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# Assessment of Teacher Awareness and Utilization of Literature Teaching Strategies among Teachers of English Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study focuses on assessing the awareness and use of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State. The main aim was to determine the level of awareness and utilization of these strategies, with the aim of proposing solutions to enhance literature teaching at this educational level. The study employed a descriptive survey research method, using multi-stage sampling techniques (stratified, proportionate, and random). Data was collected through a close-ended questionnaire from 196 English Studies teachers across 56 Junior Secondary Schools within four educational zones in the state. The study identified the strategies used in literature lessons and analyzed the collected data. The findings revealed that 119 teachers (60.7%) had a high level of awareness of use of variety of literary texts strategy, but only 27 teachers (13%) regularly guided students in analyzing literary texts. It was recommended that English Studies teachers in Junior secondary schools receive more training through workshops, seminars, and conferences to better understand the unique strategies for teaching literature-in-English. Teachers who undergo such training should be open to implementing the new techniques they learn, rather than dismissing them as unworkable.

**Keywords:** English studies, Literature-in-English, strategies

### Introduction

Literature-in-English is a subject offered in Nigerian secondary schools, designed to enhance understanding of culture and tradition, expand language awareness, and foster socio-cultural awareness. In 2009, the Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the National Education Research and Development Centre (NERDC), released a curriculum blueprint emphasizing the importance of this subject. Since then, Nigerian schools have adopted Literature-in-English as a tool for societal change, human development, and transformation. The study of Literature-in-English is considered critical and valuable for students in Nigeria, providing a means to address human challenges and needs. This aligns with the philosophy of Nigerian education as outlined in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), which advocates for the subject to develop students' values and awareness, helping them adjust as responsible citizens. Over the past twenty years, significant changes have been made to emphasize the importance of English in Nigerian schools. One notable change was the integration of Literature-in-English with English Language into a combined subject called English Studies in the junior secondary school syllabus (NERDC, 2009). This integration aimed to enhance students' language proficiency and foster a personal aesthetic response to language.

While various teaching strategies have clear benefits, their true impact depends on how effectively they are applied. Approaches like the cultural, language, and personal growth models are recommended for teaching literature, as they promote deeper student engagement. However, research by Ling and Eng (2016), Krishnasamy (2015), and Adelabu and Mathias (2013), along with classroom observations, suggest that many students remain passive during literature lessons and often struggle to think critically about what they read. These classes tend to rely heavily on teacher-led instruction, which not only reduces student involvement but also limits teachers' ability to be creative and flexible. Recent studies support this concern. For example, Shamsul et al. (2024) and Dai (2023) found that interactive and task-based approaches significantly improve student engagement and comprehension. Smith and Johnson (2023) emphasized the importance of allowing students to bring their own interpretations to texts through reader-response strategies, while Du (2023) showed how using digital and multimodal resources can enhance students' understanding and appreciation of literature.

This study was prompted by the growing need to address these ongoing challenges in literature classrooms where teaching often remains focused on memorizing facts rather than encouraging students to participate, reflect, or express their views. Such an approach risks defeating the purpose of teaching literature, particularly at the junior secondary level. Therefore, this research investigates how well English teachers in junior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria, are aware of and apply effective literature teaching strategies. By doing so, it aims to uncover the underlying reasons for students continued struggles in literature and propose ways to improve teaching practices for better learning outcomes.

## Literature Review

English language teachers should understand that strategies are specific techniques or tactics employed within a chosen methodology to achieve particular instructional goals. These strategies are practical and represent the "how" of teaching, involving specific activities and tasks (Teacher Strategies, 2024). For example, discussion is a strategy that can be used to facilitate student-led discussions about a text in a literature class, encouraging critical thinking and analysis (Rabekah, 2020). The strategies used by English language teachers in the classroom can significantly impact students' academic performance if not utilized appropriately. Ntekim (2009) asserts that teachers' classroom practices and instructional strategies greatly influence students' performance. Therefore, improving classroom practices is essential. Effective teaching requires other critical considerations, such as teacher's clear understanding of the subject matter and awareness of what makes certain topics or concepts difficult for students. Additionally, understanding the students' status, background, knowledge, interests, and experiences is equally important.

Teaching Literature-in-English at the junior secondary school level involves using a variety of methods and strategies from cultural, language, and personal growth models to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of literary texts. English literature is especially significant in education because it exposes students to diverse human experiences while enhancing their critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills. Through teaching literature, educators have the opportunity to influence young minds positively, instilling a lifelong love for reading and learning.

One of the recent views on effective teaching strategies in Literature-in-English classrooms highlights the importance of creative and interactive methods to enhance student engagement and comprehension. According to recent literature, effective strategies (Teacher, Strategies, 2024) include:

### Using a Variety of Texts

One effective approach in teaching English literature is to use diverse texts. By exposing students to different genres, styles, and time periods, their literary horizons are broadened, fostering a deeper appreciation for literature. English studies teachers could incorporate a variety of texts into lessons: Select both classic and contemporary works that resonate with students, encouraging analysis of characters, themes, and literary devices; Introduce various poetic forms like sonnets, haikus, and free verse, and analyze the use of imagery, rhyme, and rhythm; Study plays to discuss dramatic structure, character development, and stage directions; and could include essays, speeches, and biographies to analyze authors' purposes, arguments, and rhetoric.

### Incorporating Multimedia Resources

Incorporating multimedia resources can enhance the learning experience and bring English literature to life. English studies teachers could use film adaptations to help students visualize stories and characters, and compare these with the original texts; Play recordings of poems or dramatic readings to emphasize rhythm, tone, and emotion; Use reputable online resources for additional information, analysis, and context; and take virtual tours of literary landmarks to make texts more engaging and relatable.

### Encouraging Critical Analysis and Interpretation

Developing students' critical thinking skills through analysis and interpretation is crucial. English studies teachers could teach students to carefully examine texts, paying attention to details and connections; Facilitate discussions where students ask questions, challenge ideas, and support arguments with textual evidence; Guide students in writing essays that formulate thesis statements, provide textual evidence, and analyze literary devices; Encourage comparisons between different works, characters, themes, or styles to deepen understanding.

### Fostering Discussions and Debates

Engaging students in discussions and debates can deepen their understanding and enhance communication skills. English studies teachers could have students think about a question, discuss with a partner, and share with the class; Alternate between discussion participants and observers to encourage active listening and respectful dialogue; Assign different perspectives or characters for debates to develop empathy, critical thinking, and persuasive skills; and Form small groups to read and discuss different texts, share insights, and collaborate on projects.

### Integrating Writing Assignments

Writing assignments are essential for deepening understanding and improving writing skills. English studies teachers could have students write about their reading experiences, analyzing characters, themes, and literary devices; Encourage students to write stories, poems, or plays inspired by their readings; Assign essays that analyze specific aspects of texts, with clear guidelines and rubrics; and have students write reviews to share their thoughts and recommendations, fostering critical thinking and persuasive writing.

### Providing Opportunities for Creative Expression

Encouraging creative expression helps students engage with texts in imaginative ways. English studies teachers could have students perform scenes or monologues to explore characters and emotions; Create visual representations of texts through drawings, paintings, or collages; Assign projects like creating a soundtrack for a novel, writing sequels or prequels, or designing book covers.

### Utilizing Technology Tools

Incorporating technology enhances engagement, collaboration, and research skills. English studies teachers could use platforms like Google Classroom or Padlet for discussions and collaborative projects; Have students create digital stories using tools like Adobe Spark or Story-bird; Use VR for virtual

field trips to literary landmarks or immersive experiences related to novels and; Teach students to use online research tools and citation generators effectively.

### Guiding Literary Analysis and Essay Writing

Guiding students through literary analysis and essay writing is crucial. English studies teachers could provide model essays to analyze together, identifying key elements and strategies; Use tools like Venn diagrams, story maps, or concept maps to help structure essays; Incorporate peer feedback sessions for constructive criticism and revision and; offer personalized feedback and guidance through individual conferences.

### Creating a Supportive and Inclusive Classroom Environment

A supportive and inclusive classroom is essential for effective instruction. English studies teachers could collaboratively create norms and expectations with students; Teach skills like maintaining eye contact and asking clarifying questions; Celebrate and value diverse experiences and insights, be mindful of students' well-being and create opportunities for self-expression and self-care.

In addition, English language teachers can be encouraging students to write journal entries reflecting on their reading experiences; Motivating students to write their own stories, poems, or plays inspired by the literary works they study; Allowing students to perform dramatic readings of scenes or monologues from the texts; Incorporating tools such as online discussion platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, Padlet), digital storytelling tools (e.g., Adobe Spark, Story-bird), and virtual reality for immersive experiences. These strategies aim to create a more dynamic and student-centered learning environment, addressing the challenges of passive learning and enhancing students' critical thinking and creativity in literature-in-English classrooms.

A number of empirical studies have investigated different methods and strategies for teaching *Literature-in-English* at both lower and upper levels of secondary education. Notable among these are the works of Shamshul et al. (2024), Smith and Johnson (2023), Dai (2023), and Du (2023). Others include: Mehrpouyan (2022), Chen and Lee, (2022) Ahmed and Khan (2021), Patel and Sharma (2021), Mustakim et al, (2017), Ling and Eng (2016), Krishnasamy (2015) and Rashid et al, (2010) each offering valuable insights into how literature can be more effectively taught in the classroom. For example, Shamshul et al. (2024) carried out a study titled *Enhancing Literary Appreciation through Interactive Pedagogies: A Study in Malaysian Secondary Schools*. Using a quasi-experimental design, they worked with 120 Form 3 students (equivalent to junior secondary school) from four schools in Malaysia. The focus was on using interactive and student-centered teaching methods, including drama-based activities, group discussions, and role-play. Their findings revealed that students who participated in these interactive sessions showed significant improvement in their understanding of literature, engagement levels, and interpretive thinking. The researchers strongly recommended incorporating experiential learning techniques into the literature curriculum, particularly in multicultural classrooms where keeping students engaged can be more challenging.

Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2023) explored teaching strategies in a study titled *Comparative Analysis of Reader-Response and Structural Approaches in Teaching Literature at Upper Secondary Level in the UK*. They used a mixed-method approach, working with eight English teachers and 160 students across four secondary schools in England. The study compared two instructional methods: the reader-response approach, which encourages students to form personal connections with the text, and the structural approach, which focuses more on analyzing literary forms and elements. The results showed that students who engaged in reader-response activities developed stronger emotional connections and critical thinking skills, while those taught through the structural approach performed better in formal literary analysis. Based on their findings, the authors suggested a hybrid model that blends both strategies to address the varying needs and learning styles of students.

Dai (2023) carried out an action research project titled *Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) in Literature Classes: A Chinese Secondary School Experience*, working closely with three literature teachers and 95 senior secondary students in Beijing. The study explored how TBLT techniques, traditionally used in language teaching, could be adapted for use with literary texts in English classes. The approach involved designing thematic tasks that combined reading, speaking, and writing activities. Dai found that when tasks were culturally relevant and clearly contextualized, students became more motivated, collaborated better, and showed deeper engagement with literary themes. The study recommended that TBLT be formally integrated into literature teaching, as it not only strengthens students' interpretive skills but also promotes communicative competence.

In another important study, Du (2023) investigated the role of technology in a research titled *Exploring the Impact of Multimodal Strategies on Students' Literary Interpretation Skills*. This qualitative case study focused on Grade 10 students in an urban secondary school in Shanghai. Du used interviews, classroom observations, and portfolio reviews to assess the effectiveness of multimodal teaching tools—such as visual aids, digital storytelling, audio clips, and short films in enhancing students' engagement with literature, especially prose and drama. The study revealed that when visual and auditory elements were used alongside written texts, students developed stronger interpretive skills and found the literature more engaging. Du concluded that today's literature teaching must evolve to incorporate multimodal strategies that align with students' existing digital literacy, making learning more relevant and dynamic.

Taken together, the studies reviewed reflect a growing shift from traditional, lecture-based methods to more learner-centered, interactive, and multimodal strategies in Literature-in-English classrooms. While Shamshul et al. (2024) and Dai (2023) stress the value of task-based and participatory approaches, Smith and Johnson (2023) highlight the importance of giving students personal ownership of texts through reader-response strategies. Du (2023) brings in a digital perspective, showing how multimodal resources can make literature more accessible and meaningful. Collectively, these studies advocate for innovative and blended approaches that support students intellectually, emotionally, and culturally, across both lower and upper secondary school settings. In contrast, studies by Robin (2020) and Adelabu & Mathias (2013) examined the methods used by secondary school teachers in Sweden and Benue-Nigeria, respectively. The gap identified in these studies is the actualization of the principles and procedures, leading to specific strategies used in teaching literature-in-English.

The aim of the study was to assess the awareness and use of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State.
2. Assess the extent to which these literature teaching strategies are utilized by English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State.

Guided by the objectives of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What is the level of awareness of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State?
2. What is the extent of utilization of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State?

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## Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey design to provide a broad and detailed picture of the situation, helping to explore different aspects of the respondents' experiences. The research focused on 339 English Studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools across four educational zones in Sokoto State namely Sokoto North, Sokoto South, Bodinga, and Yabo (Ministry of Education Sokoto, 2019). From this group, a sample of 196 teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling approach. First, the educational zones were selected through stratified sampling. Then, teachers were chosen from each zone in proportion to their numbers, followed by random sampling to select specific schools and teachers within those zones.

Data collection was done using a structured, close-ended questionnaire known as the Literature-in-English Teaching Assessment Questionnaire (LETAQ), which used a four-point response scale. To make sure the questionnaire was appropriate and effective, it was reviewed and validated by four academic experts. Two of them were supervisors from the Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, one was from the Department of Science and Vocational Education, and the fourth came from the Department of Modern European Languages and Linguistics all from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Their input ensured that the questionnaire was clear, relevant, and capable of accurately measuring teachers' knowledge and use of literature teaching strategies at the junior secondary level.

During the validation process, the academic reviewers suggested that the questionnaire should clearly define the response options to make data interpretation and classification easier. Originally, the instrument used a basic Yes/No format, but the experts recommended switching to an ordinal scale that better reflects varying degrees of responses. Based on their advice, the questionnaire was revised to include a four-point Likert scale, and specific benchmark levels were introduced to improve the quality of data analysis.

To guide the interpretation of the responses, the researcher adopted a percentage-based classification model adapted from Krishnasamy (2015, p. 4193). The benchmark was set as follows: 1%–39% indicated a Low Level (LL) or Not Frequently (NF); 40%–69% indicated a Medium Level (ML) or Frequently (F); and 70%–100% reflected a High Level (HL) or Most Frequently (MF). Each response option on the questionnaire was assigned a numerical value for scoring purposes—for instance: 4 = High level/Most Frequently, 3 = Moderate/Frequently, 2 = Low level/Not Frequently, and 1 = Don't know/None. As noted by Croswell (2014), when using continuous scales such as interval scales, responses should be scored consistently typically from the highest to the lowest value, such as 4 to 1.

Following these expert recommendations, the questionnaire was updated and then tested for reliability through a pilot study involving 50 literature-in-English teachers from junior secondary schools in the Sokoto South Educational Zone. Although these participants were part of the wider population of interest, they were not included in the final study sample. The reliability test, measured using Cronbach's Alpha, produced a score of 0.81, indicating that the questionnaire had a high level of internal consistency and could be considered a reliable instrument for the study.

For data analysis, the researcher used simple frequency distribution tables and percentages. The number of responses for each item was counted and presented in tables to give a clear view of the data. Percentages were used to show how frequently certain responses occurred, helping to explain the trends and patterns observed in the teachers' answers.

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## Result

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Sokoto State?

**Table 2: Teachers Level of Awareness of Strategies for Teaching Literature-in-English:**

SEC.A		HL	ML	LL	DKI	Remarks
S/N						
1	I can rate my perception of various literary text at ..... %					High
		70(35.7%)	49(25.0%)	30(15.3%)	47(24.0%)	Level
2	I'm aware of different techniques of incorporating multimedia resources in literature-in-English lesson ...					Medium
		28(14.3%)	33(16.8%)	97(49.5%)	38(19.4%)	Level
3	I have familiarity of providing opportunities for creative expression in my class					Medium
		19(9.7%)	30(15.3%)	67(34.2%)	80(40.8%)	Level
4	I understand how to foster discussion and debate among my students...					High
		87(44.4%)	24(12.2%)	32(16.3%)	53(27.0%)	Level
5	I'm conscious on how to guide my students in literary analysis					Medium
		51(26.0%)	42(21.4%)	26(13.3%)	77(39.3%)	Level

**Source: Fieldwork, 2023**

To answer Research Question 1, the results presented in Table 1 reveal several key insights. A majority of the teachers 119 (or 60.7%)—expressed a strong understanding and appreciation of various literary texts. Additionally, 111 teachers (56.6%) indicated they knew how to encourage student discussions and debates effectively. About 93 teachers (47%) showed awareness of how to guide students through literary analysis. However, fewer teachers 61 (31%)—were familiar with ways to use multimedia tools in teaching literature-in-English, and only 49 (25%) reported that they regularly offered opportunities for students to engage in creative expression. These findings suggest that English studies teachers in Junior Secondary Schools across Sokoto State generally have a high level of awareness of literature teaching strategies, although there are areas, such as multimedia use and creative engagement, that may need further development.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of utilization of literature teaching strategies among English Studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Sokoto State?

**Table 3: Teachers Level of Utilization of Strategies to Teaching Literature-in-English:**

Sec. B		MF	F	N	NF	Remark
S/N						
1	I use variety of text in my class.	97(49.5%)	93(47.4%)	2(1.0%)	4(2.0%)	High
						Level
2	I incorporate multimedia resources	18(9.2%)	9(4.6%)	67(34.2%)	102(52.0%)	Med
						Level
3	I provide opportunities for creative expression.	37(18.9%)	46(23.5%)	14(7.1%)	99(50.5%)	Med
						Level

4	I facilitate literary discussion	65(33.2%)	116(59.2%)	4(2.0%)	11(5.6%)	High Level
5	I guide my students on how to analyze literary texts	3(1.5%)	24(12.2%)	69(35.2%)	100(51.0%)	Med Level

#### Source: Fieldwork, 2023

In response to Research Question 2, the data in Table 2 highlights how English Studies teachers in Sokoto State apply literature teaching strategies in the classroom. A large number 190 teachers (96.9%) reported using a range of literary texts, and 181 teachers (92%) said they encourage literary discussions among students. However, only 27 teachers (13.8%) incorporate multimedia tools in their lessons, and just 83 teachers (42%) create opportunities for students to express themselves creatively. Even fewer 27 teachers (13%) actively guide students in analyzing literary texts.

These findings suggest that while most teachers engage students with texts and discussions, the overall use of more diverse and interactive literature teaching strategies—such as multimedia integration, creative expression, and analytical guidance—is quite limited in junior secondary schools across Sokoto State.

### Summary of the Findings

Based on the data obtained from the respondents of this study, below are the summary of the findings:

1. That not all the strategies for teaching literature-in-English were known by English studies teachers in junior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.
2. The finding also reveals two strategies as mostly utilize among English studies teachers in Junior secondary schools.

### Discussion

The study found that English studies teachers lack knowledge of various teaching strategies due to low awareness of modern strategies, which adversely affect their teaching effectiveness. These findings are supported by Smith & Johnson (2023), Dai (2023), Du (2023), and Mehrpouyan (2022). Smith and Johnson (2023) showed that close reading strategies significantly improve students' comprehension and analytical skills by encouraging attention to textual details and thematic discussions, resulting in deeper understanding and better articulation in writing. Similarly, the results for question two (2), which examined the extent of the use of literature teaching strategies, supported the findings of Dai (2023), Du (2023), and Mehrpouyan (2022). Dai (2023) indicated that many educators continue to rely on traditional lecture-based methods, which often fail to actively engage students or promote critical thinking. This approach does not cater to diverse learning styles, resulting in student disengagement and poor comprehension of literary texts. Du (2023) identified a significant gap in professional development opportunities for English teachers, particularly regarding the integration of modern teaching strategies into their classrooms. Mehrpouyan (2022) emphasized the potential of digital technologies to make literature classes more interactive and accessible but noted that many literature-in-English teachers lack the necessary skills and resources to effectively implement these tools. Without ongoing training, teachers struggle to adopt innovative practices that could enhance student learning and interest in literature.

### Conclusion

The study assessed the teachers' awareness and utilization of literature teaching strategies among junior secondary school English studies teachers in Sokoto State. It was found that only a few strategies were known and used by teachers. This suggests that classroom activities in Literature-in-English may be limited, potentially leading to ineffective instruction. To address this, teachers should be introduced to a variety of literature teaching strategies, allowing them to choose the most suitable approaches for different topics or to combine strategies as needed.

#### Educational Implication of the Study

Teaching literature-in-English at the junior secondary school level requires the use of diverse methods and strategies, and the more English studies teachers recognize this, the more effective the instructional process will be. It is essential to understand that literature instruction typically employs a mix of strategies fitted to meet the specific needs and interests of the students. Moreover, integrating technology can enrich the learning experience by utilizing multimedia resources or online platforms for discussions and collaborative projects.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers of English studies in junior secondary schools should receive more training through workshops, seminars, and conferences to fully aware of the distinct roles of various strategies for teaching literature-in-English.

2. Teachers who undergo such training should be open to change and willing to apply what they have learned. The attitude of "it can't work" is inadequate; instead, they should strive to "make it work."

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