELT classroom, the researcher is also interested in studying academic achievement and retention. The low academic achievement and retention of senior secondary school students in poetry have been a source of concern to language educators about the future of language learning.

Academic achievement in poetry means performance outcomes in public examination that indicates the extent to which students in poetry have accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, especially in senior secondary schools. Students' achievement may be teacher-made test or standardised test (Nworgu, 2015). Achievement is connected to retention. A students' academic achievement in poetry is ultimately determined by the quality of poetry retention in a literary classroom. Retention and retrieval of knowledge are crucial factors in the achievement of students in a subject. Academic retention is the ability to absorb, hold or keep in memory what has been learned and hence remember or utilized the already acquired knowledge or skill over an extended period of time (Omenka, 2018).

The main theories that underpin multimedia technology instruction and cooperative learning method are: Cognitive theory of multimedia learning by Mayer Richard and Social Constructivism theory by Morton Deutsch. Cognitive theory of multimedia learning emphasises that learners attempt to build meaningful connections between words and pictures and process them actively in long-term memory. The theory is based on three assumptions: dual channels, limited capacity and active processing (Mayer, 2014). Basically, social constructivism in language learning is a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. The theory says that learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting things and reflecting on those experiences. Learning is both an individual and social process. Generally, social constructivist learning theory aims to identify how to implement learning processes in the classroom and how knowledge is co-constructed (Butler & Griffin, 2010).

Taking Mayer's and Deutsch's ideas where language is done with social interaction, multimedia technology and cooperative learning focus on language learning in natural settings through the use of interaction in pairs or/and group work. Through interactions, student can have the opportunity to exchange information and bring new idea, stimulate their imagination and creativity. It is against this background that the researchers decided to carry out a study on the effect of integrating cooperative learning and multimedia technology on secondary students' achievement and retention in poetry in Benue State. Poetry as an important genre of Literature-in-English in the senior secondary school is taught for the numerous benefits it offers language learners. However, in spite of the importance of teaching and learning poetry in schools, it is disheartening to note that students' achievement and retention in poetry have been consistently poor. Evidence abounds in research studies to point to such poor academic achievement and retention (WAEC Chief Examiner Reports, 2010 -2020). A vast majority of students find poetry difficult and complex which is reflected in the low academic achievement and retention.

The perennial and persistent poor achievement and retention of senior secondary school students in poetry was suspected to be related and attributed to the consistent use of traditional lecture method in teaching and learning poetry. The traditional lecture method involves rote learning, chalk and talk, parroting of unfamiliar ideas and regurgitation of facts and knowledge. The outcome of this mode of instructional method has not adequately improved the academic achievement and retention of students in poetry over the years. No doubt, avalanche of modern methods and technologies like cooperative learning and multimedia technology abound for integration in the Literature-in-English classroom. However, the availability of methodology and technology do not necessarily lead to integration that support students' learning. The application of modern methodology and technology in the Literature-in-English is still low. Hence, pedagogical practice must change with the times. Therefore, there is a need to integrate cooperative learning method and multimedia technology to see if they could increase academic achievement and retention of students in poetry. Research revealed that cooperative learning and multimedia instruction are popular and extensively researched methods around the globe. Yet are rarely integrated in actual inclusive poetry classroom in Nigeria.

Furthermore, a review of the literature showed that cooperative learning method and multimedia technology require a staged and sustained approach to implementation which has led to a gap between its potential and actual integration. The literature does not give much space to the actual integration of cooperation learning and multimedia technology instruction especially in Nigerian secondary schools by English Language teachers and their effects on students' academic achievement and retention in poetry classroom. This study aimed to filling this gap in the literature and practice. In view of that, the problem of this study posed as a question, is what effects do integration cooperative learning method and multimedia technology instruction have on senior secondary school students' achievement and retention on poetry in Benue State, Nigeria?

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the effect of integrating cooperative learning method and lecture method on the mean achievement scores of students taught with poetry?
2. What is the effect of integrating multimedia technology and lecture method on the mean achievement scores of students taught with poetry?
3. What is the effect of integrating cooperative learning method and lecture method on the mean retention scores of students taught with poetry?
4. What is the effect of integration multimedia technology and lecture method on the mean retention scores of students taught with poetry?

The hypotheses stated below guided the study and was tested at probability less than 0.05 level of significance.

Ho 1: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught poetry using cooperative learning method and lecture method.

Ho 2: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught poetry using multimedia technology and lecture method.

Ho 3: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students taught poetry using cooperative learning method and lecture method.

Ho 4: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students taught poetry using multimedia technology and lecture method.

Research Method

The research design was quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, pretest, posttest non-equivalent control group design was used. By this, students in the two groups— Experimental and Control, had the same pretest and posttest while treatment was applied only to the Experimental Group.

The population of the study consisted of 1545 students. There are 98 co-education senior secondary schools in Zone C Education Zone of Benue State. The entire co-education senior secondary two (SS II) students offering Literature-in-English in the 2020/2021 academic session in Zone C Education Zone of Benue State constituted the study. The choice of SS II students was to ensure that students used for the study were adequately exposed to the senior secondary school Literature-in-English curriculum especially with regard to achievement and retention of poetry to enable them attempt the Literature-in-English Achievement Test designed for the study.

Purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 150 SS II students offering Literature-in-English in four co-educational schools. The schools were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that only schools that have qualified Literature-in-English teachers and allowed the use of their students were selected. Two intact classes were used for the study since most of the schools have only two intact Literature-in-English classes.

The research instrument used for data collection was Literature-in-English Achievement Test (LAT), developed by the researchers. LAT was used for pretest, posttest and retention test. The items in the LAT were used for pretest and was reshuffled for posttest and later reshuffled and used as retention test. LAT is a four-item instrument which comprised essay questions drawn from poems. The essay test was developed from the topics in SS II current curriculum and scheme of work under African and non-African poetry. Total mark was 40 and each item in the instrument carried equal marks; while the lowest mark was 0.

The LAT was subjected to both face and content validation. The research instrument was validated by three experts in Language Education and Measurement and Evaluation, Benue State University, Makurdi. The instrument was validated in terms of scope of coverage, clarity of the questions asked and appropriateness of the questions to the students' level of understanding. Some useful comments were made by the validators which formed the bases for corrections of the final instrument.

The instrument was trial tested for two weeks among 44 SS II students offering Literature-in-English from two different co-educational secondary schools with similar characteristics to the schools that participated in the main study. Pearson Correlation was used to analyse the scores of students which yielded a reliability of 0.93 and 0.93 alpha coefficient for the pretest and posttest respectively which is considered as good internal consistency. The research questions of this study were answered using means scores and standard deviation.

Table 1: Mean (x) and Standard Deviation (SD) Achievement Scores of Students Taught Using Cooperative Learning Method and Traditional Lecture Method

Method	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain Score
		X1	SD1	X2	SD2	
Cooperative	87	34.20	20.36	54.95	24.02	20.75
Traditional	103	29.50	17.05	41.85	19.10	12.35

The data on cooperative learning and traditional lecture method in Table 1 revealed that the gain score for students taught using cooperative learning was 20.75 while that of students taught with traditional lecture method was 12.35. Students taught poetry using cooperative learning, therefore, performed better than students taught with traditional learning method.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement Scores of Students Taught Using Multimedia Technology and Traditional Lecture Method.

Method	N	Pretest		Posttest		Gain Score
Multimedia	87	36.22	23.21	60.21	26.03	23.45
Traditional	104	27.40	16.07	42.45	18.11	13.25

The data on multimedia technology and traditional lecture method in Table 2 showed that the gain score for students taught using multimedia learning was 23.45 while that of students taught with traditional lecture method was 13.25, therefore, students taught poetry using multimedia strategy achieved considerably better than those taught with traditional lecture method.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Retention Scores of Students Taught Using Cooperative Learning Method and Traditional Lecture Method.

Method	N	Pretest			Posttest	Gain Score
		X1	SD1	X2		
Cooperative	87	54.95	24.02	58.6	23.60	3.72
Traditional	103	41.85	19.10	45.08	19.76	3.23

The data on cooperative learning and traditional lecture method in Table 3 revealed that the retention gain score for students taught using cooperative learning was 3.72 while that of students taught with traditional lecture method was 3.23. Students taught poetry using cooperative learning therefore, had slightly higher retention score than students taught with traditional learning method.

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Retention Scores of Students Taught Using Multimedia Technology and Traditional Lecture Method.

Method	N	Pretest			Posttest	Gain Score
		X1	SD1	X2		
Multimedia	87	65.15	29.03	69.58	25.12	5.14
Traditional	114	52.75	21.32	53.21	20.15	4.25

The data on multimedia learning and traditional lecture method in Table 4 indicated that the retention gain score for students taught using multimedia learning strategy was 5.14 while that of students taught with traditional lecture method was 4.25. This implies that students taught poetry using multimedia technology had a little higher retention mean score than students taught with traditional lecture method.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this research revealed the following: Students taught poetry using cooperative learning therefore, performed better than students taught with traditional learning method. Students taught poetry using multimedia strategy therefore, achieved considerably better than those taught with traditional lecture method. Students taught poetry using cooperative learning method therefore, had slightly higher retention mean score than students taught with traditional lecture method. Students taught poetry using multimedia learning strategy therefore, had a little higher retention mean score than students taught with traditional lecture method. Therefore, there was a significant difference in the mean achievement and retention scores of students taught with cooperative learning method compared to students taught with traditional lecture method. Furthermore, there was a positive significant difference in the mean gain achievement and retention scores using multimedia technology compared to the students taught with traditional lecture method. The result is in agreement with Ominini and Jennifer who found that the traditional face-to-face classroom-based instruction with an instructor dominating instructional delivery which seem not to bring about the significant flexibility offered by the use of educational technology for the creative, innovative and professionally fulfilled workforce in the 21st century.

The findings also in agreement with Aisha, Amna and Muntasir who found that multimedia presentations encourage students to work in groups, express their knowledge in multiple ways, solve problems, revise their work and construct their knowledge. Students have the opportunity to learn

and apply real-world skills. They learn the value of teamwork; the impact and the importance of different media, including design issues, media appropriate and how to accept and provide constructive feedback.

Conclusion

The study investigated the effect of integrating cooperative learning method and multimedia technology in students' achievement and retention of poetry in Benue State. State-of-the-art review of ELT integration of modern methodology and multimedia technology revealed that traditional lecture method of impacting knowledge to language learner have become less motivating. Nowadays, the stereotyped traditional lecture method is unpopular. Meanwhile, integrating cooperative learning and multimedia technology into literally classroom facilitates the creation of virtual environment that transform learning from a traditional passive experience to one of discovery, innovative thinking, self-study, creativity, exploration, excitement and self-reliant in a less stressful classroom setting in line with the philosophy of Nigerian education.

However, modern based methodology and technology-based curriculum do not automatically guarantee integration in poetry classroom that supports students' learning as pointed out earlier on the study. Language teachers' integration of cooperative learning and multimedia technology in actual literally classroom could be described as either reluctant or at a limited level.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that judicious integration of cooperative learning method and multimedia technology could improve the desired pedagogical outcome in the Literature-in-English classroom for the creative innovative and professionally fulfilled workforce in the 21st century.

Recommendations

In view of the above, it is recommended that:

1. The school authorities and curriculum planners should urgently organise task force for effective integration of cooperative learning and multimedia technology.
2. School owners should make available adequate modern technologies such as computer hardware, software, internet access in language classrooms.

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