
Using Pictorial Teaching Strategy in Resolving Reading Comprehension Challenges Among Primary School Pupils in Ikere Local Government of Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT: *The study examines pictorial teaching strategy to improve reading comprehension challenges among primary school pupils in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. A descriptive survey design is adopted for the study with the selection of one hundred female and male teachers randomly drawn from urban and rural areas of the study area. The instrument used is a self-structured questionnaire of twenty items tagged ' Pictorial Teaching Questionnaire' (PTQ). The instrument is validated by experts in Curriculum Studies. Data collected are analyzed using simple percentages and mean. The results show that picture reading strategy is utilized by primary school teachers which have impacted positively on the reading comprehension abilities of pupils. The study recommends that pictorial teaching should be more encouraged to aid reading comprehension and that government should strive to assist indigent pupils to procure relevant texts. Curriculum planners should try to integrate more pictures into English texts most especially at the elementary stage of reading for pupils.*

KEYWORDS: pictures, reading, comprehension, strategy, challenges

INTRODUCTION

Human beings coexist with language as a means of communication, employing it to express concepts, thoughts, viewpoints, and emotions. Every community in which humans reside have its own unique language. Language may be understood as a complex system of symbols that exhibit several levels of organisation, including phonetics (the study of sounds), syntax (the study of grammar), and semantics (the study of meanings). According to Edward (1921), language may be defined as a distinctly human and non-instinctive mode of expressing thoughts, feelings, and desires via the use

of a system of intentionally created symbols. Language serves as a means of expression and communication, facilitating the cohesion and integration of individuals within a given culture. Language may be recognised as a means by which individuals establish their identity by associating themselves with a certain language.

The act of reading is a formal receptive skill that is systematically instructed to learners. Literacy is seen as a significant indicator due to the fact that reading proficiency is not a universal skill possessed by all individuals. The act of reading plays a key role in achieving success within the realm of academia. According to Nuan (1989), the talent of reading is not a fixed or unchanging ability. The correlation between reading frequency and reading proficiency suggests that more exposure to reading materials contributes to improved reading skills, if a satisfactory level of comprehension is achieved. This relationship underscores the educational value of reading in language acquisition. According to Grabe (2009), reading may be defined as the cognitive act of comprehending and understanding information conveyed through written language, specifically through the medium of print. According to Adedara (2018), the significance of reading lies in its profound impact on pupils' academic achievements, since their reading and comprehension ability greatly influence their overall performance. Comprehension is a fundamental aspect of reading, requiring readers to possess a comprehensive understanding of the contents they are reading and to interpret them in accordance with the author's intended meaning. The foundation of reading is on comprehension, as the absence of this skill renders reading both futile and unengaging. The acquisition of reading skills can be challenging in the absence of effective instruction and guidance provided through suitable instructional methodologies. Reading comprehension is influenced by several elements, such as phonetic awareness, alphabetic understanding, fluency with code, vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge, engagement, and interest. These elements are sequentially advancing, necessitating teachers to employ various tactics and approaches, particularly throughout the early years of primary education.

According to Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018), the deficiency in vocabulary knowledge may contribute to a lack of reading comprehension. A pupil who possesses a restricted understanding of vocabulary acquisition may have difficulties in the realm of reading comprehension. According to Afzal (2019), a potential remedial approach for the aforementioned pupil would be expanding their language knowledge. According to Durkin (2011), reading comprehension is often regarded as the core aspect of reading. Effective instruction in reading throughout the early stages of primary education may greatly enhance pupils' interest in reading, while inadequate approaches may potentially deter their enthusiasm. At this level, it is important for English educators to ascertain the demographic makeup of their pupils, including factors such as their physical well-being, familial context, educational setting, inherent abilities and inclinations, accessibility to educational resources, and prevailing national educational regulations. It is imperative for educators to possess a heightened level of awareness, since their role significantly impacts the attainment of proficient reading skills and reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension refers to the cognitive ability to understand and make sense of written material, involving the processes of analysing information and interpreting the intended meaning conveyed by the author. Although reading comprehension cannot be fully captured by a single

process, when considered collectively, these processes provide a comprehensive understanding of the necessary procedures for achieving fluent reading (Grabe & Stoller, 2002),

One effective instructional approach for promoting reading skills and comprehension is known as pictorial reading. This method entails engaging pupils with reading materials that consist of concise sentences, basic vocabulary, and extensive visual analysis. The utilisation of visual aids in reading instruction contributes to the establishment of a strong foundation for learners, facilitates the interpretation of unfamiliar vocabulary, captivates and maintains learners' engagement, and provides cues for learners' comprehension. According to Wright (2019), visuals are regarded as the most appropriate medium for simplifying and reinforcing the understanding of words. Images have the ability to enhance pupils' curiosity, drive, and comprehension in relation to language-related subject matter. According to Rahmawati (2018), image tales are constructed by a thorough examination of creative processes. Testbookcom (2023) states that picture books are designed for young readers who are either not yet able to read or possess basic reading abilities. These visual representations, commonly referred to as drawings, play a crucial role in educating youngsters by facilitating the development of connections and enhancing their self-awareness.

The inclusion of images in written texts serves as explicit visual aids and concise illustrations that enhance and facilitate the understanding of the narrative. Through the use of straightforward written passages accompanied by ample explanatory visuals, pupils cultivate deliberate mental representations of the themes, locations, individuals, and occurrences shown within the narrative. The process of growth facilitates the progressive attainment of independence in thinking for individuals. The utilisation of visual aids in reading not only enhances the appeal of the reading experience, but also contributes to its lasting impact. It assists or, in simpler terms, alleviates the responsibilities of educators within the educational setting. Wordless picture books and conventional picture books both have the same objective of enhancing the reader's focus and involvement with the content (Sulentic, et al., 2006).

Nigeria is a unique nation characterised by challenges in implementing educational policies due to its many ethnicities, varying ideologies, and religious practises. Education in Nigeria is categorised into exclusive and residual lists, with each state within the federation having the autonomy to develop educational strategies that align with its own objectives. In the context of Ekiti State, the government engages in the recruitment process and formulates several policies aimed at enhancing education and literacy within the region. One pervasive issue that exists within the education system is the recruitment of individuals with diverse degrees across numerous fields at the elementary school level. Many teachers lack a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies of English language subject. The basic teaching credentials in Nigeria, such as the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), primarily focus on general studies courses that do not adequately prepare teachers to effectively instruct pupils in English language. It has been noted that pupils encounter challenges in the area of reading comprehension due to the influx of various textbook publishers approaching the Ministry of Education. These publishers seek to have their textbooks recommended for use in primary and secondary schools, but their offerings do not align with the specific requirements of elementary education pupils. One of the most significant drawbacks associated with these issues lies in the lack of knowledge among educators regarding the need of including visual aids, such as images, into the existing reading materials to enhance comprehension. The purpose of this study is to investigate the

potential of utilising graphical reading as a reading method to mitigate difficulties in reading comprehension and enhance the engagement of pupils.

The objectives of the study were to find out whether pictorial reading strategy is utilized in public primary schools by teachers and to find out how effective is pictorial teaching strategy. The study also confirmed the extent to which pictorial teaching can be used to assist pupils in reading comprehension and to highlight challenges posed in using pictorial teaching to ameliorate reading comprehension.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. Are pictures utilized in schools to improve learners reading comprehension?
2. How effective is using pictorial teaching to improve pupils reading comprehension?
3. To what extent can pictorial teaching be utilized to improve pupils reading comprehension?
4. What are the challenges of using pictorial reading to reading comprehension?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every pupil aspires to achieve academic excellence in their studies, starting from primary education through to higher education. In order to gain the highest level of academic achievement, learners must possess the ability to consistently and efficiently develop towards academic success. This can only be feasibly accomplished via the practise of reading. The act of reading plays a pivotal and fundamental role in the process of acquiring knowledge.

The act of reading is a talent that is formally instructed by proficient educators to pupils, with the objective of enabling them to comprehend the information conveyed through written texts. The ability to comprehend information as it is delivered is crucial in the process of reading, as it facilitates the necessary understanding. According to Sheng (2000), reading may be understood as a communicative activity in which the writer conveys information to the reader. According to this definition, it is necessary for both the writer and reader to possess a shared comprehension of the language codes employed in their communication. This will greatly facilitate the process of recognising, interpreting, and comprehending written or printed content. The act of reading entails a cognitive process wherein individuals seek to comprehend the intended meaning of an author through engaging with written language (Tarigan, 1990 as cited in Jaenal, 2010). Readers engage in reading for many goals. The motivations for engaging in various activities may include survival, academic pursuits, leisure, and the gain of further information. Various factors contribute to the diverse forms of reading, with the pace at which one covers a book being influenced by the purpose behind the act of reading.

When readers want to achieve comprehension, which is the fundamental goal of reading, they utilise their previous knowledge. This prior knowledge refers to the amount and quality of information they possess in terms of terminology and meanings. Prior knowledge refers to the existing cognitive structures inside readers that enable them to make sense of and comprehend the information presented in a text, hence facilitating their interpretation of the text in alignment with the author's intended

meaning. There is a consensus among scholars that the acquisition of information is influenced by past knowledge, and that learners engage in the process of constructing concepts based on their existing knowledge (Resnick, 1983; Glaserfeld, 1984). Numerous pupils encounter challenges in achieving academic success despite their efforts to engage in reading. These difficulties can arise from a variety of factors, including the utilisation of intricate vocabulary, insufficient background knowledge, inadequate clarity in written explanations, passive reading habits, improper application of punctuation marks, and ineffective teaching methods.

Teachers employ purposeful and conscious tactics to address the obstacles encountered by learners, particularly in the context of reading, within the classroom setting. The endeavours of educators become fruitless when pupils fail to achieve proficiency in reading, as this deficiency has repercussions not only in the domain of English language but also in other academic disciplines. Consequently, it is crucial to include visual aids, such as images, to enhance learners' comprehension and acquisition of information throughout the reading process. Images serve as symbolic representations or visual tools that learners see and connect with their personal life encounters. According to Panteleo (2001), the inclusion of visuals is essential for readers to construct interpretations and derive significance from textual content. The utilisation of visual aids, such as images, has been found to enhance pupil motivation, resulting in increased engagement and improved retention of information during the reading process. Photographs are quite affordable to get and they offer widespread accessibility. Therefore, it is imperative for educators to use proficient techniques in utilising visual aids to enhance pupils' reading self-assurance.

This study is based on the concept of schema, which provides frameworks for understanding the cognitive and behavioural patterns shown by individuals. The cognitive growth of individuals is closely associated with their use of schemas to accurately comprehend the enormous quantity of information available to them. The concept of schema pertains to the logical organisation of information and the cognitive processes involved in this mental activity. The phenomenon pertains to the manner in which mental structure is organised. The concept was initially proposed by Jean Piaget, a prominent psychologist, who posited that a schema may be understood as a framework for organising information into distinct categories, as well as the cognitive processes involved in acquiring such knowledge. For instance, a youngster may have a tendency to apply a certain description to all automobiles, irrespective of their respective models. However, as the child matures and gains more information, this generalisation need correction by others with greater expertise in the matter.

According to Piaget (1970), schemas are cognitive structures that may be modified through the assimilation of new knowledge. In the context of the present discourse, it is possible to incorporate or integrate novel knowledge into existing cognitive frameworks. According to Pankin (2013), humans utilise schema in order to facilitate their present comprehension and behaviour. The author provides an illustrative instance whereby a pupil's self-schema pertaining to intelligence is posited to have been shaped by prior experiences of diligent effort and the impact of educators. The activation of pupils' pre-existing knowledge plays a crucial role in schema formation, as it establishes a connection between the quality and amount of knowledge they possess and their existing schema. According to Widmayer (2004), in order for learners to properly digest information, it is necessary for something to activate their pre-existing schema that is relevant to the new content. This activation may be facilitated by the use of the visual reading approach.

When considering the correlation between visuals and the acquisition of vocabulary, it is seen that children tend to retain a vivid recollection of the visual content inside reading passages, so enhancing their lexical knowledge. Additionally, the exposure to various words through visual representations aids in the cognitive development of the individual, facilitating the expansion of their mental framework. Learners have the capacity to cultivate their imaginative faculties by establishing connections between concepts and their everyday life experiences. It has an impact on the aspects that learners choose to focus on and the development of their cognitive abilities.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a descriptive survey design. This is used to obtain information from a representative sample of the envisaged population in order to describe the situation as it exists among primary school teachers and pupils. The study is carried out in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The envisaged population is all public primary school teachers' male and female in urban and rural areas of Ikere local government area of Ekiti state. The samples were one hundred teachers drawn from different public primary school teachers. Ten teachers were picked from each of the ten schools in urban and rural areas.

The research instrument is a self-structured questionnaire of twenty items that are in tandem with research questions raised for the study. The questionnaire is four (4) points likerts method of rating: Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The instrument is validated using face and content validity while the reliability of the study was ascertained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which realized 0.85 which is considered high enough for its reliability.

Data were analyzed using simple means and percentages.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: Are pictures utilized in schools to improve pupils' reading comprehension?

Table 1: Mean analysis on utilization of picture in schools to improve pupils reading comprehension

SN	ITEMS	Responses				Mean	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
1.	Pictorial teaching is used regularly by teacher in teaching reading comprehension.	60	20	10	10	3.30	Accepted
2.	Primary school teachers used textbooks with many beautiful pictures to teach	25	20	45	10	2.50	Accepted
3.	Teachers utilized visual representation to English language especially reading comprehension.	62	8	5	20	3.02	Accepted
4.	Pictures teaching are employed by teachers to improve pupils' mastery of English language concept.	59	31	5	5	3.44	Accepted

Cut-off Mean: 2.50

Table 1 shows that the respondents with a mean score of 3.30 agree that pictorial teaching is used regularly by teacher in teaching reading comprehension. The respondents also agree that primary school teachers use textbooks with many beautiful pictures to teach, with a mean score of 2.50 on item 2. In item 3, the respondents agree with a mean score of 3.20 teachers utilize visual representation to English language especially reading comprehension. In item 4, the mean value is 3.44, thus, respondents agree that pictures teaching are employed by teachers to improve pupils' mastery of English language concept. Therefore, pictures are utilized in schools to improve pupils reading comprehension

Research Question 2: How effective is using pictorial teaching to improve pupils' reading comprehension?

Table 2: Mean analysis on effectiveness of using pictorial teaching to improve pupils reading comprehension

SN	ITEMS	Responses				Mean	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
5.	Pictures are used by teacher to teach reading comprehension in primary schools.	29	30	11	30	2.58	Accepted
6.	Teachers utilized visual representation to improve pupils' academic performance in English language.	49	21	12	18	3.01	Accepted
7.	Using pictorial representation in primary school makes reading comprehension real to pupils.	42	12	16	30	2.66	Accepted
8.	Pupils easily have mental picture of reading comprehension through the utilization of pictures.	48	20	21	11	2.69	Accepted

Mean Cut-off: 2.50

Table 2 indicates that item 5 with the mean value of 2.58, the respondents agree that pictures are used by teacher to teach reading comprehension in primary schools. With mean value of 3.01 in item 6, the respondents concur that teachers utilize visual representation to improve pupils' academic performance in English language. With the mean value of 2.66 in item 7, the respondents agree that using pictorial representation in primary school makes reading comprehension real to pupils. In item 8, with mean value of 2.69, the respondents support that pupils easily have mental picture of reading comprehension through the utilization of pictures. Thus, using pictorial teaching is effective to improve pupils' reading comprehension.

Research Question 3: To what extent can pictorial teaching be utilized to improve pupils' reading comprehension?

Table 3: Mean analysis on the extent pictorial teaching is being utilized to improve pupils` reading comprehension

SN	ITEMS	Responses				Mean	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
9.	Pictorial teaching is used to let pupils understand the stories related in the reading comprehension.	69	11	13	7	3.42	Accepted
10.	Pictorial teaching improves pupils` interest in reading comprehension.	45	32	10	13	3.09	Accepted
11.	Pupils` attention and readiness are maintained when pictorial teaching is used in the classroom.	34	46	16	4	3.10	Accepted
12.	Primary school teacher used pictorial teaching in classroom regularly.	42	28	16	14	2.98	Accepted
13.	Pictorial reading aids the mental retention of pupils	55	30	5	20	3.15	Accepted
14	Pictorial reading removes the burden of comprehension to teachers.	58	22	5	15	3.23	Accepted
15	Pictorial reading makes teaching of reading lively and interesting.	49	21	12	18	3.01	Accepted

Mean Cut-off: 2.50

Table 3 as shown in item 9, with mean value of 3.49, the respondents agreed that pictorial teaching is used to let pupils understand the stories related in the reading comprehension. It is equally shown in the item 10 with mean value of 3.09 agree that pictorial teaching improves pupils` interest in reading comprehension. With mean value of 3.10 in item 11, the respondents concur that pupils` attention and readiness are maintained when pictorial teaching is used in the classroom. In item 12, with mean 2.98, the respondents are in support that primary school teacher use pictorial teaching in classroom regularly.

In item 13, with mean value of 3.15, the respondents agree that pictorial reading aids the mental retention of pupils. In the same vein, the respondents agree with mean value of 3.01, that pictorial reading makes teaching of reading lively and interesting.

Research Question 4: What are the challenges of using pictorial teaching to reading comprehension?

Table 4: Mean analysis on challenges of using pictorial teaching to reading comprehension

SN	ITEMS	Responses				Mean	Decision
		SA	A	D	SD		
16.	There is unavailability of pictures to teach.	42	12	16	30	2.66	Accepted
17.	Some teachers could not use pictorial teaching very well.	18	20	51	11	2.55	Accepted
18.	There is inadequacy of pictorial teaching materials compared to the number of pupils.	42	12	16	30	2.63	Accepted
19.	Some pupils do not have textbooks for reading comprehension.	69	11	13	7	3.42	Accepted
20.	Pictorial reading is not viewed as a strategy to teach reading	45	32	10	13	3.09	Accepted

Mean Cut-off: 2.50

Table 4 indicates that in item 16 with the mean value of 2.66, the respondents unanimously agree that there is unavailability of pictures to teach which pose a great challenge to using pictorial teaching for reading comprehension. With mean value of 2.55 in item 17, the respondents concur that some teachers could not use pictorial teaching very well. Considering the mean value of 2.63 in item 18, the respondents agree that there is inadequacy of pictorial teaching materials compared to the number of pupils. In item 19, the respondents support that some pupils do not have textbooks for reading comprehension. In item 20, the respondents agree that pictorial reading is not seen as a strategy to teach reading. So these are challenges to using pictorial teaching to reading comprehension.

DISCUSSION

In the discourse surrounding the research inquiries and corresponding answers, the first research query pertains to the employment of visual aids, specifically photographs, to enhance pupils' understanding. The respondents unanimously acknowledged that they consistently employ this instructional strategy. According to Wright (2019), visuals are considered the most appropriate medium for simplifying and reinforcing the meanings of words. Images have the capacity to stimulate and pique the interest of pupils. Pictures are utilised to offer relevant hints, hence facilitating the retention of knowledge. This study aligns with the perspective put forward by Lederberg et al, which suggests that the integration of visuals with texts might be advantageous since it facilitates pupils' comprehension of the textual content. Additionally, the utilisation of visual aids such as image cards throughout the process of reading aloud has been found to have a positive impact on vocabulary acquisition and comprehension skills.

Research question two investigates the efficacy of utilising graphical reading as a means to enhance pupils' reading comprehension abilities. The study demonstrates the efficacy of utilising graphical

teaching methods in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension abilities. The aforementioned conclusion aligns with the viewpoint expressed by Mahmood (2020), who posits that the use of pictorial storytelling might be advantageous in enhancing pupils' reading proficiency. Research question three examined the degree to which the use of visual teaching might enhance pupils' reading comprehension, highlighting the significance of pictorial teaching in promoting understanding. According to Goddard (2019), there is agreement with the notion that visual images complement written information in order to construct a whole reading experience. This assertion is supported by Collins (2018), who argues that pupils exhibit a heightened level of engagement with the grammatical structure of sentences when instructional methods using visual aids are utilised.

The research findings indicate that instructing learners at each step through graphical teaching methods is crucial for effectively improving reading comprehension. This approach ensures that visual representations are utilised to facilitate long-term retention of learned material. This implies that the utilisation of visual representations to convey ideas and concepts is widely accepted as a technique of enhancing memory and durability.

Research question four examined the potential obstacles that may arise when employing visual teaching methods. There exist a diverse array of challenges encompassing the absence of visual aids for instruction, teachers' limited capacity to incorporate visual teaching methods to enhance reading comprehension, insufficiencies in the availability of visual teaching materials relative to the pupil population in public primary schools, and the absence of textbooks among pupils, which is often associated with the socio-economic status of their parents. It is a cause for concern to see that a significant number of pupils residing in rural regions, where their parents lack literacy skills, do not own textbooks and writing materials for both English language and other academic courses.

CONCLUSION

Sequel to the findings of the study, the study concludes that using pictorial teaching makes teaching more effective in teaching reading comprehension. It also improves reading comprehension abilities of pupils not only in English language but also in other subject areas. The study also concludes that teaching becomes more fascinating as pupils' interest are sustained with pictures in their texts. It simplifies difficulties encountered in vocabulary as they relate pictures to meaning. Pupils have the opportunity to concretise concepts with pictures which make learning permanent. Difficult vocabulary is simplified, meanings are realised and comprehension is achieved.

Recommendations

The research suggests the integration of graphical teaching into teachers' instructional approaches. Educators should exert more effort in providing visual aids that are relevant to the respective academic disciplines of their pupils. It is advisable that governmental entities at all levels provide assistance to parents, particularly those residing in rural regions, in acquiring textbooks for their children at reduced costs. Furthermore, it is imperative for parents to demonstrate heightened awareness of their parental obligations by ensuring the provision of essential necessities for their children and dependents. It is recommended that workshops and seminars be organised to address the newest ideas for enhancing pedagogy. These events should be made compulsory for English teachers in order to enhance the academic accomplishments of pupils. Curriculum designers in the field of

English Language should strive to raise awareness among language educators and text publishers on the importance of incorporating a greater number of visual aids, particularly during the early stages of primary school.

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