

**EFFECTS OF TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS METHOD ON SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS' ABILITY TO INTERPRET THEIR EMOTIONS
AND EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS ABOUT A POEM
IN JOS NORTH, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of transactional analysis method on senior secondary school students' ability to appreciate poetry in Jos North, Plateau State. The research was motivated by the poor performance of secondary students in poetry in both the internal and external examinations. The transactional analysis method for teaching literary appreciation was used as interventions. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The pure experimental design that employed the pre-test, post-test control group design was utilized for the study. The population was made up of 1,157 literature students spread over the 21 government schools in Jos North. The sample of 120 students was randomly selected and assigned to the experimental and the control groups. The Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT) was used to collect the data for the study. The experimental group was exposed to the treatment while the control group was taught brainstorming. The data collected were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The results indicated that the experimental group that was taught poetic devices using transactional literature discussion (TLD) performed better in interpreting their feelings and expressing their opinions about any given poem. The hypotheses also revealed that there was a significant difference in the experimental groups' ability to interpret their feelings and express their opinion of a poem, after treatment. Based on the findings, it was recommended that transactional analysis method should be employed by literature teachers in poetry classroom to teach poetic devices and poetry appreciation.

Keywords: Transactional Analysis Method, Poetry, Poetic Devices, Poetry Appreciation, Secondary School Students.

Introduction

Some literature students are not properly acquainted with special features of poetry and characteristics of poetic devices. They are not conversant with archaic words, complex style, verse forms, themes and sound devices. Indeed, they lack the knowledge of the lavish use of figures of speech, neither can they express their feelings or state their opinion about any given poem. The poet's point of view, narrative techniques, mood, tone and atmosphere of the poem

are also ignored. Transactional analysis method proposed that Reader Responses are evoked and triggered in poetry class when readers 'transact' with text. They live through the reading experience by attending to their own feelings, memories, or images that the poem-evokes. Rosenblatt (1978, p.25) proposed reading literary text as a poetic experience" because the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text. Rather than merely recognizing plots and characters, readers experience the characters, feelings and attend to the plot by developing attitudes, a sense of tone and character of the narrative persona (Rosenblatt 1978, p. 38). The poem activates elements of the reader's past experiences and evokes in readers certain images, feelings, attitudes, associations and ideas. Readers actively construct meaning by responding to a text and then reflecting on their responses.

Rosenblatt hypothesised that a reader's stance and focus of attention while reading a poem play a significant role in creating the meaning of the poem. The practice of reading poems in turns and answering questions at the end of the reading is not valuable because it does not encourage the students to comprehend what they read. Secondly it does not encourage them to locate and explain sound devices, figures of speech, express their feelings or state their opinion about any poem or appreciate the didactic nature of poetry. Besides, it does not make for a purposeful and meaningful treatment of different aspects such as form, theme, emotions, images, symbols, sound, structure and the rhetoric of poetry. It also makes it impossible for students to enjoy or write poetry or apply the experiences acquired in poetry class to solve other life issues. It is not surprising therefore that the students do not acquire language skills or gain the confidence to use their own opinion to react to poems. Students' performance in poetry aspect of literature is therefore not satisfactory and remains always on the decline.

The essence of affective response in this work is connected to the students' emotional involvement with the poems they have read. The aim is to find out the students' feelings and attitudes about the selected poems. It is to know the extent to which the students enjoyed and appreciated the poems they had studied. It seeks to find out how the students feel about the characters, images, events, style and language of the poems. Here the pervading atmosphere and predominant mood of each poem studied is determined. Affective responses will reveal whether the mood of the poem is that of joy, sorrow, sadness, depression, anger, bitterness or solemnity. It will also reveal whether the tone of the poem is flippant, sad, happy, dignified, angry, contemplative or satirical as well as what feelings the poem aroused in the reader. It enables the reader to form an opinion about the poem, especially whether the poet succeeded in conveying his emotions to the reader.

The reason for the failure according to Rosenblatt is that there are two approaches that readers can employ-the efferent stance or aesthetic stance. Readers who read to gather information adopt efferent stance. The readers who adopt the aesthetic stance attends not only to the information/content but to the feelings evoked, the associations and memories aroused, the streams of images that pass through the mind and as an experience itself. The reader savors the quality of the feeling, ideas, situations, scenes, personalities and emotions that are called forth and participates in the tensions, conflicts and resolutions as they unfold. Rosenblatt (1978, 1983, and 1986) contended that although the appropriate stance when reading poetry is aesthetic stance, literature in schools is taught from an efferent approach. Readers who read to gather information adopt efferent stance. Gomwalk cited in Attah (2011) declared that poor

methodology often displayed by literature teachers do not enable the students to acquire a set of skills for decoding poetry. For many teachers, the important facts about poetry teaching do not go beyond identifying a few metaphors, similes and making some naïve remarks about musicality and rhyme.

Purpose of the Study

The present study was designed to:

1. find out the extent to which instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, will improve the students' ability to interpret the appropriateness of the poet's words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems;
2. establish the extent to which instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, will improve the students' ability to express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them;

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study.

1. To what extent can SS 1 students interpret the appropriateness of the poets' words and language and emotions built around certain words and actions in poems, before and after treatment?
2. To what extent can SS 1 students express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them, before and after treatment?

Hypotheses

In this research study, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance.

- a. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students exposed to and those not exposed to instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, with respect to their ability to interpret the appropriateness of poets' words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems.
- b. There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students exposed to and those not exposed to instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, with respect to their ability to express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them.

Methodology

The present study was a pure experimental research that employed randomized pre-test post-test control group design that provided adequate and complete controls for all sources of internal invalidity. The pure experimental research design establishes statistical equivalence of the samples by ensuring that characteristics of the samples in both the experimental and control groups are the same. In this design, there were two groups drawn from the same population. The assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups was through randomization and without biases. The experimental group was exposed to treatment while the control group was not exposed to treatment. The central aim of this study was to compare the gain scores of the two groups; the Experimental and Control groups.

The population of the study consisted of 1,157 SSS I students: 598 boys and 559 girls, sampled out of the twenty (20) government - owned public secondary schools located within the area

of coverage of Jos North Area Directorate of Education. The sample for the study consisted of the one hundred and twenty (120) senior secondary one students selected from two Plateau State government public secondary schools within Jos North. The 120 students were randomly selected from the total population of 1157 students: 598 boys and 559 girls in the 2 schools. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the two schools for the study and to assign the students into the experimental and control groups.

Instrument for Data Collection

The major instrument used for purposes of data collection in this study was the Poetry Appreciation Test (PAT). It was used for the conduct of both pre-test and the post-test exercises in the study. The PAT instrument was made up of two components, labeled as Section A (Objective test items) and Section B (Essay test items) respectively. Section A is made of 35 test items while Section B contains 4 test items.

Experimental Procedure

To develop balanced and representative instruments, consideration was given to the transactional analysis method for teaching emotions/feelings in poetry and students' interpretive opinions about poems. The poetic devices instruction curriculum for treatment was aimed at building in students the poetry appreciation, behaviours and competencies they need to acquire and develop.

Four (4) teachers of literature in English were trained as research assistants for the study. The teachers were holders of, at least, B. Ed (English), with not less than 5 years teaching experience in any government senior secondary school in Jos North. The pre-test was administered on the first day of the first week of the treatment programme. The (PAT) lasted for a period of one hour for the objectives and two and half (2 ½) hours for the essay test items. The pre-test was administered on Experimental groups A and B and the Control groups A and B. After the administration of the pre-test, the treatment was administered to the students. The Experimental Groups A and B were taught poetic devices (emotions in poetry) selected using the transactional analysis method while the Control Groups A and B did not receive any treatment rather they were taught writing skills using the lecture method. The treatment programme lasted for seven (7) weeks. The treatment was made up of the description and modeling of the steps towards interpreting emotions and expressing opinions about poetry with the component feature of poetic devices identified for each lesson. A post-test was planned and administered to both the experimental and control groups, at the closing stages of the treatment period of the study. The same test earlier administered as pre-test was administered as post-test at the same time to all the groups, but the question numbers reshuffled to stop the students from recognizing the questions.

Method of Data Analysis

The methods of data analysis employed in this research work were the mean frequencies, percentages, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA (the analysis of variance). Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions while mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to compute and compare post-test results of the two groups to determine the degree of differences that existed between them. The test scores obtained by the students were computed using t-test analysis, and the output of the analysis was shown using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0.

Results

The results as presented were guided by the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One

To what extent can SS 1 students interpret the appropriateness of poet's words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems before and after treatment?

In order to answer this research question, the frequency counts of the experimental and control groups, pre-test and post-test scores on students' ability to interpret the appropriateness of poet's words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems before and after treatment were taken and percentages calculated. The result of the analysis was presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Experimental and Control Groups Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Interpreting the Appropriateness of Poet's Words and Language and the Emotions Built Around Certain Words and Actions in Poems Before and After Treatment

INTERPRETING EMOTION/FEELINGS				
Test	Group	Score	Frequency	%
Pre-test	Exp	Low	57	95
		Average	3	5.0
		Total	60	100
	Control	Low	59	98.3
		Average	1	1.7
		Total	60	100
Post-test	Exp.	Average	20	33.3
		High	40	66.7
		Total	60	100
	Control	Low	59	98.3
		Average	1	1.7
		Total	60	100

The Table above showed that in the experimental group, 95% of the students were on the low category while 5% of the students were on the average category of achievement in their pretest. But in their posttest, 33.3% of the students were on the average while 66.7% were on the high level of performance. Meanwhile, in the control group, 98.3% of the students remained on the low level while 1.7% of students remained on average level of achievement in their posttests.

Research Question Two

To what extent can SS 1 students express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effect it has had on them before and after treatment?

In order to answer this research question, the frequency counts of the experimental and control groups, pre-test post-test scores on students' ability to express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them before and after treatment were taken and percentages calculated. The result analysis was presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Experimental and Control Groups' Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Expressing Their Own Interpretive Opinions of a Poems in General and the Effects it Has Had on Them before and after Treatment

EXPRESSING OPINIONS				
Test	Group	Score	Frequency	%
Pre-test	Exp	Low	58	96.7
		Average	2	33
		Total	60	100
Post-test	Control	Low	60	100
	Exp.	Low	3	5
		Average	29	48.3
		High	28	46.7
		Total	60	100
	Control	Low	60	100

On opinion, 96.7% of the students in experimental group were on low and average level in their pre-test. After the intervention, only 5% remained on the low level while 48.3% and 46.7% moved to the average and high levels of achievement respectively. Meanwhile, in the control group, no one candidate moved from the lower level to the average level. Unfortunately, all the 60 student representing 100% were on the lower level in the post test.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students exposed to and those not exposed to instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, with respect to their ability to interpret the appropriateness of poets' words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems.

Table 3 presents the post-test mean scores of the students in the experimental and control groups with respect to their ability to interpret the appropriateness of poets' words and language and the emotions built around certain words and actions in poems.

Table 3: Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups with Respect to Interpreting the Appropriateness of Poets' Words and Language and the Emotions Built Around Certain Words and Actions in Poems

Hypothesis One: EMOTION							
Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	t-cal	df	Sig (P)	Decision
Experimental	60	11.10	1.349	30.7666	118	0.000	Significant
Control	60	2.98	1.535				

P > 0.05

The mean values were 11.10 and 2.98 for the Experimental and Control groups respectively. The SD= 1.349 and 1.535. The calculated t= 30.7666, df= 118 and P= 0.000. This showed that there exists a significant difference between the Experimental and Control groups since p value was less than 0.05. We therefore reject the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of students exposed to and those not exposed to instruction in poetic devices, using the transactional analysis method, with respect to their ability to express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them.

Table 4 presents the post-test mean scores of the students in the experimental and control groups with respect to their ability to express their own interpretive opinions of a poem in general and the effects it has had on them.

Table 4: Post-test Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups with Respect to Expressing their Own Interpretive Opinions of a Poem in General and the Effects

it Has Had on Hypothesis Two: OPINION							
Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	t-cal	df	Sig (P)	Decision
Experimental	60	10.12	2.076	23.773	118	0.000	Significant
Control	60	2.28	1.485				

P > 0.05

The mean values for the experimental and control groups were 10.12 and 2.28 respectively. The Standard deviations for the two groups (Experimental and Control) were 2.076 and 1.485 respectively. The student t-test was 23.773, $df = 118$ and $p = 0.000$. Since P was less than 0.05, we conclude that there exists a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. We therefore reject the null hypothesis.

Discussion

Affective response to poetry refers to the students' emotional involvement with a work, how they feel and their opinions about characters, images, symbols and the events in the poem. The pre-test results of students in both experimental and control groups showed that most of them could not express their feelings, state their opinions or pass judgments on any given poem before the treatment programme. However, the post-test mean scores of the experimental group reveals that the students in the group had developed a higher than average level of ability in affective responses to the content of poems as a result of their exposure to the treatment programme in poetic devices using transactional analysis method. The students were able to express the feelings a poem aroused in them and state their opinions about the poems they had read.

The experimental and control group post-test mean scores in responding to the affective level of appreciation were 11.10 and 2.98 for emotion/feelings and 10.12 and 2.28 for expressing opinions. The experimental group members were able to express their feelings about the poems, which may be that of satisfaction, disgust, laughter, grief or sympathy. It may also be that of emotions of sorrow, anger, melancholy, sadness or joy with accompanying moods of brooding, meditation, reflection or joy. This shows that there exists a significant difference between the experimental and control groups since the probability value was less than 0.05 level of significance. The respondents in the experimental group were able to express their feelings and opinions about the poems they read after the transactional poetry discussion in class.

The interpretive stance that readers bring to the study of poetry in this research work is most crucial. The choice was the combination of efferent stance and aesthetic stance. The efferent stance is concerned with the information the reader will carry from the text while the aesthetic stance is that of a reader who attends not only to the information but also to the feelings evoked, the associations and memories aroused, the stream of symbols and images employed and the exposure of the sound and structural elements that passes through the mind while reading the poem.

Transactional theory as observed in this research insists that a reader's individuality must be respected and considered since the meaning of a poem depends on every individual reader. The readers in this research work understood the poems only on the bases of prior experience. The transactional theory in this work invites the readers to reflect upon what he/she brings to the reading of the poem and to acknowledge and examine the responses it evokes.

Summary of Findings

The study investigated the effects of transactional analysis method on Senior Secondary School students' ability to appreciate poetry in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. After the treatment administered to the experimental and control groups and

a careful analysis of the data collected from the pre-test and the post- test, a number of key results were obtained, from which the following specific findings were derived:

1. The Pre-test results showed that there was near equivalence in the poetry appreciation scores recorded by students in both experimental and control groups; that is, the two groups did not differ significantly in terms of their respective levels of test performance in understanding and applying the rudiments of poetry analysis before the commencement of the treatment phase of the study.
2. The pre-test scores of both experimental and control groups also indicated a significantly low level of performance (in terms of test percentage scores) for all the key measures of poetry appreciation tested for. Thus, they were unable to respond satisfactorily to poetry at the cognitive, affective and aesthetic levels of appreciation before treatment.
3. The correlated mean scores of both groups also showed that students in the experimental group (who were subsequently exposed to instruction in poetic devices) performed much better than those in the control group (who were not exposed), in all the variables tested after treatment.
4. The results from the study, especially as it relates to the correlated scores of the experimental group, clearly demonstrate the relationship between transactional analysis method of teaching poetic devices and poetry appreciation. Thus it can be strongly argued that the transactional analysis method can be adopted and applied to classroom teaching to develop and consolidate poetry appreciation skills among students at the SSS level of education in Nigeria.
5. The experimental students exposed to treatment developed high abilities in interpreting the appropriateness of poets' words and language and the emotions build around certain words and actions in poems after treatment.
6. The post-test result indicated that the students in the experimental group were able to express their opinions of a poem they had read and the effects the poem has had on them after treatment.
7. The results indicated that there was significant difference in the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups in all the test items after treatment.

Conclusion

The findings of this research study suggested that the teaching and learning of poetry in senior secondary schools can be improved. The results of the study has shown that the transactional analysis method of teaching poetic devices makes a more significant contribution towards the development and acquisition of the language skills and competencies required to react to poems at the literal, inferential and critical levels of appreciation. It has also been shown that the transactional analysis method of teaching promoted the achievement of specified learning outcomes in poetry appreciation. This supports Astill's (1985) claim that some methods are more suited to some learning outcome than others. The study adds to the body of research

documenting the strong effects that teaching approaches can have on students stance, when responding to poetry (Probst 2012).

The findings of this study have shown that TLD method is intellectually productive because it leads to a high degree of understanding of concept retention, assimilation and association. The study has proved that the knowledge of poetry appreciation such as the ability to discuss the main ideas, the creation and use of sound, images, symbols, form, structure and the feelings and opinions evoked after reading poetry, helps the second language learners ESL to gain independence in poetry could be tackled, using transactional literature discussion and its activities and teaching process such as:

1. **Getting Ready:** Group previews the poem and makes predictions.
2. **Reading and Thinking Aloud:** Group reads the poem and share thoughts.
3. **Wondering on Paper:** Students and teacher write short responses to the poem.
4. **Discussion/talking:** Group discusses short responses and reflections, using RQL2 – Respond, Question, and Link.
5. **Thinking on Paper:** Students write a free response in their notebooks.
6. **Looking back:** Group reviews what was learned in form of a summary.

On a final note, the results of the study have been able to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the students in the experimental groups, after the treatment, were able to appreciate poetry better than their counterparts in the control groups. The implication is that the transactional analysis method of teaching poetry equips the students with the skills to appreciate poetry better. This also implies that the teacher must be equipped with how the method works to use it properly in poetry classroom.

Recommendations

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

1. The teachers of literature in general and poetry in particular should adopt the student-centred transactional analysis method of teaching poetry which encourages further explanation of some poetic devices and literary techniques such as theme, content, sound, form, structures, images, symbols, and emotions in poetry.
2. The teacher in transactional poetry discussion class should invite responses from the students and make it clear to the students that their responses, emotional and intellectual are valid starting points for discussion and writing.
3. The teacher should give ideas time to crystallize in TLD class and encourage the students to reflect upon their responses.
4. The teacher and the students should find points of contact among themselves and the teacher to open up the discussion to the topics of self, text and world or others.
5. Poetry teachers should be encouraged to embrace and actively employ the use of transactional analysis method to teach their students some of the literary terms and techniques needed to appreciate poems effectively.
6. Poetry teachers should give room for group discussion, questions and answers and encourage group activities in oral and written responses in class, because when students participate in poetry class, it helps them to form their own candid interpretive opinions about any work of art.

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