

## **EFFECT OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING METHOD ON SECONDARY STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TENSES**

**Ogbonne U. Torty (Ph.D)**  
**Professor G.C. Offorma**  
Faculty of Education  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

### **Abstract**

*This study examined the effect of collaborative learning method on secondary school students' achievement in English language tenses. One research question was posed and one null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The design of the study was the non-equivalent pre-test, post-test control group quasi –experimental research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the schools used for the study. Simple random sampling was used to draw 217 senior secondary two (SS2) students used for the study. The experimental group was taught using the collaborative learning method while the control group was taught using the lecture method. The instrument used for data collection was the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT). The instrument was face validated by experts from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA). The results indicated that students taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method recorded significantly larger achievement more than those taught using the lecture method. Based on the findings it was concluded that the study provided an empirical evidence of the efficacy of collaborative learning method in enhancing students' achievement in English language tenses. It was then recommend that teachers should adopt and practise collaborative learning method in their various schools.*

### **Introduction**

English language is one of the many languages spoken by man. English is the official language of Nigeria. It is the language of politics, religion, mass communication, trade and commerce, education, science and technology. According to Azikiwe (1998), Nigerians speak numerous distinct dialects, so English is learnt in school as a second language for effective communication



within and outside Nigeria. This is in line with Umaru's (2005) ideas that in spite of the multi-lingual nature of Nigeria, English language helps Nigerians to share ideas and feelings with one another without necessarily understanding one another's language. English language is a tool for effective learning of other subjects and major criteria for assessing the quality of any senior school certificate examination results. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the basic skills of English language.

One of the factors that make the user of any language proficient is the proper application of the structure of the language. Tenses are aspect of English language structure which students misuse in essay writing in both internal and external examinations. Ike (2000) noted that tense refers to a verb modified to indicate the time at which an action took place and sometimes the degree of the completeness of such action. Bamgbose (2003) stated that several errors that occur in English language arise from the improper mastery of verb forms and tenses by students. Reports from the English language chief examiners of West African Examination Council (2005) reveal that the major cause of the students' poor achievement in English language was their inability to handle the sequence of tenses properly in their essay writing. Adofo, Burgess and Burgess, Idowu and Sogbesan (1998) upheld that tenses give problems to a large number of students.

The lecture method which is mostly used to teach English language in schools makes the students to become passive listeners as the teacher dominates the teaching/learning activities. According to Ale (2006), the students' potentials are rarely used to the fullest and impatience rather than enthusiasm is generated when taught English Language using the lecture method. This method contributes to the students' persistent poor academic achievement in English language tenses which affects their performance in English language.

Collaborative learning is a method in which students at various performance levels work together in small groups towards a common academic goal (Gokhale, 1995). The students participate actively in the lessons; help each other to learn while the teacher becomes a facilitator of learning. The group members become so united that they respect each other's opinion, tolerate and resolve differences amicably. This forms the basis for healthy social growth and may likely influence student's achievement in English language tenses. The study sought to determine the effect of collaborative learning methods on students' achievement in English language tenses.

### Research Question

- What are the relative mean achievement scores of students taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method and those taught using the lecture method

### Hypothesis

- H<sub>01</sub> There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method and those taught using the lecture method.

### Method

The research design was quasi-experimental, non equivalent pre-test, post-test control group design. The study was conducted in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

### Sample of the study

The sample for the study was made up of 217 SS2 students. The schools from where the students were drawn were sampled using stratified random sampling based on gender and location. In each school, two intact SS2 classes were randomly sampled, one class for experimental group and the other one for the control group. Balloting was used to assign the classes to experimental and control groups, while the students in the experimental classes were placed into groups of five members using balloting without replacement.

### Instrument for Data Collection

A researcher-constructed English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) was used for data collection. The instrument was face validated by three experts in the field of English language from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and one graduate of Education/English who has been teaching the subject for more than twenty years in secondary schools. The instrument was trial tested using twenty representative sample from another school outside those sampled for the study. The trial test scores were used for the estimation of the reliability of the instrument using Kuder-Richardson formula 20 (K-R-20). The reliability coefficient was 0.73



### Experimental Procedure

The experimental group was taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method while the control group was taught using the lecture method. The treatment in both groups lasted four weeks. The students' regular English language teachers in the schools sampled for the study were used to teach both the experimental and control groups under the guidance of the researcher. The teachers who taught the experimental group were trained on how to conduct the collaborative learning before the experiment started. The ELAT was administered as pre-test before the experiment started.

### The Collaborative Learning Method

One of the class activities used in collaborative learning was the round robin brainstorming (Galvin, 1996). This involved dividing the students into small groups with one person appointed as the recorder. A leader was also appointed in each group to moderate the discussion. The teacher discussed generally in the class the tenses she wanted the students to study for a particular lesson. The students then moved to their various groups and sat round a table to do the assignments. The teacher presented the assignment to the students as follows:

- An essay passage with mixed tenses was given to the students to identify the tenses and classify them under simple present, simple past and simple future.
- They were also given a passage with wrong tenses to re-write using the correct tenses.
- Finally, they were given a passage to fill the gaps with the correct tenses of the verbs enclosed in brackets.

After the brain-storming ('think time') members of the group shared responses with one another round robin style as follows: the recorder wrote down the answers of the group members. The person next to the recorder identified and classified a verb and each person in the group in order gave an answer. Then all the members of the group came to a consensus and picked a common answer from the one each member supplied. The recorder wrote the answer. They continue one after the other until the assignments were completed. The leader submitted each team's written answers to the teacher. The teacher led the students to do the general corrections on the chalk board. Group score were given to each team.

### The Lecture Method

The teacher presented the tenses she wanted the students to study for a particular lesson period. She taught the students all she wanted them to learn about the tenses. She gave them the following assignments:

- A passage with mixed tenses was given to the students to identify and classify them under simple present, simple past and simple future.
- They were also given a passage with wrong tenses to re-write using the correct tenses.
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Each student, on his/her individual seat/desk solved the problems alone, preventing his/her work from being exposed to another student. At the expiration of the time given for the written work, the teacher collected the students' books and awarded scores to each student depending on his/her performance. At the end of the teaching which lasted four weeks, the re-shuffled ELAT was administered as post-test to the students.

### Data analysis

The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) with pre-test scores as a covariate. The hypotheses were tested at alpha level of 0.05.

### Results

The results of the study are presented in line with the research question and hypothesis that guided the study.

### Research question

- What are the relative mean achievement scores of the students taught English Language tenses using the collaborative learning method and those taught using the lecture method?

Table 1

Pre/Post achievement mean(x) scores of students taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method and those taught using the lecture method.

Groups	N	Pre-test	Post-test	Gain score
Experimental (collaborative)	105	39.24	59.05	19.81
Control (lecture)	112	37.32	51.43	14.11



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Table 1 shows that the experimental group has a pre-test mean score of 39.24 and a post-test mean score of 59.05 while the control group has a pre-test mean score of 37.32 and a post-test mean score of 51.43. The experimental group has a higher mean gain score of 19.81 than the control group with a mean gain score of 14.11. This shows that the groups taught English language tenses with collaborative learning method achieved better than those taught with the lecture method.

Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught English language tenses using the collaborative learning method and those taught using the lecture method.

**Table 2**

Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) of students' post achievement scores in English language tenses (Treatment X Method)

Source	Type III SS	DF	MS	F	Sign
Corrected Model	4262.132a	4	1065.533	10.777	.000
Intercept	39396.100	1	39396.100	398.472	.000
Pre – test	740.212	1	740.212	7.487	.007
Experimental	3007.115	1	3007.115	30.415	.000*S
Error	20959.988	212	98.868		
Total	684400.000	217			
Corrected Total	25222.120	216			

\*S = Significant at 0.05 level

Results shown in table 2 indicate that treatment has significant effect on students' achievements in English language tenses. This is because the F-value of 30.415 in respect of treatment main effect is shown to be significant at .000. This therefore shows that at 0.05 level, the F-value of 30.415 is significant. The results indicate that the students taught with collaborative learning method achieved higher than those taught with lecture method. Therefore the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught English language tenses with collaborative learning method and those taught with lecture method is rejected. The difference in achievement between the treatment and control groups is attributed to method used.

## Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the use of collaborative learning method has a significant effect on students' achievement in English language tenses. The students taught with the collaborative learning method achieved significantly better than those taught with the lecture method. This result is not a surprise because in collaborative learning, students encouraged one another to do their best and helped one another to learn. Low achievers contributed and experienced success while bright students developed and extended their understanding of concept by explaining them to others. Discussion fostered critical thinking and improved understanding of both course contents and the learning process. The result is in agreement with the result of Gokhale (1995). He found out that the collaborative learning group performed significantly better than the individual learning group on a critical thinking test in physics. He also found out that the collaborative medium provided students with opportunities to analyze synthesize and evaluate ideas. This result is also in agreement with that of Vygotsky (1978) who found out that students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work collaboratively than when asked to work individually. Doise and Mugry (1984) reported similar findings that collaborative learners achieved better than individual learners. Digby, Russ, Sills and Totten, (1991) in their study of collaborative learning, observed that students' interaction produced more critical thinkers than individual learners. David and Johnson (2001), Galvin (1996), Heyle and Rau (1990), from their studies affirmed the efficacy of collaborative learning over individual learning.

## Conclusion

The results of this study show that collaborative learning method is more effective than lecture method in enhancing students' achievement in English language tenses.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made.

- Enlightenment campaign, workshops and seminar should be organized for teachers by Education Authorities to create awareness of the efficacy of collaborative learning method, and then impress on these teachers on the necessity for its adoption in their various schools.

- Curriculum planners can include the method in teachers training and secondary schools English language curriculum.

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