

**EFFECTS OF LITERARY AWARENESS PROGRAMME ON READING
COMPREHENSION SKILLS OF PUPILS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN
SHENDAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Many Pupils In Public Primary Schools In Shendam Are Unable To Read Text Books Meant For Their Classes Meaningfully. In The Schools, They Are Taught To Read Using Recitation Or Choral Methods. This Makes The Pupils To Have Low Vocabulary For Use To Communicate In English Language. This Study Investigated The Effects Of Literary Awareness Programme (lap) On Reading Comprehension Levels Of Pupils With Reading Difficulties In Shendam Local Government, Plateau State. Two Research Questions And Hypotheses Guided The Study. Quasi Experimental Research, Specifically; Equivalent Group Pretestposttest Design Was Used For The Study. 40 Pupils With Reading Difficulties Were Used As Sample For The Study. Simple Random Sampling Technique Was Employed For The Study. Sight Word Recognition Test (swrt) And Informal Reading Inventory (iri) Were Used For Data Collection. Intervention Was Given Using Lap. Data Collected Was Analysed Using Percentage And T-test. The Findings Showed Significant Improvement In The Pupils' Reading And Comprehension Levels. The Pupils Were Able To Read Meaningfully And Answer Inferential And Critical Comprehension Questions. The Researchers Concluded That The Improvement Recorded Was Due To The Intervention Given Using Lap. The Researchers Recommended That Pupils Should Be Made To Read Texts That Are Based On Their Background Knowledge And Experiences. The Text Must Be At Their Reading And Comprehension Levels.

Keywords: Literary Awareness Programme, Pupils With Reading Difficulties, Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Level

Introduction

Literary Awareness Programme (lap) Is A Method Where Teacher Reads Interesting Story Books Aloud To Pupils On A Daily Basis In The School. Umolu And Oyetunde (2017) Stated That Daily Reading Aloud Of Interested Story Books To Pupils Is The Most Important Activities Teachers Can Do To Encourage Pupils Acquire Vocabulary And Show Interest In To Read With Comprehension. To Help Pupils With Reading Difficulties Learn To Read, Every Opportunity Is Utilized By Teachers To Lay The Foundation For Learning How To Read. This Is Because Reading Aloud To Pupils Every Day Helps To Stimulate Their Love For Books. It Also Gives The Pupils The Awareness And Connection Between Print And Spoken Languages

Literary Awareness Programme Serves As A Link That Prepares Pupils For Beginning Reading. During Lap Time In The Class, A Teacher Or Pupil Who Can Read Well Is Asked To Read Aloud To The Non-readers. The Book To Be Read Must Be Interesting And Enjoyable To Both The Teacher And The Pupils. Milaham (2020) Expressed That Books For Lap Must Be Selected In Advance, Especially Those With Interesting Stories And Attractive Pictures. To Start The Reading, Should Be Arranged To Sit In Semi-circular Shape And Near The Teacher While The Story Is Read. The Pupils Could Also Be Made To Sit Under Shed On Mats Outside The Classroom. The Pictures From The Story To Be Read Are First Discussed With The Pupils Before The Story Is Read To Them. The Pupils Are Encouraged To React To The Various Aspects Of The Story And Questions Based On Their Understanding Of The Story.

Reading Refers To The Interpretation Of Printed Symbols. It Is An Interactive Process Of Understanding Print And Graphic Symbols. Milaham (2019) Stated That Reading Is Not Just Learning Sounds And Words In Isolation. It Is A Skill That Helps The Reader To Understand The Meaning Of Words At Sight. Readingalso Involves Mental Abilities To Understand And Monitor Meaning Of Different Texts. Good Readers Integrate Meaning Of The Text, Structure Of The Language And Visual Cues Throughout The Reading Process. Reading Is A Process And Product. The Process Is The Interaction That Takes Place Between The Reader And The Text During Reading, While The Product Is The Outcome, Gains Or Results Gotten From Reading The Text. Milaham (2020) Expressed That In A Normal Reading Process, The Reader Does Not Just Decipher And Decode Meaning Of The Printed Symbols Or Their Relationship, But Also Actively Engages In Different Cognitive Processes Such As Activating Prior Knowledge, Interpreting Meaning Of The Text, Predicting Outcome And Giving Own Point Of View About The Text. Reading Is Carried Out For Two Main Purposes; For Pleasure And Academics. It Helps The Read To Interact With The Environment. Reading Comprehension On The Other Hand Is The Act Or Process Of Understanding The Nature Or Meaning Of Something. Comprehension Cannot Be Found On Printed Page, But In The Mind Of The Reader Who Reads The Prints. Comprehension Is Building Bridge Between The New And The Known. Reading Comprehension Helps The Reader To Get Information, Gain Knowledge And Relates Same For A Purpose. Milaham And Milaham (2019) Submitted That During Reading Comprehension, Pupils Do Not Just Read The Text, But Also Understand The Message From The Text Read As Sent By The Writer.

There Are Three Levels Of Reading Comprehension Namely; Literal, Inferential And Critical. Literal Or Factual Comprehension Refers To The Reader's Ability To Recognize Or Locate The Main Ideas, Details, Sequences, Cause-effects And Characters That Are Explicitly Stated In The Passage. Inferential Or Interpretive Comprehension Involves Reading Between And Beyond The Lines. It Is A Higher-level Thought Process Where The Reader Makes Inferences From The Fact, Reach Conclusion And Generalization, While Critical Or Evaluative Comprehension Is The Highest Level Of Cognitive Processing And Involves Reader's Ability To Pass Judgements On The Content Of The Passage Read.

Statement Of The Problem

The Use Of Lap To Teach Reading Comprehension To Pupils In Primary Schools Is Either Absent Or Is Poorly Used By Teachers. In Public Primary Schools In Nigeria, Pupils' Ability To Read Is Very Low. Andzayi And Umolu (2004) Stated That Some Pupils Enter Primary School Without The Ability To Read Or Communicate English Language Which Is The Official Language Use. Others Are Unable To Read Text That Is Meant For Their Class Level. Milaham (2018) Stated That Majority Of Them Have Limited Vocabulary For Use To Communicate Their Feelings And Ideas. Such Pupils Found Reading Very Difficult And Frustrating. During Reading, They Are Not Helped To Set Purpose For Reading The Text. Milaham (2018) Further Noted That In Most Of The Public Primary Schools In The Local Government, Pupils Are Taught To Read Through Recitation, Memorization And Choral Reading. These Strategies Might Only Make The Pupils To Call Words Without Understanding Their Meanings.

Literary Awareness Programme Was Not Used To Enhance Pupils' Reading Comprehension Skills. The Texts Used Are Either Above The Pupils' Reading Level Or The Book Is At Their Frustration Level. Milaham (2020) Stated That In Some Instances, They Are Taught To Read A Passage Which They Have No Background Knowledge About Its Content Or The Text Is Far Removed From Their Experiential Background. In The Class, Teachers Do Not Consider The Difficulty Level Of The Text The Pupils Are Given To Read, Such As; Independent Level (students Read And Answer Questions On Their Own), Instructional Level (students Read And Answer Questions With Teacher's Assistance) And Frustration Level (pupils cannot Read The Text Even With Teacher's Assistance).

The Researchers' Interaction With The Pupils Noticed That Many Of Them Saw Reading Comprehension As The Most Difficult Subject. Many Of Them Could Not Read Words Even From The First Page Of Their Class Text Book. They Have Poor Or Limited Vocabulary (Zulkifli, Evawati, & Koryati, 2021). In Some Instances, The Teacher Read The Passage And Asked The Pupils Factual, Inferential And Critical Comprehension Questions Randomly Without Following The Level Of Difficulty. Pupils Are Not Guided To Think About What They Read, What The Information Got Means To Them, How It Relates To Other Things They Already Know And What They Expect As The Outcome Of The Text. This Makes The Reading To Be Bored, Difficult And A Frustrating Experience To The Pupils.

Aim And Objectives

The Aim Of This Study Was To Find Out The Effects Of Literary Awareness Programme On Reading Comprehension Skills Of Pupils With Reading Difficulties In Shendam Local Government Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, The Objectives Were To;

1. Find Out The Reading Comprehension Status Of Pupils Before Exposure To Lap
2. Determine The Reading Comprehension Levels Of Pupils Before And After Exposure To Lap

Research Questions

1. What Is The Reading Status Of Pupils With Reading Difficulties Before Exposure To Lap?
2. What Are The Reading Comprehension Achievement Levels Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap?

Hypotheses

1. There Is No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before Exposure To Lap.
2. There Is No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Achievement Levels Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap.

Method And Procedure

This Is An Experimental Research Type, Specifically, Pretestposttestequivalentgroup Design. This Design Was Used To Enable The Researchers To Carry Out Random Selection And Assignment Of The Participants. The Participants Were Grouped Into Experimental And Control Groups. This Was Done To Determine The Effects Of Lap On Their Reading Comprehension Achievement Levels Before And After Treatment. Pretest Was First Administered Onboth The Experimental And Control Groups To Determine Their Baseline Achievement Level Before The Commencement Of Intervention. Thereafter, Only **The** Experimental Group Was Given Intervention Using Lap, While The Control Group Remained In Their Regular Classroom. At The End Of The Eightweeks' Intervention, Posttest Was Administered To Both The Experimental And Control Groups To Determine If There Was A Gain Score In Their Reading Comprehension.

Roman Catholic Mission (rcm) Transfer Primary School Shendam Was Purposively Selected For This Study Because Of Its Large Population. It Is Also The Oldest School In The Locality. The School Has A Population Of Ninety-three Primary Five Pupils, Made Up Three Arms. Out Of This Number, 68 Pupils Were Found To Have Low Reading Comprehension Skills. These Pupils Became The Population For The Study. The Choice Of One School For The Study Was To Allow The Researchers Have Enough Time With The Pupils In Their Class During The Intervention Period. primary Five Pupils Were Chosen Because The Researchers Believe That, At This Stage, They Can Read Comprehensively In Readiness For Secondary School Education, Where Success At That Level Depends On Having Good Literal, Inferential And Critical Reading Comprehension Skills. In Addition, The Use Of Public Primary Schools Was Based On The Research Reports By Milaham (2018) Where The Researcher Found That Majority Of The Pupils Graduated From Primary Schoolscannot Or Have Poor Reading Comprehension Skills.

Fortypupils Were Randomly Selected As Sample For The Study. Simple Random Sampling Technique Was Used To Assign 20 For The Experimental And 20 For The Control Group. The Experimental Group Was Attended To By The Researchers In A Different Classroom During Their English Period. This Helped To Prevent The Control Group From Having Access And Knowledge Of The Intervention Materials Given To The Experimental Group.

All The Primary Five Pupils Were Screened Usingsight Word Recognition Test (swrt) Andinformal Reading Inventory (iri). Sight Words Were Taken From The Hundred High Frequency Words Wherethe Pupils Are Expected To Read All Before They Can Be Considered As Good Readers. Iri Was A Graded Passagetaken From The Pupils' English Text Book. Three Passages From The Text Were Used To Test The Pupils' Reading Comprehension Levels. The Passages Taken Were Used To Screen The Pupils Reading And Comprehension Level Before And After Intervention. The Pupils Were Given Questions From The Passages Based On The Three Levels Of Comprehension Namely; Factual, Inferential And Critical To Determine Their Baseline Level Before Intervention And Gain Score After Intervention Using Lap. Three Passages Taken From The Pupils' Text With Comprehension Questions Were Given To Each Pupils To Rea And Answer The Questions.

Hat-and-draw Method Was Used To Assign Participants Into Experimental And Control Groups. “yes” Was Written On 20 Pieces Of Paper And “no” On 20 Pieces. The Remaining 28pieces Of Paper Were Left Blank. The Pieces Of Paper Were Mixed And All The 68pupils Were Individually Asked To Pick One Piece. Pupils Who Picked “yes” Were Made The Experimental Group, While Those Who Picked “no” Were Made The Control Group. Those Who Picked The Blank Papers Were Excluded From The Study. All The Pupils' Names Were Written Down For Record Purposes And To Avoid Mix Up Ofthe Group. This Method Gave All The Pupils Equal Chance Of Being Represented In The Study. A Time Duration Of 30 Minutes Was Given To Pupils To Read And Answer The Questions. After The Exercise, 20 Marks Was Allotted To Each Of The Five Questions Answered Correctly. A Score Range Of 0 To 44 Was Considered As Critical Comprehension Level, 45 To 59 Inferential Comprehension Levels, While 60 And Above Was Considered As Literal Comprehension.

Simple Percentage Was Used To Analyse The Data Collected. Pretest Post Test Scores Of The Experimental Group Was Correlated With The Pretestposttest Scores Of The Control Group To Determine If Any Gain Score Occur. The Pretest And Posttest Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Experimental And Control Groups Were Analysed Using T-test At 0.05 Level Of Significance For Independent Sample. This Was Carried Out To Help The Researchers Show The Degree Of Mean Difference In The Reading Comprehension Level Of Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Intervention.

Results And Discussion

Question One: What Is The Reading Level Of Pupils With Reading Difficulty Before Exposure To Lap?

Table 1: Pupils' Reading Difficulty Levels

Comprehension Levels	Experimental		Control	
	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)
Factual	20 (100)	0	20 (100)	20 (100)
Inferential	0 0	9 (45)	0	0
Critical	0 0	11 (55)	0	0
Total	20 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)

Source: Spss V.21

Comprehension Levels	Experimental		Control	
	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)
Factual	20 (100)	0	20 (100)	20 (100)
Inferential	0 0	9 (45)	0	0
Critical	0 0	11 (55)	0	0
Total	20 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)

Source: Spss V.21

Table 2 Shows The Reading Comprehension Levels Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap. Before Exposure To Lap, 100% Of The Pupils In Experimental Group And Control Groups Answered Only The Factual Comprehension Questions. This Result Indicates That Both The Experimental And Control Groups Showed Significant Difficulty In Their Reading Comprehension Level. After The Treatment, 45% Of Pupils In The Experimental Group Were Able To Answer The Inferential Questions, While 55% Answered The Critical Comprehension Questions. The Control Group Remained At The Factual Comprehension Level. This Shows That Lap Has Significant Effects On The Reading Comprehension Skills Of The Pupils.

Hypothesis One: There Is No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Status Mean Scores Of Experimental And Control Groups Before Exposure To Lap.

Table 3: Reading Ability Level Mean Score Of The Experimental And Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental	20	29.10	1.99737	38	1.302	.201
Control	20	28.45	.99868			

Source: Spss V.21

Table 3 indicates Significant Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Level Means Scores Of Experimental And Control Groups Before Exposure To Lap. The Pupils In The Experimental Group Had A Mean Score Of 29.10 And Standard Deviation Of 2.00, Whereas The Control Group Had A Mean Score Of 28.45 And Standard Deviation Of 1.00. This Shows That There Was No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Level Mean Score Between The Experimental And Control Groups. In Addition, The Calculated Value Of T Was 1.30, While The P-value Was 0.20. Since The P-value Of 0.20 Was Greater Than 0.05, It Means That There Was Greater Than 2% Chance That The Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap Occurred By Chance. Therefore, The Researchers Accepted The Null Hypothesis And Concluded That There Were No Significant Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Levels Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Group Before Exposure To Lap.

Hypothesis Two: There Is No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Achievement Mean Scores Of Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap

Table 4: Reading Comprehension Achievement Levels Mean Scores Of Experimental And Control Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental	20	60.10	4.303	38	21.92	.010
Control	20	36.90	1.97		2	

Source: Spss V.21

Table 4 Indicates The Significant Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Mean Scores Of Experimental And Control Groups Before Exposure To Lap. The Students In The Experimental Group Had A Mean Score Of 60.10 And Standard Deviation Of 4.30, Whereas The Control Group Had A Mean Score Of 36.90 And Standard Deviation Of 1.97. This Shows That There Was No Significant Difference Between The Reading Comprehension Achievement Mean Score Of The Experimental And Control Groups. In Addition, The Calculated Value Of T Was 21.92, While The P-value Was 0.01. Since The P-value Of 0.01 Was Greater Than 0.05, It Means That There Was Greater Than 1% Chance That The Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Achievement Mean Score Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap Occurred By Chance. Therefore, The Researchers Accepted The Null Hypothesis And Concluded That There Were No Significant Differences Between The Reading Comprehension Achievement Mean Score Of The Experimental And Control Groups

Discussion

Research Question One, Table 1, Shows The Reading Level Of The Students Before Exposure To Lap. Before The Pupils Were Exposed To Lap, 100% Of The Experimental And Control Groups Could Only Answer Literal Comprehension Questions. None Of Them Could Answer The Inferential Comprehension Questions. This Is In Line With The Opinion Of Umolu And Oyetunde (2017) Where they Stated That In Most Public Primary Schools In Nigeria, Lots Of Pupils Enter Primary School Without The Ability To Read Or Speak In English Language. In Research Question Two, The Researcher Investigated The Reading Comprehension Levels Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before And After Exposure To Lap. Before Exposure To Lap, 100% Of Both The Pupils In The Experimental And Control Groups Can Only Read And Answer Factual Comprehension Questions. After The Experimental Group Was Exposed To Treatment Using Lap, 45% Of Them Were Able To Answer Inferential Comprehension Questions, While 55% Answered Critical Comprehension Questions Correctly. The Control Group Who Were Taught Using The Conventional Method, Their Comprehension Level Score Was 100% Based On Factual Comprehension. They Showed Difficulty In Their Reading Comprehension Ability As Compared With The Result Of Experimental Group. This Result Corroborates With Milaham (2018) Who Stated That For Pupils To Read Comprehensively, They Should Be Able To Connect New And Known Ideas Meaningfully. Similarly, Milaham (2020) Also Found That Pupils Who Were Taught To Read Using Their Background Experiences From Lap Performed Better Than Those Who Were Taught To Read Using English Text Books.

To Test The Hypotheses, T-test For Independent Samples Was Used To Analyse The Data Collected. The Findings Showed No Significant Differences In The Reading Comprehension Skills Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Groups On Reading Comprehension Levels Before Exposure To Lap. The Results Showed That The Pre-test P.values For Reading Comprehension Level Is Greater Than 0.05. This Means That The Differences In Pre-test Reading Comprehension Levels Mean Scores Of The Experimental And Control Groups Before Exposure To Lap Occurred By Chance. The Experimental Group Was Taught Using Lap, While The Control Group Remained In Their Regular Classroom. Iri Was Used To Post-test The Two Groups. The Results Showed That The Experimental Group Exhibit Significant Improvement In Reading Comprehension Mean Scores Than The Control Group. This Was Confirmed By The Post-test T-test Analysis Results As Shown In Table 4, Where The Post-test P.values Of 0.01 Scored In Reading Comprehension Levels Is Less Than 0.05. This Shows That The Differences In The Post-test Reading Comprehension Levels Mean Scores Between The Experimental And Control Groups Occurred As A Result Of Treatment Received In Lap When Compared To That Of The Control Group.

This Finding Agrees With Milaham (2018) Opinion Who Stated That Pupils can Read Comprehensively Through Involvement In Activities Based On Interest, Background Knowledge And Experiences Formally And Informally. Similarly, Milaham (2020) Also Stated That Exposing Pupils To Read Through Discussing Pictures, Story-telling And Retelling Of Personal Experiences Are Useful Activities That Help Pupils Learn To Read Comprehensively.

Conclusion

The Study Investigated The Effects Of Lap On Pupils' reading comprehension Achievement Levels In Rcm Transfer Primary School Shendam Lga, Plateau State. Both The Experimental And Control Groups Were Screened For Reading Comprehension Using Sight Words Recognition Test. Only The Experimental Group Was given Treatment Using Lap. The Researchers Read Different Interested Story Books To The Experimental Three Times A Day For Eight Weeks using Lap. The Control Group Was Attended To In Their Regular Classroom By The Class Teacher Using A Different Method. Thereafter, The Two Groups Were Post-tested Using The Instruments That Were Used To Screen Them. The Results Showed That Pupils In The Experimental Were Able To Use

Group Their Background Knowledge And Experiences Gained During The Lap To Reading Text Passages Comprehensively. They Were Able To Answer Most Inferential And Critical Comprehension Questions Than The Control Group.

Recommendations

Based On The Findings Reached, The Researchersrecommended That:

1. Interested Story Books With Captivating Pictures Should Be Acquired And Always Read To The Pupils In School And At Home To Help Them Have Enough Vocabulary, Background Knowledge And Experiencesabout Reading And Reading Comprehension Skills Which Can Use When Reading
2. A Period For Lap Should Be Allotted On The Class Timetable During Which Pupils Will Be Actively Engaged In Reading Different Story Books Or Be Read To By The Teacher.
3. Pupils Should Be Actively Engaged In Oral Discussion Before And After Lap. They Can Be Asked To Illustrate The Story Read.

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