LINGUISTIC RELEVANCE OF SCAFFOLDS AND FICTION AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

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Abstract:

This paper considered the linguistic relevance of scaffolds and fiction among young people. It considered how the young people could be helped with the use of scaffolds at different levels to teach or instruct them either in school or society concerning importance of linguistics in fiction. Through fiction, the young ones could be helped to improve upon their linguistic challenges using scaffolds as they receive assistance from more knowledgeable people until they could carry out difficult task on their own. This is done in relation to Zone of Proximal Development. The four skills of language, importance of fiction, problems encountered by young people can be resolved with the help of this study. The teachers in schools, parents, peers can act as teachers or guides to help the young ones or students create interest in fiction. Through fiction, the moral values of the society will be respected by our young people and help to mold and remould their lives and thereby helping our society and our nation to be devoid of moral decadences at different levels.

Keywords: linguistics, scaffolds, fiction, assistance, young people

Introduction

Linguistics is concerned with the nature of language and communication. It includes the following subareas: phonetics (the study of the production, acoustics and hearing of speech sounds) morphology (the structure words) syntax (the structure of sentences) semantics (meaning) pragmatics (language in context). The four skills of language are listening, speaking, reading and writing are to be well mastered for any person to communicate

intelligibly either in writing or speaking. Listening is a receptive skill. It is an essential tool for receiving information in any learning situation. Listening is more than hearing sounds and noises; it is the process of hearing, identifying and interpreting spoken language (Gbenedio, 1996).

Speaking is a productive skill and it is the ability to produce, pronounce and comprehend sounds accurately. Speaking is one of the linguistic skills that showcases that a learner has been taught a language. Reading is a literacy skill. It is a vital means by which a reader assimilates and interprets ideas, facts and information printed materials. Reading is regarded as the core factor in learning process because all academic and professional competencies depend on one's ability to read. Writing on the other hand, deals with the graphical representation of a person's thoughts, ideas, feelings and imaginations in print or electronic forms. As an important learning tool, no learner can be successfully learn without scribbling something on paper either as feedback or materials for reading at a later time (Ofodu & Oso, 2017).

Whosoever that does not possess a good mastery of the four skills will have people look down on them as they make grammatical mistakes or inability to read and interpret excerpts. This will also affect students and young ones in their academics and interaction with people within the school environments and society at large. The level of language skills among school children in Nigeria is fast deteriorating along with academic performance (Olanipekun, Atteh, Zaku & Sarki, 2014).

Considering the fact that many of our young people are students facing challenges in these four skills of language need help and immense assistance to bail them out of their struggles with these skills to be able to communicate effectively, answer questions correctly either orally or in written form and ability to read and understand since ability to read is the bedrock of education.

According to Kolawole (2009) reading interest of secondary school students is dwindling fast and if nothing is done to improve the students low reading interest in secondary schools, students will soon get frustrated and lose sight of the benefits of good reading habits. Also, other pedagogical contents of the English Language like phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology need to be well developed to make the young people and students to excel in their academics.

Several cases of moral decadence are witnessed today in our nation, lack of moral values, respect for elders, faithfulness, endurance, honesty, unity, love, commitment, humility, perseverance and hard work are all declining very fast as students and young ones are not able to actualise the values of good teaching which would have given a good orientation for useful living in the society (Daniel, 2003).

Many of our young people are novice when it comes to the culture and norms of their lands. Worse of all, those that have knowledge of their good culture are not ready to allow the good cultures o triumph rather they allow evil to triumph. Many are throwing their pearls before swine. Abnormalities are gradually becoming normal in the society. Young ones want to fast track everything to be at their own advantage at whatever cost even at the detriments of other people's lives. Lives are not valued by most of our young ones. At a slight of discomfort, they are ready to go on rampage to destroy properties and lives.

Good names of the family that are treasured and valued before are no longer valued by our young ones. They want to make 'their quick money' this is why you see them all over the place going into bad gangs to perpetrate different forms of evil, criminal acts to make money like *yahoo-yahoo (plus)*.

The word fiction comes from the Latin *fictio* which means "*the act of making, fashioning, or molding"*. Fiction comes in in two main forms: the novel and the short story (Wikipedia). Fiction is the classification for any story or setting that is derived from imagination- in other words, not based strictly on history or fact. Modern fiction encompasses an extensive range of types and styles, including science fiction, romance and mystery. Fiction can be expressed in a variety of formats, including writings, live performances, films, television programs, animations, video games, and role-playing games, through the term originally and most commonly refers to the narrative forms of literature (literary fiction), including novels, novellas, short stories, and plays. Fiction is occasionally used in its narrowest sense to mean simply any "literary narrative". Fiction is an act of creative imagination, its total faithfulness to the real-world is not usually assumed by its audience (Cortex, 2011).

Gottschall (2012) conducts a research and concludes that fiction consistently does mold us. The more deeply we are cast under a story's spell, the more potent its influence. In fact, fiction seems to be more effective at changing beliefs than nonfiction, which is designed to persuade through argument and evidence. Studies show that when we read nonfiction, we read with our shields up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and his seems to make us rubbery and easy to shape.

This study seeks to know whether fiction can help the young ones to overcome their linguistic challenges. Can scaffolds be of good assistance to young ones to develop their linguistic inputs through fiction?

Understanding Scaffolds

The concept of scaffolding, was introduced by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) to explain an adult controlling those elements or the task that are essentially beyond the learner's capacity,

thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence. Later, Gibbons (2002) describes scaffolding as a temporary structure that is often put up in the process of constructing a building. As each bit of the new building is finished, the scaffolding is taken down. The scaffolding is temporary, but essential for the construction of the building. Vygotsy (1978) in his social cognitive theory stated that children who, by themselves, are able to perform a task at a particular cognitive level, in cooperation with others and with adults, will be able to perform at a higher level, and this variation between the two levels is the child's "Zone of Proximal Development". The zone of proximal development, commonly referred to as ZPD, is an important principle of Vygotsky's work. ZPD is defined as the range of task that a child can perform with the help and guidance of others but cannot yet perform independently.

Within the zone of proximal development, there are two levels. First, we have the actual development level. This is the upper limit of tasks one can perform independently. The second level is the level of potential development. This is the upper limit of tasks that one can perform with the assistance of more competent individual. Depending on environments and situations the teachers in school, parents at home, and pastors in different churches or peers at their arena or elders in the society can assist the learners or young ones or an individual to act as scaffold. In simple language, scaffolding as a strategy is when a teacher, adult or peer provides assistance to the learner or young one who is a novice in a particular field is assistive to level of what he or she cannot do on his own from the arena of his prior knowledge to level of what he or she cannot do on his own and immediately the learners understands what to do, the scaffold or the assistance is removed or withdrawn.

There are different types of scaffolds: macro and micro, collective/peer scaffolding, software scaffolding, distributed scaffolding, teacher-provided scaffolding, soft and hard scaffolding, reciprocal scaffolding, technical scaffolding and directive/supportive scaffolding. In education, scaffolding refers to a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively toward stronger understanding and ultimately, greater independence in the learning process. The term itself offers the relevant descriptive metaphor: teachers provide successive levels of temporary support that help students reach higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition that would not be able to achieve without assistance. Like physical scaffolding, the supportive strategies are incrementally removed when they are no longer needed, and the teacher gradually shifts more responsibility over the learning process to the student.

Scaffolds and Fiction: Any relationship?

The teaching process can also be compared to the process of constructing a building. So, the term scaffolding is described as the assistance given to a learner while he or she is trying a new skill. The ability of the learner determines whether the assistance increase or decrease according to the accomplishment of the task on his or her own (Anihigileri 2006; Wachyunni, 2015).

Vytgotsky's explains social interaction as an important way in which children learn knowledge available in their culture without needing to reinvent it. Parents, adults, caregiver's teachers and peers play important roles in the process of instructions, comments and feedback to students because they also communicate with teachers by conveying their problems or their answers in an integrative manner. Children also use conversations in working with their peers in handling exercises, projects and problems. Through this, they exchange ideas and receive information, gaining understanding and developing knowledge. Jannelle (2017) opines that if you want do not scaffold a lesson, then it's like teaching a child to ride their bike without the training wheels on. It's essential that we teachers do not say "I would like you to write a three-page essay." We have to give our students the tools to know what to do and how to write that essay. This is expressing the importance of scaffold to students or young people. One of the first teaching strategies a teacher supposed to use is scaffolding. It's providing students with a tool for better understanding. If you were beginning a new chapter, you might read key vocabulary words, preview the chapter, or read a few chunks of the first chapter together as the class. Scaffolding is making sure students have a firm grasp of the information that they about to learn by giving them tools to succeed. Jannelle identifies five scaffolding strategies: modeling, prior knowledge, cooperative learning, incorporate visual aids and check for understanding. The fiction text may be in form of modeling where by some students may act ads characters in the text. Peers in turn interact as they discuss the text.

Examining the Influence of Fiction and Young Minds

With the aid of scaffolds, the young ones could be helped to create interest in fiction through which they could improve their reading habits. Ability to develop their vocabularies in English language as they meet new words in the reading of text fiction and even ability for better interaction with peers. Through the reading of Bible passages and explanation in our churches the children are imbibing good reading culture, moral values and even able to improve upon their communicative skills. Fiction is taken beyond the school environment.

According to Ibrahim (2005) teachers should endeavor to motivate students with the use of instructional materials by taking time to explain, summarize any recommended texts to students. Students are advised to develop interest in reading and not just to read to pass examinations because reading literary texts could also aid understanding in reading comprehension. Without good reading habit then students may not be able to go far in studying literature texts to have a good success.

Cortez (2011) gave six important reasons to have time for the study of fiction: First, fiction reveals truth. A good story makes us experience truth. Fiction is great for conveying information and makes information sink into our bones in powerful ways. Secondly, fiction strengthens people's imagination. Imagination is the skill of seeing the world as it could be. Through fiction, the imaginative power of an individual is enhanced. Whatever that is imagined can be written down for other to read and benefit. By reading a written description of an event or a place, your mind is responsible for creating that image in your head. Thirdly, fiction manifests beauty.

Like any art form, good fiction has a unique ability to display beauty. The right combination of words, a powerful metaphor, and a well described scene, each of these uses the written word to display beauty in ways that no other art form can. And, although non-fiction has the same ability to manifest beauty through the written word, there's something in the beauty of narrative that's impossible to capture in any other medium. Fourthly, fiction expands horizons. We are storied beings; our stories define us. A good story draws us in, unveiling reality from a new perspective. Fiction expands one's window of reality, seeing reality through another's eyes. And by drawing one in and making one part of the story, it reveals these new perspectives in ways that non-fiction typically does not.

Furthermore, fiction makes better writers. Fiction authors use language differently than non-fiction writers. And any good writer needs exposure to a variety of writing techniques. Each reveals a new way of writing that can expand the tool available to the aspiring author. Good fiction shapes good writers.

According to Streetei (2005), reading fiction develops essential human psychological traits: empathy, abstract thinking, and the ability to connect the general to the specific. Speaking of super-powers; not only is fiction time-travel, its mind reading too. You will interact with another person's mind in a deep, unrivaled way as you read fictional stories. Fiction is a deep and individual art form that reveals the contours of an author's mind in veiled and subtle ways. It is a deep conversation between author and reader.

Streetei (2015) affirms that fiction also reveals its truths via storytelling techniques that non-fiction cannot use. Fiction uses veils, tropes, archetypes, and devices to provide an experimental virtual reality. The stories may connect to our emotions in ways non-fiction cannot, giving a view into the imagined and private minds of others. Fictional stories have

the ability to show us depth and breadth in the facets of other people's lives. This is where our empathy comes in; by deeply experiencing characters who are different from us, our horizons are expanded.

Fiction requires a deep comprehension to grasp the real purpose of fiction reading. According to Ofodu (2009), comprehension is the ultimate reason for any reading effort. She opines that if readers can read the words of the text but do not understand, they are not really reading. Also, Najwa (2001) affirms that the elements of narrative literature plot, character, setting and theme foster reading comprehension as students are presented with various activities which would make reading easily comprehensible by utilizing specific strategies. Also, good communication is also required to be able to narrate or discuss fiction. It requires interaction of people. Also, good communication is also required to be able to narrate or discuss fiction.

In the same vein, Kirstein (2017) describes fiction as a gateway to reading. It motivates to know what happens next as you turn pages with eagerness. It compels one to learn new languages, to think new thought to keep going and a discovery that reading is pleasurable. Once you learn that, you can read everything. Fiction builds empathy. By enhancing empathy, fiction reduces social friction. At the same time, story exerts a kind of magnetic force, drawing us together around common values. When you watch TV or see a film, you are looking at things happening to other people. Empathy is a tool for building people into groups, for allowing us to function as a society and not as self-centered individual. You're also finding out something as you read, vitally important for making your way in the world. Through fiction, young people or students can improve their reading and communication competences in English through reading literary texts. It is impossible for an English teacher to make an appreciable impact in the teaching of communicative skills unless the student has a healthy reading habit. Fiction is about the best way by which one can be exposed to new words, idioms and current usages. Fiction enables the student to develop the intuition for correctness so that when he writes a report or correspondence, he instinctively knows when a sentence deviates from the norm in English Daniel (2013).

Kolawole (2009) affirms reading interest of secondary school students is dwindling fast and if nothing is done to improve the students low reading interest in secondary schools, students will soon get frustrated and lose sight of the benefits of good reading habits. The novel (fiction) can also be used to teach reading especially when learners are exposed to a wide range of suitable and interesting novels. Reading novel aloud can serve as a means of second language development and the act can also be used to teach pronunciation. This practice can also help inculcate in the learners, the love for extensive reading. This will promote competence in the use of the second language since it will be used to illustrate and reinforce aspects of language use.

Several cases of decadence in our nation could be checked through fiction as a tool for promoting the moral values of respect for elders, faithfulness, endurance, honesty, unity, love, commitment, humility, perseverance and hard work, these are all declining very fast as students are not able to actualize the values of teaching Literature-in-English that would have given a good orientation for useful living in the society, according to Daniel (2013). Ibrahim (2016) affirms that many students lack confidence to communicate in English Language with others or even participate in the class discussions because they do not trust their competence. Fear or lack of confidence does not allow some students to speak fluently thus, making most students performs poorly in both internal and external examinations. Plays are written to be read aloud. So, drama if properly taught can be used to improve learner's spoken language and develop self confidence in speaking. This can be achieved when students are exposed to play reading, role playing, acting, paying special attention to the relationship between stress and information on one hand and meaning on the other hand. There is a great loss of cultural values and non-smooth transmission in the entire society due to the spate of ethno-religious crises presently threatening the peaceful and corporate existence of Nigerian citizens.

According to Ibrahim (2015), teachers should endeavour to motivate students with the use of instructional materials by taking time to explain, summarize any recommended texts to students. Students are advised to develop interest in reading and not just to read to pass examinations because reading literary texts could also aid understanding in reading comprehension. Without good reading habit the students may not be able to go far in studying literature texts to have a good success.

Linguistic Relevance of Scaffolds and Fiction

With the application of scaffolds to assist the young ones and students in fiction, their linguistic challenges are taken care of as the teachers, adults and even peers help beyond their actual level of development. It helps to build confidence in young ones to read well. This will benefit them in school as they are able to participate fully in activities. Another part of building confidence and self-esteem is to know where you fit into the world. It helps them to have robust and well developed vocabularies that help them to communicate effectively with people. It will help them in their writing skills.

It is a great way to introduce new words and ideas into a child's language- starting with picture books for the very young, working up to more complex novel for teenagers. Fiction based on real-life can also help children with their own life experience- it shows them how diverse the world is and that some people's lives are vastly different to theirs. It helps to develop a child's imagination by introducing new ideas into their world-ideas about

fantastical words, other Planets, different points in time and invented characters. It'll encourage them to realize that they can, and should, imagine anything they want. Several cases of moral decadences in our nation could be checked through fiction as a tool for promoting the moral values of respect for elders, faithfulness, endurance, honesty, loyalty, love, commitment, humility, perseverance and hard work.

Remalyn (2013) conducts a study on "Scaffolding strategy in teaching Mathematics: its effect on students' performance and attitude in Philippine." He uses true experimental design. The study reveals that the experimental group performs better which indicates that scaffolding strategy enhance mathematics learning. Data further reveals that the mean ratings of the experimental group in terms of the four attitudinal domains improve after the study. This means that the participants in the experimental group benefit from the scaffold lessons when it comes to boosting their confidence, reducing frustration and anxiety in learning mathematics, and developing more positive perceptions to their teacher's attitudes.

This study is also relevant to the present study because this study is out to boost students' confidence, reduce frustration and learning of fiction and to help them to create positive attitude in learning.

Safadi and Rababah (2012) conduct a study and use a quasi-experimental design. The study reveals that scaffolding aids the students effectively in increasing their reading comprehension achievement in the EFL classroom context. They compare two scaffolding groups as experimental groups and two traditional groups, taught by a conventional method, as control group. They discovered that those taught with scaffolding instruction improves in reading comprehension achievement and skills related to finding main ideas, drawing inferences, critical thinking, and vocabulary.

In summary, through the help of scaffolding fiction teaching, the linguistics challenges of the young people are well attended to in a relaxed atmosphere because in studying the novel or text, students are able to do proper analysis, give judgment, form their opinions and appreciation of the novel, the young people are able to have good reading comprehension, find main ideas, inferences, critical thinking and improve their vocabulary. Through the story line of fiction, different themes of teaching moral values are inculcated into the young ones thereby shaping their lives. Also, respect for cultural values, forming good characters, boldness to stand for truth and thereby eliminating negative influences in the society. Finally, young people can emulate characters that they hear or read about.

Conclusion

It is evident that there is good and copious linguistic relevance of scaffolds and fiction. The four skills of language are well improved upon in the reading of fiction. Assistance are given

to young people and students as they need it through the use of scaffolds and this make learning of fiction interesting and encouraging to the young people. This also assists the student to improve upon their reading culture. Any student at any grade level can benefit from instructional scaffolding. Scaffolding can be applied to any academic task. Scaffolding is useful and relevant to help our young people in learning fiction. It is therefore imperative that adults or teachers adopt the use of scaffolding for young people in learning fiction according to specific situation (topic, text, genre, time and space). The use of scaffolding will be of great help to both teachers/adults and students/young people to make learning of fiction to be student centered and participatory class for the students. It will also help young ones to develop their power of imagination even in writing fiction.

Recommendations

The teachers, parents, adults should make use of scaffolds to assist young people or students in helping them to improve on the linguistic level in relation to fiction. Through scaffolding, students' interest in fiction can be aroused. Fiction reading should be encouraged to make the students have good reading culture. Also, the ills of the society could be corrected as the young ones put into practice what they learn through fiction, thereby our nation becomes devoid of evil acts.

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