

# Teachers' Feedback Strategies and Implementation of Peer Inquiry Strategy in Prose Literature-in-English Classrooms in Oyo, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*This study examined teachers' feedback strategies and implementation of inquiry reading in prose Literature-in-English classrooms in Oyo, Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research design of mixed methods research, using ten (10) senior secondary schools which were purposively selected from Oyo township. The participants were 12 Literature-in-English teachers from 12 senior secondary schools in Oyo. Instruments used were Teachers' Feedback Strategies ( $r=0.74$ ) and Peer Inquiry Implementation Rating ( $r=0.77$ ) scales. Two research questions were answered. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentage and mean. The results showed that teachers' level of implementation of inquiry reading strategy in prose Literature-in-English was high (weighted mean 2.97). It was also found that teachers mostly used immediate feedbacks in prose Literature-in-English class (Weighted mean 3.07). Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers of Literature-in-English should be exposed to regular professional development programmes to enable them adopt diverse feedback strategies and effect correct implementation of peer inquiry strategy.*

**Keywords:** Feedback strategies, Implementation, Peer Inquiry, Prose Literature-in-English

## Introduction

Literature is taught as Literature-in-English and English literature in most countries where English language serves as Foreign Language (EFL) and Second language (ESL). Literature-in-English is one of the subjects on the school curriculum in Nigeria. English language learners (ELLs) in most of these countries find literature-in-English useful. It is a very useful tool for education, literacy, instruction and entertainment, in addition to having other academic and social benefits. The pedagogical value also embraces the development of cognitive, affective and psychosocial domains of learning.

Literature-in-English is sub-divided into three genres namely; Drama, Poetry and Prose. Among the three genres of literature, Prose is generally regarded as the most popular. This is due to the fact that writers use everyday language to write stories (Ezeokoli and Igbor, 2014, Okere, 2015). It is also the easiest to read because unlike poetry, it does not contain rhythmical lines, and unlike drama, it allows for independent reading rather than dialogical reading. Although it is expected that students will excel in the study of prose literature owing to its simple nature, however, this expectation is hardly met as students performance in Prose aspect of literature-in-English is poor. WASSCE chief Examiners Reports in 2010, 2011 and 2014 identified Prose as the genre that is responsible for students' poor performance in literature-in-English. Specifically, WEAC Chief Examiners Reports (2014) revealed that student performed better in Drama and Poetry than in Prose aspect.

One of the objectives of teaching Literature-

in-English is to develop students' ability to respond appropriately and independently to literary texts (Federal Ministry of Education 2015 – 2018). The results obtained yearly as recorded by WAEC showed that candidates responded poorly to questions. Again, commenting on the weakness of the candidates in the prose section (paper 3) of the examination, the 2008 through 2014 reports show that candidates failed to focus on the demands of the questions asked. As regards prose aspect of Literature-in-English, WAEC Chief Examiners' Reports (2010) observed that low quality of teaching and learning is responsible for candidates' poor response and the low grades they obtained yearly.

The persistent poor performance of students in literature-in-English has brought about low interest in the subject and low enrollment at the senior secondary school level (Ezeokoli and Igbor, 2014). Several factors have been identified such as: poor reading habit (Lawal, 2000), lack of instructional resources (Ogunnaike, 2002), inadequacy of qualified teachers with expertise in the subject (Olowonmi and Oyewole, 2011; Zhen, 2012), poor teaching method (Ezeokeli and Igbor, 2014; Okere, 2015 and Icheku, 2016), and insufficient number of teaching periods and time allocation (Ahmad, 2008; Ayedun and Ogunnaike, 2018), teachers poor implementation of inquiry reading strategy, poor feedback strategies and classroom management.

Efforts to address the poor teaching of prose literature have led researchers to recommend inquiry reading strategies (Araromi 2002). Although inquiry reading strategy is student-centered and activity based, an informal classroom survey conducted by the

researcher revealed that it is not activating much as far as student's learning outcomes are concerned in prose literature. This then calls for a survey of how teachers implement the strategy.

Teaching prose means teaching reading with comprehension. One of the objectives of teaching prose Literature-in-English is to guide students to better comprehension and engagement with texts (Anne Post, 2018). In order to foster and monitor students' comprehension of text in Literature-in-English class, the teaching/learning environment must be one that promotes curiosity and questioning. One of the strategies suggested by scholars is inquiry reading strategy (Araromi, 2002). Peer Inquiry Reading strategy, according to Araromi, stimulates curiosity and helps students overcome boredom and inactivity through a greater involvement in reading. Research suggested that using inquiry-based strategy with students can help them become more active, more positive and more independent (Khune, 1995).

The use of IRS facilitates students' engagement with texts. Exline (2004) used an old adage, "Involve me and I understand" to describe inquiry process. Wilhem (2007) listed some steps which teachers can use to promote student's reading while using inquiry strategies. The starting point is the exploration of the topic by the teacher. The teacher connects the topic to students' experiences and asks questions to develop their interest. He also models various inquiry activities before students proceed to small group inquiry. Inquiry based instruction seeks to improve student achievement while engaging them deeply in the learning process (Marshall, Smart & Alston, 2016). Inquiry Reading Strategy promotes deeper understanding of the text through deeper involvement. However, in an informal classroom survey conducted by the researcher, many teachers construe inquiry reading to mean just question and answer technique typical of many classroom teaching.

Besides the teaching of prose Literature-in-English, inquiry-based strategies have been advocated for use across all the subjects in the curriculum. It has become an important pedagogical process in subject area teaching. There is a strong advocacy for its use to teaching science subjects (National Research Council, 2000; American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1994). Although much research has shed light on multifaceted pictures of inquiry-based learning to encourage teachers implement it in school science

(Buntern, Loe, Kong, Srikoon and Vangpoomyai, 2014), many teachers have not embraced the use of these strategies in the classroom (PISSA, 2015). Capps and Crawford, 2013 had reported lack of empirical evidence regarding how inquiry is being implemented in real classroom across United States. Deters (2004) had earlier observed that inquiry is not being implemented in many classroom despite being the acceptable direction of science education.

Also, much research has been conducted to identify the barriers that impede inquiry practice in science teaching (Kang & Koinonen, 2016; Saleh, 2017), however, little or no effort has been done to determine the level of implementation of IRS to teach prose literature in a conventional setting. There is no empirical evidence to suggest that the strategy is being effectively used in literature classroom across Nigeria. There is also little or no research evidence to the best knowledge of the researcher suggesting effective implementation of inquiry reading strategy to teach prose Literature-in-English. There is also lack of empirical evidence to show the level of its implementation in many classrooms in Oyo Township to the best knowledge of the researcher.

It has been established is by scholars that there is no absolutely perfect instructional strategy, rather, other pedagogical factors could impede or promote effective implementation of teaching strategies. Notable among such pedagogical factors are teachers' feedback strategies (Aiyede, 2017).

The use of different feedback strategies have been found to be effective in enhancing literacy skills of learners (Kolawole, 2003). Also studies have shown that formative assessment feedback strategies can be effectively used to improve teaching and learning (Boston, 2002 & British Council, 2014). Tapp (2015) explains that feedback is any dialogue (written or oral) between the students and the teacher, or the student and a peer which provides information that structure student's learning. Feedback strategy can be in form of teacher's oral response, or student/peer response to questions or puzzles.

One major reason for the choice of feedback strategies in this study is the importance attached to assessment process in the curriculum of Literature-in-English, and the fact that feedback strategies are strongly linked to various assessment strategies embedded in literacy pedagogy. The use of feedback strategy is an additional vehicle for improving motivation and engagement. Smith and Wilhelm (2000) noted that a classroom environment that responds to adolescent's need to feel competent and

that provides feedback in a specific and supportive way can result in greater motivation to engage with literary tasks. Teacher's feedback is crucial in helping learners develop teacher's need instructional support in the use of authentic tools such as inquiry chart or question matrix to enhance feedback protocols in prose literature classroom. As students engage with the tools, they also develop questioning skills, formulate their own question and engage well with the text. Thus feedback becomes an ongoing process in inquiry classroom.

One of the aims of teaching Literature-in-English at the senior secondary school level is to develop students' ability to respond independently to literary works (FME 2009). This aim has not been realized fully in Nigerian secondary schools. WAEC Chief Examiners' Reports (2003, 2010) indicate that candidates' responses to the texts are getting worse yearly. This can be attributed to lack of effective teaching strategy that can enhance readers' response to literacy texts. Also when teachers give students answers to their questions, listen to their answers to questions and provide effective feedback, the process will enable students' to expand their understanding and facilitate appropriate responses to texts. Thus, the choice of feedback strategy in this study is also predicated upon the fact that assessment and feedback procedures are part of inquiry process.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Prose literature is taught to equip learners with greater reading and comprehension skills as well as stimulating their level of literacy appreciation. However, reports from past West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and Chief Examiners' revealed that students are not doing well in prose aspect of Literature-in-English and this has engendered poor attitude to the subject. The situation was blamed largely on the poor implementation of peer inquiry reading strategy recommended for its teaching. Empirical literature has documented a strong link between teacher's feedback strategies and implementation of inquiry reading strategies with little consideration the examination of the feedback strategies adopted by teachers and their implementation of peer inquiry reading strategy). Therefore, this study was carried out to investigate implementation of inquiry reading strategy and feedback strategies deployed by the teachers in prose Literature-in-English classrooms in Oyo township, Nigeria.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of teacher's implementation of inquiry reading strategy in prose literature classroom?
2. What are the dominant feedback strategies used by teachers?

#### **Scope of the Study**

This study covered 10 teachers from 20 schools in Oyo Township. The study examined the implementation of peer inquiry reading strategy and feedback strategies in prose literature-in-English classroom in Oyo Township.

#### **Significance of the Study**

The study will be useful in so many ways. First, it will reveal the manner in which prose literature teacher implement inquiry reading with a view to finding whether or not this strategy is correctly implemented. It will also reveal prose literature in English teachers' use of feedback.

The findings from this study will also reveal teachers' deficiency or efficiency in these regards. Finally, the study will come out to be an additional effort geared towards improving the study of prose literature, in English.

#### **Methodology**

The study adopted the survey research design. The multi-stage sample selection was used to select participants for the study. Three local government areas were enumerated in Oyo township. The local governments are Atiba Local Government, Oyo East Local Government and Oyo West Local Government. Purposive sampling technique was used to select twelve schools (four from each local government). One intact class of SS2 Literature-in-English in each school was purposively selected making a total of twelve intact classes. Purposive sampling will be used to select one Literature-in-English making a total of twelve (12) teachers that participated in the study. The instruments used were Peer Inquiry Reading Strategy Implementation Rating Scale ( $r=0.77$ ) and Feedback Strategies Rating Scale ( $r=0.74$ ). The teachers prepared a lesson plan for each topic in each class. The lesson plan was used by the teachers to implement the strategy in prose Literature-in-English classroom. Each teacher was observed twice on feedbacks strategies deployed and implementation of Peer Inquiry Reading Strategy.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage and mean.

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of implementation of inquiry reading strategy in prose Literature instruction?

## Results

**Table 1: The Level of Teachers' Implementation of Inquiry Reading Strategy in Prose Literature Instruction**

S/N	Items	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	St.D	
1	Teacher starts with guided exploration of a topic for a class	10 (100%)	-	-	-	4.00	.000	
2	teacher connects the topic to students' previous knowledge	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	-	-	3.80	.421	
3	teacher asks questions that take students deep into the text	3 (30%)	7 (70%)	-	-	3.30	.483	
4	teacher uses more of open ended questions	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	-	-	3.90	.316	
5	teacher reviews questions with the students and asks them to read text passage	-	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	-	2.80	.421	
6	students are divided into groups	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2.50	.971	
7	students refer to teacher's modelling as they use the strategy	-	5 (50%)	5 (50%)	-	2.50	.527	
8	students review questions then read text passage	1 (10%)	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	-	2.80	.632	
9	students engage in talking about text and its meaning with peers	-	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	-	2.10	.316	
10	students practice with teacher guidance	-	-	10 (100%)	-	2.00	.000	
		<b>Standard Mean = 2.50; Weighted Mean = 2.97</b>						

Table 1 shows the level of teachers' implementation of inquiry reading strategy in prose literature instruction, as expressed in frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The table indicates a weighted mean of 2.97 and standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the level of teachers' implementation of inquiry reading strategy was high. The table shows that four of the ten items contributed to this high level of implementation. The items, in their order of magnitude, are item 1 - Teacher starts with guided exploration of a topic for a class (mean = 4.00 > 2.97); item 4 - teacher uses more of open ended questions (mean = 3.90 > 2.97); item 2 - teacher connects the topic to students' previous knowledge (mean = 3.80 > 2.97) and item 3 - teacher asks questions that take students deep into the text (mean = 3.30 > 2.97). Also, the table shows that the means of items 1 to 8 are = 2.50 (the standard mean) while the mean of the remaining two items (items 9 and 10) were < 2.50 (the standard mean). This implies that the majority of the teachers always/sometimes implemented the inquiry reading strategy.

**Research Question 2:** What type of feedback strategies are used by teachers?

**Table 2: Teachers' Use of Feedback Strategies in Prose Literature Instruction**

S/N	Items	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Mean	St.D
1	Feedback is grade-focused	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	2.55	1.23
2	Teachers and Students engage in feedback process	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)	-	3.00	.707
3	Feedback is part of an ongoing learning process	4 (40%)	4 (40%)	-	2 (20%)	3.00	1.15
4	Teacher praises students	1 (10%)	5 (50%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	2.50	.971
5	Teacher gives more oral feedback	4 (40%)	5 (50%)	-	1 (10%)	3.20	.918
6	Feedback is immediate	7 (70%)	3 (30%)	-	-	3.70	.483
7	Teachers echoes students response	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	-	3.10	.567
8	Teacher gives more of written feedback	2 (22.2%)	3 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	2 (22.2%)	2.55	1.13
9	Feedback is related to lesson objectives	6 (60%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	-	3.50	.707
10	Feedback incorporates students' self-assessment	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	-	3.10	.875
11	Feedback incorporates peer assessment	2 (22.2%)	4 (44.4%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)	2.77	.971
12	Feedback comes after the completion of learning task	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	-	3.40	.843
13	Teachers engages learners in post-learning task discussion	5 (55.6%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (11.1%)	-	3.44	.726
14	Teachers uses feedback to help learners advance to next stage of learning task	5 (50%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	-	3.40	.699
15	Teacher uses more of formative assessment feedback	1 (11.1%)	7 (77.8%)	-	1 (11.1%)	2.88	.781
		<b>Standard Mean = 2.50; Weighted Mean = 3.07</b>					

Table 2 shows the feedback strategies that most of the teachers always use, as expressed in frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The result shows that the feedback strategies that the majority of the teachers always use are indicated in all the items, since the means of each of the item is greater than the standard mean. In order of magnitude, the feedback strategies teachers use are: Feedback is immediate (mean = 3.70); Feedback is related to lesson objectives (mean = 3.50); Teachers engages learners in post-learning task discussion (mean = 3.44); Feedback comes after the completion of learning task (mean = 3.40); Teachers uses feedback to help learners advance to next stage of learning task (mean = 3.40); Teacher gives more oral feedback (mean = 3.20); Teacher gives more oral feedback (mean = 3.20); Teachers echoes students response (mean = 3.10); Feedback incorporates students' self-assessment (mean = 3.10); Teachers and Students engage in feedback process (mean = 3.00); Feedback is part of an ongoing learning process (mean = 3.00); Teacher uses more of formative assessment feedback (mean = 2.88); Feedback incorporates peer assessment (mean = 2.77); Feedback is grade-focused (mean = 2.55); Teacher gives more of written feedback (mean = 2.55); and Teacher praises students (mean = 2.50). In conclusion, the result in table 4.2 shows that teachers mostly used immediate feedback in prose literature instruction.

## Discussion of Findings

### Teacher's Implementation of Peer reading inquiry strategy in Prose Literature-in-English Classroom

The result of research question one revealed that the majority of the teachers always/sometimes implemented the inquiry reading strategy. The result shows that the level of implementation was high. This is clear sign that the teachers are aware of how to use inquiry reading strategy. What also accounted for

this was the disposition of the teachers to the use of inquiry reading strategy. Also, the teachers were sensitized on the use of inquiry reading strategy before implementing it. In addition, from the interviews conducted by the researcher, majority of the teachers were positive about the use of inquiry reading strategy in the classroom. The challenges that they have to confront did not seem to deter their ability. This contradicts Vacca (2002) who inform that instruction in the development of comprehension strategy

requires explanation, modeling, practice and application. It also contradicted Meltezer and Hamman (2004) who reported that teachers foster facilitative leaning environment in the classroom by using cooperative learning technique.

### The Dominant Feedback Strategies Used By the Teachers

The findings of the study showed that teachers mostly used immediate feedback in prose literature classroom. Also, the teacher gives more of Oral feedback and echoes students' response. This in consonance with Adewuyi (2002) who indicated that verbal feedback was more effective feedback than written feedback. The result is also in conformity with Biacanosa and Snow (2004) who found that the use of on-going formative form of assessment and feedback procedures provided teachers and student alike with valid information about the students' literacy habit and skills. The reason for the result of the finding is that feedback is on-going during inquiry process and it include response giving by the teacher and student's oral response that stimulate dialogue.

### Conclusion

It could be concluded that teachers were not averse to implementation of peer inquiry reading strategy in prose Literature classroom, but they use mainly oral feedbacks. The findings of the study also showed that teachers mostly used immediate feedback in prose literature classroom.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should be trained on regular basis to update them on the use of the strategy.
2. Teachers should be exposed to regular professional development programmes to update their knowledge of innovative feedback strategies and procedures for implementing peer inquiry reading strategy.

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