Using Advance Organizers to Enhance Pupils' Achievement in Learning Poetry in English Language

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Abstract

The study was a quasi-experimental that investigated the effects of Advance Organizers (AO) on achievement in poetry. Target population was class seven pupils of Nakuru North Sub-county primary schools in Kenya. 160 pupils were involved in the study. Four sampled schools were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups in Solomon Four Non- Equivalent Control Design was used to collect data using Pupils Poetry Achievement Test (PPAT) whose Reliability coefficient was 0.76. Prior to the treatment, one control and one experimental group were pretested. The experimental groups were taught using AO. All groups were Post tested. ANOVA was used to analyze data. The results revealed that pupils who were taught using AO demonstrated significant improvement in poetry. The researchers recommend the use AOs in the learning of poetry in English Language.

Keywords: Advance Organizers; Pupils' Achievement; Poetry in English Language

1 Introduction

Poetry is an art in which language is presented in its most condensed form and a cultural composite. Thus, when a pupil is learning poetry, he or she is learning a culture in which people rely in communication with each other and this may help improve pupils' interest and achievement in English language (Zeyuan, 2010). Poetry helps in vocabulary building; enhances listening, reading, writing, grammar, builds cooperation, imparts values, builds self esteem and allows the learner to have fun (Elena, 2013). The knowledge and skills acquired through learning poetry is a key element in answering questions in English language at formative and summative levels of assessments. As such, if poetry is adequately and effectively taught, achievement in English language may improve as it covers all aspects of language. However the integrated nature of poetry in the primary school curriculum gives poetry very little emphasis. At the same time the teaching approaches used do not allow pupils to have meaningful learning in poetry. This in turn leads to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) for many primary school pupils (KIE, 2005; Kanja, Wambugu & Mutiti, 2015; Ongalo, Wambugu. & Anditi ,2014).). The teaching and learning of poetry may need the use of effective approaches such as Advance Organizers (AO) for enhancement of pupils' achievement.

AO help learners to link prior knowledge to an existing cognitive structure and indicate to the learner what information from a lesson will be important (Ausubel, 1960; Novak, 1980; Atomatofa, 2013). AO are used at the beginning of lessons in which new information is to be learned. Herron, Harley and Steven (2011) argue that students are active constructors of knowledge and so the AO is designed to strengthen the students' cognitive structures. In this study, Graphic AO in the form of charts, Venn diagrams, pictures and photographs on various poems were used as a bridge to help pupils link what they read and recite from the poems and the important information to be learnt.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using AO on pupils' achievement in poetry as compared to the conventional teaching methods that are commonly used by teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Achievement in English language is crucial since it is the language of instruction for all subjects in upper primary except in Kiswahili in Kenya. However, pupils' performance in English language at KCPE where poetry contributes a great deal has continued to be poor. This has been attributed to expository instructional strategies used by most teachers that make learners to be passive recipients rather than active participants among other factors. There is therefore need to investigate approaches that actively involve learners in the construction of knowledge and allows meaningful learning. The use of AO has been found to facilitate learning and improves

achievement. This study investigated the effects of using AO in pupils' achievement in poetry in English language.

1.3 Objective of the Study

To determine whether use of AO enhanced pupils' achievement in poetry as compared to those taught using Conventional Teaching Method (CTM).

1.4 Hypothesis of the Study

H_{O1}: There is no statistically significant difference in pupils' achievement in poetry in English between pupils exposed AO those that are not exposed to it.

2 Methodology

The study was a quasi experimental research where the researchers used the Solomon-Four Non Equivalent Control Group Research Design. There were two experimental groups and two control groups. The first experimental group E_1 received a pre-test to measure their achievement before the treatment, and then the treatment followed by a post-test. The second experimental group E_2 had no pre-test but received the treatment followed by the post-test. The first control group C_1 received a pre–test but no treatment followed by a post-test. The second control group C_2 had no pre-test, no treatment but a post-test. Figure 1 shows the Solomon- Four Non- Equivalent Control Group Design.
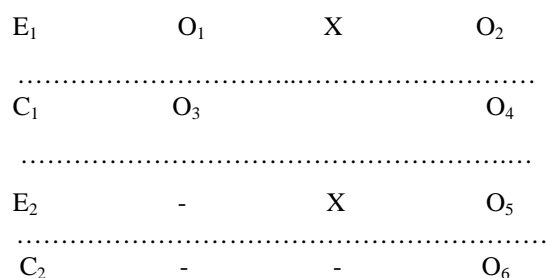
$$E_1 \qquad O_1 \qquad X \qquad O_2$$
……………………………..………………………
$$C_1 \qquad O_3 \qquad\qquad O_4$$

…………………………………………………….…
$$E_2 \qquad - \qquad X \qquad O_5$$
…………………………………………………………
$$C_2 \qquad - \qquad - \qquad O_6$$

Figure 1: The Solomon- Four Non- Equivalent Control Group Design

Key

X – Treatment   -No treatment
C_1 and C_2 - Control Groups E_1 and E_2- Experimental groups
O_2, O_4, O_5 and O_6 – post-test O_1 and O_3 - pre-test
……. Use of Non-equivalent groups

Four (4) public primary schools in Nakuru North Sub-County, Kenya were purposively sampled. The Sub-County was chosen because it has been recording low achievement in English Language at (KCPE). Class seven pupils in the four selected schools were involved in the study. The class was chosen because at this level in the primary school in Kenya the pupils have acquired sufficient vocabulary and grammar to enable them to read and comprehend poetry. A total of 160 pupils were involved in the study. Teachers of the experimental groups were trained on how to use the AO using teachers' induction manual to ensure they successfully incorporated it in their instructional process. The AO to be used were the KWL chart, pictures and photos and Venn diagrams.

To elicit data from the respondents, a Pupils' Poetry Achievement Test (PPAT) was used. The PPAT was used in the pre-test and post-test to measure pupils' achievement in poetry. However during the post-test the PPAT was reorganized to take care of pupils being test-wise. The PPAT was constructed by the researcher and contained 15 objective type questions. PPAT was validated by experts and also pilot tested to ascertain the reliability coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. According to Gall, Borg & Gall (2007) a coefficient of alpha value above 0.7 is considered suitable to make possible group predictions that are sufficiently accurate.

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

PPAT was used to collect data. The researchers administered the instrument in respective schools. Groups E1 and C1 were given pre-test before the start of the treatment. This followed by treatment, which took three weeks.

After treatment, the researchers administered post-tests to the four groups. The researchers then scored the responses from pupils and generated quantitative data which was analyzed using ANOVA and t-test. ANOVA was used to analyze difference in the means; to establish whether there was a significant difference between the means of the four groups on PPAT. T-test was used to detect the difference between the pre-test and post-test means since it is superior detecting differences between two means (Gall; Borg & Gall, 2007).

3 Results

The analyzed are discussed in the following sections**.**

3.1 Pre - test Results

The researchers sought to assess the homogeneity of the groups before the treatment (Gall, Borg & Gall, 2007). Analysis of independent sample t-test for PPAT was done for the two groups that sat for the pre-test. The results are shown in Table 1

Table 1. Independent Sample t-test of the Pre-test mean scores on PPAT

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t
PPAT	E_1	45	8.18	1.980	93	0.046
	C_1	50	8.16	1.822		

The t-test results indicate that the calculated value of t (93) = 0.046, p > 0.05) for the PPAT. This shows that there was no statistically significant difference between E1 and C1 in the PPAT scores hence the two groups in the study exhibited comparable characteristics and therefore were suitable for the study.

3.2 Post-test results

To determine the effect of of Using Advance Organizers on Achievement in Poetry in English Language the analysis of post-test PPAT means scores was carried out. The hypothesis Ho1 of the study sought indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in pupils' achievement in poetry in English between pupils taught using Advance Organizers and those taught using conventional teaching methods. The mean scores of the four groups are shown in Table 2

Table 2. PPAT Post-Test PPT Mean Scores obtained by Pupils in the Four Groups

	N	Mean	SD
E 1	45	8.77	2.136
C 1	50	6.50	1.619
E 2	34	9.85	1.479
C 2	31	7.71	1.883

The results in Table 2 show clearly that the experimental groups performed better than the control groups an indication that AO had an impact on the pupils' acquisition of poetry skills and knowledge. ANOVA was carried out to determine whether these means were statistically different. To establish whether the mean scores were statistically different, analysis of one way variance (ANOVA) was done and the results are shown on Table 3.

Table 2. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Post-Test Scores on PPAT

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	255.148	3	85.049	26.120	.000
Within Groups	507.952	156	3.256		
Total	763.100	159			

The F-test results indicate that the calculated value of $F_{(3, 156)} = 26.120$ $p < 0.05$ indicating that the differences in PPAT for the four groups were statistically significant. After establishing that there was a significant difference between students taught poetry AO and those taught using CTM, further tests were carried to show where the difference occurred. This was done using post-hoc tests of multiple comparisons using Tukey test. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Tukey Post-Hoc Comparisons of the Post-Test

Group(I-J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	P Value
C_1 v/s C_2	1.21	0.02
C_1 v/s E_1	2.23	0.000*
C_1 v/s E_2	3.35	0.000*
C_2 v/s E_1	2.02	0.000*
C_2 v/s E_2	2.14	0.000*
E_2 v/s E_1	1.12	0.03

* Denotes the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that the scores of groups E1 and C1, groups E1 and C2, groups E2 and C1 and groups E2 and C2 were statistically significant at 0.05 level. The statistical differences are an indication that the use of AO improved the achievement in poetry for the class seven pupils. This means that the overall achievement in English Language may therefore improve. Since the difference in the PPAT mean scores were statistically significant H_O1 was rejected.

4 Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that students are not passive subjects in the learning process if they are actively involved in the learning process by use of chart, pictures and photos and Venn diagrams as Advance Organizers. These findings, therefore, make a contribution to the literature on strategies that would be used to enhance pupils' achievement in learning poetry. The use of AO in this study enabled pupils to be active cognitively and hence higher achievement in poetry. The findings concur with Gall, (2013) who asserts that the conventional teaching methods make learners lose interest in learning due to the fact that they are passive whereas those taught using AO are active participants and constructors of knowledge. Herron, Harley & Steven, (2011) also assert that AO helps pupils learn to construct own knowledge and become active participants in their learning. This implies that the use of advance organizers enhances achievement in poetry as compared to conventional teaching methods.

Advance organizers calls for an example or image which directs the learner to relevant prior experience and points forward to new material. Advance organizers have three basic purposes in learning. First, they direct the learner to what is important in the coming lesson. Secondly they highlight relationships among ideas and lastly they remind learners of important information they already have (Joyce & Weil, 2004). This implies that AO activate the learners' curiosity to learn. This curiosity helps the pupils to concentrate in order to grasp each and every detail thereby connecting the various ideas in the lesson to enhance understanding. This concurs with Muiruri, 2016, Zeyuan (2010) and Shihusa and Keraro (2009) who asserts that AO if properly used arouse interest in learners and improves performance. Furthermore this new knowledge is linked to prior knowledge that the pupils have, that has already been activated by the AO used at the beginning of the lesson (Ausubel, 1960). The prior knowledge acts as anchor for the new knowledge thereby improving understanding of the concepts. This concurs with Crowell, (2013) who asserts that AO help link prior to new knowledge, helps track information and also reflect on the lesson. According to Hill & Fylnn, (2013) AO activate prior knowledge and activate learners' curiosity and interest in the lesson and as such meaningful learning is likely to take place. If meaningful learning occurs the learners will have acquired sufficient command of English language in spoken and written forms.

5 Conclusions

ANOVA results indicated that a significant difference was identified between group means of pupils who were taught using Advance Organizers and those taught using conventional teaching methods. There was also an improvement in the mean scores after the treatment. Thus advance organizers enhance pupils' achievement learn poetry in English Language as compared to Conventional Teaching Methods.

6 Implications

The findings of this study indicated that the use of AO results in higher learner achievement in poetry. Thus, the strategy may be incorporated in teaching poetry in primary schools. This instructional strategy is likely to assist in improving achievement in English Language at KCPE. The improved performance is likely to better performance in other subjects that are examined in English language. Teachers need to be encouraged to use AO in the learning of poetry in English to enhance achievement. The Curriculum Support Staff (TAC tutors) should assist teachers in preparation and use of AO in the teaching of poetry in primary schools. Now that ICT is being integrated in primary schools curriculum, AO may be made part of the poetry content. Teacher Training institutions may need to make AO teaching strategy part of the content covered during training of teachers.

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