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EFFECTS OF STYLISTIC METHOD ON SENIOR SECONDARY 1 STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN POETRY IN BOKKOS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE.

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Abstract
The study examined the effects of Stylistic Method on SS1 Students' Achievement in Poetry in Bokkos Local Government area, Plateau State. A quasi-experimental design was used for the study, specifically the non-equivalent pre-test post-test control group design. The population for the study was 1069 senior secondary 1 students from the 25 public secondary schools in the study area. The sample for the study was 120 senior secondary I students in two intact classes form the randomly selected school. The experimental group had 59 students and the control group had 61 students. Data were collected using Students Poetry Achievement Test (SPAT). The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The findings revealed that students' vocabulary development was improved, their literary appreciation skill was enhanced and the students' ability to comprehend and interpret poetry independently increased. It was therefore recommended that teachers of Literature in English should use stylistic method to teach Poetry in English to students.

Keywords: stylistics, poetry, achievement, pedagogical strategies, vocabulary, literary appreciation skills.

Introduction

Poetry is one of the oldest genres of literature that is used to evoke thoughts, feelings and ideas through the use of poetic language and literary devices. Poetry inhibits emotional and cultural intelligence that serves as a medium for the exploration of a variety of human and historical experiences. The primary aim of poetry is to provide a rich resource for language learning and to develop the communicative competence of learners and also foster a medium for learning across all school curriculum (Hull, 2019). A well-planned instruction in poetry exposes learners to linguistic opportunities like reading, speaking, listening, writing and practice which are inherent in learning other content areas. Poetry also helps students to expand their proficiency in self -expression through the acquisition of vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and a variability of integrated language skills using predictable language patterns, repeated words, phrases, lines and identifiable rhymes to promote a number of positive learning functions. Poetry also uses literary devices like metaphors, simile, personification, alliteration, hyperbole and a number of symbols and imagery to convey intentions that will enhance students' critical literary and memory skills for personal and academic development, Giovanelli (2022).

In spite of its importance to individuals and the community, poetry seems the most apprehensive of the genres of literature. This development is corroborated with the language of poetry which seems difficult to comprehend by teacher and students alike, either as native or foreign users of the language. It is notably that the language of poetry is nuance and connotative bordered with too many imaginary and figurative tools making it cumbersome for students to literally make out the intended meaning of a writer.

It is against this backdrop that Luzuka (1975) found that the average reader of poetry in Nigeria is only trained in the appreciation of English Poetry without being involved independently in exploring and translating the knowledge to solve life issues. In addition, Simpson (2004) posited that there are a lot of unending controversies that characterised the study of poetry different from the conventional and everyday language (Moldagali, Osnabvova & Nurgazigev, 2004). These differences range from lexical structure to phonological realizations, and to graphological deviations. The accompanying consequences of the foregoing leaves the students incompetent to explore the works of poetry independently and to experience greater gains in achievement in terms of evaluation of students' knowledge in poetry. In other words, the indices that describe students' competence are the ability to understand and comprehend a writer's point of view and to relate to the ideas a writer is putting across. Also, students' ability to enhance their vocabulary as a result of their exposure to poetry is an indication that learning has taken place. Generally speaking, the ability of students to exhibit confidence in using literary appreciation skills to understand and interpret poetry is a reflection of effective learning. On the contrarily, students show a dearth of these literary competence is the study of poetry. This may be attributed to the pedagogical approaches used as most teachers still practice the traditional method where only the teacher in engaged in giving out knowledge with the students as passive listeners.

The aforementioned pedagogical comments provide a gap for innovative pedagogical approaches where the learner and the linguistic input are central to the teaching of poetry since poetry is the study that uses linguistic input to create impact on the students. One of these innovative pedagogical strategies is the stylistic method. Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics that is used

to facilitate a robust understanding of literary text using the writer's choice of linguistics features like syntax, semantics and word register in alliance with literary devices and imagery uniquely for communicative intentions. Stylistics, according to Adams (1993), is the manner of linguistic expression a writer or speaker says whatever using a particular diction, linguistic structure and syntax with figurative language, pattern rhyme and rhetoric devices (Penny, 2011).

Stylistics is concerned with the primary aim of analysing and interpreting text in order to have a full grasp of the meaning. Stylistics method incorporates active student involvement in the process of learning to help students gain mastery and confidence to interpret and analyse poems independently. It also provides the students with the tools that will help increase communicative competence in the study of poetry.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of poetry to students seems apprehensive as most teachers of English do not teach poetry. The few that do, do so out of passion and zeal and this affects students' achievement. It is sad to note that the performance of these students is below average due to the pedagogical approaches teachers employ to teach poetry. Researches conducted like that of Inyang (2009) and Tahmaseli (2019) revealed that most teachers of English and particularly poetry still hold on to the traditional method of teaching where the teacher assumes the role of a preacher and the students are just passive listeners or sometimes they are only asked to read through the lines and stanzas of the poem without any skill to interpret and make out meaning from the poem. Or at best, students are sometimes run through the literary devices giving their meaning and a few examples without actually relating to the poem themselves. This typology of method leaves the students at the mercy of the teacher's interpretation and the students are left to be continuously dependent on the teacher. This type of knowledge cannot go beyond the classroom and as such, students cannot use the knowledge gained to become competent and more confident to interpret and analyse poems independently or even solve problems in a similar situation (Geovanelli & Mason, 2019).

Studies have shown that students can only cope with global trends if teachers embrace innovative pedagogical approaches to learning which are students centred and that make for active involvement of students in the teaching and learning process of poetry. This study is therefore designed to find out the effects of stylistic method on the achievement of senior secondary 1 students in poetry.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to determine;

1. the achievement mean scores of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability in vocabulary development.
2. the achievement mean score of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability to develop literary appreciation skills.
3. the achievement mean score of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability interpret poems independently.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study;

1. what are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in the experimental and control groups' ability to use new words from the poems in meaningful sentences?
2. what are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability in the development of literary appreciation skills?

3. What are the pre-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability to interpret poems in independently?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

1. The is no significance difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in the experiment and control groups' ability to use new words from the poems in meaningful sentences.
2. There is no significance difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability in the development of literary appreciation skills.
3. There is no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in experimental and control groups' ability to interpret poems meaningfully.

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design specifically, the non-equivalent pre-test, post-test control group design to determine the effects of stylistic method on the achievement of SS1 students in poetry. The population for the study is 1069 senior secondary students in the 25 public schools in Bokkos LGA of Plateau State. The sample is 120 SS1 students in two intact classes in the randomly selected school. The experimental group had 59 SS 1 students while the control group had 61 SS 1 students.

A Student Poetry Achievement Test (SPAT) was used to collect data for the study. At the commencement of the study, a pretest was administered to the students in experimental and control groups to ascertain their level of achievement in poetry, after which an intervention which is the teaching of poetry using stylistic method was given to the experimental group for four weeks.

Using the stylistic method to teach poetry, the teacher adopted three stages.

The first stage had an introductory task for the students to perform. Students were asked to give general first impression of the poem both as individual and as a literary circle. The students were also allowed space to check out the meaning of words they do not understand in the poem. These activities were meant to familiarise the students with the poem and to also share their impression about the poem and learn new words. Another way the teacher helped the students to grasp the general meaning of the poem was by guiding the students to use the new words in their own sentences. These activities are capable of arousing and improving the students' intonation, pronunciation rhymes and vocabulary skills.

In the second stage, the teacher initiated adequate knowledge of poetic language and literary devices. To maximize this activity, the teacher selected a poem that has enough figures of speech. The teacher guided the students to realize the meaning of the different figures of speech like the metaphor, simile, personification, alliteration and imaginary. This activity was also helpful as it guided the students to have a better understanding of the meaning of the poem while at the same time developing their literary appreciation skills (Shalid, 2020).

The third stage involves the teacher guiding the students to analyse the poem by lines and stanzas to decode the intended meaning of the poem. At this stage, the learners talk about the structural features of the poem and the semantic effect of the poem and make effort to connect structure and the meaning of the poem in a null shell to become imaginative, creative and independent interpreters of poems. The three stages can be summarized as identification, exploring

and concluding. The stages are not however rigid but flexible base on the poem of instruction. But the hallmark is that if these stages are adhered to, they will lead students to achieve a systematic and purposeful understanding, interpretation and the ability to relate to poems in an independent manner.

Results

Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses were answered respectively as follow:

Research question one

What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS 1 students in experimental and control groups' ability to use new words from the poem to make meaningful sentences?

Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of SS1 Students' Ability to use New Words in Sentences in the Experimental and the Control Groups

Group	pre-test		post-test		-gain	-difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Experiment.	59	4.07	1.337	9.98	2.121	5.91
Control	60	3.82	1.258	5.34	1.015	1.52	4.39

Table 1 revealed the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in the experimental and control groups' ability to use new words from the poem in meaningful sentences. Students in the experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 4.07, a standard deviation of 1,337 and a post-test mean score 9.98, a standard deviation of 2.121 and a mean gain of 4.39 the control group had a pre-test mean score of 3.82, a standard deviation of 1.258, and in post-test a mean score of 5.34, a standard deviation of 1.015 and mean gain of 1.52. this indicated that before the intervention both groups had low achievement but after the intervention, the experimental group had higher mean scores in post-test then the control group.

Research question two

What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SSl students in experimental and control groups' ability in the development of literary appreciation skills

Table 2: Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of SS1 Students in the Experimental and the Control Groups in the Development of Literary Appreciation Skills

Group		**Pre-test**		**post –test**		**-Gain**	**-Difference**
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**		
Experimental	59	3.75	1.40	9.71	2.20	5.96	431
Control	61	3.43	1.12	5.08	.900	1.65	

Table 2 revealed the pre-test post-test achievement mean scores of SS 1 students in the experimental and control groups in the development of literary appreciation skills. Students in the experimental group had pre-test post-test mean score of 3.75, a standard deviation of 1.40 and a post-test mean score 9.71 a standard deviation of 2.20 and a mean gain of 5.96. the control group had a pre-test mean score of 3.43, a standard deviation of 1.12, and in post-test a mean score of 5.08, a standard deviation of .900 and mean gain of 1.65. this showed that before the intervention both groups had low achievement but after the intervention the experimental group had higher mean scores in pose-test than the control group.

Research question three

What are the pre-test and post-test achievement mean scores of SS l students in the experimental and control groups' ability to interpret poems independently?

Table3: Pre-test and Post-test Achievement Mean Scores of SS1 Students in the Experimental and the Control Groups in meaningful interpretation of Poems

Group		Pre-Test		Post-Test		-Gain	-Difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Experimental	59	2.27	.520	7.95	2.873	5.68	4.52
Control	61	2.23	.424	3.39	.665	1.16	

Table 3 revealed the pre-test post-test achievement mean scores of SS II students in the experimental and control group' ability to interpret poems independently. Students in the experimental group had a pre-test mean score of 2.27, a standard deviation of .520 and post-test mean score 795, a standard deviation of 2.873 and a mean gain of 4.52. the control group had a pre-test mean Score of 2. 23, a standard deviation of .434, and in post-test, a mean score of 3.39, a standard deviation of .665 and mean gain of 1.16 this indicated that before the intervention both groups had low achievement but after the intervention, the experimental group had higher mean scores in post-test than the control group.

Hypothesis One

There is no significance difference in the post-test achievement mean score of SS1 students in experiment and control groups' ability to use new words in sentences.

Table 4: Summary of ANCOVA on Post-Test Mean Score of SS1 Students in the Experimental and the Control Groups' Ability to use New Words in Sentences

Sources	Type III Sum of squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	646.934[a]	2	323.467	116.571	.000	.666
Intercept	615.672	1	615.672	221.876	.000	.665
Pretest	4.034	1	4.034	1.454	.230	.012
Group	619.879	1	619.879	223.392	.000	.656
Error	324.658	117	2.775			
Total	7469.000	120				
Corrected Total	971.592	119				

a. R Squared = .672 (Adjusted R Squared = .666)

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists between the post-test achievement mean score of SS1 student in the experimental and control groups' ability to use new words in sentences. Table 4 showed that $F(1,117) = 231.39$, $p<0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that there was a significant effect of stylistic method on students' achievement in the use of new words to in sentences. The result Further revealed an adjusted R squared value of .666

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in the experimental and control groups in the development of literary appreciation skills.

Table 5: Summary of ANCOVA on Post-test Mean Scores of SS1 Students in the Experimental and Control Groups' Ability in the Development of Literary Appreciation Skills.

Source	Type III sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	646.934a	2	323.467	116.571	.000	.666
Intercept	615.672	1	615.672	221.876	.000	.655
Pretest	4.034	1	4.034	1.454	.230	.012
Group	619.879	1	619.879	223.392	.000	.656
Error	324.658	117	2.775			
Total	7469.000	120				
Corrected Total	971.592	119				

a. R Squared = .666 (adjusted R Squared = .660)

Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists between the post-test achievements mean scores of SS1 students in the experimental and control groups' ability in the development of literary appreciation skills. Table 5 showed that f (1,117) =223.39, $p<0.05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This is an indication that there was a significant effect of stylistic method on students' ability to develop their literary appreciation skills. The result revealed an adjusted R squared value of .660.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the post-test achievement mean scores of SS l students in experimental and control groups' ability to interpret poems independently.

Table 6: Summary of ANCOVA on Post-test Mean Scores of SS1 Students in the Experimental and the Control Groups in Meaningful Interpretation of Poems

Sources	Type III Sum of squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	622.736a	2	311.368	72.120	.000	.552	
Intercept	174.250	1	174.250	40.360	.000	.256	
Pretest	.275	1	.275.064	.801	.001		
Group	622.397	1	622.397	144.162	.000	.552	
Error	505.130	117	4.317				
Total	4936.000	120					
Corrected Total	1127.867	119					

a. R Squared = .552 (Adjusted R Squared = .554)

analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine if a significant difference exists between the post-test achievement mean scores of SS1 students in the experimental and control groups' ability to interpret poems meaningfully. Table 6 showed that F (1,117) = 144.16, $p <0,05$, since the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a significant effect of stylistics method on students' ability to interpret poems meaningfully. The result further revealed an adjusted R squared value of .554.

Discussion

The study examined the effects of stylistic method on senior secondary 1 student's achievement in poetry. Findings from the study indicated that the use of stylistics method had significant effect on the experimental group who were exposed to the method. This study is in agreement with Amasa and Abdulkadir (2016) who found that stylistic method helped students achieved higher in poetry specifically in their ability to develop vocabulary and meaning.

Tahmasebi (2016) submitted that stylistic method is an effective pedagogical method for the teaching of poetry in that it enhances students' ability to learn a variety of linguistic and literary devices. This study is in consonant with the above submission as students in the experimental group achieved significantly higher in terms of literary appreciation skills, could identify literary devices and their meanings as well as apply same to improve their understanding of poetry.

Findings from the study showed that there was statistically significant high difference in the students' ability to interpret poems. The observed difference in favour of the experimental group may be connected to the students' exposure to the stylistic method which allowed them time and space to connect the linguistic features and literary devices to interpret poems competently and independently. The current finding is in consonance with that of Tahmasebi (2016) who noted that stylistic method helped to motivate students gain mastery of the skill of independent interpretation of poetry. The writer also added that this skill equips the student to cope with the challenges of understanding and interpreting poem of different varieties using the writer's diction, choice of words and tone.

Conclusion

The study conducted, show that stylistic method of teaching poetry was effective in motivating and enhancing student's achievement in poetry through the variety of linguistic activities. The method was beneficially to both teachers and students. The stylistic method which is a paradigm shift form the traditional method where the students are only encouraged to memorise, paraphrase and depend on the teacher for meaning, understanding and interpretation. Stylistics employ a variability of linguistic elements like the syntactic semantic, phonological and lexical features of a poem to help students have a better grip of the meaning of a poem. The pedagogy of stylistics allows students the space to practice and improve on a variety of skills like the development of vocabulary, as students use of new words from the poem to write sentences of their own. Students also are seen to immerse their literacy appreciation skills by identify literary devices and their meaning and how they connect with the structure of the poem for improved understanding and can better play with language.

The ability for students to use the writer's consistency in diction, choice of word intonation, add to the understanding of the meaning of a poem. Similarly students' ability to connect linguistic features with the meaning of the poem as a whole makes them competent, imaginative, creative and independent interpreters and users of poetry.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Students should be guided by teachers to use stylistic method in poetry lesson to help students develop their vocabulary
2. Students should be encouraged to either as individuals or as literary circles to use stylistics method which provides enough time and space for them to learn literacy devices that will help improve meaning and understanding of poems
3. Students should be guided to connect linguistic features and literary devices to enhance their ability to understand and interpret poems independently.

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