

## **Effects of Team Teaching on Students' Academic Achievement In English Language Comprehension**

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the effects of Team Teaching Approach (TTA) on the achievement of students in English language comprehension and how the effects vary across gender. The study employed non randomized pretest-posttest control group quasi experimental design. Intact classes were therefore assigned to the experimental and control groups. The population consisted of 5,171 senior secondary two students made up of 2,407 males and 2,764 females in Onitsha education zone of Anambra State. A total of 189 students (97 males and 92 females) randomly selected from four public secondary schools constituted the sample. Two of the schools selected were used as experimental group while the other two were used as the control group. Two research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Data were collected with one comprehension passage. Data generated were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. The major findings showed that the students taught English language comprehension with team teaching approach achieved significantly higher than those of the control group who were taught with single teacher teaching approach. The female students in TTA group achieved significantly higher than their male counterparts. Based on the finding of this study, it was recommended that team teaching approach should be adopted as a more effective approach to teaching and learning English language comprehension in public secondary schools to enhance academic achievement of students in the subject.*

**Keyword:** *Team teaching, single teacher teaching approach, curriculum.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Language is one of God's greatest endowments on man. Ezeude (2007) defined it as a non-instructive method of communicating ideas, feelings and desires by means of systems of sound and sound symbols. Igbokwe and Egbe (2011) noted that the central role language plays in human existence is most noticeable in educational enterprise. Classroom interactions and activities would be impossible without language.

The English language is one of the most popular and widely used languages of the world. Asudu (2013) stated that foreign languages such as English have always bridged the communication gap among bodies technologically, politically, culturally, socially, economically etc. In Nigeria, apart from the fact that English is the official language used for the purposes of government and administration, it is also that of communication and education at all levels. At the secondary school level, it is studied as a compulsory and core subject. It is also the medium of instruction in all school subjects. Consequently, a student who does not have a proper grasp of both, written and spoken English will experience difficulties in the course of his professional development. English Language has different aspects which are comprehension, summary, essay/letter writing, grammar and oral English. Teacher's task in public secondary schools is to teach all the aspects outlined to a stream.

Comprehension in English language which is the skill of extracting meaning from print is central to reading. Alo (2001) stated that reading comprehension means understanding the writer's meaning or the information he intends to convey. Understanding takes place when writers and readers make the same associations between the text and meanings. In order words, the reader should be able to understand the main ideas and thoughts the writer is trying to convey. According to Udensi and Emele, (2003) in comprehension information is passed from the writer to the reader who tries to isolate concept represented in print. In comprehension, the reader follows the writer's lines of thought, reactivating in his mind the mental pictures and ideas transmitted by the writer. Okafor, Ndeche and Assimonye (2003) pointed out the following three levels at which a reader is expected to operate. The three levels are:

- Between lines what the writer has written
- For implied meaning and
- For critical evaluation

Otagburuagu and Oba, Onuigbo and Okorji (2007) listed the following comprehension skills: setting purpose, reading with questions, identifying main ideas, identifying details, perceiving relationships between ideas, using background knowledge and reading critically. Comprehension therefore tests students' proficiency in both reading rate and vocabulary development. Oba (1981) outlined some reading techniques and habits which will help students to read and comprehend well. They are:

- Reading with purpose;
- Picking out the main ideas through topic sentences and pre-reading
- Linking through verbal and sense links, sentence and paragraphs connectives
- Following the writer's line of development through introduction, body and conclusion.
- Being a questioning reader.

Therefore, comprehension as a basic linguistic skill should showcase the skill of reading and understanding what one reads. However, Otagburuagu et al lamented that many teachers are often guilty of testing comprehension in classrooms rather, than teaching it. In effect, teaching comprehension should not be limited to asking questions on texts without considerations for developing specific skills in students. Hence Adejimola (2007) lamented that there are inadequacies in the teacher's method against the learner-oriented methods.

The practice in public secondary schools is to assign one teacher to a stream to teach the different aspects in English language. The language is scheduled on the school timetable to be taught in each class every day. So it is the teacher's task to teach all the aspects which are: comprehension, summary, essay/letter writing, grammar and oral English and assess students by giving tests, assignments, projects etc and mark them for the purposes of providing feedback. The teacher equally sets examination questions, marks and records them as well. The workload on the teacher is enormous and this accounts for the poor attention given to English language teaching especially comprehension. Onuigbo (1999) described the situation where only one teacher may be required to teach all the aspects of the language which may force him or her to give more time to some aspects while neglecting others. Since the use of the conventional approach of assigning a single teacher to teach the different aspects of English language in a stream seem not to have resulted in improved academic achievement per say, there is need to use another novel approach in order to promote teaching and learning and as such enhance students' academic achievement. One way to address this ugly trend may be to give a trial to Team Teaching Approach (TTA) as an alternative approach to teaching that go beyond the traditional practice of Single Teacher Teaching Approach (STTA).

Team Teaching (TT) is different from single Teacher Teaching (STT) because it involves two or more teachers each with distinctive roles, sharing responsibilities for planning, presentation and evaluation of lessons for the same group of students. Main and Brye (2006) defined team teaching as two or more teachers who combine their talents, expertise, interests and resources to take joint responsibility for any or all aspects of teaching the same students According to Brandenburg (1997) team teaching exposes students to a variety of teaching styles and approaches, which increases the potential for the team to meet the various learning styles of students. However, while team teaching may prove advantageous for many students, some may feel frustration and discontentment about having more than one teacher. But with proper collaboration and cohesiveness within a team, there are vital benefits for those willing to adopt team teaching approach especially in English language classroom. Hence, Hughes and Murwaski (2001) remarked that collaboration cooperation and interaction distinguish team teaching from single teacher teaching. Beyond the advantages of creating, additional time for other academic activities and supportive environment it equally augments the opportunity for intellectual growth, increases student's teacher interaction (Wadkins, Wozniak and Miller, 2004), overcome isolation that is the norm in the conventional single teaching approach (Iheagwam, 2006). For the students, team teaching in English language classroom can help them benefit through the opportunity to receive teaching from teachers for whom the aspect/content is their area of expertise and interest which gives them exposure to diverse perspectives on issues. Leavett (2006) identified three models of team teaching which are interactive, rotational and dispersed models while Goetz (2000) classified team teaching into two categories.

The first category involves a combination of models according to the personalities, strength and philosophies of the team teachers as well as that of the students. In this first category team members teach the same students at the same time within the same classroom. The second category involves a variety of team teaching models in which the instructors work together to prepare the teaching materials but do not necessarily teach the same group of students at the same time. George and Davis-Wiley (2000) explained that team teaching models can be described as weak or strong. This depends on the degree of collaboration integration, interaction and cooperation of the team members in their level of engagement in the teaching of the students. Goetz (2000) further stated that no single model of team teaching automatically results in success for a given teaching situation. Rather any such programme must be planned to suit the curriculum, teachers and students.

The advent of team teaching in education seems to have changed the typical pattern in most schools especially in developed countries. However, what is not so well established is the effect of team teaching at the secondary school level especially on students' academic achievement in English language comprehension. Despite the importance of English language in the school system and the fact that it has been taught and learnt for several decades, students' poor performance and academic achievement in the subject is worrisome. This recorded poor performance of students over the years is of great concern to linguists, educators and in fact the general public. To confirm this assertion, the West African Senior School Certificate Examination Chief examiner's report in English language for May/June (2004) showed a steady deterioration in students' performance in English language. The report showed that most students lacked the ability to write clear and appropriate sentences and to use correctly the conventions peculiar to the language, to think creatively and develop thoughts. They also lacked the ability to select, organize, and arrange relevant information and write concise write up in the language. This implies that students do not properly comprehend what they read in order to clearly express themselves in writing. Comprehension in English language must be attempted by all the candidates which assessed student's proficiency at expressing themselves in writing, vocabulary development and grammatical meaning; Chief examiner's report (2009) showed that many candidates could not express themselves in good English.

... the performance of the candidates were generally poor. Majority of the weaknesses in the scripts of the candidates had to do with little or no exposure to writing skills. Candidates did not show that they were conversant with the required formats in English. (p5).

Adepoju and Oluchukwu (2011) asserted that some researchers and other stakeholders in education industry in the recent past have identified several factors such as student teacher high ratio, some classroom practices among other things as the causes of students' poor performance and academic achievement, especially in external examinations. The suspicion is that the inadequacies of using the single teacher teaching approach may have been partly responsible for students continued poor academic achievement. The standard of English written by majority of senior secondary school students' borders on illiteracy and this may be connected with their inability to read and comprehend printed materials.

The focus of this work therefore was to determine if the teaming of English language teachers in teaching English comprehension enhanced students' achievement in this aspect of English language and the extent to which the achievement varies among gender. Gender differentials in academic achievement have been identified in Nigeria education system. However the extent to which knowledge is dependent on gender appears not to be resolved yet. Study results have been mixed. Some authorities such as (Eze, 2000; Gbodi&Laleye 2006 and Akudolu, 2005) believe that good teaching should break the boundaries of gender while others such as (Opera, 2001 and Obayan, 2006) believe that knowledge is gender-related. This study was therefore carried out to investigate if team teaching approach could be of greater assistance in facilitating students' achievement in English language comprehension vis-à-vis the effect of teaching approaches on achievement of different gender.

**The following research questions guided the study:**

1. What are the mean achievement scores in English language comprehension of students taught with team teaching approach and those taught with single teacher teaching approach?
2. What are the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught English language comprehension using TTA and those taught with STTA?

**Null Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores in English language comprehension of senior secondary two (SSII) students taught with TTA and those taught with STTA
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female students taught English language comprehension using TTA and STTA
3. There is no significant interaction effect of teaching approach (TTA and STTA) and gender on students mean achievement in English language comprehension.

**II. Method**

The study adopted quasi-experimental design. It was a non-randomized pretest-posttest control group. This study was carried out in Onitsha Education zone of Anambra State in Nigeria. The population consisted of five thousand one hundred and seventy one (5,171) senior secondary two (SSII) students drawn from thirty public secondary schools in the zone. A total of one hundred and eighty nine (189) students (97 males and 92 females) randomly selected from four public secondary schools constituted the sample. Two of the selected schools were used as experimental group while the other two were used as the control group. The instruments used for the study were six English language comprehension passages. Five were selected from the scheme of work for Senior Secondary Two (SS2) for second term when the study was carried out. Then one

passage was carefully selected from external examination of past year that is from senior school certificate examination past question set by WAEC was used for the pretest and posttest. Since the passages and the questions on them were selected from the scheme and past standard examination, their validity and reliability must have been tested and ascertained in measuring the art of reading comprehension. However, two experienced English language teachers helped to revalidate the instruments.

The pretest was administered to both the experimental and control groups before the treatment. The treatment lasted for six weeks. The comprehension passages in the second term scheme of work were used for the training. The team teachers taught those in the experimental group with the lesson notes and materials they prepared together while those in the control groups were taught by their regular class teachers alone using what is conventional to them mainly notes they prepared. The post test was administered after the treatment. The teachers marked and scored the scripts while the researcher collated the scores for analysis.

### III. Results

**Table 1: Students' Mean Achievement and Standard Deviation Scores in English Language Comprehension of Students Taught with Team Teaching Approach (TTA) and Single Teacher Teaching Approach (STTA)**

G r o u p	P r e t e s t			P o s t t e s t		Mean Gain Score
	N	M e a n	S D	M e a n	S D	
Experimental	87	11.21	2.63	16.87	2.31	5.66
Control	69	6.17	2.30	9.62	2.96	3.45

Table 1 shows mean scores of 11.21 and 6.17 for TTA group and STTA group respectively for pretest in English Language comprehension, and 16.87 and 9.62 for the posttest. The mean gain score for the TTA group was 5.66 while that of the STTA group was 3.45. This showed that both the TTA group and STTA group improved in their performance after the treatment however, students in the TTA group had a higher gain score than the students in STTA group.

**Table 2: Students' Mean and Standard Deviation Scores in English Language comprehension by Teaching Approach (Team Teaching and Single Teacher Teaching) and Gender.**

G e n d e r	T e a c h i n g Method	P r e - t e s t			P o s t - t e s t			Mean Gain Score
		N	M e a n	S D	N	M e a n	S D	
M a l e	T T A	47	12.08	2.42	47	17.26	2.09	5.18
M a l e	S T T A	29	6.07	2.33	29	8.31	2.62	2.24
F e m a l e	T T A	40	10.18	2.51	40	16.42	2.50	6.24
F e m a l e	S T T A	40	6.25	2.31	40	10.57	2.85	4.32

Table 2 shows mean scores of 12.08 and 6.07 for TTA group (male) and STTA group (male) respectively for pre-test in English Language, while the pretest for their female counterpart in TTA was 10.18 and 6.25 STTA. The mean gain score for the TTA group (Male) 5.18, while their male counterparts in STTA group had 2.24 gain score. For female students, the TTA group had mean gain of 6.24 while the STTA group had 4.32 mean gain score.

**Table 3: Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Students' Mean Achievement Scores in English Language Comprehension by Teaching Method.**

S o u r c e	S	d	M	S	F	p
P r e - T e s t <sup>a</sup>	214.87	1	214.87	39.19		.000*
T e a c h i n g M e t h o d	449.98	1	449.98	82.06		.000*
E r r o r	838.94	153	54.8			
T o t a l	3076.67	155				

Using Analysis of Covariance, there was a statistically significant difference  $F(1,153) = 82.06, P < 0.05$  in mean achievement in English Language Comprehension between students taught English language Comprehension using TTA and those taught with STTA after adjusting for initial differences between the two groups on the covariate (pre-test). The null hypothesis was therefore not supported.

**Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Students' Mean Achievement Scores in English Language Comprehension by Gender.**

S o u r c e	S	S d	f	M	S	F	P
P r e - T e s t	1 8 3 9 . 9 4	1		1 8 3 9 . 9 4		2 2 8 . 4 7	. 0 0 0
G e n d e r	5 6 . 7 6	1		5 6 . 7 6		7 . 0 5	. 0 0 9 *
E r r o r	1 2 3 2 . 1 7	1 5 3		8 . 0 5			
T o t a l	3 0 7 6 . 6 7	1 5 5					

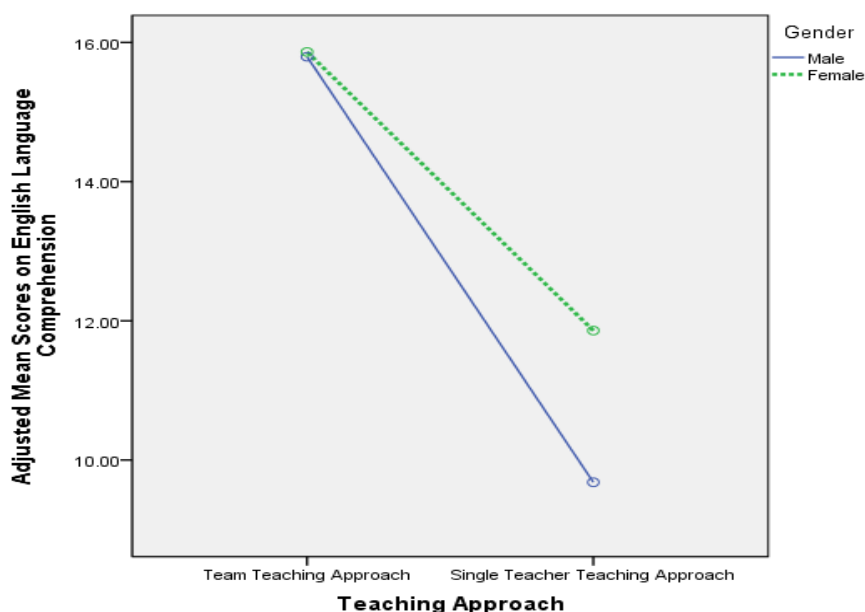
Table 4 shows that there was significant difference  $F(1,153) = 7.05, P<0.05.$  in mean achievement in English language comprehension between male and female students taught using TTA and STTA. The null hypothesis was not supported.

**Table 5: Summary of Analysis of Covariance of Students' Mean Achievement Scores in English Language Comprehension by Teaching Approach and Gender.**

S o u r c e	S	S d	f	M	S	F	p
P r e - T e s t	1 9 3 . 6 9	1		1 9 3 . 6 9		3 8 . 5 3	. 0 0 0
T e a c h i n g A p p r o a c h	4 6 7 . 9 6	1		4 6 7 . 9 6		9 3 . 1 0	. 0 0 0
G e n d e r	4 6 . 2 9	1		4 6 . 2 9		9 . 2 1	. 0 0 3
T e a c h i n g A p p r o a c h * G e n d e r	4 0 . 2 3	1		4 0 . 2 3		8 . 0 0	. 0 0 5 *
Error	7 5 9 . 0 0	1 5 1		5 . 0 3			
T o t a l	3 0 7 6 . 6 7	1 5 5					

\*Significant

There was a statistically significant interaction of teaching approach (TTA and STTA) and gender on students' mean achievement in English Language Comprehension,  $F(1,155) = 8.00, P<0.05.$  The null hypothesis was not supported. This interaction was depicted better in the figure 1 shown below:



**Fig.1:**Interaction effect of teaching approach and gender in English language comprehension as measured by ELAT.

#### IV. Discussion Of Findings

The major purpose of this study was to find out whether team teaching provides better students' academic achievements in English language comprehension than the single teacher teaching approach. It was found that team teaching provides a better academic achievement in English language comprehension. From table 1 the mean gain score of the students taught with the team teaching approach is higher (5.66) than those taught with the single teacher teaching approach (3.45). This result is further confirmed by the result of table 3 which indicates that the teaching approach was a significant factor in the achievement of students in English

language comprehension. This is shown by the rejection of the null hypothesis of no statistical difference in the mean academic achievement scores in English language comprehension of students taught with the team teaching approach and those taught with the single teacher teaching approach. Thus, this result confirms that the group taught English language comprehension with TTA performed better than the group taught with STTA.

The result of this study is supported by the earlier findings of Achor, Imoko and Jimin (2012) and Jang (2006) who proved that team teaching improved the academic achievement of students more than the single teacher teaching approach. Though their work is not in English language but their report is essential to this study because both involve school subject in which students' academic achievement is poor especially in external examination.

The reason that may have made team teaching in this study effective is the fact as reported by Wadkins, Wozniak and Miller (2004) that team-taught classes provide valuable learning experiences and increased student-teacher interaction. Again, the findings go to buttress the theory that when the tasks are divided, team members give and receive moral support as they discuss ideas and processes for improved instruction for their students. The fact that one teacher did not teach all the comprehension passages created much room for the teachers to pay more attention to both lesson preparation and interaction with their students. The students had greater opportunity to have their questions answered thereby removing the stress normally associated with learning difficult lessons. This is because such lessons are more helpful, challenging and interesting (Hinton & Dowling 1998 and Mckee & Day 1992).

However, this finding is not in line with the report of Igwe (2006) that the team teaching approach is not superior to the single teacher teaching approach per class.

Another major finding of this study is that there is gender difference in academic achievement in English language comprehension when taught with team teaching approach. The result indicated that differences existed between the mean gain scores of males (5.18) and that of their female (6.24) counterparts. That is to say, that female performed better than the males in English language comprehension when taught with TTA. In table 4, the result indicated that gender a significant factor in students' achievement in English language comprehension. This difference was in favour of females. The female students achieved higher when taught with the team teaching approach than their male counterparts. This agreed with Opara (2001) who reported that females perform better in languages than the males while males do better in science oriented courses. However, the findings of this study is not in line with Achor, Imoko and Jimin (2012) who reported that gender was not found to be a factor in the team teaching approach because both male and female students exposed to the method showed no significant difference in their mean achievement. This finding that female students in the experimental group gained in achievement more than their male counterparts is at variants with Akudolu (2005).

This may be attributed to the assertion of (Dufour, 2004 & Timmon, 2006) who explained that collaboration is a shared commitment on the part of all the team teachers to meet students' learning needs and help them make the highest academic achievement possible. The presence of two skilled and experienced teachers in the class each teaching differently would have exposed the students to learning the English language comprehension in diversified ways especially the female students leading them to higher achievement.

Another major purpose of the study was to find out the interaction effect of teaching approach and gender on students academic achievement in English language comprehension. It was found out that there was significant interaction effect of teaching approach (TTA and STTA) and gender on students' achievement in English language comprehension,  $F(1,155) = 8.00, P < 0.05$ . The findings implied that the interaction had a significant effect on students' achievement in English language comprehension. Table 5 shows that there was significant interaction of teaching approach (TTA and STTA) and gender in English comprehension. TTA had effect on the gender though it was more effective with the female students.

## **V. Conclusion**

From the results obtained from the investigation into the effects of team teaching approach on students' academic achievements in English comprehension the following conclusions were drawn:

The study has proved that TTA used in teaching English language comprehension is more effective than the STTA. This has therefore provided empirical basis for improving and enhancing classroom teaching and learning of English language especially the comprehension aspect. This is evident from the fact that the group taught with TTA performed significantly higher than the groups that were taught with STTA. Again, the female students in TTA group achieved significantly higher than their male counterpart. There was also a significant interaction between teaching approach and gender. This shows that while TTA was more effective with the female participant the males appeared to have benefited more with STTA.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research study, the following recommendations were made; Teachers should be encouraged to adopt team teaching approach in their classroom service delivery especially now that

the curriculum is enlarged. This too is vital in view of the large students' population more especially in the public secondary schools. The adoption of team teaching will help to correct students' poor attitude towards the study of English language comprehension particularly the male students.

Again, many serving teachers are ignorant of the vital contributions TTA will contribute to their professional development, so relevant government bodies should organize workshops, conferences and seminars to educate them. Teachers should as matter of commitment use appropriate instructional materials to aid students to learn better. Federal and State ministries of education, curriculum experts and even textbook authors should encourage teachers through the various means available to them to incorporate team teaching as an effective approach to enhance achievement in students' learning.

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