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Full Length Research Paper

The practice of process approach in writing classes: Grade eleven learners of Jimma preparatory and Jimma University community preparatory school in focus

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The purpose of this study is to explore the practices of process writing approach in grade eleven students at Jimma Preparatory School and Jimma University Community Preparatory school in Oromia Regional State. To accomplish this purpose, the study employed a descriptive study method, which was supplemented by both quantitative and qualitative research to enrich the data. The study was carried out in two school selected through purposive sampling aimed to make the sample by including the teachers and grade Eleven learners in the region. Then, all Grade Eleven EFL teachers and 170 learners were selected from the two schools using simple random sampling techniques particularly lottery method. Questionnaire, interview, classroom observation and content analysis were data collection tools used for this study. The frequency, percentage, and means were used in the analysis of quantitative data while qualitative data were described in narrative way. Based on the data, the result of the finding showed that students were not familiar enough with the skills of writing. Further, it was shown that the teachers have high theoretical orientation of teaching process-writing strategies, but they lacked skills in teaching students how to write. Therefore, having done the necessary analysis on the study's findings, recommendations were drawn on the key stakeholders in practices of process writing approach.

Key words: Process approach, EFL writing classrooms, practice.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most required lifelong language skills to serve in academic areas and in real life situation. Countrywide, it serves as school settings; writing plays major roles in helping us to gain recent information such as in writing e-mail, textbook, business letter, dissertation, thesis, conference presentation, test of writing standardized English proficiency as in TOEFL for further studies and being involved in global network (Reid, 1993). There is much more to writing than mere learning and applying of linguistic or rhetorical rules. Writing itself, by its nature, is a process (Emig, 1982). Describing writing this way, writers and linguistic researchers are attempting to describe the incredibly complex system of transforming thought into written communication

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(D"Aoust, 1997).

As indicated above, a significant impact on writing teachers who demand for a product is replaced by a concern for the series of stages, which make up the writing process. The stage-process model has been used as a teaching tool to facilitate students' writing. The significance of understanding the writing process for both teachers and students that may have to restructure the classroom and constantly reevaluate his or her role as a writing teacher (D"Aoust, 1997); whereas the latter helps us to see how initial weaknesses in writing can actually become successes through feedback and revision in the processes of writing. The study of the writing process approach has thus produced notable changes in the teaching of writing (Walshe et al., 1981). Understanding the writing process approach implies finding out what actually goes on when students write, which is "disgracefully difficult" (White and Arndt, 1991). This issue of thinking of what they have to do when they are teaching writing enables their students to utilize their cognitive skills in writing and what writing strategies the students apply to generate ideas, organize and write to communicate. Thus, writing skills are crucial in the teaching and learning process and a combination of the language skills has a positive effect on the students' success (Selma, 2010).

D'Aoust (1997) argued that as the teacher facilitates the students' writing process, it becomes apparent that the writing stages overlap and sometimes compete for the students' attention. The students' own recursive inner processes dictate the sequence of the writing process. Writing teachers are thus faced with the challenging tasks of developing students' awareness that as they write, they might dart back and forth from one stage to another (White and Arndt, 1991). Therefore, instructional approaches that assign sequential planning, drafting, and revising stages miss the point of the cognitive model of writing (Lipson et al, 2000). The phases involved in the writing process capture the complexity of writing and the difficulty of teaching it (Lipson et al., 2000: 211).

Consequently, writing instruction is complex, demanding teachers who are astute observers of students' writing and who are capable of making instructional decisions responsive to writing issues that students are grappling with as they write (Freedman Dyson, 1991 in Lipson et al., 2000). The process approach means that students spend more time writing (Coe, 1988). One of the most valuable perspectives to come out of the process approach is that rewriting and revision are integral to writing (Myers, 1997); they are fundamental to improvement of students' writing skills. Coe (1988) explained that the process approach includes explicitly helping students develop the cognitive, affective, and verbal abilities that underlie effective writing and speaking. It is not enough to just show students what good writing is, demand that they do it, and grade them down if they fail. In addition, the process approach means

treating writing and speaking as creative and communicative processes. It means guiding students through the writing process, not just grading their written products. It means helping them learn how to communicate effectively in various situations.

Practicing the process approach regularly would help students realize that not even the professionals can get their writing right straight off. "Everyone needs to revise and everyone *can* revise – and that means *everyone can learn to write*, at least competently" (Walshe, 1981: 16). Students are expected to eventually realize that writing generally requires many drafts and revisions to get ideas into a form that satisfies the writer. Within the construct of the process approach, revision is seen as a way of shaping and forming and discovering meaning, thus aimed at conveying the writer's ideas as effectively as possible (Peregoy, 1997). To raise some of the works done on process writing approach, Getnet (1993) and Tesfaye (1995) conducted a research on Evaluating the Effectiveness of Writing Materials while the second one is Provision of Feedback in Writing. The finding of their study revealed that students are less successful to meet the instructors' expectation to write in their academic area. Moreover, Temesgen (2008) also conducted a study on the effects of peer feedback on the students' writing skills at Adama University. The study shows the text analysis for both the experimental and control groups' writing.

However, the students without trained peer feedback provision brought better changes in their writing. Most of the previous studies both the universals and the local did not attempt to look into the practice of the process approaches to teaching writing, and study on how to make process approach is being practiced by teachers and students in the selected schools. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to explore the practice process approaches in their writing classes with particular reference to Jimma and Jimma University Community Preparatory schools in Grade eleven students. Consequently, this schoolwork differs from the above studies in that it has used the descriptive research design involving both quantitative and qualitative methods. To fill this gap, the need for exploring the area has a paramount significance.

Objectives of the study

To explore grade eleven EFL teachers and students to become more efficient practitioners of process approach in writing classes in some selected centers of Jimma and Jimma University Community Preparatory schools.

The specific objectives of the study are:

(i) To assess the extent to which grade eleven EFL teachers and students practice the strategies of process

writing.
(ii) To evaluate the teachers' beliefs practice process approach towards teaching writing skills.
(iii) To find out the writing activity in the textbook designed in line with process approach to writing practice.

Significances of the study

It reveals the strength and weaknesses of the current practice of process approach in teaching writing skills for practitioners of secondary schools. It can facilitate the teaching and writing through the process approach to writing in grade eleven EFL classes. The result of the study provided learners with the chance of using the existing professional skill and knowledge gap on the part of practice process approach in writing class. Finally, it serves as stepping stone for furthers researches in the area.

Limitations of the study

As expected, this research study is not free from limitations. To this end, some limitations were observed in this study. That is, the researcher would like to note that due to scarcity of research budget, they were obliged to limit the study site to only two secondary schools. They were also forced to limit the informants to as few as 181 (11 EFL teachers and 170 learners) from the two schools. Had it not been for the shortage of resources, it would have been better to reach more areas and participants that would strengthen the dependability of the data and generalize ability of the results. As a result, the study missed additional information, which might be useful to support both quantitative and qualitative data.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research designs employed to conduct the study were both quantitative and qualitative; it focused more on quantitative design. However, the qualitative part needs more time and experience of the researcher. Thus, it is incorporated in the study only to enrich the quantitative data.

Population and sample size of the study

The target population was drawn from two secondary schools (Jimma and Jimma University Community Preparatory schools) which are found in Oromiya Regional State. The selection of the study area was purposive because the researcher has experiences in teaching in different secondary schools of the region; it was suitable for them to gather necessary data. The sample size of the participants of the quantitative data was determined based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s required sample size determination techniques. Consequently, 9 EFL teachers and 140 learners in Jimma Preparatory, and 2 EFL teachers and 30 learners in Jimma

University Community Preparatory School summing up to 181 samples were proportionally selected from each school respectively.

Data collection instruments and procedures

In the descriptive study, primary information was gathered from the respondents using questionnaire, observation and interview tools (Kothari, 2004). In addition to these tools, the researcher made content analysis of the writing activities in the current Grade Eleven English textbook for Ethiopian students. Hence, qualitative data were analysed thematically, whereas for the quantitative data descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, and means were employed. Thus, teachers' and students' responses to the questionnaire were entered into SPSS computer software and each item's reliability was checked. Prior to collecting the data, the researcher did the following major activities. Firstly, they visited Jimma and Jimma University Community Preparatory schools main office to get general information about the sites and respondents.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues pertaining to the legitimacy of this study and the rights of the human participant were addressed in the following ways. Before leaving for the data collections, the researcher secured letter of permission from the schools to the research sites. Firstly, all the respondents were provided with information regarding the objectives of the study, and ethical issues related ahead of data collection activities. Secondly, the current researcher designed appropriate ways of ethical consideration for many people to be willing to disclose a lot of personal information. We treat all the participants with respect and keep their information confidential. More importantly, respondents were told not to write their names on the questionnaire papers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to explore the practice of process approach in writing classes of Grade Eleven students in Oromia Regional State. To collect relevant data for the study, questionnaire, interview, classroom observation and content analysis were employed. Therefore, the analysis of the data collected from all respondents was done using percentage, mean. Table 1 depicts the students' responses about their attitudes towards writing in English. Many ELT scholars like Silva (1990) argued that process writing teaches learners how to become active writers in terms of generating ideas actively and dynamically throughout the composing process from producing ideas to the final version. Every one of them explicitly is explained based on the data collected. Thus, the first item shows the frequency of the two secondary schools (JP and JUCP) students' involvement in the research.

Accordingly, Table 1 depicts that 70 (50%), 34(24.3%) and 14 (10%) of the respondents confirmed that they strongly agree, agree and normally like were engaged from various centers of JP school students. On the other hand, 6 (20%), 16(53.3%) and 2 (6.7%) of the respondents were from JUCP school. Overall, the mean

Table 1. Students' responses to the attitudes of writing in English.

S/No	Items	Schools	SA (5)		A(4)		N(3)		DA(2)		SDA (1)		Total respondent	Mean	
	Students' attitude		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No		
1	I like writing English classes	JPS	70	50	34	24.3	14	10	13	9.3	9	6.4	140	563	4.02
		JUCPS	6	20	16	53.3	2	6.7	4	13.3	2	6.7	30	110	3.67
2	I think it is easy to write in English	JPS	16	11.4	20	14.3	20	14.3	28	20	56	40	140	332	2.35
		JUCPS	4	13.3	5	16.7	3	10	7	23.3	11	36.7	30	74	2.47
3	I like to work with a classmate during writing classes.	JPS	40	28.6	60	42.9	14	10	20	14.3	6	4.3	140	528	3.77
		JUCPS	11	36.7	8	26.7	3	10	5	16.7	3	10	30	109	3.63
4	I need the teacher to teach us how to write.	JPS	98	70	18	12.9	6	4.3	10	7.1	8	5.7	140	608	4.34
		JUCPS	18	60	6	20	3	10	1	3.3	2	6.7	30	127	4.23
5	I think considering grammar is more important than content in writing	JPS	34	24.3	75	53.6	8	5.7	14	10	9	6.4	140	531	3.79
		JUCPS	15	50	8	26.7	4	13.3	2	6.7	1	3.3	30	124	4.13

Key:SA(5)=Strongly Agree, A(4)=Agree, N(3)=Neutral, DA(2)=Disagree, SDA(1)= Strongly Disagree, JPS= Jimma preparatory school, JUCPS= Jimma University Community preparatory school

values of these two schools' (M=4.02 and 3.67) inclined towards agree.

Every writing process, the writer and the process through which the writer goes to produce text are the most important components of writing (Kroll, 1990). Owing to this, in replying to item two, 56(40%) JPS and 11(36.7%) JUCPS Grade Eleven students disagreed with the statement. This shows that most of the two students perceive that writing in English is not easy for them. The mean value of this item (M= 2.37 and 2.47) inclined towards disagree. For the items, 3 to 5 were used to find out the respondents' wakefulness of the different uses of process writing in teaching/learning. Table 1 demonstrates that the mean values 3.6, 3.63, 4.34, 4.23, 3.79,

and 4.13 for both students' items respectively reveal that the respondents agree' with the issues raised in these items.

Generally, the data in Table 1 collected from the students showed that the majority of the respondents have positive attitudes towards learning writing English and they need their teachers to teach them the strategies of writing process in order to get help for the difficulty of their writing. Ross and Dereshiwsky (1993) suggested that teachers were observed when they guided their students' writing based on their teaching beliefs in teaching practices. The actual classroom observation showed that the teachers have theoretical orientation of teaching the process writing strategies but not succeed to

make students practice process-writing techniques in writing instruction.

As can be seen in Table 2, on the first item (how often students in the two schools have the habit of revising their contents of writing to improve it by adding, deleting and rearranging), 65(46.4%) rarely revise the content of their writing; 28 (20%) never. The majority of the respondents were unable to decide how frequently practice in their writing habits. On the other hand, 11(26.7%) rarely; 10(33.3%) of them never revise contents in the process of writing. Similarly, the mean for the item, which is (M=2.51 and 2.3) clearly shows that most of the students rarely exercise content revision strategies. From this, it can be implied that most of the students have noticed when they

Table 2. Students' responses to the frequently practice in their writing way of life.

S/No	Items / Students' writing habits	Schools	A(5) No	A(5) %	U(4) No	U(4) %	S(3) No	S(3) %	R(2) No	R(2) %	N(1) No	N(1) %	Total respondent No	Mean	
1	I often check the content of my writing beforehand it in to the teacher	JPS	15	10.7	23	16.4	9	6.4	65	46.4	28	20	140	352	2.51
		JUCPS	3	10	4	13.3	2	6.7	11	26.7	10	33.3	30	69	2.3
2	Our teacher intervenes to help us when we ask him in writing class.	JPS	14	10	10	7.1	10	7.1	56	40	50	35.7	140	302	2.16
		JUCPS	2	6.7	4	13.3	2	6.7	13	43.3	9	30	30	67	2.23
3	I often use planning, drafting, revising and editing strategies inwriting.	JPS	15	10.7	17	12.4	30	21.4	50	35.7	28	20	140	361	2.58
		JUCPS	4	13.3	4	13.3	3	10	9	30	10	33.3	30	73	2.43
4	I often participate in editing, revising and commenting of what others write.	JPS	14	10	20	14.2	16	11.4	62	44.3	28	20	140	350	2.5
		JUCPS	4	13.3	3	10	2	6.7	14	46.7	7	23.3	30	73	2.43
5	I don't think to write out side of what the teacher orders me	JPS	35	25	61	43.6	14	10	20	14.2	10	7.1	140	511	3.65
		JUCPS	9	30	14	46.7	2	13.3	3	10	2	13.3	30	115	3.83
6	I often try to make my writing error free of grammar and mechanics.	JPS	57	40.7	33	23.6	20	14.2	16	11.4	14	10	140	523	3.74
		JUCPS	6	20	15	50	3	10	5	16.7	1	3.3	30	110	3.67
7	I see the teacher as a controller of my writing.	JPS	36	25.7	51	36.4	10	7.1	20	14.2	23	16.4	140	477	3.41
		JUCPS	10	33.3	11	26.7	2	6.7	4	13.3	3	10	30	111	3.7

Key: A (5)=Always, U(4)=Usually, S (3)= Some times, R(2)= Rarely, N(1)= Never, JPS= Jimma preparatory school, JUCPS= Jimma University Community preparatory school.

did not make revision of contents in writing classes. Regarding this, Raimes (1987) also argued that advantage of revision stating that even professional writers cannot get it right in their first draft of writing immediately unless they revise their draft. In the same manner, Kroll (1990) believed that it is a strategy of writing which helps students to improve their writing. Again in Table 2, item 2 above, 56(40%), 13(43.3%) of the respondents have shown their rarely, and were unable to decide on the claim respectively.

Likewise, the mean for the item is M= 2.16 and 2.23. This indicates that students' response lies in the range of rarely. From this, one can conclude that the above, 56(40%), 13(43.3%) of the respondents have shown their rarely, and were unable to decide on the claim respectively. Likewise, the mean for the item is M= 2.16 and 2.23. This indicates that students' response lies in the range of rarely. From this, one can conclude that the respondents have no request and interact with their teachers to get help when they need

supportin writing activities. White and Arndt (1991) stated that the role of the teacher in writing class is to create a learning environment that enables students to learn about writing, engage in writing and feel enthusiastic about writing.

When we see the students' responses for item 3, in Table 2 above was intended to identify whether students exercise the convention of planning, drafting, revising and editing their writing or not. Most of the students, 50 (35.7%) showed rarely and 10 (33.3%) never to the item

Table 3. Students responses to the exercise process-writing strategies.

S/No	Items	Schools	A(5)		U(4)		S(3)		R(2)		N(1)		Total respondent	Mean	
	Strategies of writing		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1	I read model texts before starting to write	JPS	14	10	10	7.1	15	10.7	66	47.1	35	25	140	322	2.3
		JUCPS	2	6.7	15	50	2	6.7	3	10	8	26.7	30	90	3.0
2	I plan and make outlines before I write	JPS	20	14.2	15	10.7	10	7.1	62	44.2	33	23.6	140	347	2.47
		JUCPS	3	10	14	46.7	4	13.3	2	6.7	7	23.3	30	94	3.13
3	I ask my friends to comment on my writing	JPS	15	10.7	10	7.1	20	14.2	67	47.9	28	20	140	341	2.43
		JUCPS	2	6.7	13	43.3	2	6.7	3	10	10	33.3	30	84	2.8
4	I revise and edit my drafts of writing	JPS	20	14.2	10	7.1	12	8.6	62	44.3	36	25.7	140	336	2.4
		JUCPS	2	6.7	14	46.7	2	6.7	4	13.3	8	26.7	30	88	2.93
5	I exercise group writing tasks	JPS	20	14.2	14	10	10	7.1	64	45.7	32	22.9	140	346	2.47
		JUCPS	3	10	12	40	2	6.7	4	13.3	9	30	30	86	2.87

Key: A (5) =Always, U(4)=Usually, S (3)= Some times, R(2)= Rarely, N(1)= Never, JPS= Jimma preparatory school, JUCPS= Jimma University Community preparatory school.

respectively.

Moreover, this can be seen from the mean value (M=2.58 and 2.43) of the item which inclines to neutral. Hence, this mean value clearly depicts that students do not involve in the exercise of planning, drafting, revising and editing strategies in their writing process. White and Arndt (1991) also argued that process approach to writing helps students to know how to actually write using the strategies of generating ideas, reviewing, evaluating, focusing, structuring, and drafting.

Item 4 indicated whether the students were involved in revising, editing and commenting or not. Consequently, 62 (44.3%), and 14 (46.7%) respondents were unable to decide and rarely with the item respectively; whereas 20 (14.2%) of the respondents showed usually. Hence, the students tend to have a negative attitude towards this negative item, which implies that they are positive to the classroom writing. Furthermore, the classroom observations in the schools indicated that students have not seen when they practiced revising, editing and giving feedback activities in their writing classes. Regarding the last three items that are teachers control the students, using error free grammar and mechanics, students perceive in writing, majority 61(43.6%) / 14 (46.7%), 57(40.7%) / 15 (50%) and 51 (36.4%) / 11 (26.7%) of the students and teacher respondents responded as usually respectively. The mean value of these items were M=3.65, M=3.83, M=3.74, M=3.67, M=3.41 and M=3.7 which inclines to neutral. Hence, this shows that the respondents have knowledge gap on understanding as reflective own self-confidence and autonomy in writing were overlooked of the two-sample secondary schools in the region. Supporting this finding, ELT theoreticians argue that teachers' educational attitudes and theories have an effect on their classroom practices, influence what students actually learn, and are a determinant of their teaching approach (Karavas, 1996).

Generally, from the above quantitative and qualitative data discussion, it can be incidental that grade eleven students in the two sample schools of the study area have no good understanding of process writing. Moreover, EFL teachers do not make the students practice each strategy of writing.

As it is seen from Table 3, item 1 was designed to gather information of how often students use reading model texts strategies before starting to write. To this end, 66 (47.14%), and 15 (50%) of

the student respondents use model textbooks' strategies to write rarely and usually in their schools. As seen from the table, the teachers rarely encourage their student to read model text strategies. Similarly, the mean for the item, M = 2.3, M = 3.0 also shows that the students have shown rarely with the statement.

In their response to item two, 62 (44.2%) and 14 (46.7%) of the respondents have shown they rarely exercise the strategies of planning and making outline in their writing, and usually with the claim respectively. Moreover, the mean values of the item, M = 2.47, M = 3.13 are found almost sometimes. This implies that majority of the respondents in the schools have no experience of prewriting [planning and making out line and so on]. From the result, therefore, the classroom practices observation showed that most of the students abruptly begin writing without planning what they want to write and try to copy from friends who write their drafts. In the rest items (3, 4 and 5), respondents were asked to assess the strategy of asking their friends comments, the strategies of revising and editing their drafts in their writing and the strategy of group writing (item 5). Thus, most of the sample respondents 67 (47.9%)/ 13(43.3%), 62(44.3%)/ 14(46.6%), 64 (45.7%)/ 12(40%) rated the three items as rarely and usually respectively. Furthermore, the mean value of the three items, M = 2.43, M = 2.8 and M = 2.4, M = 2.93, M = 2.47, M = 2.87 clearly shows all the items were rated as rarely and usually respectively. This shows that the respondents have practiced process writing strategies poorly to make plan, outline, feedback, revise, edit, and group writing strategies, which are major aspects of process writing. Hence, JUCPS students have relatively better exposure of exercising process strategies than JPS students.

The interview conducted with teachers also depicted lack of facilities and in service trained human power in the area of process writing strategies were the prominent factors in realizing the practice of process writing approach programs effectively in the two sample secondary schools. As a result, the stage of the current practice of process writing approach, stage of encouragement, and content analysis of the writing lessons were not effective in the sample secondary schools.

Generally, from the findings of the above items, it can be concluded that concerned bodies like teachers and students in the Jimma Preparatory and jimma University Preparatory school were not fully committed to making fertile ground for the practical process writing approach.

Results from grade eleven English textbook

The subject of the study is whether the writing strategies in the writing lessons adequately help students to learn writing or not. This was done through analyzing the existence of process writing strategies in all units of the text, and how much the students and teachers are encouraged to follow writing instruction. Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text (Webb, 2011). Hence, the procedures refer to the techniques the investigator applies to analyze the required data to the context of its uses, whereas the text addresses the book, unit, paragraph, etc in the analysis of the writing strategies in each unit of the current Grade Eleven English book.

The general discussion for the Grade Eleven English textbook has process writing strategies that students could practice in their writing. Students are required to exercise prewriting activities like brainstorming, making notes, selecting points and organizing ideas before the actual writing process in unit 2 of page 52 in a "magazine article" on the needs of Ethiopian educated women. However, the Grade Eleven English textbook showed that the contents are neither sufficient nor competent to address the entire unit. Cotton (1988) argued that students' writing skill improves when they use the writing strategies for process approach.
Nunan (1991) also noted that these strategies promote the development of learning language use in general, cooperative learning and learning autonomy of the learners. From this, the theoretical bases of the current Grade Eleven English Textbook at Ethiopian student provide the process writing strategies that promote and motivate students in learning EFL writing skills.

RESULTS FROM OBSERVATION

Observation was made to investigate the approach of writing instruction implemented by both teachers and students in writing classes. Observation was made of four sessions of writing lesson in three sections A, C and I in JP and B in JUCP School for two consecutive periods in each section. Hence, the data were gathered through students' questionnaire, teachers' interviews and analysis of writing lesson in current Grade Eleven English textbook. Observation was based on the process writing strategies given by Shameem (1988), who sees writing as a recursive and nonlinear process, with four basic processes: prewriting, writing, revision and proofreading/editing. These strategies were used as a benchmark to prepare the checklists for the main activities done in each stage of process writing.

Therefore the score scales of students as most, many of, some of , a few and none were observed how they demonstrated their involvement in writing instructional activity at each stage of writing strategies based on VanTassel-Baska (2003)'s classroom observation guidelines.

The main target of the checklist above was to triangulate the data collected by the tools. Accordingly, both schoolteachers were not seen in organizing and encouraging peer-writing activities, rather they were

Table 4. Writing strategies incorporated in grade eleven english textbook.

| Unit | Strategies of Writing Process in Each Unit | | | |
	Prewriting	Drafting	Revising	Editing
One	-Brainstorm - -pair discussion - arrange ideas logically	-Write your first draft	-Give feedback -Read each others' text	- Check grammar, spelling, punctuation
Two	-Thinking -organize points	-write the first draft	-Ask your friend to check	-Edit and write final version
Three	-Brainstorming and Thinking -Select ideas	-Write first draft of your article	- check it - invite others	-Edit the article -Write the final
Four	-Discuss with partner -make notes	-write first draft	-revise and make constructive suggestion	- write the final version
Five	Work in group Make a plan of writing	-Write first draft	-Revise the text	-Read and write the final version
Six	Write the point needed to include	-Write the first draft	- Read the draft -Invite friends to read	-Write the final version
Seven	Make your notes	Write based on notes	Revise the draft	Edit
Eight	-make plan - draw information	Write the draft	Revise	Write the final draft
Nine	-Discuss on how to write -organize points	-Write rough draft	Revise the ideas	Edit the spelling, grammar, punctuation
Ten	-think on the topic -brainstorm	-write first draft	Revise the ideas, language	-add the changes and write the final
Eleven	Discus in small group	Write the points based on the plan	Discus on the contents Revise individually	Write the final version
Twelve	Make an out line -brainstorm select points	-write the first draft	-Revise for ideas Accuracy and length -Invite others to read	Write the final version

observed in providing individual writing activities. In addition, none of the three section students were observed in exercising the strategies of thinking, making out line, discussing with peers to generate and organize their ideas in the prewriting activities (Table 4). Cotton (1988) also argued that students who do the prewriting activities have greater writing achievement than those who start to write without any preparation. In general, the classroom observation for all the students shows there is little practice of process writing approach, though the current grade 11 English texts and literature support the effectiveness of using process-writing instruction. In fact, the researcher observed that the teachers were theoretically oriented to teach the strategies of process writing but they lacked the skills of making students practice the strategies in actual writing instruction.

Moreover, he noticed when a few students described orally to their teachers the process writing strategies, they did not exercise the strategies in classroom writing. (Williams, 1998) argued that "to instruct someone in a discipline is not a matter of getting him to have results in mind. Rather, it is to teach him the process that makes possible the establishment of knowledge". This implies

that transferring theoretical knowledge of writing strategies to the students does not bring the intended results of students' writing skills if they are not taught the theory of using the practices of the writing techniques. The interview conducted with the teachers also depicted that lack of facilities and in service trained human power in the area of process writing strategies were the prominent factors in realizing the practice of process writing approach programs effectively in the two-sample secondary schools. As a result, the stage of the current practice of process writing approach, stage of encouragement, and content analysis of the writing lessons were not effective in the sample secondary schools. Generally, from the findings of Table 5, it can be concluded that concerned bodies like teachers and students in the two schools were not fully committed to making fertile ground for the practice of process writing approach.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the questionnaire, interview,

Table 5. Observation of Writing Lessons in Section A, C, I Grade 11 students and B.

Stage	Role	Activities practiced at each writing stage	TA d1	TA d2	TC d1	TC d2	TI d1	TI d2	TB d1	TB d2	Most >75% d1	Most >75% d2	Many 50-75% d1	Many 50-75% d2	Some 25-50% d1	Some 25-50% d2	a few <25% d1	a few <25% d2	None d1	None d2
Prewriting stage	Teacher	-Gives various topics	x	✓	x	x	x	x	x	x										
		Gives clear instruction	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓										
		-organizes peer work	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
	Student	-Think, make out lines																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
		-Discuss in peers																✓C	xAxCxIxB	xA,xIxB
		-Organize outlines																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
Drafting stage	Teacher	-Intervenes to help	x	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓										
		Supervises moving round	x	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓										
		-Responses for calling	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	x	✓										
	Student	-Modify out lines																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
		-Write draft freely									✓A ✓I			✓I ✓B ✓C	xC, xB					xA
		-Ask teacher or friend									✓A			✓A ✓B	xI,xC,xB					xI,xC
Revising stage	Teacher	Involves as a reader	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
		-Encourages peer or group feedback	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
		Comments on content	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
	student	Exchange drafts																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
		Comments' on others' writing																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
		Discuss on feedback																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
Editing stage	Teacher	Encourage students to edit others' writing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x										
		Tells to take self or peer correction	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	✓										
	student	Take time to read their draft																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB
		Read others' draft to edit																	xAxCxIxB	xAxCxIxB

Key: TA=Teacher in section A, TC= Teacher in section C, TI=Teacher in section I: TB= Teacher in section B, **X**= not done, ✓= done, xA=students A didn't practice, xI = students I didn't practice, xC= student C did not practice, xB=student B didn't practice. **1**= first day, **2**=second day, JPS=Jimma preparatory school, JUCPS= Jimma University Community preparatory school.

classroom observation and content analysis, it may be possible to conclude that grade eleven students of JP & JUCP have benefited and encountered difficulty from practicing process approach in writing class. Consequently, majority of the students have a positive attitude towards learning writing and they need their teachers to teach them how to practice the strategies of process writing. In their response to the interviews, the teachers have high theoretical orientations and understanding of process writing strategies in the light of teaching writing; there was incompatibility between the teachers prescribing the strategies of writing with what they practice with their students in the actual writing instruction in both schools. Therefore, the teachers made it clear that they did not get adequate pre/in-service training opportunities on issues related to process writing teaching.

The finding of this study verifies that the current Grade

Eleven English textbook on writing strategies in EFL writing classes has not enough variety of practical activities in writing. In addition to that, the finding of this study indicated that the teachers perceived teaching writing as an optional activity and tedious work; they claimed students complain that process writing is not done in national exams and time constraints do not allow them to teach writing.

Generally, from the above quantitative and qualitative data discussion, most of the teachers focus on the grammatical aspects of writing while teaching and comment on students' writing more than the contents and strategies of the process of writing needed for students in EFL writing instruction. Thus, the result of the study indicated that there is little effort in making students practice process writing in teaching writing, though the textbook and literature support the effectiveness of making students involve in process writing in teaching EFL writing classes.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations are given:

(1) It would be advisable for the EFL teachers to be given in service training from university/college to familiarize them with the new textbook approach of teaching writing; it would play a crucial role in determining the implementation of approaching our context through the ministry of education. Since writing is not an easy skill for EFL students, practical skills of students' cognitive process should be given from the earlier levels of teaching language to make students have good background skill in writing.
(2) It would be helpful if teacher training colleges and universities are aware of the gap between teachers' knowledge on the theoretical orientations of teaching process writing and their practical skills in teaching and writing. Thus, they need to make the required adjustments to ensure that the knowledge is transferred to trainees concerning theoretical and practical aspects of teaching process writing in classes.
(3) It seems to be difficult to improve the situation in process writing strategies; they lecture theoretically in writing class without practices. It would be better if a national exam agency center in collaboration with a regional education sectors find a means on how to incorporate process writing skill marks in national exams to avoid students' wrong perception of learning writing.
(4) It would be better if teachers usually and confidentially give constructive comments to the schools that help them to create fertile ground for the practice of process writing in classes. Current English textbook should get balance-writing contents with other language skills to give students many exercises rather than including repeated few language skills. This study needs to be conducted in

the future to determine the status of the practice of process writing in secondary schools.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Learning the English Passive Voice: Difficulties, learning strategies of Igbo ESL learners and pedagogical implications

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From the author's teaching experience, a greater number of Nigerian university students either stick monotonously to the active English sentences or use the expletive "It" structure. This paper investigated the difficulties Igbo bilinguals encounter when learning the English passive and the grammar learning strategies they adopt to overcome the difficulties. For the study, 30 Igbo speaking 100 level students of the Department of English and Communication Arts, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE) Port Harcourt were selected. At the end of teaching the English passive voice, two written achievement tests were given to the class from which the scripts of the sampled students were selected. Data from three academic sessions were used for the purpose of ensuring correctness and objectivity of results. For data elicitation on the difficulties encountered and learning strategies used, the students were asked to write diaries of their problems and how they coped with them. In –class observation and think aloud protocols were also used. The findings revealed that the most difficult aspect was the tense-aspect changes of the verb phrase and the most used strategy was affective strategy. Based on the findings, this paper discussed some pedagogical implications.

Key words: English passive voice, difficulties, learning strategies, Igbo learners, pedagogical implications.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, the teaching of English grammar at the primary and secondary levels is designed in such a way that the teacher presents the language structures to the learners, explain how and when any structure is constructed and as well used in a linguistic context. Thus different English language textbook series from which most schools choose their core textbooks systematically present the language structure with practice exercises (for example, Premier English for Nigerian Primary Schools Series 1-6; Melrose Communicative English for Primary Schools series 1-6; Secondary English project series, JSS – SSS; Intensive English Series JSS – SSS etc.). A major task of the teacher therefore is to ensure that he adopts a form-focused mode of instruction to enable the students de/induce the rules that underlie the structures they learn and also internalize the features. A form-focused instruction is a systematic teaching of grammatical/linguistic features of the target language as

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presented in the syllabus or in the context of communicative activities derived from the syllabus, or some combination of the two (Ellis, 2014). Through such mode of instruction, the teacher is afforded an opportunity to explicitly teach the grammatical features and/or rules of forming any grammatical construction with practice activities/tasks and use the feedbacks/errors of the students as the base for driving home the grammar points and rules. Thus, the goal of such form-focused instruction is to enable the students notice the gap between their own production and that of a competent user, develop knowledge of the grammatical systems of the target language (in this case, English) and also to produce the targeted language structure(s) accurately and appropriately. The students need not only to "learn how to use grammar appropriate to specific contents, but a focus on form is necessary for optimal second language learning" (Frodesen, 2014, p. 238) because it provides an intentional and intensive focus on the linguistic items or forms to be learned. This is necessary because since the structural differences between English and many Nigerian languages pose problems to the learning of English and the goal of teaching English is to produce competent users, using the form-focused mode of instruction in the classroom would ensure explicit teaching of any grammatical feature and/or rules in the context of communicative activities.

Despite the systematic presentation of the English language grammar in the English language textbooks used in Nigeria, Mohammed (2014) and Banjo (2012) observe that after 12 years of learning English, many Nigerian students at the tertiary level cannot produce the English passive sentence. This according to Mohammed (2014) is because the provisions made on communicative activities in the major English textbooks used at the primary and secondary levels are inadequate for the learning of the passives. Ibe (2007) and Oyetunde and Muodumogu (1999) also hold similar view. To Banjo (2012) and Umoh (1996), students' failure to use the English passive sentence accurately is traceable to the differences between English grammar and those of the indigenous Nigerian languages. Such "linguistic noise" occurs because the rules are different or misapplied or that the passive does not exist in the mother tongue (MT) or first language (L1) of the learners. That certain linguistic features that exist or do not exist in the MT/ L1 of Nigerian learners of English may affect their ability to process and use the English passive sentences is not peculiar. Hinkel (2002) posits that many ESL/EFL teachers know from experience that teaching the meaning, uses and functions of the passive voice represents one of the thorniest problems in L2 grammar instruction and that the speakers of many L1 appear to have difficulty with passive construction

Personal experiences of the author as a teacher of English language at the college and presently university levels have shown that despite the use of focus on form

mode of teaching English language structures, majority of the students still have difficulties with the passive construction. They are unable to use the English passive accurately and appropriately in written and spoken communication. It is against this background that this study investigated the features of the English passive which Igbo learners of English find difficult to master and the grammar learning strategies they adopt for constructing the English passive sentence. This is predicated on the belief that an understanding of the learners' problems and the strategies they adopt have pedagogical implications that will improve the quality of teaching and learning of the English passive by this linguistic group in particular and other second language learners of English, and also the designing and utilizing of appropriate teaching and learning materials. Also given that the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) examiners' reports on areas students performed poorly in English have consistently identified grammar and spelling as the weakest points, this paper hopes to contribute to the efforts made at helping the Nigerian students tackle their deficiency in English grammar and thereby alleviating the problem of poor performance in English. This study is aimed at finding out the difficulties Igbo ESL learners encounter when learning the English passive sentence, the learning strategies they adopt to learn the English passive sentence structure and discussing the pedagogical implications of the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and concept of passive voice

The passive voice is the grammatical construction in which a head noun functioning as the subject of a sentence, clause or verb is affected by the action of a verb or being acted upon by the verb. The noun functioning as the grammatical subject is typically the recipient of the action denoted by the verb rather than the agent, and may be used to avoid assigning responsibility to the doer (Choomthong 2011, Crystal, 2008). Thus, in an English passive sentence, "the logical subject – the agent – moves out of the position of grammatical subject and is relegated to a by-phrase" (Brinton and Brinton 2010, p. 131). Constructing the passive voice therefore involves the inversion of the noun phrase (NP) subject and NP object positions. That is a syntactic movement.

The inversion of the NP- subject and NP – object positions affects the verb structure of the active sentence. English has two ways of casting the verb in the passive voice, namely, using a form of the verb "to be", and using a form of the verb "to get". The commonest way is by using a form of "to be" with the past participle of a lexical verb, for example: "He *was flogged* by the teacher". This way of passivizing the verb appears in all levels of

Table 1. A Contrast of VGP of English Active and Passive Voice

	Active Voice	Passive Voice
Infinitive	to stop/ see	to be stopped/ seen
Present	I stop/ see	I am stopped/ seen
Past	I stopped/ saw	I was stopped / seen
Future	I will stop/ see	I will be stopped / seen
Conditional	I would stop/ see	I would be stopped / seen
Perfect infinitive	to have stopped/ seen	to have been stopped/ seen
Present perfect	I have stopped/ seen	I have been stopped/ seen
Past perfect	I had stopped / seen	I had been stopped / seen
Future perfect	I will have stopped/ seen	I will have been stopped/ seen
Conditional perfect	I would have stopped/ seen	I would have been stopped / seen

English; its only restriction is that the verb must be transitive. This variant is known as the "be – passive". The other variant, known as the "get-passive" is used in less formal situations and is restricted to a small number of verbs, for example: He *got arrested*. The focus of this paper is on the "be-passive".

In addition, passive voice involves using the past participle form of a transitive verb and the introduction of the preposition, *by,* before the agent noun. However, the by – phrase can be omitted, resulting in not mentioning the 'noun' agent who performed the action.
for example: *The kidnappers were arrested (by the police).*

The overall structure of the passive construction can be aptly captured if it is contrasted with the active voice. The contrast is so evident on the verb group (VGP) if displayed in a paradigm of traditional English verb tenses as shown by Payne 2006 (Table 1).

A passive VGP therefore differs from the corresponding active counterpart by containing a form of the verb *be* and the -*ed* (or -*en*) past participle morpheme being suffixed accordingly to the verb following *be*. Hence the passive forms of the active verbs *sees, jumps* are *is seen* and *is jumped*. The passive voice in English is clearly marked morphologically on the VGP with appropriate forms of the verb *to be* and the *ed/en* past participle forms of transitive verbs. Thus, the formation of passivevoice in English involves both morphological and syntactic changes.

Two types of passive voice exist in English, namely agentive passives and agentless passives. The agentive passive always takes an agent noun; that is the performer of the action must be mentioned. Hence the by –phrase marker is obligatory. For example.: *Purple Hibiscus is written by Chimamanda Adiche.* Contrarily, agentless passives do not take the by – phrase because there is no need for it since the focus is on the action not on the performer of the action. For example: *Many roads were constructed.*

With regard to the situations in which the passive voice is used in English, Oluikpe (1981, p. 94) identifies three

essential situations;
1) When the active subject is unknown or cannot be easily expressed,
For example: *A man was shot.*
2) When the active subject is self-evident from the context; for example: *The singer was praised.*
3) When tact and delicacy of sentiment is needed; for example: *We would have been informed.*
This means that the passive is used when 'who' or what causes or performs an action is not important or known, or when the focus is on the action not the doer or performer of the action. Morphologically, it involves a change of verb forms and syntactically, it involves a change (rearrangement) of two clausal elements – NP subject and object positions and the introduction of new class of word – the preposition. This shows that in English the active – passive relation involves two grammatical levels: the verb phrase and the clausal NP elements.

Igbo language which is spoken predominantly in Eastern Nigeria is typologically different from English. According to Obi-Okoye (2008) Igbo does not have the passive voice. Emenanjo (2015, p.247) notes that although every Igbo verb obligatorily co-exists with inherent nominal elements, the nominal elements are not direct object of the verb but are rather syntactic complements. Thus, transitivity, a surface structure feature in Igbo is an irrelevant category for passive formation (Emenanjon, 2015). Given this clear absence of the passive structure in Igbo its avoidance by Igbo learners of English is predictable. A comparison of the passive construction in English and what looks like it in Igbo by Obi-Okoye (2008, p. 186) is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that there is the absence of parallel equivalence of English passive structure in Igbo. Obi-Okoye (2008) describes the Igbo translation of the English passive as round-about and ambiguous. Rather, what is commonly used is the expletive 'it' structural pattern and it is used for topicalization. The absence of the passive structure in Igbo means that any shift from the active verb structure to the passive structure, and the

Table 2. A Comparison between the Passive Construction in English and Igbo.

English	Igbo
The hunter killed the tiger – The tiger was killed by the hunter	Dinta gburu agu – Agu ahu bu dinta gburu ya/ o bu agu ka dinta gburu.
	Hunter killed tiger – Tiger that / the is hunter killed it/ it is tiger that hunter killed.
The teacher is helping the children to write – The children are being helped to write by the teacher	Onyenkuzi na-enyere umuaka aka ide ihe – Umuaka ahu ka onyenkuzi na-enyere aka idi iche
	Teacher is helping children hand – write something – Children those that teacher is helping hand write something.

rearrangement of two clausal elements (NP subject and NP object) and the addition of 'by' which characterize English passive voice are most likely to pose not only morpho- syntactic problems, but also semantic problems to Igbo learners of English. Such difficulties may inhibit effective writing and speaking in English. Obi – Okoye's (2008) discussion is based on a contrastive analysis of English and Igbo grammatical systems. To confirm these assumptions, empirical research is needed. Hence the study on which this paper is based is empirical.

English language learners' difficulties with learning and using the passive voice

Studies of the teaching, learning and use of the English passive voice in native and non-native contexts have shown that it poses difficulties to both native and non-native learners. According to Moreb (2016, p.3) Pullum (2014) and Leong (2014) traced the difficulties to the 'negative attitudes associated with its usage' as more often than not teachers warn their students against using it, and instead recommend the use of the active voice. Hinkel (2002, 2004) and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) cited in Neilson (2016) also noted that teaching, learning when and how to use the passive voice presents the greatest difficulty to ESL/EFL teachers and learners.

Some studies that dealt with the difficulties ESL/EFL learners encounter in learning and using the English passive voice are McDonough, Trofimovich and Neumann (2015) cited in Neilson (2016), Elmadwi (2015), Mohammed (2014), Somphong (2013), Banjo (2012), Manea (2012), Choomthong (2011), Hinkel, (2002), Umoh (1996) etc. The overall conclusion of these studies has been that the syntactic configuration of English passive voice particularly the forms and use of the present progressive and perfect forms of the auxiliary verb '*be', (being and been)* rule of concord, tense, rearrangement of the subject and object constituent of the passive sentences constitute the greatest difficulties. All these occur because of the non-existence of the passive voice in the learners' L1 (Banjo (2012), Umoh (1996), mother tongue interference (McDonough, Trofimovich and Neumann 2015 cited in Neilson (2016),

Elmadwi (2015), Somphong, (2013), differences between the syntactic and semantic configuration of English passive voice and passive voice of the learners, L1 (Mohammed 2014, Choomthong 2011, Hinkel, 2002, Somphong, 2013, Manea, 2012).

Apart from Elmadwi (2015), Choomthong (2011) Somphong (2013) that focused on secondary and university students (learners) others were general treatments of the challenges their target ESL/EFL L2 learner have or may encounter in and using the English passive voice. This study is similar to these studies because it is aimed at finding out the difficulties ESL learners have in learning and using the English passive voice. However, this study differs because it is a study of the difficulties of first year university Igbo learners' have in learning and using of the English passive voice and the strategies they adopt to overcome their difficulties. In a way, this study is similar to Choomthong (2011) in terms of considering the learning strategies the learner adopt to overcome the challenges. To the best of my knowledge, there is a dearth of literature on the difficulties Igbo learners encounter in learning and using the English passive voice and the grammar learning strategies they adopt to overcome their challenges. This study therefore aims to fill this gap and also attempts to discuss the pedagogical implications.

Grammar Learning Strategies

According to Choomthong (2011, p. 76) grammar learning strategies also referred to as grammar strategies are "actions and thoughts that learners consciously employ to make learning to use a language easier, more effective, more efficient and more enjoyable". Purpura (2014) describes the actions and thoughts as part of the strategic competence which is critically important in learning and using a second or foreign language. Since "success in learning a second or foreign language depends on the students ability to plan, ask questions, make associations, remember, prioritize, distinguish main ideas from details, monitor progress, reflect on success and flexibly shift their approaches to language learning or use" (Purpura 2014, p. 533) studies of language learning strategies (LLSs) used by learners of second or foreign

language have been identified, described and classified into different types.

In English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) contexts studies of the strategies used by learners have been established. Hardan (2013) and Habok and Magyar (2018) assert that the most detailed study and frequently used is Oxford's (1990) taxonomic classification of the strategies into three direct and three indirect strategies. The direct strategies are specific means of language use learners deploy when working with the language itself, and they are memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. The cognitive strategies are the conscious mental strategies (for example using mnemonic devices to learn vocabulary or practice drills to learn a particular language structure) learners use to link new information with an existing schema by analyzing, reasoning, classifying and drawing conclusion based on the existing knowledge. The memory strategies are for storing, remembering and retrieving of information when needed and the compensation strategies help the learners to guess intelligently while using the language despite any deficiencies in knowledge. The indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective and social strategies and they are used when the learners manage the learning context themselves. Whereas the metacognitive strategies are used by learners to co-ordinate the learning process by organizing, planning and evaluating their learning, affective strategies are used to handle emotions and attitudes- to lower anxiety, build self-confidence by encouraging one's self. The social strategies are the activities learners use to get opportunities to ask questions, co-operate and empathize with other learners, more experienced learners and even native speakers of the language.

The significance of using these strategies to achieve second language proficiency has also been established. Helal (2016, p.152) notes O'Malley and Chamot (1990) view that they "can effectively assist foreign/second language learners in mastering different language skills on both levels, receptive and productive". Similarly, Griffiths (2013), Macaro (2001), Chamot and El-Dinary (1999), Nunan (1997) and Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) also cited in Helal (2016) and Lee (2010) emphasize the positive correlation between the use of LLSs and second/foreign language achievement and motivation. This is because using the strategies allows the learners to extend their learning beyond the confines of formal classroom. Hence Helal (2016) maintains that these strategies provide myriad of means ESL/EFL learners can use to overcome the challenges of learning any aspect of the language.

There is no doubt that Igbo learners of English will deploy some grammar learning strategies that would enable them to understand and regulate the challenges of learning and using effectively the English passive sentence. Hence, the grammar strategies they employ are worth being considered.

Research Questions

1) What are the difficulties Igbo ESL learners encounter when learning the English passive sentence?
2) What learning strategies do the Igbo ESL learners adopt when learning the English passive sentence?
3) What are the pedagogical implications of the answers to (1) and (2)?

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in this study were 30 first year students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria selected from the 2013/2014, 2014/ 2015 and 2015/2016 academic sessions. From each academic session, 10 Igbo speaking students were randomly selected. They were among those who studied ENG III: 'English Grammar and Mechanics of Writing' as a compulsory course in the first semester of 100level at the Department of English and Communication Arts taught by the author. All the participants speak Igbo as their first language (mother tongue) and can also read and write Igbo language. At the time of this study, they have learned English for about 12 years (6 years primary school and 6 years secondary school).

Materials

The instruments used in this study were students' diaries, in-class observation, achievement tests, and think – aloud protocols.

Diary

Although all the students were to write diaries of the difficulties they encountered in learning the English passive and the learning strategies they used, only the sampled Igbo participants were specifically instructed to conscientiously write the problems they encountered and how they coped with them for the 3 days (of 2 hours each) it took to finish teaching the passive. This instrument is used because of the advantages which writing a diary offers to learners. According to Nunan (1997) by writing a diary, learners can record the problems that emanates from learning a subject in order to find ways to alleviate the problems. It also motivates them to be responsible and also build self-confidence. For the purpose of this study and specifically for systematic diary writing a focus on form method of teaching was adopted. That is, a step-by-step and clearly defined teaching (with authentic examples drawn from newspaper reports and the students' experiential background) of how the different aspects of the passive sentence are derived from the active sentence: exchange of subject and object positions, the addition of passive auxiliary "be", tense-aspect changes, the addition of preposition "by" and the reasons for the use of passive sentences in speech and writing.

In-Class Observation

While teaching the English passive, the author-researcher observed how the learners learnt the rules needed for effective mastery of the passive moving from the simple tasks (such as the positional exchange of subject and object nouns etc.) to complex tasks (such as the verb –tense aspect sequencing and changes), and also noted the mistakes and errors the students frequently made. That

is, the difficulties they had with changing the active sentences into their passive forms and constructing correct passive sentences with given clues. This is aimed at confirming what the sampled students had written in their diaries. In order to elicit data to ascertain the difficulties and learning strategies of the sampled students, the researcher used purposely the forced and free response evaluative styles and asked them more questions as the teaching progresses and recorded their responses in her observation note prepared specifically for the sampled students. Also, the 3 day teaching sessions were as tape-recorded.

Achievement Tests

Two achievement tests were given the students at the end of the 3 days teaching sessions (of 2 hours each) of the English passive voice by the author-researcher in order to find out the level of their understanding and its application. The first test was similar to what was taught in class, and it required the students to change active sentences into their passive counterparts. The sentences were about familiar events and activities such as cooking, writing, football, washing, reading, school etc. The second test was a fill-in-the –blank test aimed at finding out if the students can apply what they have learnt to other linguistic contexts. The two tests were given to all the students, as these constitute part of their continuous assessment score. However, for the purpose of this study, only the scripts of the sampled students were selected for further analysis. Test 1 consisted of 20 items while Test II had 12 items.

Think – aloud Protocol

After the tests, the sampled students submitted their diaries. They were shown their scripts in the two tests and asked to think aloud on how they arrived at their answers. This was to further check what learning strategies they deployed while trying to learn and use the English passive. The explanations of each student were recorded by the researcher in her observation note and as well tape-recorded.

Data analysis and findings

For the analysis of data a mixed approach is used. That is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The first analysis was qualitative: explanations of the data elicited from the students' diaries, researcher's in-class observation and think-aloud notes, and recordings in her phone on the difficulties of the participants in learning and using the passive voice and learning strategies deployed. The second analysis was quantitative: descriptive statistical analyses of the data obtained from the achievement tests diaries, in-class observation and think-aloud protocol. For the achievement tests a frequency count, mean and standard deviation of the participants' performance in the achievement tests was done (Tables 1 and 2 in appendix A). For the other instruments percentage counts were done where necessary. A comparison of the results of these analyses established a consistency in the participants' difficulties and the learning strategies used. However, the default base for identifying the most difficult aspect of the passive to learn is the frequency of its incorrect and no-response usages in the participants' performances in the in-class evaluation questions and the achievement tests. For the type of learning strategies which the participants adopted the default base for identifying is their direct and indirect, conscious and unconscious actions and/or behaviours. Once a learning strategy was established the data was further quantified to determine the extent of its use among the participants.

FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the students had difficulties in learning the English passive and also used some grammar learning strategies.

From the entries in the diaries, in-class observation and think-aloud protocol notes it was found that the students had difficulty identifying the situations in which the passive is used. This made their learning difficult and hindered their ability to construct and use English passive sentences appropriately. The majority of them (80%) reported in their diaries that they were uncertain when they should use the passive voice or the active voice, especially if only the subject and verb are given or the subject is to be omitted. Their incorrect or no answers to items 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 20 in Test 1 (Appendix B) further confirmed this. Many of them (66.67%) also reported that they need to know the object (direct or indirect) of ditransitive verbs like "give" that changes position with the subject. Their incorrect and no answers to items 9, 15 and 19 in Test 1 (see appendix B) reaffirmed their diary entries.

The most difficult area for the participants is the tense-aspect changes. The result revealed that 21 (70%) of the students had difficulty in knowing how to change tense. From their diaries entries they complained that it was difficult to master the English tense and aspect. They reported that the shift from one tense to another, especially when the participle forms (perfect and progressive) are used, was confusing. The answers to tests revealed that they were confident with changing active sentences that have one lexical verb to changing those that have complex verb group.

The in-class observation and the test answers also revealed that they were unable to distinguish between passive auxiliary "be" and the progressive auxiliary 'be', and to master the order of auxiliary verbs in passive sentences. For example, to items 11, 15 and 20 on Test1 (Appendix B):

11. *The head girl is ringing the bell.*
15. *You have given me nothing.*
20. *You should have given the letter.*

The wrong answers given include*: … was been rang by the head girl; the letter should be written…; it is the letter you should write/ have written; You gave me…; I am giving….*

Although, adverbs of time such as *every day*, *daily, every Saturday*, *yesterday*, *last week* occurred as hints for guessing the tenses, 16 (53.33%) of the students failed to use them appropriately. This means that they were unaware that such time markers should enable them use the English tense appropriately.

For example:
*Property worth millions of Naira *are/is* damaged … which *sweep* across … last week.

*A book *was* read by Juan daily. *Jimmy *was* beat every day.

The students had difficulty with the conjugation of the past participle form of English verbs especially, the irregular forms needed to form passive. From the tests and in-class observation, it was found that 18 students (60%) failed to master the past participle forms of irregular verbs. They failed to add the -*ed* to the regular verbs, and also used the irregular forms wrongly by adding –*ed*.
E.g.: *Show – showed –* *showed* (instead of *shown*)
*Burst – *bursted; Beat – *beated; Hit – *hitted*

Similarly, they also failed to use the present progressive and past perfect forms of the passive auxiliary, *be*. For instance, wrong answers to items 9, 11 and 15 on Achievement Test 1(see appendix B) are:
…am writing -   is written (instead of is being written)
…is ringing   -   is rang (instead of is being rung")
…have given - was given (have been given)

Such difficulties are traceable to the confusion of adding the -*ed* suffix to past tense form of regular verbs and the irregularities of the irregular forms. For instance, the use of *bursted* instead of *burst* for the past participle. Though the Igbo language uses the suffixes -*ra* and -*re* as in *biara* (*came*) and *jere* (*went*) to indicate the past participle forms of verbs, there are no irregularities. The irregular forms of some verbs present in English is absent in Igbo.

The Mastery of the syntactic structure of the English passive sentence was also difficult.
From the diaries and think aloud protocols although all the participants reported that they were taught that the structure of the English passive (subject + be+ past participle + by + NP) differs from other sentence structures in English they still had difficulty constructing the structure, especially when the verb group is complex, the active sentence is in the negative (with any form of the verb *do*) or the subject is absent. They also had difficulty distinguishing between the primary auxiliary *be* and the passive auxiliary *be*. This is evident in their failure to use the correct forms of the following verbs group: …*are watching*, - …*are watched* (instead of *are being watched*); …*is helping - is helped* (instead of *is being helped*); *is ringing – is rang/ rung* (instead of *is being rung*). Alternatively, some of them used the expletives it sentence structure or another active sentence structure. For example: *It is her picture they are showing us/ they showed us her picture*.

To 22 (73.33%) participants the present and past progressive tense are confused with the passive voice verb structure. These participants' failure to add the passive auxiliary to the main verb is traceable to this confusing syntactic structure. These findings agree with the studies cited earlier that the syntactic configuration of the English passive voice poses challenges to ESL learners.

In relation to the learning strategies the sampled Igbo

ESL learners adopted to overcome difficulties in learning English passive sentence the findings revealed that the participants adopted affective strategy, cognitive strategy and memory strategy.

Affective strategy

The majority of the participants (22; 73.33%) complained that they had problems with learning the passive Verb Phrase (VP) structure. The shift from the active verb group structure to the passive verb group and the systematic order of auxiliary verb in the passive verb structure pose a great difficulty, especially when an aspectual form (progressive or perfective) is involved. This is because the passive auxiliary *be* can co-occur with any combination of auxiliary verbs: modal + Passive + LV (*will be driven/ jumped*); Perf+ Pass + LV (*has been driven/ jumped*); Prog + Pass + LV (*is being driven/ jumped*); modal + Perf + Pass + LV (*should have been driven/ jumped*); modal + Prog + Pass +Perf + LV (*may be being driven / jumped*); modal + perf + prog + pass + LV (*could have been being driven/ jumped*).

The students' limited understanding of English passive verb phrase (VP) structure and inability to differentiate *been* from *being* made them to see English language as complex and difficult.

However, because of the status of English as the language of tertiary education, and all official communication networks in Nigeria, their attitude towards learning English is positive. As such some of the participants observe that for them to use English effectively they must have a positive attitude towards English and also encouraged themselves since proficiency in English is the hallmark of academic excellence in Nigeria. Of particular note is the diary entry and think-aloud responses of five (16.67%) more confident participants whose affective filters are low. These believe they can learn the passive structure more effectively by looking out for opportunities to practice grammar tasks that help them focus on passive sentence constructions. They therefore developed a conscious, intentional and goal oriented strategy by reading newspaper reports regularly. And this helped them to consciously rehearse any answers (s) they give to any questions(s) on changing active sentences to passive sentences.

Cognitive and memory strategies

14 (46.67%) of the participants had problems with subject – object inversion especially if the sentence contains both direct and indirect objects. They reported that they coped with this problem by invoking their knowledge and understanding of transitive verb complementation. They believe that having "learnt that transitive verbs take

objects (direct and indirect) and that by asking the questions 'what?' and 'who?' after the verb" they can identify the object, doing so could help them to do subject – object inversion required in the passive structure appropriately. However, 3 of them reported that all they did with overcoming the problems of VP structure and subject – object inversion was to memorize the rules for the construction of passive sentences. They believe that such would help them to write passive sentences correctly without much stress.

Responses from the think – aloud protocol revealed that five (5; 16.67%) participants were more confident and had a tendency to take more risks than the less confident ones. Their scores in Test II revealed that they scored well: three (3) scored 8, the other two scored 9 and 7 respectively. They were able to apply what they were taught in class and also their conscious goal oriented strategy.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the features of English Passive the participants had difficulties with are: i) the situations when the passive sentence should be used; ii) how tense and aspect changes; iii) conjugation of the past participle forms of irregular verbs, and distinguishing between *be* as a primary auxiliary and as a passive auxiliary; iv) the syntactic structure of English passive sentences, especially with the sequence of verbs in the VP structure.

These findings reveal that the students lack both grammatical and pragmatic knowledge to enable them construct and use the English passive sentence correctly and appropriately. These difficulties are mostly attributed to lack of the passive structure in Igbo language and the discourse structure of Igbo (Emenanjo, 2015; Obi-Okoye, 2008; Umoh, 1996, etc). To overcome these difficulties, the participants adopted some grammar learning strategies such as affective strategy, cognitive strategy and memory strategy.

Given the crucial role of English in Nigeria's tertiary education and benefits that accrue from having a high proficiency in it for effective communication in school and out-of-school situations, many of the participants' low affective filter helped them to make concerted efforts toward mastering the English passive. This implies that the sustenance of such low affective filter would yield a positive impact on their learning English grammar generally, of which the passive is an aspect. The goal – directed strategy which the 5 more confident participants adopted by reading newspaper reports regularly and looking out for opportunities to practice the task of constructing active sentences and their passive forms show that the integration of real-life authentic resource materials into the teaching and learning of English in Nigeria will go a long way to arousing and sustaining the

students' motivation and improving their performance. This finding agrees with Hinkel (2002) that there is need for the presentation of the passive features in meaningful contexts.

The cognitive strategy they adopted revealed that they tried to invoke their knowledge of transitive verb complementation. While the memory strategy involved memorization of the rules for the construction of English passive sentences. This means that they perceived that if the "subject + to be+ participle" is not mastered, the passive structure cannot be formed. This implies that the participants need to be equipped with the rules that underlie and govern the formation of English passive sentence. This finding is in consonance with seeing language learning in L2 situation as more of rule-formation than of habit – formation.

The findings revealed that cognitive – code learning (CCL) method can help students tackle the problems of passivization. Although the researcher used a focus on form mode of teaching the findings revealed that there is need for more explicit teaching. This calls for the devising and using of a flexible hierarchical teaching and learning method and using illustrative sentences from students' experiential backgrounds. That is, a teaching-learning method the teacher can modify and which as well supports the presentation of learning tasks in the order of the level of difficulty involved in their learning and with a variety of real-life practice exercises for the learners.

Pedagogical implications

The findings of this study revealed that the difficulties the students had in learning the English passive sentence are associated with the morpho-syntactic features of the verb group. The obvious pedagogical implications (answer to Research Question 3) are discussed here. To help the students tackle the difficulties requires using an eclectic teaching method: a flexible method that enables a systematic presentation of the learning tasks with the aid of authentic materials in meaningful contexts; one that enables the teacher to present and explain the morpho-syntactic features of the passive sentence explicitly so that the learner does not use any item wrongly through false analogy; a method that gives learners greater opportunity to a wide variety of practice activities, and to create passive sentences from their communicative experiences (Williams, 1990).

Given that the passive is an aspect of English grammar that demands the teaching and learning of verbs, their patterns and conjugation, and active sentences, any method used in teaching it should be flexible enough to accommodate an orderly presentation of all content and use of authentic real-life materials. Therefore, this paper proposes using cognitive-code learning (CCL) method that supports hierarchical presentation of tasks as a good teaching/learning strategy.

Cognitive-code teaching and learning method postulates that language learning entails rule formation. It is a rule-governed behavior. According to Williams (1990, p.49) the underlying principles of CCL include:

1. The frequency with which an item is practiced per see is not as important as the frequency with which it is contrasted with other items with which it may be confused. Thus, it can help both teacher and learners contrast the passive structure with the active structure. Such a contrast will help the students overcome any difficulties resulting from the verb phrase structure.
2. Materials which are presented in a meaning context are more easily learned and retained. This principle gives the teacher the opportunity to systematically present the critical morpho-syntactic features of the passive sentence in meaningful contexts. The performance of 5 more confident students in the tests and the goal-oriented strategy they used affirm that in addition to explicit teaching of contrasting forms, presenting such forms in meaningful contexts would also raise the learners' affective strategies towards more realistic social strategies. This invariably would facilitate learning, aid retention and improve proficiency.
3. Language skills are better learned if conscious attention is paid to the understanding of their critical features. The critical features of the passive voice should be well spelt out and sufficient practice for generating correct forms given to the students.

Therefore CCL is considered suitable for helping Igbo ESL learners to tackle the problems of passivization. Its underlying principles supports frequent and conscious learning of the grammar of passive voice with practice materials presented in real-life meaningful contexts, thereby spelling out the correct forms and eliminating the possibilities of false analogy. That such more frequent numerous kind of association with the target items would facilitate better learning and retention is not questionable. Thus using CCL provides the Igbo (and other ESL) learners with a point of reference and a means for comparing the syntactic and semantic functions of nouns and noun phrases and the verb group structure of active and passive sentences. This would also impart positively on their grammatical judgement.

On the basis of the participants' difficulty in using the passive structure, a hierarchical teaching method should also be adopted. This is because hierarchical teaching embraces some aspects of CCL method and as well helps the teacher to outline the learning tasks which the learners need to know in order to master the passive sentence. It also supports inductive teaching-learning method which involves starting from simple tasks to complex ones, from known to unknown. This is a method allows both teacher and learner to sort out and explore concepts that support the learning task in order for the learners to recognize how the target task is constructed. Thus, it requires a clearly defined arrangement of the learning tasks to be mastered by the learners so as to raise their awareness and consciousness of the target task. This implies that effective teaching and consequent learning of the passive sentence will be achieved if the teacher presents the learning tasks from simple to complex, with the desired passive structure being the terminal task. Once the learners understand what each rung on the passive sentence "ladder" is and means, they can understand how they all fit together and how they differ from the active sentence.

Based on the finding that the morpho-syntactic structure of the passive verb phrase posed the greatest difficulty, this paper proposes the following hierarchy as the teaching-learning route for presenting learning tasks:
i) Transitive verbs: These have to be mastered first in active sentences because only transitive verbs are passivized.
ii) Subject and object of the active sentence: This is because of their positional change in the passive sentence.
iii) Contrast of the passive auxiliary verb "be" with the other uses of "be' as a main verb, or linking verb or when it is used to show progressive tense.
iv) Past participle form of verbs: As a constant feature of the passive verb group, its various forms (regular and irregular) should be well taught and learnt.
v) Tense/ Aspects: This should be properly taught and learnt because the aspect of "be" in the active sentence is the same for the auxiliary "be" and it is "be" that undergoes change according to aspects and tense.
vi) Subject – verb concord: This applies to both active and passive sentences.
vii) Active sentence: Active sentences must contain one subject with at least one object. This is because proper positioning of subject and object in active sentence facilitates subject – object inversion in the passive sentence and the meaning of the sentence.
viii) Exchange of subject – object positions of active sentence: This ushers in the passive construction because it involves inversion of subject – object positions.
ix) The 'by + agent': This ushers in the treatment of passive sentences with agents and passives without agents. This should be properly taught and learnt because it explains the situations when the use of passive is necessary in order to avoid ambiguity.

If this presentation is systematically followed at the early stages of learning (primary and secondary levels) and it flows and gives the formula: "Subject + be + main verb + en + by + agent" of the terminal task (passive sentence), learning and construction of the passive structure at later stages (tertiary levels) would only involve remediation of errors and consolidation of learned tasks.

Given that the participants adopted some strategies in order to overcome the difficulties with using the English passive sentence, especially with the morpho-syntactic

features of the verb group the pedagogical implication is that the content and tasks for teaching and learning of the passive sentence at the tertiary level should be more of a progressive systematic presentation of the varied morpho-syntactic features of the verb group of the passive sentence in contrast with their active counterparts. The importance of passive sentences in enhancing variety of sentence in academic writing demands that the content, method and materials used for its teaching and learning should address these difficulties. They should remedy errors, reinforce and enhance learning, and promote the learners' strategies that positively influence the learning of the terminal task and English language in general.

To enhance effective teaching and learning of the English passive sentence at primary and secondary levels, it is recommended that meaningful materials and practice exercises drawn from students' experiential background or other real-life contexts which illustrate the features (forms, functions and meaning) of the passive sentence to be learned should be used. The materials and exercises should also be such that make it easy for the teacher to explain the situations when the passive sentences are used and the reasons for using the passive voice. Using such materials would invariably affect the students' affective filters and their anxiety levels positively, thereby bringing about a good performance in the construction and use of passive sentences.

Conclusion

This paper presents the difficulties some Igbo ESL learners at the university level encountered in learning the English passive sentences and the grammar (language) learning strategies they adopted in order to overcome the difficulties. The difficulties are associated more with the morpho-syntactic features of the passive verb group. To tackle these problems, the students adopted different learning strategies: affective, cognitive and memory strategies. The findings have pedagogical implications related to the content, method, materials and practice exercises. The implication is that there is need for the content of grammar instruction on the English passive, especially at the secondary school level to address in details its forms, functions and meanings using materials drawn from the students' experiential background or other real-life contexts. Achieving this involves using a flexible hierarchical teaching-learning method that supports the integration of real-life materials that will raise the learner's awareness of the structure of the English passive sentence. It is hoped that the findings of this paper and the pedagogical implications spelt out would be beneficial to the ESL teachers.

However, the limitations of this study in terms of the number of participants and the focus on only first year university students do not warrant full generalization. Hence it is suggested that further and more inclusive research at this level and other levels of education on the challenges of Igbo learners in learning and using the English passive voice and the learning strategies should be carried out.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declared that the research was conducted without any commercial or financial relationship or interest that could be construed as a potential conflict of interests.

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Appendix A.

Table 1. Percentage, mean and standard deviation of test 1.

Score (20 items)	Frequency	%
18	1	3.33
16	1	3.33
13	2	6.67
12	2	6.67
11	3	10.00
10	4	13.33
9	2	6.67
8	6	20
5	3	10
3	2	6.67
0	4	13.33
Mean = 7.97		
SD = 4.84		

Table 2. Percentage, mean and standard deviation of Test II.

Score (12 items)	Frequency	%
9	1	3.33
8	3	10
7	6	20
6	3	10
5	2	6.67
4	4	13.33
3	3	10
2	5	16.67
1	1	3.33
0	2	6.67
Mean = 4.63		
SD = 2.53		

Appendix B

Achievement tests

Test 1

Change the following active sentences into passive sentences. Pay attention to tenses.

1)   The hospital admitted him.
2)   Simbi has swept the room.
3)   Her mother beats Jimmy everyday.
4)   Esther broke the plates.
5)   The boys are watching the football match.
6)   The children feed the dog everyday.
7)   Juan reads a book daily.
8)   John gave Mary a gift.
9)   I am writing a song for you.
10)   Ali cuts the grass every Saturday.

11)   The head girl is ringing the bell.
12)   Someone might have cooked the rice.
13)   Ngozi washed my dress yesterday.
14)   I did not allow her to go.
15)   You have given me nothing.
16)   He has warned you not to be late the school.
17)   The teacher is helping her to write.
18)   I will return the book tomorrow.
19)   They are showing us her picture.
20)   You should have written the letters.

Test II

Fill in the blank spaces with the appropriate form and tense of the verbs in bracket in this news report about flooding.
Property worth millions of Naira -1 - (be, damage) by flood which –2 - (sweep) across Northern Nigeria last week. The River Niger -3 - (overflow) its bank after two days of heavy rain. Many houses - 4 - (be, wash) away. However, many people   - 5 - (be rescue) from the flood. No loss of life –6- (has, be, report) as NEMA officials who received hundreds of calls for help promptly responded. The depth of the flood - 7-   (reach) twenty metres deep in some places. Roads - 8- (be, block) by fallen trees and electricity lines   - 9-   (be, bring) down, leaving thousands of houses in Lokoja without electricity. Though thousands of people -10-   (be, render) homeless, "everything possible is -11-   (do) to get things back to normal", a NEMA official -12-   (say).

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