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DIFFERENTIAL EFFECT OF PEER TUTORING AND GENDER ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study was investigated differential effect of peer tutoring instructional method and gender on secondary school students' academic achievement in English Language in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. Quasi-experimental of pretest, posttest non-randomized control group involving 2x2 factorial design was adopted. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Population of the study consisted 4,596 SS2 students in the 62 public secondary schools in the five Local Government Areas in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The sample size was 71 SS2 students (33 males and 38 females) obtained from two co-educational public secondary schools. Multi-stage sampling procedures of purposive and simple random sampling were used. English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) was used for data collection which was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kudder Richardson-20 (KR-20) formula which yielded the coefficient values of 0.80 and 0.71. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering research questions and ANCOVA for testing the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that students taught English Language using peer tutoring instructional method (PTIM) achieved significantly higher than those taught with conventional lecture instructional method (CLIM). Also, gender had no significant effect in the achievement of male and female students taught using PTIM. It was concluded that the use of peer tutoring had a significant effect on academic achievement of students in English Language. It was therefore recommended that English Language teachers should be encouraged to adopt the use of peer tutoring instructional method in the teaching and learning of English Language as it has been discovered as efficacious means of instructional delivery.

Keywords: Peer tutoring, instructional method, academic achievement, English Language gender, conventional lecture instructional method.

Introduction

In the midst of language diversities causing communication gap across diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria, means of interaction, socialisation and appropriate mode of communication were some of the essential tools behind the adoption of English Language in Nigerian schools not only as a subject of study but as a means of instructional

delivery at all levels of education. No wonder, Audu, Ominike and Ogunode (2021) asserted that the aim of teaching and learning of English Language was to equip the students with the English language skills and communicative competence for effective functionality. Worthwhile as the objective is and given the continual poor achievement of students in English Language in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), Adekola (2012) asserted that it is a concern that the reason for which English Language is included in the school curriculum is being threatened. This situation may be due to lack of use of student-centered teaching method in teaching at all levels of education in Nigeria, as teachers mostly use conventional method which is a one-way teacher-centered teaching method. According to Dania (2014), conventional lecture method is theoretical and non-interactive which has the capability of making students easily lose interest, have shallow understanding and lessen retention of the lesson content as they listen with little or no participation. Appropriate teaching method is what awakens students' motivation and interest in a lesson which are central to positive learning outcome (Farooqi, Igbal & Ahmed, 2020).

English Language is an important subject in Nigerian education system. It is a subject that students must be studied to a high level of proficiency if they must make an outstanding progress in education (Udoye & Chituru, 2019). To enhance students' interest and motivation for learning English Language, there is need to employ the method that is suitable for their individual learning needs and styles, such as peer tutoring instructional method. Samuel and Sambo (2019) described peer tutoring as an instructional method used by teachers to engage students in a learning environment that are intended to illustrate students helping each other to better understand and retain a concept through teaching under the supervision of a teacher. Olulowo, Ige and Ugwuoke (2020) explained that the use of peer tutoring instructional method enables students to effectively learn, master and retain information when the explanation is done by their fellow students than when it is from the teacher. Peer tutoring therefore is seen as the use of students or peers as teachers in teaching and learning process. The researchers therefore envisaged that with the application of peer tutoring instructional method in teaching of English Language, problems such as learning anxiety, shyness and passiveness during learning can be taken care of, thereby enhancing students' academic achievement.

Academic achievement can be described as what students achieved in a given subject in the school or class. It is commonly measured using tests, quizzes, continuous assessment through the scores and grades obtained in them. In this study, academic achievement in English Language can be measured using English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) to determine the extent of students' understanding using peer tutoring instructional method. Previous research by Nwachukwu, Ndifreke and Ime (2021) has shown that achievement of children with learning disabilities significantly improved when taught English Language using peer tutoring

than that of those taught with direct instruction. Faridatus (2018) found out that there was a significant difference in the achievement of students taught reading comprehension using peer tutoring strategy than those taught with traditional method. Akpokiniovo and Akudolu (2023) in their own study revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Physics with peer tutoring instructional method and those taught with conventional lecture instructional method.

Peer tutoring instructional method is a useful method for instruction that involves students' participation. The method is such that students learn the lesson content from their textbooks at home and come to class for more internalisation through teaching and learning by themselves under the teacher's guidance. However, from the studies investigated, it is obvious that there are inconclusive results on the effect of peer tutoring instructional method on students' academic achievement. It is pertinent also to find out if gender will give the same result when taught with the same instructional method.

Gender is a common term that refers to male and female. It is a very sensitive issue in our society. It affects everything including instructional activities. It is so tied to how people learn in terms of the method adopted in the instructional process which necessitates its being a factor in this study. Gender differences in students' academic achievement have been explored, resulting in various empirical studies. Longjohn and Osila (2022) indicated that female students performed better than their male counterparts when taught Mathematics using peer instructional method, but no significant difference was found in their achievement. Letam (2020) found out that there was significant difference on the performance of male and female students taught Mathematics using peer tutoring instructional method in favour of male students. Awofala and Agbolade (2023) in their study on the effect of peer tutoring on senior school students' academic achievement in Mathematics found out that male students achieved higher than the female students, though, there was no significant difference in their achievement. From the findings of the researches on the effect of peer tutoring on students' achievement in relation to gender, it was observed that the results are inconclusive. Based on this, the researchers sought to determine the effect of peer tutoring instructional method on secondary school students' academic achievement in English Language in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the pretest and posttest mean achievement scores of students taught English Language using peer tutoring instructional method (PTIM) and those taught using conventional lecture instructional method (CLIM)?
2. What are the pretest and posttest mean achievement scores of male and female students taught English Language using peer-tutoring instructional method (PTIM)?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest mean achievement scores of students taught

English Language using peer tutoring instructional method (PTIM) and those taught using conventional lecture instructional method (CLIM).

2. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught English Language using peer-tutoring instructional method (PTIM).

Research Method

The study adopted quasi experimental of pretest, posttest, non-randomized control group involving 2x2 factorial design. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consisted 4,596 SS2 students in the 62 public secondary schools in the five Local Government Areas in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The sample size was 71 SS2 students (33 males and 38 females) obtained from two co-educational public secondary school from the 62 public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. Multi-stage sampling procedure of purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) was used for data collection which was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kudder Richardson-20 (KR-20) formula which yielded the coefficient indexes of 0.80 and 0.71. The experiment lasted for seven weeks. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions and ANCOVA for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Result

Table 1: Pretest and Post-test Mean Achievement Scores of Students taught English Language using Peer Tutoring instructional Method and those taught with Conventional Lecture Instructional Method

	Pretest Scores		Posttest Scores		
Methods	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
PTIM	41.87	9.276	72.47	9.522	30.60
CLIM	42.04	7.758	58.15	7.879	16.11

Data in Table 1 show that the pretest mean achievement scores of students taught English Language with PTIM (Experimental group) is 41.87 while that of those taught with CLIM (Control group) is 42.04. At the end of the experiment, the posttest mean achievement scores of students taught English Language with PTIM increased to 72.47 whereas that of those taught with CLIM is 58.15. This indicates that those taught with PTIM has mean difference of 30.60, while CLIM has mean difference of 16.11. This is an indication that the mean difference of students taught with PTIM is higher than that of those taught with CLIM.

Table 2: Pretest and Post-test Mean Achievement Scores of Male and Female Students taught English Language using Peer Tutoring Instructional Method

Gender	Method - PTIM				
	Pretest Scores		Post-test Scores		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean Difference
Male	37.83	10.107	67.33	8.998	29.50
Female	44.56	7.846	75.89	8.443	31.33

Data in Table 2 show that the pretest mean achievement scores of male and female students taught English Language using PTIM are 37.83 for males and 44.56 for females. This result shows that their posttest mean achievement scores are 67.33 for males and 75.89 for females. The mean differences of pretest and post-test mean achievement scores of 29.50 for male students and 31.33 for female students indicate that female students taught English Language with PTIM has slightly higher mean achievement scores than male students.

Table 3: One-way ANCOVA on Difference in Mean Achievement Scores of Students taught English Language using Peer Tutoring Instructional Method and those taught using Conventional Lecture Instructional Method

Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig**	**Decision**
Corrected model	9148.231[a]	3	3049.410	116.996	.000	
Intercept	3970.109	1	3970.109	152.320	.000	
Pretest	4185.578	1	4185.578	160.587	.000	
Group	5329.901	2	2664.950	102.245	.000	
Error	2710.686	104	26.064			
Total	493861.000	108				Significant
Corrected total	11858.917	107				

Note R Squared =.771 (Adjusted R Squared =.765)

Data in Table 3 reveal that there is a significant difference in the pretests and posttests mean achievement scores of students taught English Language with PTIM and CLIM ($F(2, 104) = 102.245$, $R^2 = .771$, $p = .000 < .05$). The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the groups is therefore rejected.

Table 4: One-way ANCOVA on Difference in Mean Achievement Scores of Male and Female Students taught English Language using Peer Tutoring Instructional Method

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Corrected model	2100.344[a]	2	1050.172	53.588	.000	
Intercept	1634.423	1	1634.423	83.401	.000	
PeerPretest	1573.322	1	1573.322	80.283	.000	
PeerGender	50.210	1	50.210	2.562	.121	
Error	529.123	27	19.597			Not Significant
Total	160172.000	30				
Corrected total	2629.467	29				

Note. R Squared =.799 (Adjusted R Squared =.784)

Data in Table 4 reveal that there is no significant difference in the pretests and posttests mean achievement scores of male and female students taught English Language using PTIM ($F(1, 27) = 1.495$, $R^2 = .799$, $p = .121 > .05$). This means that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that SS2 students who were taught English Language using peer tutoring instructional method significantly achieved higher mean scores than those taught the same subject contents using conventional lecture instructional method. This indicated that peer tutoring is effective and as well has the capability of enhancing students' academic achievement in English Language. The finding of this present study agreed with the results of Faridatus (2018) and Nwachukwu, Ndifreke and Ime (2021) who posited that peer tutoring instructional method significantly affect students' academic achievement in English Language than conventional lecture instructional method. On the contrary, the finding of the present study disagreed with the finding of Akpokiniovo and Akudolu (2023) that there was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught Physics using peer tutoring instructional method and those taught with conventional lecture instructional method.

In addition, the finding of the present study indicated that female students achieved higher mean scores than their male counterparts, although, there was no significant difference in their achievements. This is an indication that peer tutoring instructional method is gender- friendly. The finding of the present study is in line with the findings of Longjohn and Osila (2022) that female students achieved higher than their male counterparts but no significant difference was found in their achievements. This shows that gender is not a factor in the achievement of male and female students with the use of peer tutoring. On the contrary, Letam (2022) and Awofala and Agbolade (2023) in their studies on Mathematics found out that male students performed better than their female counterparts and there was a significant difference in their achievements. These findings by

different researchers showed that the effect of gender on students' academic achievement is inconclusive.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers concluded that the use of peer tutoring had a significant effect on academic achievement of students in English Language. Also that gender was not a significant factor on students' academic achievement in English Language when taught with peer tutoring instructional method.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it was recommended among others that:

1. English Language teachers should be encouraged to adopt the use of PTIM in the teaching and learning of English Language as it has been discovered to be efficacious means of instructional delivery in enhancing students' achievement in English Language, irrespective of gender.

2. Curriculum planners should ensure that PTIM is included in the curriculum of English Language so as to make learning more student-centered and activity-based in order to get all students involved in the instructional process for enhancement of academic achievement.

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