

# Experimenting Side-Reading Questioning Strategy in Reawakening Nigerian Polytechnic Students' Summary Writing Performance

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**Abstract:** This study examined the influence of side-reading questioning strategy on polytechnic students' summary writing performance in Kaduna polytechnic Kaduna State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to examine the: (i) general performance of polytechnic students' performance in summary writing; (ii) effect of SRQ on polytechnic students' performance in summary writing; (iii) influence of gender. A two-group pre-test post-test quasi-experimental design was adopted for this study. The population consisted of all National Diploma II in Kaduna Polytechnic. Two departments were sampled using multi-stage sampling technique. The sample was categorised into one experimental group and one control group. A total number of 100 polytechnic students (NDII) were sampled. English Reading Comprehension Performance Test (ERCPT) was used to collect data from the respondents. The test items were adapted from English language and Communication texts and validated by language experts. The reliability of the instrument was carried out through test re-test method in an interval of two weeks and a reliability index of 0.72 was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The data were analysed using the percentage, mean, standard deviation, and analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that: (i) the general performance of polytechnic students in summary writing (both the experimental and control groups) was low before the treatment but high after the treatment; (ii) that side-reading questions significantly reawakening polytechnic students' summary writing performance; (iv) that there is no significant effect of SRQ on polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the bases of gender. The study concluded that SRQ add value to students' summary writing performance. The implication is that this strategy have significant effect on polytechnic students summary performance. The study recommended that teachers should employ the use of SRQ strategy for teaching reading to enhance students' comprehension and summary writing performance.

**Keywords:** Reading, Comprehension, Summary Writing, Accepted, Rejected, Inconclusive

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a continuous process that rises above boundaries and generations. Education remains a vital tool for personal, national and international development. It is a tool which enhances individuals to make successful living and contribute meaningfully to the development of their society in all facet of human life. Edohre, (2019) asserted that the primary purpose of education is to teach learners how to live a meaningful life by developing and equipping their minds on how to deal with reality. Language is at the centre of human life. It is used for a

number of functions including learning, achieving goals, furthering career, gaining simple pleasure, enriching oneself and broadening of educational experience among others. [15] Language is a tool employed for communication by human beings to convey ideas, thoughts and intensions and without it, human relationships would have been problematic as communication will be difficult. Language plays a very crucial and essential role in the social, economic and political life of the people in any given community.

According to Onukaogu [16], Gutenberg's invention of printing during the 16<sup>th</sup> century placed a revolution on the

written text. Thereafter, modern technology has aided printing and placed the written text in a very strategic position in human advancement. Consequently, every human being is at this moment in time influenced by the written text (i.e. through reading). Reading is a basic skill necessary for learning both indigenous and foreign languages and forms the basis of instructions in all tasks of language learning which includes the use of textbooks, writing tasks, revision and acquisition of vocabulary, acquiring grammar, and the use of computer-assisted language learning programmes [15].

Comprehension, therefore, is the ultimate goal of reading and reading comprehension is a strong pedestal on which summary writing rests on. This implies that the ability to understand a text is crucial to all summary writing exercises. Reading comprehension, therefore, can be regarded as one of the proofs of summary writing success. Reading informed comprehension, while comprehension in turned informed summary writing performance. They can all be viewed as water and blood running in the same vein; without one the existence of the other appears meaningless [12].

Comprehension involves and requires summary writer's ability to understand and interpret the text and considered the most cognitively tasking of the five essential skills (Wing, 2017). The five essential skills, regarded as foundation to reading include: phonemic awareness, fluency, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension (Basarba, Yovanoff, Alonzo, and Tindal 2013). Lawal [12] stresses that comprehension is the process that takes the reader beyond the text into the writer's world as it is what demonstrates a reader's ability to extract the required information from the text as efficiently as possible and further affirmed that comprehension is a complex skill that involves the use of the eyes, ears, heart, brain and the entire nervous systems because it is a complex activity that requires learner's effort, interest, attention and determination.

Reading comprehension and summary writing involves a high degree of mental representation of meaning. Readers' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar are fundamental in the understanding of the meaning of a text. The roles of vocabulary and grammar in reading comprehension and summary writing are for the construction of literal and inferential meanings of a text. Also, reading comprehension and summary writing largely depend on the strength of readers' cognitive foundation established in their early years of reading, which helps them to move considerably from passive to active level of reading. Good readers are expected to comprehend what they are reading from the words and grammatical structures familiar to them and be able to extract the main ideas and the supporting details. For learners to comprehend reading as a whole and be able to give the summary, teachers of reading should introduce activities such as side-reading questions to prepare learners' minds for the actual intent of the text and to enable them and their teachers to monitor their comprehension.

Summary writing is a records in readers own words that give the main point of a piece of writing such as article, essay, and chapter of a book or even a whole text. Summary does not involve details and reader's interpretation of the original. A good summary is expected to embrace the following:

1. A good summary writing should underline all the important points, evidence and topic sentence.
2. The summary writer should look for words that are repeated severally likely to be key or transition words that can help him or to understand the text.
3. The writer should use his own vocabulary and expressions as much as possible not the details.
4. A good summary should answer basic questions about the original text.
5. A good should list the main ideas and the supporting details.
6. A good summary should not include selected examples, details or information that are not relevant to the piece of writing.
7. And, a good summary should include the main ideas of each paragraph and the main evidence supporting the ideas except their not relevant to the article or essay.

### *1.1. Review of Related Literature*

Side-reading Questioning strategy thus serve as self-regulating, comprehension-monitoring, error-detection and information-processing tools. According to Tiffany, Mindy, Laura and Kate [19] language inference, comprehension monitoring and use of text structure knowledge are critical to successful comprehension because they are not reliant on what reading ability is alone but also focus on how to stimulate the reader through the use of side-reading questions. They advocated for the use of appropriate questioning strategy for the teaching of reading comprehension to enhance summary writing because they believed that good comprehension involves creating a mental representation of a text meaning. Tiffany et al [19] further explained that comprehension monitoring is an aspect of meta-cognitive strategy for comprehending connected prose. They noted that comprehension monitoring usually helps readers to detect inconsistency such as crumbled sentences, contradictory sentences/statements that conflict with external information (word knowledge) in a text. They also submitted that comprehension monitoring is an error-detecting tool (side-reading questions) that is required of a reader to evaluate his understanding of the text and be able to regulate his reading to resolve any reading problem such as summary writing.

In a related development, Cane, Oakhill and Bryant [4] identified inference-making skills, comprehension-monitoring skills, and understanding of text-structure as components of reading comprehension and summary writing skills required of learners. They opined that the construction of meaning-based representation of a text involves going beyond the meaning of the text to the generation of inference as it is necessary to establish coherence among different events and actions in the text. Their view on comprehension monitoring as an aspect of meta-cognition reveals that comprehension monitoring involves readers' ability to detect inconsistency in a text and be able to extract the main ideas and the supporting details. In another development Cain et al [4] submitted that readers' inadequate knowledge about text structure is a possible source of their comprehension failure

and summary writing problem arising from the insufficient reading experience.

Thus, comprehension monitoring is essential in reading comprehension with the appropriate use of instructional support at different stages of the reading such as side-reading questions. Tiffany et al [19] advocated for a questioning strategy tagged "Questioning the author". They are of the view that this strategy will increase readers' comprehension monitoring when the teacher stopped at strategic points and the learners raise questions and the student or teacher answers the questions to improve learners' comprehension and summary skills. This strategy encourages learners to be actively engaged in the text and in turn improves their ability to detect in-roads to meaning. The contributions of Zucker, Justice, Piasta and Kaderavek [21] are very crucial to this study. They were of the view that questions can be used to stimulate readers' ability to recall the content stated in the text, and they identified two types of inferences: text-connecting inferences and gap-filling inferences which can be assessed through side-reading. They asserted that efficient reading strategies improve understanding, retention, recall and transfer of learning and intellectual development. However, side-reading questions are tips that can encourage active reading. Teachers of reading are expected therefore, to model their side-reading questions segmentally so as to give the desired result and provide students with the opportunity to think and search for information from the text to enhance summary writing.

### 1.2. Statement of the Problem

Most teachers of English language in Nigerian polytechnics tend to neglect the teaching of reading comprehension and summary writing and mostly engage in testing summary. This is because teachers teaching summary writing are not abreast of the appropriate teaching techniques for teaching reading comprehension and summary. This neglect detracts proficiency in English and learning at the polytechnic level of education.

Tunde-Awe [20] investigated inter-relationships of reading attitudes, televiewing habit and reading comprehension performance of secondary school students and the outcome of the study revealed that students' attitude towards extensive reading was negative and poor. Popoola [18] worked on effects of pre-reading activities on the reading comprehension performance of secondary school students and his findings revealed that pre-reading activities have significant effects on students' reading comprehension performance.

Many other researchers Kristie, [11]; KeiMihara, 2011, Lawal, [12] have carried out studies on questioning and self-questioning strategies. However, it was found that none of these previous studies worked on the effect of side-reading questions on reading comprehension and summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students. Hence, this left a research gap part of which this study filled.

### 1.3. Purpose of the Study

Generally, this study examined the reawakening strength

of side-reading questions on the reading comprehension and summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students. Specifically, the study find out:

1. the general level of Nigerian polytechnic students' performance in summary writing;
2. the reawakening strength of side-reading questions (SRQ) on the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students;
3. the reawakening strength of side-reading questions (SRQ) on the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students on the basis of gender (male and female);
4. the reawakening strength of side-reading questions (SRQ) on the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students on the basis of ability levels (low, medium and high).

### 1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. What is the general level of Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance?
2. Will side-reading questions reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance?
3. Will side-reading questions reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of gender (male and female)?
4. Will side-reading questions reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of ability levels (low, medium and high)?

### 1.5. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this research:

$HO_1$ : Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance.

$HO_2$ : Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of gender (male and female).

$HO_3$ : Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of ability levels (low, medium and high).

### 1.6. Scope of the Study

This study centered on reawakening strength of side-reading questions on summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students (NDII). The population for this study was all NDII students in Kaduna polytechnic, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study covered two departments within Kaduna polytechnic from where participants were selected using intact classes sampling technique. The study was informed by Cain et al [4] and Tiffany et al [19] comprehension monitoring models which advocated for a number of teacher-initiated and learner-oriented instructional strategies and the study involved one experimental group and a control group. The strategy used is side-reading questions and the use of conventional method in facilitating/teaching reading comprehension and summary

writing at the polytechnic level. Also, the study was limited to the summary writing aspect of the English Language curriculum for Nigerian polytechnic students (ND II). Percentage, Mean and standard deviation and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistical techniques were used to analyse the data collected for the study.

## 2. Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the

results for this study. The demographic distribution of both the experimental and control group respondents were analysed using percentage. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one, while other research questions with corresponding hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The study provided answers to only the research questions without corresponding hypotheses. However, all other research questions with corresponding hypotheses were addressed through appropriate testing of the hypotheses. The results are presented as follow:

*Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants.*

| Groups                              | Gender | Frequency (%) | Sub-Total (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| Experimental Group I                | Male   | 27 (27%)      | 50 (50.0%)    |
| side-Reading Questions (PRQ)        | Female | 23 (23%)      |               |
| Control Group (Conventional Method) | Male   | 31 (31%)      | 50 (50.0%)    |
| Total                               | Female | 19 (19%)      |               |

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the two groups (experimental and control group). Out of 100 (100%) students sampled for this study, 50 (50.0%) of the respondents formed the experimental group I (Side-reading questions) from which 27 (27%) were males and 23 (23%) were females and 50 (50.0%) of the respondents constituted the control group (conventional method) out of which 31

(31%) were males and 19 (19%) were females.

### 2.1. Answering of Research Question

*Research Question One:* What is the general level of Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance?

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on the general level of Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance?*

| Groups                                  |           | Mean  | S.D.  | Min   | Max   | Remark  |
|---|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| Experimental I (side-reading Questions) | Pre-test  | 42.79 | 8.19  | 18.00 | 56.00 | Low     |
|   | Post-test | 59.70 | 13.36 | 40.00 | 72.00 | High    |
| Control (Conventional Method)           | Pre-test  | 40.52 | 7.80  | 22.00 | 54.00 | Low     |
|   | Post-test | 49.52 | 6.47  | 42.00 | 64.00 | Average |

As revealed in Table 2, the performance of polytechnic students (experimental and control groups) in the post-test was higher than in the pre-test. There sult indicates that students' performance scores before the treatments (*Experimental Group 42 and Control Group. 40.52*) were low. However, after the treatments, the mean score of students' summary writing performance taught with side-reading questions was 59.70; than those taught with taught using conventional method had a mean score of 49.52. This

shows that summary writing performance of students taught with conventional method is relatively low compared to the experimental group.

### 2.2. Hypotheses Testing

*Hypothesis One:* Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance.

*Table 3. Analysis of Covariance Showing Side-reading questions reawakening strength of Nigerian polytechnic Students' summary writing performance.*

| Source                 | Type III Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected Model        | 12514.586 <sup>a</sup>  | 2   | 6257.293    | 117.300 | .000 |
| Intercept              | 3834.486                | 1   | 3834.486    | 71.882  | .000 |
| Pre-test               | 2151.346                | 1   | 2151.346    | 40.329  | .000 |
| Side-reading questions | 7203.857                | 1   | 7203.857    | 135.044 | .000 |
| Error                  | 5174.414                | 97  | 53.344      |         |      |
| Total                  | 374098.000              | 100 |             |         |      |
| Corrected Total        | 17689.000               | 99  |             |         |      |

a. R Squared = .707 (Adjusted R Squared = .701)

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

The result in Table 3 reveals that F-value is 135.044 and a p-value is 0.000 computed at 0.05 level of significance since the p-value (0.00) is less than the level of significance (0.05), the null hypothesis one is rejected.

Thus, side-reading questions significantly reawakes the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students ( $F_{(1, 97)} = 135.044, p < 0.05$ ). A Pair wise Comparison Analysis is presented in Table 4 on where the

difference lies between the use of side-reading question and conventional methods (i.e. the effect of the treatments on students' summary writing performance and use of conventional method).

**Table 4.** Pairwise Comparisons Analysis Showing the Effect of Treatment on Students' Summary Writing Performance.

| Treatment                  | Mean               | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. <sup>b</sup> | 95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup> |             |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|---|-------------|
|                            |                    |                       |            |                   | Lower Bound   | Upper Bound |
| Side-reading questions (I) | 59.70 <sup>a</sup> | 10.18*                | 1.52       | 0.00              | 14.66   | 20.69       |
| Conventional Method (J)    | 49.52 <sup>a</sup> | -10.18*               | 1.52       | 0.00              | -20.69  | -14.66      |
| Grand Mean = 54.61         |                    |                       |            |                   |   |             |

\* The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level  
 b. Adjustment for Multiple Comparisons: Bonferroni.

As shown in Table 4, students in the experimental group 1 who were taught reading comprehension with side-reading questions had higher mean score of 59.70 than those in the control group taught with conventional method with the mean score of 49.52. This outcome reveals that students taught with side-reading questions performed better than

those taught using the conventional method with the mean difference of 10.18.

*Hypothesis Two: Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of gender (male and female).*

**Table 5.** Analysis of Covariance on Side-reading questions reawakening strength of Nigerian polytechnic Students' summary writing performance on the Basis of Gender.

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Corrected Model | 12628.970 <sup>a</sup>  | 4   | 3157.243    | 59.276 | .000 |
| Intercept       | 3859.794                | 1   | 3859.794    | 72.466 | .000 |
| Pretest         | 2020.785                | 1   | 2020.785    | 37.939 | .000 |
| Gender          | 112.103                 | 1   | 112.103     | 2.105  | .150 |
| Error           | 5060.030                | 95  | 53.263      |        |      |
| Total           | 374098.000              | 100 |             |        |      |
| Corrected Total | 17689.000               | 99  |             |        |      |

a. R Squared = .714 (Adjusted R Squared = .702)

\*Insignificant at p>0.05.

The result in Table 5 reveals that the calculated F-value is 2.105 and the p-value is 0.150 computed at 0.05 significance level. Since the p-value (0.150) is greater than significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis two is retained. Thus, side-reading questions do not significantly reawakes the summary writing performance of polytechnic sampled students on the basis of gender (male and female) ( $F_{(1,95)} = 2.105, p>0.05$ ).

This implies that gender does not play any intervening role on the earlier finding on the reawakening strength of side-reading questions.

*Hypothesis Three: Side-reading questions will not significantly reawake Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance on the basis of ability levels (low, medium and high).*

**Table 6.** Analysis of Covariance on Side-reading questions as reawakening strength of Nigerian polytechnic Students' summary writing performance on the Basis of Ability Levels.

| Source          | Type III Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected Model | 15453.921 <sup>a</sup>  | 5   | 3090.782    | 129.988 | .000 |
| Intercept       | 6365.961                | 1   | 6365.961    | 267.730 | .000 |
| Pretest         | 61.117                  | 1   | 61.117      | 2.570   | .112 |
| Ability         | 988.455                 | 2   | .278        | .0857   | .914 |
| Error           | 2235.088                | 94  | 23.778      |         |      |
| Total           | 374098.000              | 100 |             |         |      |
| Corrected Total | 17689.000               | 99  |             |         |      |

a. R Squared = .874 (Adjusted R Squared = .867)

\*significant at p>0.05.

The result in Table 6 reveals that the calculated F-value of 0.847 and p-value of 0.914 computed at 0.05 significant levels. Since the p-value (0.914) is greater than the significance level (0.05). Null hypothesis three is retained. Thus, side-reading questions do not reawake the summary writing performance of

Nigerian polytechnic students on the basis of ability levels as high, medium and low ( $F_{(1,94)} = .4209, p>0.05$ ). This implies that ability levels do not play any intervening role on the earlier finding on the reawakening strength of side-reading questions on summary writing performance.

### 3. Discussion

The general objective of this study was to investigate the reawakening capacity ability of side-reading questions on the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students. The motive was to find out whether or not the use of this questioning strategy would offer cognitive assistance to students of reading to achieve better summary writing in their reading task.

#### 3.1. General Level of Nigerian Polytechnic Students' Summary Writing Performance

The result on the general levels of Nigerian polytechnic students' summary writing performance in the experimental and control groups was low before the treatments but better after the treatments. The outcome of this study is in line with the findings of Muhammed [13], Edohre (2019), just to mention a few, who found that the performance of learners was better when they were exposed to treatments. This finding implies that questioning strategy for teaching reading are important variables. The findings of this study have proved beyond reasonable doubt that the experimental group (side-reading questions) better predicts students' summary writing performance than the conventional method of teaching summary writing.

#### 3.2. Reawakening of Side-Reading Questions in Relation to Summary Writing Performance of Nigerian Polytechnic Students'

The outcome of this study indicated that side-reading questions significantly reawaked summary writing of Nigerian polytechnic students. This manifested in the performance of those taught with side-reading questions. These students also performed better than those taught with the conventional method because the strategy affords them the learning ability to monitor the information entrenched in the reading text as the reading progresses which serve as knowledge pool. The finding confirmed Duke and Pearson's [7] that side-reading questions enhance readers' comprehension of the incoming information and enable students to select and integrate prior knowledge with the reading text. This finding corroborates the submission of Okoye and Okechukwu (2010) and Ajaja [1], who separately stressed that side-reading questions assist students in understanding complex ideas and clarifying ambiguous issues.

#### 3.3. Reawakening Strength of Side-Reading Questions in Relation to Summary Writing Performance of Nigerian Polytechnic Students on the Basis of Gender

The findings on the reawakening ability of side-reading questions on the basis of gender and ability levels revealed that a significant difference did not exist in students' summary writing performance. This may be due to the equal opportunities opened to students at the same time when using this questioning strategy for teaching summary writing. This

finding is consistent with Carrier's [5] finding that gender difference and ability level was not significant among English as second language college students. The finding also agrees with Popoola's [18] that no significant difference existed between male and female students' performance in reading comprehension. However, the finding is in contrast with Ofodu's [14] whose outcome revealed a significant difference in the performance of male and female students in reading. Therefore, in view of the foregoing, findings on the role of gender and ability levels in relation to summary writing performance appear inconclusive and further research is thus required in this tricky areas.

### 4. Conclusions

Based on the discussion of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The general level of performance of students in summary writing in the experimental and control groups was low before treatment but better after the treatment. This finding implies that side-reading questioning strategy for teaching summary writing is an important variable because it better enhanced students' summary writing performance than the conventional method of teaching, as also found by Zucker et al. [21] and Ajaja [1]. Therefore, it is concluded that side-reading questioning strategy tends to reawake polytechnic students' summary writing performance better than the conventional method of teaching.

This finding showed that the use of side-reading questions is an effective strategy for teaching reading comprehension and summary as it enhanced summary writing performance of students irrespective of gender and ability levels. However, some studies such as Tunde-Awe [20], Iliyas and Lawal [8], among others found gender and ability level highly significance in the reading comprehension achievement of students. Therefore, findings on the role of gender and ability levels in summary writing performance appear inconclusive and further research is thus required in this tricky areas.

### 5. Recommendations

From the findings of this study, recommendations are offered to teachers, students, curriculum planners, textbook writers and publishers as well as the government on effective ways of using questioning strategies in facilitating students' reading comprehension and summary writing.

### 6. Suggestions for Further Studies

This study examined the reawakening strength of side-reading questions on the summary writing performance of Nigerian polytechnic students. Further studies should also examine the influence of gender and ability levels on the use of questioning strategies since it tends to be inconclusive as previously observed.

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