

Effect of Dialogic Reading Strategy on Lower Basic School Pupils' Academic Performance in Literacy in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State

Olumuyiwa Ayobami AJAYI, Ph.D, Omilola Amina OLAWOLE, Adeleye Olorunkunmi OYUNNIYI, Abike Kalia DOSUNMU

Department of Early childhood and Primary Education, Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria
olumuyiwa.ajayi@kwasu.edu.ng

Abstract: Over time, pupils' academic performance in literacy has been worse, these could be as a result of many factors such as teachers' attitude, pupils' readiness, and instructional strategy employed by teachers. For these reasons, the study looks at the outcome of dialogic reading strategy on pupils' academic performance in Literacy. Pre-test post-test control group quasi-experimental research design was used. All schools in Moro Local Government were used as population 2 private and 2 public schools in Moro Local Government, Kwara State were selected to participate in the study and simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Pupils' Dialogic Reading Strategic Test (PDRST) was the instrument used to collect the data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method was used to calculate PDRST reliability index, and it yielded (0.75). In this study, seven research hypotheses were developed and assessed at a significance level of 0.05. Findings showed that there was significant main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' academic performance in literacy ($F_{(1,21)} = 30.252, P < 0.05$), there was no significant effect of school type on lower basic pupils' academic performance in literacy ($F_{(1,21)} = 0.901; P > 0.05$) and there was no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' literacy ($F_{(1,21)} = .608; P > 0.05$). The study concluded that dialogic reading strategy can improve pupils' academic performance in Literacy. It was therefore recommended among others that pupils should be groomed with dialogic reading strategy for adequate performance in literacy.

Keywords: Dialogic reading, Literacy, Academic performance, Pupils, School Type

Introduction

Reading is crucial to the academic success of pupils and to the expansion of a nation. Successful pupils in schools are those who develop interest in reading as much as the topic covered and class assignments given required reading comprehension. Also, one can think of reading as a basic life skill and a cornerstone for success at school and throughout life, therefore pupils who can read well can function more effectively in everyday school activities.

One of the complex factors resulting in pupils' poor reading are the teachers because most of them are trained to teach basic reading. They continued to state that the employment of unqualified language teachers had a negative impact on the level of instruction and learning quality of reading subjects in schools (Botha, 2008). Also, Moats and Tolman (2011) submit that the majority of pupils who are poor readers and poor spellers have a weak phonological processing skill. Some of the key contributing factors to pupils' poor reading abilities include: poor attention given to phonics instructions in class, pupils' laziness and lack of motivation to learn to read. Efkilde (2008) asserts that reading influences vocabulary development, however when pupils do not read fluently or regularly, their vocabulary skills are impacted.

Jordan (2011) states that most pupils have low reading abilities as a result of primary school; teachers' difficulties in moving beginning readers toward immediate reading skills, pupils' lack of exposure of reading strategies and the prevailing attitude among teachers towards strategies. Lucas (2011) confirmed this by stating that some primary school teachers continue to struggle with reading instruction and remain resistant to its implementation in class. Botha (2008) claims many teachers have under developed understanding of teaching literacy, reading and writing. As a result, they do not know how to teach reading to pupils and they do not know how to stimulate pupils' reading both inside and outside the classroom.

The challenges teachers may face in teaching reading strategies to pupils may include pupils' lack of foundation in reading (Oyetunji 2011). Pupils' inability to hear or produce a new sound in a second language has also been noted by Stanford (2015) as one of the challenges with which the teachers may face in teaching reading strategies in class. Stanford (2015) highlighted that one key factor that impedes pupils' reading ability is their inability to process the individual sounds of letters which is needed for word recognition. Robertson (2013) claimed that the limitations of pupils' vocabulary proficiency impede their reading ability as well as a challenge to teachers when teaching reading strategies to pupils. Stanford (2015) point out that underdeveloped phonemic awareness and phonics skills do interfere with pupils' ability to read words fluently because reading is a technical process of reading letter by letter and word by word. Swanson (2009) also asserted that weak phonological retention processing results into poor

reading abilities of pupils. Blending sounds within words (retaining phonological information) is essential for learning to read. Joseph (2018) added that pupils who become poor readers experience difficulties with accurately identifying and reading words at lower grades.

Literacy is so crucial in that it is a means of instruction in Nigeria schools from Upper primary to higher institutions. The knowledge of content of school subject is transferred to learners at all levels of education through Literacy medium, or how proficient a learner is, will predict school academic performance, and at the same time how he or she can cope with the language of instruction thus, there is a significant influence of literacy proficiency on learner's academic performance. Exposing children to literacy improves early language development and it is a good attempt at invest in learners reading and writing skills in order to prevent social and behavioral problems. The level of learners' academic performance in school subject may be determined by learners' level of proficiency in literacy skills and since literacy is the language of instruction, learners success and proficiency in the language of instruction may also determine his or her academic performance.

Aina and Olanipekun (2014) revealed that competency in literacy is the most important factor of learning excellence and performance especially in this part of the world and that reading skill in foreign language is practically determined by the learner's proficiency in the language. In spite of the role of literacy in all human spheres of life as well as in learners academic performance, evidences abound that learners still experience problems in the attempt to learn literacy skills in our schools and this is also apparent in the poor performance of learners in school examination, even their inability to compete favorably with their peers on many occasions, (Samantha, 2015).

Robby (2010) highlighted some of the challenges literacy pose on pupils at the early years; these include the fear of mistakes; which is one of the main problems that determine how well pupils develop reading and writing skills. Learners at the early years also have challenges of decoding which means inability to distinguish phonemes also on many occasions slow oral pronunciation, problem of sounds recognition, inappropriate use of tenses and reading without proper expression (Klinger, 2011). Idiaka (2017) posited that often children experience difficulties in reading when faced with seemingly difficult and ambiguous language. It causes distraction that prevents learners from gaining meaningfully from what they read and such other problems includes comprehension, retention and reading

Aladejana (2008) explains dialogic reading as a strategy where, instead of reading to a passive reader who simply sits and listens, one should utilize dialogue to engage learners in the text. In short, one reads with them, instead of reading to them. Generally, one should ask them questions about what is happening, and what they think might happen next. It works equally well for children of all ages, and for fiction and non-fiction texts. Pointing to a character illustration and asking the learner who it is, asking a learner to point to something on the page, or asking them to join in at certain moments are all examples of dialogic reading. These are the forms that dialogic reading commonly takes with younger children; simple questions to check their understanding, and make the reading process more active and engaging (Fisseha, 2011)

Public and private schools are institutions owned as the name connotes. The public school in Nigeria have federal, state, and local governments as their proprietors while private schools have individuals, associations, or organizations as their owners. Private schools vary widely, and the level of parental participation differs from one private school to the other. What is important for a parent is to choose a private school that has characteristics that match what he/she is looking for. Parents pay for the cost of educating their children in private schools and therefore tend to be more engaged in determining what the schools offer than parents whose children are in public schools (Mabekeje, 2012).

A better understanding of the effect of school variables on learning is necessary because the policy may influence the characteristics of public schools, as well as the cost of private schools through vouchers and scholarships. Tunde-Awe (2001) stated that, besides educational materials supplied to school, the geographical location of a school also influences the teaching and learning of students and hence the level of pupils' learning outcomes. Therefore, the specific type of school dictates what is taught, how it is taught, and what materials are available. Alai (2012) further maintained that where educative materials are deprived, pupils suffer from academic deterioration and mental imbalance. Also, where the teacher relates positively to the pupils, the school becomes their academic endeavour.

Many studies by Sociologists, Psychologists, and Educationists showed that the type of schools a learner attends has a great impact on his learning outcome. For instance, Bibby and Peil (2019) stated that children who attended private primary schools do better than pupils in public schools. This idea is also back-up by Ransford-Kaldon (2009) as he maintained further that the public schools which saw education as a good thing aimed to leave the question of educational achievement or downfall in the hands of the public and their parents. This means that the business of education is not taken with all the seriousness it requires in public schools. This, of course, is what may be the general indifference of the people to government-owned business or property, a situation that has resulted in a nonchalant attitude of government workers, including teachers in public schools who are made to believe that a brilliant child would achieve automatically at school with little or no active help coming from a teacher. In this regard, the

researchers investigated the effects of dialogic reading strategy on lower basic school pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Moro local Government area of Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Literacy as a subject affects all aspects of human life at different levels. Thus, the need to know how to read and write is necessary. The National Policy of Education in its objectives for primary education also noted in its first objective, which is to inculcate permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively. Despite the efforts from the federal government to promote free education for pupils, pupils still perform poorly in Literacy. Many efforts have been made by researchers in the past and are still ongoing to improve pupils' literacy performance while using different strategies such as differentiated instruction, concrete representational abstract, and concept mapping. In spite of these efforts, the problem of pupils' poor academic performance in Literacy still persists. One can infer from the foregoing that, to improve pupils' academic performance in Literacy, there is a need to explore other strategies that can captivate the interest of the pupils towards Literacy skill development, defining new vocabulary, improving verbal fluency, introducing story components, and developing narrative skills. This creates a researchable gap; the gap in which this study filled by examining the effects of dialogic reading strategy on pupils' academic performance in literacy. This is because there seems to be no documented empirical evidence on the effects of dialogic reading strategy on lower basic school pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Moro local Government area of Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the purposes are:

- a. Examine the main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy
- b. Investigate the main effect of school type on lower basic pupils' literacy
- c. Assess the effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' literacy

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study, and were tested at 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: there is no significant main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy

H₀₂: there is no significant main effect of school type on lower basic pupils' literacy

H₀₃: there is no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' literacy

Methodology

This study adopted the pretest-posttest, control group quasi-experimental research design. The population of this study consisted of all primary school pupils in both public and private schools in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State. A factorial design of 2X2 was adopted to test the null hypotheses for this study. The first two levels were two experimental groups (dialogic reading strategy and the control group) while the second factorial level is the school type (public and private). This design allowed for the experimental groups to receive treatment (dialogic reading strategy) while the control groups received placebo, although the control group were taught the same topics as the experimental group using the conventional teaching method. However, both the experimental and control groups received the pre-test and the post-test before and after treatments, respectively.

The study's population were all primary three pupils in both 27 public primary schools with a total of 6,696 pupils and 241 private schools with total of 13,443 pupils in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara state, (Kwara State School Census Report, 2019/2020). Intact classes were used to avoid disruption of class. Sample size comprised 30 primary three pupils. Purposive sampling was employed to choose four schools from the total population in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State. Thereafter, one primary three pupils of these schools were selected for the experimental groups in addition to one control group. This is due to the fact that they are matured enough to respond to the test questions, and it will encourage learners to learn from peers and express themselves before reaching upper classes.

The instrument for data collection for this study was Pupils' Dialogic Reading Strategic Test (PDRST). Some items for the PDRST were constructed by the researchers and it consists of ten (10) questions, based on the basic three Literacy curriculums. The objective of the topics in basic literacy curriculums serves as a guide for developing the questions. The Pupils' Dialogic Reading Strategic Test (PDRST) was used to assess the pupils' dialogic reading strategy in literacy. Instruments were subjected to face and content validity by one literacy teacher and three experts in Early Childhood and Primary Education. To ascertain the reliability of the three instruments, test re-test method was used. Thereafter, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) coefficient was used

to determine the reliability index ($r=0.75$). Frequency counts and percentage were used to analyze the respondents' demographic information, while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Results

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant main effect of treatment on lower basic school pupils' academic performance in literacy.

Table 1: summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) showing the Main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	184.079 ^a	4	23.010	7.253	.734
Intercept	523.545	1	523.545	165.031	.889
Pretest	1.679	1*	1.679	0.529	.475
Main Effect					
Treatment	95.972	1*	95.972	30.252	.000
School type	2.859	1*	2.859	0.901	.353
Two Way Interaction					
Treatment * school type	1.930	1*	1.930	0.608	.444
Error	66.621	25*	3.172		
Total	7091.00	30			
Corrected Total	250.700	29			

a. R Squared = .734 (Adjusted R Squared = .633)

Table 1 shows the effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy. There was significant main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy ($F_{(1,25)} = 30.252$, $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.000) is less than 0.05. This implies that treatment had significant effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' literacy.

Table 2: Summary of Bonferroni's Poc Hoc Pairwise Comparison of the scores within the two groups

Treatment	Mean Difference	Experimental	Control Group
Dialogue reading strategy	18.812	*	
Conventional Method	10.818		*

Table 2 revealed that the significant main effect exposed by Table 3 is as a result the significant difference between dialogue reading strategy and conventional method. Dialogue reading strategy teaching refers to experimental group, while conventional method is known as control group. This implies that those exposed to dialogue reading strategy (18.812) performed significantly better than those exposed to conventional method (10.818).

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant main effect of school type on lower basic pupils' academic performance in literacy

Table 1 also revealed the effect of school type on lower basic pupils' literacy. There was no significant effect of school type on lower basic pupils' literacy ($F_{(1,25)} = 0.901$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.353) is greater than 0.05. This implies that school type had no significant effect on lower basic pupils' literacy.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' academic performance in literacy

Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' literacy. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on lower basic pupils' literacy ($F_{(1,25)} = .608$; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.444) is greater than 0.05. This implies that treatment and school type had no significant effect on lower basic pupils' literacy.

Discussion

The findings showed that there was significant main effect of treatment on lower basic pupils' performance in literacy. This implies that pupils taught using dialogic reading strategy performed significantly higher than pupils taught using conventional

method. The fact that dialogic strategy is a teaching method that uses discussion most effectively for carrying out learning activities may be the main reason for the improvement of pupils academic performance. This finding is in tandem with the earlier study by Huebner and Payne (2010). Huchner and Payne found out that two years after receiving brief dialogic reading training, pupils who received training used 90% more dialogic reading behaviors than pupils who had not received training.

Furthermore, findings of the study revealed that there was no significant effect of school type on the academic performance of pupils in literacy in Moro local government Kwara State, this finding does not support the idea backed up by Ransford-Kaldon (2009) as he maintained further that there was significant effect of school type on the academic performance of pupils in literacy.

Lastly, findings of the study revealed that there was no significant effect of treatment and school type on the academic performance of pupils in literacy in Moro local government Kwara State. This study implies that, irrespective of school types, there was no observable differences which states that dialogic strategy has impact on one school than the other. This finding supports that of Huebner and Payne (2010) which states that, there was no significant effect of dialogic strategy on the academic performance of pupils in literacy based on school type

Conclusion

Considering the study's findings, it is evident that dialogic reading strategy has effect on the academic performance of pupils in literacy. Dialogic reading strategy can bring about improvement in the academic performance of pupils in literacy regardless of gender and the type of school they attend.

Recommendations

Recommendations are provided in light of the findings:

1. Regular organization of seminars and workshops is necessary to inform teachers in both public and private schools on new strategies of teaching and how to use dialogic reading strategy in the classroom
2. Teachers of literacy should be informed about the benefits of dialogic reading strategy for pupils' academic success in literacy.
3. Curriculum planners should include the use of dialogic reading strategy in Literacy curriculum

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Journal of Education research and Available Jtajai@gmail.com.