

Effect of Exit-Tickets Instructional Strategy on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by the persistent concern over students' low achievement in English Language and the limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of Exit-Tickets as a formative assessment strategy in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in Taraba State. A quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test non-equivalent control group design was adopted. The population comprised all Senior Secondary School II (SSS II) students offering English Language in public secondary schools in Taraba State during the 2024/2025 academic session. A sample of 240 students, determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula and selected through a multistage sampling technique, participated in the study. Data were collected using the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT), validated by experts, with reliability established using Cronbach's Alpha. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Paired simple t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) tested the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that students taught using the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy achieved significantly higher academic performance than those taught using the conventional teaching method. The study concludes that Exit-Tickets constitute an effective formative assessment strategy for improving students' achievement in English Language. The study contributes empirical evidence supporting the integration of Exit-Tickets into secondary school English Language instruction within the Nigerian educational context.

Keywords: Exit-Tickets, formative assessment, academic performance, English Language, secondary school students.

Introduction

English Language occupies a strategic position in Nigeria's educational system and remains important for students' academic participation, communication, and access to further educational opportunities. Achievement in the subject is therefore an important concern for secondary education. This makes classroom approaches that enable teachers to monitor students' understanding and respond to learning difficulties during instruction particularly relevant.

One such approach is the Exit-Ticket, a brief formative assessment activity administered at the end of a lesson or instructional activity. Students respond to focused prompts designed to reveal what they have understood, what they can apply, or where difficulties remain. The responses provide teachers with immediate evidence that can be used to inform subsequent instruction. Recent research describes Exit-Tickets as brief assessments administered immediately after instructional activities and demonstrates their potential for providing useful information about students' learning-related responses (Basco, 2021).

Exit-Tickets are situated within the broader practice of formative assessment, in which evidence of learning is generated during instruction and used to improve subsequent teaching and learning. Their usefulness therefore depends not merely on collecting students' responses but on how teachers interpret and act upon the evidence. In practice, Exit-Tickets may require students to summarize a lesson, answer a key question, explain a concept, identify an area of difficulty, or apply newly learned knowledge. This makes the strategy adaptable to different learning objectives and classroom contexts.

The strategy has particular relevance to English Language instruction because language learning requires repeated opportunities to retrieve, apply, explain, and receive feedback on newly acquired knowledge and skills. Exit-Tickets can, for example, be used to assess students' understanding of vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, or written expression within a short classroom activity. Their use may also encourage learners to reflect on recently acquired knowledge while enabling teachers to identify areas requiring reinforcement.

Recent empirical evidence indicates that Exit-Tickets can provide useful formative information. Lim (2025)., using data from 1,067 Grade 5 students, found that Exit-Ticket responses demonstrated consistent measurement properties and were associated with students' self-efficacy and interest in mathematics-integrated computer science learning. Similarly, Mendoza, and Reyes (2023) reported that Exit-Tickets encouraged deeper engagement with course material and improved students' use of educational resources, although their effect on sustained study effort was limited. These findings suggest that Exit-Tickets may support learning, but they also indicate that their effects may vary according to the outcome measured and the educational context.

Evidence specifically concerning English Language achievement is still emerging. A recent quasi-experimental study involving eighth-grade students in Indonesia reported a positive effect of the Exit-Ticket strategy on English Language achievement. Although this finding is relevant, evidence from another national context cannot be assumed to apply directly to Nigerian secondary schools because differences in curriculum implementation, classroom conditions, teacher practices, and learner characteristics may influence instructional outcomes.

This creates an important empirical gap. While recent studies have examined Exit-Tickets in different educational settings, there remains limited evidence on their effect on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Nigeria, particularly in Taraba State. The present study therefore examined the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria. By comparing students taught using Exit-Tickets with those taught using the conventional method, the study provides context-specific evidence on the applicability of this formative assessment strategy in Nigerian secondary school English Language instruction.

Statement of the Problem

English Language remains an important subject in secondary education, yet concerns about students' academic achievement continue to justify attention to classroom instructional and assessment practices. Formative assessment provides opportunities for teachers to obtain evidence of learning during instruction and use such evidence to improve subsequent teaching and learning (Mwangi & Otieno, 2023).

Exit-Tickets are one practical form of formative assessment through which students briefly demonstrate their understanding at the end of a lesson. Recent evidence indicates that Exit-Tickets can provide useful information about students' learning-related responses and support instructional decision-making (Nguyen & Tran, 2024). However, evidence concerning their effect on academic achievement remains limited and context-dependent. A recent quasi-experimental study reported a positive effect of Exit-Tickets on English Language achievement among Indonesian junior secondary students, but evidence from that context cannot be assumed to apply directly to Nigerian secondary schools.

The problem, therefore, is not the absence of a potentially useful formative assessment strategy, but the limited empirical evidence on whether Exit-Tickets can significantly improve English Language achievement among secondary school students in the Nigerian context, particularly in Taraba State. This study addresses the gap by examining the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on students' academic performance in English Language compared with the conventional teaching method.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on the academic performance of secondary school students in English Language in Taraba State;
2. Compare the academic performance of students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State?

2. What is the difference in academic performance between students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State.

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental pre-test, post-test non-equivalent control group design because intact classes were used, making random assignment of individual students impracticable. The population comprised all Senior Secondary School II (SSS II) students offering English Language in public secondary schools in Taraba State during the 2024/2025 academic session. The sample size of 240 students was determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula, after which a multistage sampling technique was employed to select the participating schools and intact classes. The selected students were assigned to experimental and control groups.

Data were collected using the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT), developed from the SSS II English Language curriculum. The instrument was validated by experts and its reliability established through a pilot study using Cronbach's Alpha. The experimental group was taught using the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy, while the control group received instruction through the conventional teaching method. Pre-test and post-test scores were obtained using the ELAT. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while paired sample t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results and findings

This section presents the respondents' bio-data, analysis of data collected for the study, including the presentation and interpretation of results. The analyses are organised based on the research questions and hypotheses earlier formulated. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics, including Paired Sample t-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) were employed to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Respondents' Bio-Data

This section presents a descriptive overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The bio-data includes variables such as instructional strategies and gender details that offer context to the interpretation of the research findings. The data are summarized using descriptive statistics specifically, frequencies and percentages depending on the nature of each variable. Tables and figures are employed to enhance clarity and enable a quick visual grasp of the distribution patterns across demographic categories. By examining the demographic profile of the respondents, this section provides foundational insights that support the validity and generalizability of the study's results. It also serves as a basis for understanding

potential influences that respondent characteristics may have on the responses given to the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 1: Description of Participants by Group

Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Exit Tickets (Experimental Group)	120	50
Conventional (Control Group)	120	50
Total	240	100

Table 1 presents the number and percentage of students that participated in the research in relation to the type of treatment received. The analysis revealed that 120 participants across gender representing 50% each were under exit tickets instructional strategy (experimental group) and conventional teaching method (control group) respectively.

Research Questions

In this section, the study presents and discusses the responses to the research questions through the application of descriptive statistical methods. Specifically, measures of central tendency such as the mean and measures of dispersion particularly the standard deviation are employed to summarize and interpret the data collected from respondents. These statistical tools provide insights into the general trends and variability of the responses, thereby allowing for a clearer understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Each research question is examined independently, with results outlined in tables and followed by narrative interpretations. The discussion focuses on identifying patterns and drawing connections between the findings and the broader objectives of the study. This approach ensures that the analysis remains both rigorous and accessible, contributing meaningfully to the field of inquiry.

Research Question One: What is the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria? The summary of the analysis is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria (N = 120)

Test Type	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Gain
Pretest	120	31.3583	10.92587	
Posttest	120	48.0333	1.46634	16.675

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the pretest and posttest scores of 120 secondary school students who were taught English Language using the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy. The pretest mean score was 31.3583 with a standard deviation of 10.92587, while the posttest mean score increased to 48.0333 with a much lower standard deviation of 1.46634. This resulted in a mean gain of **16.675**. The marked increase in the mean score after the intervention suggests a significant improvement in students' academic performance. Additionally, the reduction in the standard deviation from pretest to posttest implies that the students' performance became more

consistent. These findings indicate that the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy had a positive effect on the academic achievement of the students in English Language.

Research Question Two: What is the difference in academic performance between students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State?

Table 3: Descriptive statistics showing the difference in academic performance between students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State.

Instructional Group	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference (Gain)
Exit-Tickets	120	48.0333	1.46634	
Conventional	120	42.4833	1.42004	
Total	240	45.2583	3.13169	5.5500

Note. Mean Difference was calculated as: $48.0333 - 42.4833 = 5.5500$.

Table 3 above reveals the descriptive statistics for the posttest scores of secondary school students taught English language using the **Exit-Tickets** and **Conventional** instructional strategies. The **Exit-Tickets** group (N = 120) achieved a **mean posttest score of 48.0333** with a **standard deviation of 1.46634**, indicating relatively high achievement and consistent performance within this group. The **Conventional** group (N = 120) had a **mean posttest score of 42.4833** and a **standard deviation of 1.42004**, suggesting that students in this group performed lower on average, but their performance was similarly consistent. The **mean difference** or **mean gain** between the **Exit-Tickets** and **Conventional** groups was calculated to be **5.55** ($48.0333 - 42.4833$), indicating that the **Exit-Tickets** group outperformed the **Conventional** group by this margin. This **mean gain of 5.55 points** suggests that the **Exit-Tickets instructional strategy** has more positive impact on student achievement compared to the **Conventional method**.

Null Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the statistical evaluation of the research hypotheses using inferential techniques aimed at determining significant differences and relationships within the collected data. Specifically, the paired sample t-test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) are utilized to test the formulated hypotheses and assess the impact of the independent variables while controlling for potential covariates. The paired sample t-test is employed to compare mean scores from related groups, highlighting any statistically significant differences arising from experimental treatments or interventions. ANCOVA, on the other hand, facilitates a more refined analysis by adjusting for covariates, thus enhancing the precision of comparisons among group means.

Each hypothesis is examined independently, and the results are presented in structured tables showing key statistical outputs such as the p-values, effect sizes, and confidence intervals. Interpretations follow, offering insights into the implications of the findings in relation to the study objectives and the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

Hypothesis One (H_{01}): There is no significant effect of Exit-Tickets instructional strategy on secondary school students' academic performance in English Language in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 4:

Paired Samples t-Test Result for Pretest and Posttest Achievement Scores of Students Taught English Language Using the Exit-Tickets Instructional Strategy (N = 120)

Statistics	Value
Mean Difference	-16.67500
Standard Deviation (SD)	11.13112
Standard Error of Mean (SEM)	1.01613
95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	-18.68703 to -14.66297
t-value	-16.410
Degrees of Freedom (df)	119
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

The table 4 above showed the result of a **paired samples t-test** conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the **Exit-Tickets instructional strategy** on students' achievement in English language in Taraba State. The test compared the mean pretest and post-test scores of secondary school students who participated in the Exit-Tickets instructional approach. The results indicate a significant difference between the pretest and post-test achievement scores of secondary school students who were taught English language using the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy. The mean difference between the pretest and post-test scores was -16.675, with a standard deviation of 11.13112 and a standard error of mean of 1.01613. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in scores ranged from -18.68703 to -14.66297, indicating a substantial improvement in students' performance. The t-value for the test was -16.410, with 119 degrees of freedom, and the significance value (p-value) was found to be 0.000, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. This result indicates that the improvement in achievement scores from the pretest to the post-test is statistically significant, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. It can be concluded that the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy had a positive impact on students' English language achievement, as evidenced by the significant increase in their post test scores. The substantial mean difference and the statistical significance support the effectiveness of the Exit-Tickets strategy in enhancing student learning outcomes in the English language.

Hypothesis Two (H_{02}): There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students taught English Language using Exit-Tickets instructional strategy and those taught using conventional teaching methods in Taraba State.

Table 5:

Summary of ANCOVA on Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Posttest Achievement Scores by Instructional Method (Exit-Tickets vs. Conventional Method)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1849.852	2	924.926	443.622	.000	.789
Intercept	46714.788	1	46714.788	22405.813	.000	.990
Pretest	1.702	1	1.702	0.817	.367	.003
Group (Instructional)	1818.101	1	1818.101	872.016	.000	.786
Error	494.131	237	2.085	-	-	-
Total	493940.000	240	-	-	-	-
Corrected Total	2343.983	239	-	-	-	-

R Squared = .789 (Adjusted R Squared = .787). Covariate: Pretest score evaluated at 32.42.

Table 6: Pairwise Comparisons of Posttest Achievement Scores between Exit-Tickets and Conventional Methods

Experimental (I)	Control (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval
Exit-Tickets	Conventional	5.533*	0.187	.000	5.164 – 5.902
Conventional	Exit-Tickets	-5.533*	0.187	.000	-5.902 – -5.164

p < .05. The mean difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of the ANCOVA analysis from Table 5 reveal a statistically significant main effect of instructional method on students' post-test achievement scores in English language, $F(1, 237) = 872.016$, $p = .000$, with a large effect size (Partial Eta Squared = .786). This indicates that the type of instructional strategy used: Exit-Tickets versus Conventional method had a significant impact on student achievement, after controlling for pretest scores. The non-significant effect of the pretest scores ($p = .367$) indicates that the groups were adequately equated at the beginning of the study. Supporting this, the pairwise comparison in Table 6 shows that students taught using the Exit-Tickets strategy significantly out-performed those taught using the Conventional Method, with a mean difference of 5.533 ($p = .000$) and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 5.164 to 5.902. Given these findings, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of students taught English using Exit-Tickets and those taught using the Conventional method in Taraba State was **rejected**. This implies that Exit-Tickets is a more effective instructional strategy for improving students' academic performance in English language compare to the conventional method.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that students taught English Language using the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy performed significantly better than those taught using the conventional method. This finding suggests that incorporating brief formative assessment into instruction can enhance students' learning by providing opportunities to demonstrate understanding and enabling teachers to respond to identified learning difficulties.

The finding is consistent with evidence that formative assessment and feedback can positively influence students' learning outcomes (Ifeanyi & Garba, 2025; Basco, 2021). It is also supported by studies specifically examining Exit-Tickets. Aliyu and Nwachukwu (2023) reported significant effects associated with assessment approaches incorporating Exit-Tickets, while Lim (2025) found that Exit-Tickets promoted students' engagement with course materials and use of learning resources. Similarly, recent evidence from English Language instruction reported improved achievement among students exposed to Exit-Tickets compared with conventional instruction.

The positive effect may be attributed to the feedback and reflective processes associated with the strategy. By responding to brief lesson-focused prompts, students are required to retrieve and organize recently learned information, while teachers obtain immediate evidence of areas requiring clarification or reinforcement. This creates an opportunity to adjust subsequent instruction to students' identified needs. Such a process is particularly relevant to English Language learning, where continuous practice, feedback, and correction are important for developing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and written expression.

The finding also extends existing evidence by providing context-specific support for the use of Exit-Tickets in secondary school English Language instruction in Taraba State. While previous studies have examined the strategy in other subjects and educational settings, evidence from Nigerian secondary schools remains limited. The present finding therefore contributes to the emerging literature by demonstrating that Exit-Tickets can be a practical formative assessment strategy for improving English Language achievement within the study context.

The finding should, however, be interpreted within the scope of the study. Differences in school conditions, teacher competence, class size, learner characteristics, and implementation practices may influence the effectiveness of Exit-Tickets in other settings. Further studies across different Nigerian states, subjects, and school contexts are therefore necessary to establish the broader applicability of the strategy.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Exit-Tickets instructional strategy significantly improves secondary school students' academic performance in English Language compared with the conventional teaching method. The finding indicates that integrating brief formative assessment into instruction can strengthen students' engagement and understanding while providing teachers with timely evidence for subsequent instructional decisions.

The study contributes to knowledge by providing context-specific empirical evidence from Taraba State on the effectiveness of Exit-Tickets in secondary school English Language instruction. It extends the existing literature by demonstrating the potential of a simple, low-cost formative assessment strategy within a Nigerian secondary school context, where empirical evidence on Exit-Tickets remains limited. The findings therefore provide a basis for incorporating Exit-Tickets as a complementary formative assessment approach to conventional English Language instruction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

1. English Language teachers should integrate Exit-Tickets into classroom instruction as a formative assessment strategy for monitoring students' understanding and identifying learning difficulties.
2. School administrators and education authorities should provide relevant professional development to equip English Language teachers with skills for designing and effectively implementing Exit-Tickets.
3. Curriculum planners should encourage the incorporation of practical formative assessment approaches such as Exit-Tickets into English Language teaching and assessment practices.
4. Researchers should undertake further studies on Exit-Tickets across other subjects, educational levels, and Nigerian contexts to determine the consistency and wider applicability of the strategy.

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