

EFFECTIVENESS OF HANDOUTS IN TEACHING ANTON CHEKHOV'S STORY "ABOUT LOVE"

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Abstract

The crucial objective of this article is to examine the effectiveness of handouts in teaching Anton Chekhov's story entitled "About Love" published in 1898. The study was experimental in nature and the pretest-posttest control group research design was adopted among 60 students from the XII grade studying at Makawanpur Multiple Campus, Hetauda, Nepal. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the students in order to form the Control Group and the Experimental Group which were taught by using the lecture method without handouts and the lecture method with handouts, respectively for forty-five minutes in different class rooms. The independent samples t test in SPSS was used to compare pretest and Posttest Mean Scores between two groups. The independent samples t test between the Experimental Group and the Control Group on the Posttest Mean Score (observed t-value = 11.710, critical t-value = 2.001, df = 58 and $p < .05$) shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the Posttest Mean Scores between the Experimental Group (Mean = 65.500) and the Control Group (Mean = 47.400). The difference in their Posttest Mean Scores reflects that the lecture method with handouts was more effective than the lecture method without handouts. It obviously indicates that the use of handouts in teaching the story was effective. This article is significant to those who are involved in teaching-learning activities.

Keywords: *effectiveness, handouts, language, lecture, teaching.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Story which belongs to fiction is a genre of literature. Story is widely read and enjoyed by the teachers and students. Most of the students at colleges prefer to read stories, and request the teachers to teach stories, even in the period of teaching essays and poems. Teachers fundamentally focus on plot, characters and thematic aspects of the story while teaching a particular story in the Nepalese colleges. The XII grade students demand summaries and answers of the questions asked in the final examinations. The teachers generally adopt the lecture method to teach stories in the classrooms.

The article writer was curious to measure the effectiveness of teaching the story entitled "About Love" by the famous Russian writer Anton Chekhov through the lecture method without handouts and the lecture method with handouts. The major objective of the research study was to examine whether the lecture method with handouts was more effective than the lecture method without handouts. He considered Section "A" as the Control Group which was taught using the lecture method without handouts and Section "B" as the Experimental Group which was taught through the lecture method with handouts for forty-five minutes.

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (29 January 1860-15 July 1904) was a Russian playwright and short-story writer. (WIKI, 2019) mentions Anton Chekhov as being "one of the greatest writers of short fiction in history". His career as a playwright produced four classics, and his best short stories are held in high esteem by writers and critics. (BRITANNICA, n.d.) considers Anton Chekhov to have been "a literary artist of laconic precision". He probed below the surface of life, laying bare the secret motives of his characters.

Chekhov's "About Love" is a realistic story which deals with the theme of love and reminiscence. In this story, Chekhov assumes the story to have presented "three kinds of love affairs" (CHEKHOV, n.d.). The first one is the love affair between Nikanor and Pelageya. Their love is sensual, often violent. The second love affair is between Alyohin and a girl when he was studying at the university in Moscow. Though Alyohin loved her, she regarded love as a way of earning money. The third love affair is between Alyohin and Anna Alexeyevna. Their love can be termed as unexpressed or spiritual love. This

story depicts that love is strange and mysterious, not bound by the marital relations.

The researcher chose Makawanpur Multiple Campus, Hetauda for teaching this story, because students with different backgrounds, political beliefs, cultures, knowledge bases and geographical situations come here to study. They can be the representatives of the students from other areas in Makawanpur District, Nepal. This article is presumed to be significant to the teachers who are involved in teaching English stories.

1.1 Objectives of the Research Study

The specific objective of the study was:

a. To examine the effectiveness of handouts in teaching Anton Chekhov's story "About Love"

1.2 Null Hypotheses of the Research Study

a. There is no statistically significant difference between the Pretest Mean Scores of the Students from the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

b. There is no statistically significant difference between the Posttest Mean Scores of the Students from the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review encompasses definition of teaching, language teaching method, some advantages and disadvantages of lecture teaching method and benefits of handouts.

2.1 Teaching

Teaching is a complex process. Centra sees teaching as an intellectual process that "produces beneficial and purposeful student learning through the use of appropriate procedures" (CENTRA, 1993). The process of teaching involves the transmission of knowledge, theory or information. Jarvis asserts that teaching is an "instrumentally rational activity" (JARVIS, 2002). Some researchers view that the lecture method is a very useful method for teaching. Berry highlights the lecture method and mentions that this method is often used to deliver a large

amount of information to the students in a short period of time (BERRY, 2008). Gehlen-Baum & Weinberger pinpoint the merit of the lecture method and state that lectures are designed to deliver new information to a large group of students. Successful teachers handle the situation and try their best to teach the students effectively (GEHLEN-BAUUM & WEINBERGER, 2014). Braskamp and Ory deal with the nature of effective teaching and enunciate that effective teaching is the creation of situations in which appropriate learning occurs, "shaping those situations is what successful teachers have learned to do effectively" (BRASKAMP & ORY, 1994).

2.2 Language Teaching Method

Teaching literature is a complex task. It involves the association between sentences and senses or meanings. The teachers should teach their students language use and its contribution to the meanings. Diverse methods have been adopted in the field of teaching English language and literature. The appropriateness of methods may depend on the text and context of teaching and learning. Larsen-Freeman views that innovation in the language teaching field in the late 1980s and 1990s has been "stimulated by a special concern for the language learning process" (LARSEN-FREEMAN, 2000).

There can be no right method for everyone. Some methods are more suitable for old learners; while others for young learners. Prabhu holds the view that acceptability of methods depends on "contextual factors" (PRABHU, 1990). Prabhu and Clarke further assert that the choice regarding the teaching methods depends on what time of the day it is, recognizing that they frequently have to make decisions owing to the complexity of the classroom reality, including what is happening socially among the participants at the time (PRABHU, 1990; CLARKE, 1994).

Teachers should know that each group they teach has its own special features. Bolster states that successful teaching requires the recognition and acknowledgement of this unique feature (BOLSTER, 1983). Furthermore, they should have complex, interpretive and contingent knowledge in order to teach their students well. English is a foreign language in Nepal. Teaching

a foreign language is a difficult task. Teaching a literary language is even much more difficult than teaching an ordinary language.

Teaching a story means teaching language and literature. The literary language is considered to be special and extra-ordinary, implicit and beyond the grasp of any objective linguistic analysis. Literary language involves a much greater degree of imagination than the language of common use. Literary language involves figures of speech which create special meanings in the texts. Wren and Martin define the figure of speech as a "departure from the ordinary form of expression or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect" (WREN & MARTIN, 1981).

2.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Lecture Teaching Method

Williams views lecture as a particular type of educational encounter in which a teacher "transmits information to a number of students" (WILLIAMS, 2002). The lecture method allows more materials to be covered, in particular the multiple and varied exemplars that have been associated with superior acquisition and transfer. Capon and Kuhn (2004) assume that it is the most economical method of transmitting knowledge (CAPON & KUHN, 2004).

Some researchers mention that there are some limitations to the lecture teaching method. Al-Modhefer and Roe point out the demerits of the lecture method and remark that lectures can be passive, outdated, rigid, one-way and ineffective routine knowledge trans-mission (AL-MODHEFER & ROE, 2009; AL-MODHEFER & ROE, 2010). Killen presumes that the lecture method is very difficult to judge learning and there is "little check of learner understanding" (KILLEN, 2007). Moust, Van and Schmidt consider that a pure lecture fails to give feedback to both the teacher and the learners. According to active learning activists, learning as a result of lectures is relatively superficial and transient (MOUST et al., 2005). Moreover, Hatim and Al-Rawi clarify that the lecture method is frequently a one-way process unaccompanied by discussion, questioning or immediate practice and that makes it a poor teaching method (HATIM, 2001; AL-RAWI, 2013).

2.4 Use of Handouts with Lecture Method

WMIN (n.d.) mentions that a handout is "a paper based resource used to support teaching and learning which can make students free from excessive note taking or supplement information not easily available elsewhere". It aids learning, may increase attention and motivation, and may help students to follow the development of an idea or argument. There are several reasons for using a handout:

1. It can provide definitions for the more jargon ridden subjects;
2. It can provide background information or detailed information, e.g. statistics, which are not readily available elsewhere;
3. It can put forward a point of view;
4. It can outline a course of action;
5. It can pose conceptual questions;
6. It can provide a case study for problem solving or discussion;
7. It can provide a complex diagram rather than students copying from the OHP;
8. It can give a step by step instruction for teaching a skill or running a laboratory exercise;
9. It can outline the session with a series of bullet points per topic area;
10. It can produce a hard copy of the transparencies used by reducing the print size of your overhead transparencies which can be printed down one half of the page, allowing students space to add their own comments or questions alongside.

Some researchers opine that the lecture method should be combined with handouts for better teaching learning activities. Munyoro opines that lecturers should provide "additional material in the form of handouts to be read after the lecture" (MUNYORO, 2014). Race notes that, there are several advantages accompanying the use of handouts, such as making more information available to students in a few pages than they would ever be able to write down for themselves during the lecture, as well as enabling the lecturer to clarify what is to be covered in a session by providing a summary of the key ideas and concepts to be presented (RACE, 2001).

Exley and Dennick consider that handouts help students to catch up on any missed sessions and the lecturer to clarify certain information

(EXLEY & DENNICK, 2004). Bligh makes an assertion that handouts are used “as sources of information” and this was confirmed by the respondents’ answers” (BLIGH, 2000).

3. METHODOLOGY

A research method in this study embraces the following aspects:

3.1 Research Design

A pretest-Posttest control group research design was used to carry out the study. The researcher collected data from one hundred pretest and Posttest multiple choice question items based on the story. The multiple-choice questions were prepared by focusing on the characters, setting, remarkable sentences and their meanings, comparison of characters, role of

characters, metaphorical sentences, themes and tone of the writer in the story.

3.2 Sampling Design

The researcher followed simple random sampling design which involved selecting 60 students by maintaining a 95% confidence level and 5 % margin of errors.

3.3 Population and Sample Size of the Research Study

All the 70 XII graders studying English as a compulsory subject into two classes at Makawanpur Multiple Campus, Hetauda in Makawanpur District, Nepal, constituted the population. The sample size involved was made up of 60 students who were equally divided into two groups namely, the Control Group and the Experimental Group

Table 1. Students in the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Campus	Experimental Group		Control Group		Total
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Makawanpur Multiple Campus (MMC)	15	15	13	17	60

The table shows that there were 15 boys and 15 girls in the Experimental Group. Similarly, 13 boys and 17 girls were in the Control Group. Each group had 30 students. There were 28 boys and 32 girls in the study.

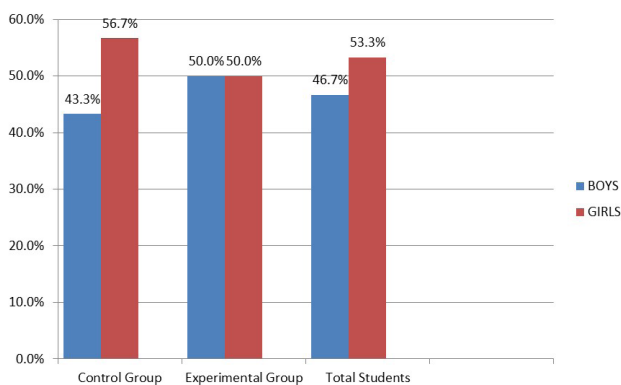


Fig. 1. Percentage of Boys and Girls in each Group and in a Whole

The figure shows that the percentage of girls was greater than that of boys in the study.

3.3.1 Age Groups of the Students

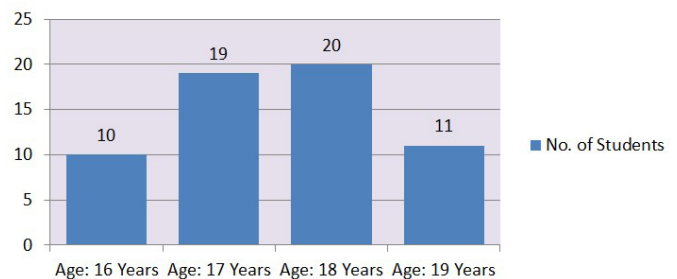


Fig. 2. Total Number of the Students with their Age

There were 28 boys and 42 girls aged between 16- 19 years. 10 students belonged to the age of 16, 19 students belonged to the age of 17, 20 students belonged to the age of 20 and 11 students belonged to the age of 19.

3.3.2 Religions of the Students

47 students belonged to Hinduism, 11 students belonged to Buddhism and 2 students belonged to Christianity. The following figure shows the percentage of students according to their religion.

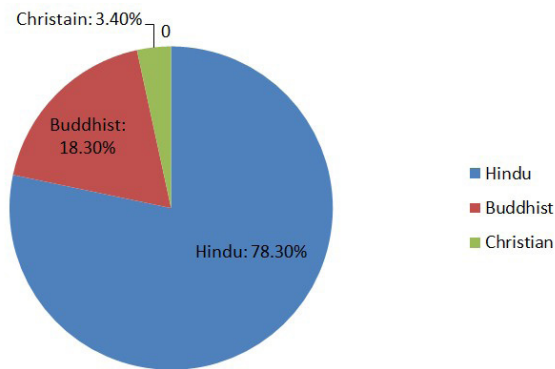


Fig. 3. Percentages of Students by Religions in the Study Sample

This figure shows that most of the students who were involved in the research belonged to the Hindu religion.

3.4 Instruments of the Study

The researcher constructed hundred multiple-choice question items by focusing on the characters, setting, remarkable sentences and their meanings, comparison of characters, role of characters, metaphorical sentences, themes and tone of the writer in the story.

3.5 Procedure

After the formation of the Control Group and the Experimental Group, the researcher administered the pretest for both groups. The same pretest question items were asked to both groups. The pretest Scores of both groups were maintained carefully on the ratio scale. Then, the Control Group was taught by using the lecture method without handouts, whereas the Experimental Group was taught by using the lecture method with the handouts related to the story for 45 minutes in two rooms. After finishing the teaching activity, the researcher administered the Posttest for both groups. The Posttest Scores of both groups were recorded on the ratio scale in order to make analysis and comparisons with their pretest Scores.

3.6 Validity of the Instruments

To measure the validity of the instruments, the researcher received opinions and judgments from subject experts and teachers. In this way, the validity of the instruments was maintained.

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

The researcher used the Split-Half model of reliability to check the reliability of the instruments. The overall internal consistency on the Posttest Scores of the students of both groups of the pilot study was .868 and that of the research study was .984. It shows us that the instruments were highly reliable in measuring students' achievement in the story "About Love".

Table 2. Reliability Statistic of Research Study

Cronbach's Alpha	Part 1	Value	.701
		N of Items	50 ^a
	Part 2	Value	.720
		N of Items	50 ^b
Total N of Items			100
Correlation Between Forms			.969
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length		.984
	Unequal Length		.984
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient			.984

- The items are: Q1, Q3, Q5, Q7, Q9, Q11, Q13, Q15, Q17, Q19, Q21, Q23, Q25, Q27, Q29, Q31, Q33, Q35, Q37, Q39, Q41, Q43, Q45, Q47, Q49, Q51, Q53, Q55, Q57, Q59, Q61, Q63, Q65, Q67, Q69, Q71, Q73, Q75, Q77, Q79, Q81, Q83, Q85, Q87, Q89, Q91, Q93, Q95, Q97, Q99.
- The items are: Q2, Q4, Q6, Q8, Q10, Q12, Q14, Q16, Q18, Q20, Q22, Q24, Q26, Q28, Q30, Q32, Q34, Q36, Q38, Q40, Q42, Q44, Q46, Q48, Q50, Q52, Q54, Q56, Q58, Q60, Q62, Q64, Q66, Q68, Q70, Q72, Q74, Q76, Q78, Q80, Q82, Q84, Q86, Q88, Q90, Q92, Q94, Q96, Q98, Q100

3.8 Variables in the Study

The lecture method used to teach the Control Group and the lecture method with handouts used to teach the Experimental Group were the independent variables and the test Scores of the students of the both groups were the dependent variables.

4. ANALYSIS OF DATA

All the data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 20 version. The researcher used independent samples t test to compare the effectiveness of the lecture method without handouts and of the lecture method with handouts. The researcher made use of G Power 3.1 Software to measure the power of the hypothesis test.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were interpreted based on the Mean Scores and t test of question items.

5.1 Analysis of Independent Samples t Test on the Pretest Score

The researcher used independent samples t-test to examine whether the pretest Mean Scores between two groups were statistically significantly different or not.

Table 3: Test Variable: Total Pretest Score&Grouping Variable: Experimental & Control

Campuses		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	Observed t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
MMC	Equal variances assumed	.348	.557	.054	58	.957	.066	1.238	-2.412	2.546
	Equal variances not assumed			.054	52.899	.957	.066	1.238	-2.417	2.551

Critical Value:df (58) = 2.001

Independent samples t test shows that the probability figure marked as Sig (two-tailed, p=.957) in the table was greater than 0.05. The observed value of t (.054) was smaller than the table / critical value of t (2.001). It implies

that there was no statistically significant difference between the Total Pretest Mean Score secured by the students from the Experimental Group and the Control Group. It accepts the null hypothesis.

Table 4. Test Variable: Total Pretest Score& Grouping Variable: Group (Experimental & Control)

Campuses	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MMC	Experimental	30	21.166	3.983	.727
	Control	30	21.100	5.492	1.002

This table shows that the Means of the test Scores obtained by the students from the Experimental Group and the Control Group were similar. It shows that understanding level of students from both groups about the story was similar before teaching them.

5.2 Analysis of Independent Samples t- Test on the PosttestScore

The researcher used independent samples t-test to examine whether the Posttest Mean Scores between two groups were statistically significantly different or not.

Table 5. Test Variable: Total PosttestScore& Grouping Variable: Experimental & Control

Campuses		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	Observed t value	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
MMC	Equal variances assumed	5.965	.018	11.710	58	.000	18.100	1.545	15.005	21.194
	Equal variances not assumed			11.710	51.668	.000	18.100	1.545	14.997	21.202

Critical Value: Df (58) = 2.001

Independent samples t test shows that the probability figure marked as Sig (two-tailed, $p=.000$) in the table was smaller than 0.05. The observed value of t (11.710) was greater than the

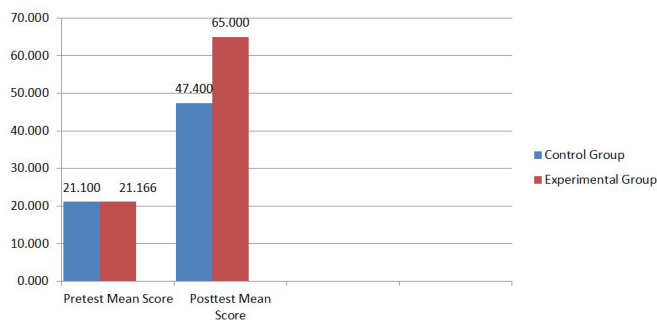
table / critical value of t (2.001). It implies that there was a statistically significant difference between the Posttest Mean Scores secured by the students from the Experimental Group and the Control Group.

Table 6. Test Variable: Total PosttestScore& Grouping Variable: Group (Experimental & Control)

Campuses	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MMC	Experimental	30	65.500	4.826	.881
	Control	30	47.400	6.956	1.269

This table shows that the MeanScore (65.500) obtained by the students from the Experimental Group was greater than the MeanScore (47.400) obtained by the students from the Control Group. It implies that the difference occurred because of the use of the handouts. It means that handouts were effective in teaching.

Fig. 4. Pretest and Posttest Mean Scores of the Control Group and the Experimental Group



The figure shows that the pretest Mean Scores of the students from both groups were almost the same, but the Posttest Mean Scores of both groups were different. Moreover, the Posttests MeanScore of the Experimental Group was greater than that of the Control Group. It implies that handouts were effective in teaching the story. It rejects the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference between the Mean Scores of the Control Group and the Experimental Group.

5.3 Power of Hypothesis Test in the Experimental Group

The researcher made use of G Power 3.1 Software to measure the power of the hypothesis test.

Table 7. Power of Hypothesis Test

T- tests	- Means: Difference between two independent Means (two groups)
Analysis:	Post hoc: Compute achieved power
Input:	Tail(s) = Two
	Effect size d = 3.0234078
	α err prob = 0.05
	Sample size group 1 = 30
	Sample size group 2 = 30
Output:	Noncentrality parameter δ = 11.7096081
	Critical t = 2.0017175
	Df = 58
	Power (1- β err prob) = 1.0000000

The power of the hypothesis test (1- β err prob) as shown in the table was 1.000 which indicates that the test was considered to be working perfectly well. It implies that there was a 100% chance of correctly rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (H_1) with 60 students.

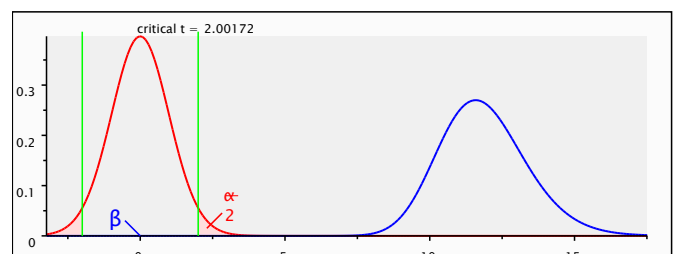


Fig. 4. Central and Noncentral Distributions

The figure of central and noncentral distribution shows that β is zero.

6. CONCLUSION

The independent samples t test between the Control Group and the Experimental Group on the PretestMeanScore confirms that there was no statistically significant difference between the Pretest Mean Scores secured by students from the Experimental Group and the Control Group. It indicates that the level of students' understanding of the story was similar before teaching them, but the independent samples t test between the Control Group and the Experimental Group on the PosttestMeanScore confirms that there was a statistically significant difference between the Posttest Mean Scores secured by students from the Experimental Group and the Control Group. The Posttest Mean Score of the students from the Experimental Group (65.00) was greater than that of the students from the Control Group (47.40). The difference in the PosttestMeanScore between the Control Group and the Experimental Group shows that the lecture method with handouts was more effective than the lecture method without handouts. It implies that the use of handouts was effective in teaching the story.

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