University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal) | Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

4-15-2010

Teaching Reading Comprehension in Selected Primary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria

Moses A. Adeniji
Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, samad2ps@yahoo.com

Anne Omale
Omolade International School

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Adeniji, Moses A. and Omale, Anne, "Teaching Reading Comprehension in Selected Primary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria" (2010). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Paper 349.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/349

Library Philosophy and Practice 2010

ISSN 1522-0222

Teaching Reading Comprehension in Selected Primary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria

Moses A. Adeniji
College Librarian
College of Engineering &Technology
Olabisi Onabanjo University
Ogun State, Nigeria

Anne Omale
Omolade International School
Eleyele Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Introduction

The ability to read is one determiner of students' success or failure. They must form the habit of reading to perform well in all subjects. A good reader has a better opportunity for greater achievement. Ajibola, (2006) states that a reading habit is cultivated by individuals who are ready to give their all to it.

The skill acquired in reading can promote the acquisition of language skills like listening, speaking, and writing. Some primary school pupils find it difficult to read and understand despite the fact that reading is indispensable. Some show a carefree attitude towards reading. This problem is not peculiar to primary schools, but pertains to all categories of readers. Lasisi (2007) asked a fundamental question on what books Nigerians read. His question included whether political office holders in the country read. It was clear from the tone of the question that he feels that reading is not part of the culture of the people that control Nigerian destiny.

Some English teachers are lagging behind in their approach to teaching reading comprehension. The effect is poor performance among students. These teachers lack methods of imparting reading skills to pupils. The condition is so bad that some pupils find it difficult to read and understand a simple sentence. Amutheazi (2000) notes that there is an urgent need to investigate into the causes of poor reading comprehension among our pupils with a view to finding a lasting solution to the problem.

Literature Review

Reading is a lifelong activity.Those who enjoy reading derive pleasure and satisfaction from it. Adigun and Oyelude (2003) observe that skill in reading will not only assist pupils in organizing their thoughts and jotting down important facts while reading, but also equip them to comprehend entire texts.

Adewole (2001) asserts that the aim of any reading programme is to lay a strong foundation that can benefit pupils throughout their lives in academic pursuits. Phillips (1997) commenting on the numbers of literate pupils in primary schools in Nigeria, notes that about 57 percent of Nigeria's population over age six is literate, that is, can read and write with understanding in at least one language. The literacy rate is higher among the male population (about 66 percent). While the literacy rate ranges between 50 and

82 percent in the southern states, the rate in most of the northern states (excluding Kaduna and Katsina) ranges from 32 to 50 percent. Adigun and Oyelude (2003) conducted research on the use of the public library in selected locations in Ibadan, with the aim of exploring reading habits and general attitude towards reading and acquisition of skills in reading.

Reading is a crucial form of communication through which we get most of the information required in teaching and learning situations and in everyday life. Krashen (1993) says that we learn to read by reading, not through drill and practice, but by free volition, and in this way learners become readers.

Reading is the recognition of printed or written symbols, which serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings built up through the reader's past experience. It has also been described as a process of translating alphabetical symbols into a form of language from which the native speaker has already derived the meaning. According to Lawal (1996), readers use the symbols to guide the recovery of information from their repertoires and subsequently use this information to construct interpretations of the message. Adewole (2001) describes “critical reading skill,” which which students need to read, explore, and appreciate a literary text effectively. The ability to read is a crucial skill for information retrieval (Dike, 2006).

There are various factors militating against the effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension in our primary schools.

Oyetunde and Unoh (1986) list impediments to positive reading habits and attitude. These includes lack of materials, poor preparation of teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all, home background, and lack of adult readers as models.

Ojo (1993) found that the major causes of students' poor performance in English and other school subjects is their inability to read effectively, which, in turn, is largely is due to the attitude of learners toward reading. Lawal (1982) did diagnostic testing of reading achievement of selected secondary schools in Samaru, Zaria, and described such reading problems as: omission, substitution, reversal, mispronunciation, sight, vocabulary, not up to grade level, nervousness, slow reading, and lack of comprehension. Teachers must take responsibility for solving these problems, but Folaranmi (2007) believes that the government should involve teachers in working out effective ways of making the teaching profession viable for serving teachers and attractive to incoming ones, in order to address the problem of student poor reading culture. Adekoya and Arua (1997) believe that “many bilingual students fail to comprehend what they read in the school situation because they lack the vital firsthand experience necessary to widen their knowledge and general information of their culture which are not included in the school text.” Akinbade (2007) states that a good environment is necessary to promote effective learning in primary schools.

Oyerokun (1993) emphasizes the need to use appropriate techniques and materials in teaching. She further states that in order to achieve this, the school, teacher, and parents should work together to ensure improvement in reading performance. Bond and Tinker (1973) share the same view as Onibokun, maintaining that school, students, teachers, and parents should work to improve English language reading skill. Chihemen (2007) states that government has an interest in this matter, and put in place a training programme called “ The Special Teacher Upgrading Programme (STUP)” to address the deficiency among pupils.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the problems facing pupils who are learning to read.

2. To determine the role of teachers in promoting reading skills.

3. To determine whether government and parents have a role in promoting reading culture in Nigeria.

4. To offer suggestions for improvement in teaching to promote reading comprehension.

Research Questions

- Do teachers play a major role in learning reading comprehension in primary schools?
- Can government as provider of education promote reading culture in Nigerian schools?
- Do parents have a contribution towards effective reading ability of their children in schools?
- Does a conducive environment promote reading ability of pupils in primary schools?

Methodology and Population

A questionnaire was the main instrument in collecting data for the study. The questionnaire was structured and consisted of thirty questions. The respondents were to limit their responses to the options provided for teachers of English language in five primary schools Ibadan northeast local government of Oyo state. Two hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed to a random sample in the selected schools.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered during the third term of 2005/2006 session. The administration was done by the researchers with the assistance of the school counselor of each school. Out of 120 copies of the questionnaire distributed 90 were filled and returned. This represents a return rate of 75 percent. The completed questionnaire were analyzed using frequency count and percentages.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Gender

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	36	40
Female	54	60
TOTAL	90	100

Sixty percent of respondents were female, and the rest male.

Table 2: Age Distribution

20-25	10	12
26-30	14	16
31-35	18	20
36-40	29	32
41-45	14	16
46-50	5	4
Total	90	100

About one-third of the respondents are between the ages of 36 and 40 years, with another fifth between 31 and 35, and the remainder distributed among other age groups.

TABLE 3: Educational qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
GRADE II	18	20
N.C.E	36	40
B.SC./ BED	26	28
MSC./ MED	10	12
TOTAL	90	100

While 40 percent of respondents possess N.C.E, another 28 percent possess B.Sc. or B. Ed., while a smaller number have Grade II and M.Sc/MED certificate.

Research Question 1: Do teachers play a major role in learning reading comprehension in primary schools?

TABLE 4: Teachers' Roles in Promoting Reading Comprehension.

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	80	88
No	10	12
TOTAL	90	100

Unsurprisingly, nearly all respondents felt that teachers have a role in teaching reading comprehension. That is consistent with the finding of Omolewa (2001) and Havighurst (1981), as cited by Lassa (1995), that depicted teachers as managers of knowledge, mediators of learning, disciplinarians, socialites, supervisors, models or ego ideal, examiners, leaders, second parents, organizers, coaches and motivators of learning.

Research Question 2: Do governments play any role in promoting reading culture in Nigeria?

Table 5: Government Role in Promoting Reading Culture

Option of the Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	69	76
No	21	24
TOTAL	90	100

Nearly four-fifths of respondents are of the opinion that government plays a role in promoting reading comprehension and reading culture. This finding is in line with those of Adesiyan (2007) that government as the provider of education also guides the operation of educational institutions in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What Is the Role of Parents in the Reading Ability of their Children?

Table 6: Parent Attitudes toward the Learning and Teaching of English in schools

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	65	72
No	25	28
TOTAL	90	100

Nearly three quarters of respondents believe that parents' attitudes affect their children's learning of English as a school subject. Parent attitudes can help promote learning. This finding corroborates the work of Oden (1999) as cited by Oladunjoye (2003) mothers serve as resource persons in language learning for girls who are at home with their mothers.

Research Question 4: Do Conducive Environments Promote Reading Ability of Primary School Pupils?

TABLE 7: Enabling Environmental Factors that Promote Learning and Reading Comprehension

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	80
No	18	20
TOTAL	90	100

Eighty percent of respondents saw a conducive environment as a factor that promotes reading and learning among the pupils. This finding corroborates Akinbade (2007), who found that a conducive environment is the bedrock without which learning would be impaired and not effective.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Reading is indispensable to primary school pupils. With the appropriate reading materials, a conducive environment, and teachers with adequate educational qualifications, good reading skills will help produce pupils who perform well in other subjects. Government, teachers, and parents have major roles to play in the education of pupils in primary schools, especially on English as a school subject. Eighty-eight percent of respondent felt that teachers play a greater role. Government is the major provider of education through funding, rules, and regulations. The attitudes of parents help motivate children.

To promote reading skills and eliminate the threat of reading disabilities among Nigerian pupils, the following recommendations are made:

- Teachers must acknowledge the importance of reading skills and mustt plan an effective programme of reading instruction with a focus on promoting reading culture among pupils in their schools.
- School authorities should introduce informal education on readiness for reading. Non-structured reading instruction should be introduced and the child's ability to respond to the reading materials be observed.
- Parents should provide a stimulating reading environment for their children and wards. They should encourage their children to read at home. Books should be provided for them to improve their reading. They should also encourage their children to watch children's educational television. This will go a long way in improving their phonetic and vocabulary development. They should cultivate the habit of using their leisure to read for pleasure.
- Government at the federal, state, and local levels should provide appropriate materials for teaching reading skills. Libraries should be provided for our primary schools, since the absence of libraries is a factor in the deficiency in reading skills. There is a need to resuscitate the mobile

library in schools and make it compulsory for all pupils to register with a token fee in order to have access to service provided by this mobile library.

References

Adekoya, C., & Arua, E. (1997). Teaching reading in Nigeria: A guidebook to theory and practice. Ife: Gbadeksol Nigeria Enterprises.

Adesiyan, S. (2007). Osun State government has done well. *The Nigerian Education Times 14* (May-June): 22.

Adewole, A.O. (2001). What reading skills do student need to comprehend literature? *Ibadan Journal of Education Studies 1* (1): 66.

Adigun, M., & Oyelude, A. (2003). Libraries as tools for development: Survey of users of Oyo State Public Library. *Nigerian Libraries 37* (2):78.

Ajibola**,** A. (2006). A practical guide to purposeful reading for students. *School Panorama 1.1* (2): 9.

Akinbade, A. (2007) Free education: Why we outsmart other states in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Education Times 14* (May-June): 18.

Alli, M. (2007). Motivation for teaching is low. *The Nigerian Education Times 14* (May-June): 36.

Amutheazi, E. (2000). Education and the challenge of patriotism in Nigeria: A goodwill message. In Babarinde K. (Ed.). Education and the challenge of patriotism in Nigeria. A publication of Philosophy of Education Association of Nigeria.

Bond, G.L., & Tinker, M. (1973). Reading difficulties: Their diagnosis and correction. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Chiahemen, F. (2007). Retraining of primary school teachers will boost UBE. *Daily Independent Newspaper* (May 17): A3.

Dike, W. (2006). Global overviews of school library development and its impact on information literacy skills of the school child. *Nigerian School Library Journal 5* (2): 7.

Folaranmi, Y.(2007). Challenges of making the teaching profession viable. *The Nigerian Education Times 14* (May-June): 37.

Krashen, S.(1993). The power of reading : Insight from the research. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Lasisi, A. (2007). We must promote reading and environmental culture. *The Punch Newspaper June 15* : 45

Lassa, N. (1995). Teachers' role in the art of schooling. In Ipaye, B. (Ed.). *Research on schooling in Nigeria: Introductory reading.* Ondo: Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.

Ojo, O. I. (2003). Narrative descriptive, argumentative, conversational and dialogic speech types. In Alabi, A.O. (Ed.). *New perspectives in english language skills.* Oyo: Immaculate City Publisher.

Oladunjoye, S. (2003). Learning strategy, gender, and achievement in verbal communication in the English language. *Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies 1&2* (June-Dec.)

Omolewa, M. (2001). *The challenge of education in Nigeria.* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Oyetunde, I. (1986). *Teaching reading comprehension and summary writing in the secondary schools.* Jos: Museum Press.

Oyerokun, S. O. (1993). *Listening Comprehension Skills.* Ibadan: Adebanke Commercial Press.

Unoh, S. (1986). *The study of reading*. Ibadan: University Press.