

EFFECT OF WHOLE LANGUAGE APPROACH ON READING SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT OF BASIC THREE PUPILS IN UNGUWAN BORNO PRIMARY SCHOOL, BAUCHI METROPOLIS, BAUCHI STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of whole language approach on reading skills achievement of Basic three pupils in Unguwan Borno metropolis, Bauch State, Nigeria. The basic three A and B pupils in Unguwan Borno Primary School were selected as experimental and control groups. The experimental groups were taught using whole language approach for twelve weeks and they are 60 and control groups are 66 pupils respectively, while the control groups were taught using the traditional method. The instrument used for data collection was a descriptive essay test, in which pre-test was administered in week one while the post-test was administered in weeks twelve for both experimental and control groups. The findings of this research shown that the achievement of experimental group in post-test on the four major reading skills achievement is higher than that of control group who were not given treatment. Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations were made among others; that there is need for sending the teachers to improve their knowledge on the various methods of teaching reading. It also recommended that teachers should be trained through workshop and seminars.

Keywords: Whole Language Approach, Reading Skills, Achievement.

Introduction

Reading is a constant process of guessing and what one brings to the text is often more important than what one finds in it. The implication here is that the pupils must be taught to use what they know in order to understand the unknown element. In addition, the essential skill in reading is getting meaning from a written message (Combs, 2006). Reading involves the active participation of the reader who makes connections between existing knowledge and the construction of meaning from the materials read. Reading is an active rather than a passive process. Also, reading is a language skill without which pupils cannot succeed in school. There are some strategies for teaching reading which include: The Whole Language Approach, the Phonics Method, the Look and Say Method, the Language Experience Approach, and the Context Supported Method (Arua, 2009). More so, reading is a process of looking at a series of written symbols and getting meaning from them (Savita, 2015).

According to Grellet (2004), reading is a constant process of guessing, and what one brings to the next is often more important than what one finds in it. Psycho-linguistically, reading is viewed as an interactive process between language and thought. There are three kinds of class activities involved in relation to the reading. These class activities are: pre-reading activities, during/whilst reading activities, and post-reading activities). Pre-reading activities are instructional activities carried out before students conduct the real reading activities. In pre-reading activities, activation is concerned with the students' background knowledge, objectives of reading class, learning activities, and motivating the students. In this stage, teachers try to activate the students' schemata related to the topic or explaining briefly the contents of the text. Pre-reading is to tell students the purpose of reading and learning. Pre-reading is also to motivate the students. Motivation in reading attracts student's attention to the text. The

activities of pre-reading are activities aiming at facilitating the students' understanding about the reading text. During or whilst reading activities are the activities that reader does while reading takes place.

Mukhroji (2011), mentioned that reading includes: identifying the main idea; finding detail of the text; following a sequence; inferring from the text, and recognising the discourse pattern. Also, Mukhroji (2011) in Meita (2013), mentioned five activities to do while reading. First, reader should identify main idea of the text and topic sentence. Second, reader should find the details in the text and finds specific information. Third, reader follows a sequence by relating items in particular order or process. Fourth, reader should infer from the text by trying to understand the text using their schemata and experience. Fifth, reader should recognize the discourse patterns to understand the text holistically. Post-reading activities are the activities conducted by a reader after reading. In post-reading activities, students do post-questions, feedback. The post- questions are more effective an incidental comprehension and the objective, since information of both greater and lesser importance are learned. Post-reading activities are instructional activities that the students and teacher do after reading take place. According to Mukhroji (2011) point out that post-question, feedback, and group and whole class discussions are activities that can be done in the phase of post-reading activities. The activities function to check students' comprehension about the text being read. The post-questions after reading class activity are very important since information of both greater and lesser important is learned. Besides asking question, summarizing the contents of the text is also applicable to the students. The activity of post-reading can also be in the form of discussion. This discussion can be in a group or whole-class discussion. The discussion may depend on the class size. If the class size is big, it has to be a group discussion. If the class is small, it will be better to have a whole class discussion.

Reading comprehension, however, according to Laily (2018), is defined as the main skill for the students in learning English. It means that in reading, students can learn to find out the information from the text they read interpreted the sentence to gain the meaning and then answer the problems of the test in the last course. Usually, they do not know the required translation of any words into target language, while different languages show different linguistic features (Arono & Nadrah, 2019). Interpreting is one of the skills which must learner have as a reading English strategy. Knowledge of grammar will help the students read a text easier to catch the information, because by learning the structure of the English sentence can improve their reading ability as much as possible. Thus, the students can arrange the meaning in every sentence of a text. Reading should be educating for the students. Therefore, they should be interested in reading in order to comprehend the text meaning (Sumirat et al, 2019). Word recognition or the ability to read words accurately and automatically is a complex, multifaceted process that teachers must understand in order to provide effective instruction. Reading comprehension is defined as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002).

A second way to decode an unknown word is by breaking a word down by familiar word parts. These word parts include letters, common spelling patterns, syllables, and morphemes (Latisha Hayes & Kevin Flanigan, 2014). Phonological and phonemic awareness: the phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of words. The levels of phonological awareness are from simplest to most complex: syllables, onset-rime, and phonemes, while phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words and when reading text. In another development, approach to teaching reading can motivate a child or serve as obstacles to reading; when the wrong approach is used to teach a child reading, the child will lose interest in reading. The relationship of teacher's teaching model and the classroom atmosphere greatly affects students' achievement (Torres, 2017). Whole Language Approach is one of the best approaches use in teaching reading especially if it is combined with phonics approach. This is considered very effective in the sense

that the child will be prepared to read group of words spontaneously, entirely and accurate. Current thinking in reading instruction is moving towards meaning oriented approach or Whole Language Approach which demands creativity and pupils' participation during reading instruction (Neuman, 2010; Hayles, 2010). Whole Language Approach did not focus on teaching the separate components of a language such as grammar, vocabulary, word decoding, word recognition, and in particular the teaching of phonics but rather all these are done harmoniously, that is why it is viewed as a top down strategy. Some scholars are of the view that language should be taught as a whole, and if language is not kept whole, it is not a language anymore.

Statement of the Problem

Almost all the students in basic three in public schools in Bauchi metropolis were unable to read. Their inability to read was not unconnected to the methodology used in teaching them. This leads to the poor performance in their entire academic pursuits. As a result of their academic poor performance, many are dropping out of school year in year out. The researcher's teaching experience area is that pupils in basic three cannot read. When something is written for them on board they cannot read. The pupils are unable to extract or construct meaning from print. This need among basic three pupils is a major motivating factor for this researcher, and also get the same information when discussing the matter with some friends within Bauchi metropolis. However, noticed that text books for teaching were amply provided in the schools but the teachers are not using them, they were just stored, which means that a teacher cannot use any other approach of teaching reading which requires the use of teaching aids, but whole language approach can suitably be used because the teachers and the pupils can produce their teaching aids and all the activities unfolding in the class were derived from the real life experience of the pupils. The only thing teachers that are using this approach shall do is to guide the pupils. Therefore, it is a learner centered approach. Furthermore, the problem of basic three pupils for being unable to read was compounded because of the inadequacy of the methods used by the teachers in teaching them how to read. The most devastating problem that prompted this research is inability of basic three pupils from public schools to decode English words, recognize them and speak with minimum fluency. By using this approach in teaching, pupils learn fast in terms of fluency, word recognition, word decoding and as well as improvement in sight words. Basic pupils, particularly, basic three still face many challenges in reading texts. It is worthy to investigate the difficulties that the basic three pupils encounter in reading comprehension lesson. Hence, the researcher deems it necessary to investigate the effects of whole language approach on reading skills achievement of basic three pupils in Unguwan Borno primary school in Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effects of a whole language approach on reading skills achievement of basic three pupils in Unguwan Borno primary school Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the effects of print awareness of basic three pupils taught using a whole language approach.
2. To ascertain the effects of a whole language approach on basic three pupils' sight word achievement in reading

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the context of this study:

1. To what extent will whole language approach enhance basic three pupils' print awareness?

2. To what extent will basic three pupil's ability improved in sight word after exposure to whole language approach?

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: There will be no significant difference in print awareness achievement of pupils taught utilizing whole language approach and those taught using other method.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in sight word achievement of pupils taught using Whole Language Approach and those taught using other method.

Methodology

The research design adopted by the researcher was quasi-experimental. Quasi-experimental design is similar to true experiment, but it lacks randomization to the experimental and control groups. The most basic of this quasi-experimental design is the nonequivalent comparison groups design (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). Quasi-experimented design is particularly useful for researchers who often look for natural experiments, or situations in which comparable groups are created by differences that already occur in the real world. The population of the study comprised all pupils from basic three in Unguwan Borno primary school, Bauchi. The sample of this study was the Basic Three (3) A and B of Unguwan Borno primary school in Bauchi will be taken as experimental group, Basic 3A and Basic 3B will be regarded as control group. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the school and one experimental group and one control group. The research instrument used was an observation guide for reading skills and a whole language learning guide. The instrument was an essay test which is administered to the pupils. The researcher used descriptive and narrative questions. The nature of descriptive and narrative questions is appropriate for the testing of proficiency of the pupils. Descriptive questions are also appropriate for the testing of the Whole language approach as a method of instruction because the method required creativity and reality and as well as in writing descriptive and narrative answers. The researcher adopted the used of previous research past question papers of pre-test and post-test for validity assurance. The questions are technically produced and properly moderated by professionals. The researcher employed test-retest method to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The first test conducted with the intervals of some days, the second test conducted in the same class of another primary school in Bauchi metropolis that is not in the sample class but considering it as part of the population. The results scores show that there is consistency in the data collected. Researcher questions were answered using standard deviation the formula is as presented. The research used Z-test to the entire 4 research hypotheses because the sample of this research is more than 30.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent will whole language approach enhance basic three pupil's print awareness?

Table 1: Result on the Pretest and Posttest Mean Score of pupils in print awareness in the Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	N	Pretest		Posttest		Mean scores
		X	SD	X	SD	
Experimental	72	29.82	1653	55.26	20.07	25.44
Control	66	22.67	11.44	28.23	12.34	5.56

Results in Table 1 reveal the pre-test and post-test means cores of pupils in print awareness in the experimental and control groups. From the result, the post-test means score ($x=55.26$, $SD=20.27$) is higher than the pretest mean score ($x=29.82$, $SD = 16.53$) with a mean gain of 25.44, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of pupils in print awareness after giving instruction. Also, for the controls groups the post-test mean achievement score ($x=28.23$, $SD = 12.34$) is higher than the pretest mean score ($x=22.67$, $SD = 11.44$) with a mean gain of 5.56. The findings show that pupils in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (55.26) against those in the control group (28.23) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 19.88.

Research Question Two

To what extent does the application of whole language approach helps pupils decode word easily compare to phonics approach?

Table 2: Result on the Pretest and Posttest Mean Score of Pupils in word decoding in the Experimental and Control Groups

Groups	N	Pretest		Posttest		Mean scores
		X	SD	X	SD	
Experimental	72	21.07	15.20	58.97	18.58	37.90
Control	66	22.14	12.79	26.14	11.60	4

Results in Table 2 reveal the pre-test and post-test means cores of pupils on word decoding in the experimental and control groups. From the result, the post-test means score ($x=58.97$, $SD=18.58$) is higher than the pretest mean score ($x=21.07$, $SD = 15.20$) with a mean gain of 37.90, indicating that there was improvement in the achievement of pupils in sight words achievement after giving instruction. Also, for the control group the post-test means achievement score ($x=22.14$, $SD = 12.79$) is higher than the pretest mean score ($x=26.14$, $SD = 11.60$) with a mean gain of 4. The findings show that pupils in the experimental group had a higher achievement mean score (37.90) against those in the control group (4) who were not given treatment with a mean difference of 33.90.

Hypotheses Testing

H0₁: There will be no significant difference between the post-test means scores of the pupils print awareness achievement using whole language approach and those taught using other methods of teaching.

Table 3: ANCOVA Result of Post-test Mean Scores of Pupils in print awareness in Experimental and Control Groups

Sources	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	34545.412 ^a	2	17272.706	80.051	.000	.543	
Intercept	22047.130	1	22047.130	10.178	.000	.431	
Precreatigal Group	9374.322	1	9374.322	43.554	.000	.243	
Error	16972.358	135	215.772				
Total	29129.255	138					
	310986.000						

Corrected Total 63674.667 137
r Squared = 543 (Adjusted R Squared = 536)

Table 4: Sidak Post Hoc Result on Post-test Achievement Mean score of Experimental and Control Group in print awareness

I	J	X diff	Std error	P-value
Experimental				
53.28	30.39	22.89	2.58	000

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted to determine the different in the posttest achievement means score of experimental and control groups in print awareness. Table 4 shows that $F(1.136) = 78.66$ $p < 0.005$ since the p values of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was significant effect of the Whole language approach on students' achievement print awareness. The result further reveals an adjusted R squared value of 536 which means that 53.6 percent of the variation in the dependant variable which is student achievement in print awareness is explained by variation in the treatment of giving instruction in the whole language approach while the remaining is due to other factors not include in this study. The Sidak post-test in Table 7 confirms that the corrected difference between experimental group and control Group was statistically significant (I-J_) = 22.89 Hence we can say that instruction in the whole language approach does increase student's achievement scores in print awareness

Hypothesis Two

H0₁: There will be no significant difference between the post-test means cores of pupils in sight words achievement in the experimental and control groups

Table 5: ANCOVA Result of Post-Test Mean Scores of Pupils in Experimental and Control Group

Sources	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Corrected Model	37127.363	1	37127.363	151.897	000	528	
Intercept	249427.363	1	249427.363	1020.468	000	882	
Group	37127.363	1	37127.363	151.897	000	528	
Error	33241.717	136	244.424				
Total	328723.000	138					
Corrected Total	70369.080	137					

R Squared = 528 (Adjusted Squared = 524)

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the WLA improved pupil's achievement in the five language skills, and the pupils instructed in Whole Language Approach improved significantly in learning achievement. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. There is need for sending teachers to improve their knowledge of the various method of teaching reading. This will enable the teachers improve on their teaching skills, knowledge and abilities.

2. English language teachers in particular should be trained through workshops, seminars, training and retraining programmes on different instruction methods for reading improvement of pupils at all levels of studies.

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