

Effects Of Jolly Phonics Strategy on Pupils' Reading Achievement and Attitudes in Lagos State Lower Basic Schools

Okoroafor, Scholastica Ngozi¹, Komolafe, Adefunke Titilayo² and Sopekan, Oludola Sarah³

^{1,2,3}Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State

Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of implementing the Jolly Phonics strategy on pupils' reading achievement and attitude within the context of lower basic schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the quasi-experimental pre-testing, post-test, control group experimental design. The population of the study consisted of all basic 1 pupil in public lower basic schools in Lagos State. While the sample size was Three hundred and twenty-four (324) pupils of Lower Basic 1 and Nine (9) teachers who were randomly and purposively selected using Simple Random sampling technique. The sample size was drawn from three schools from three Local Government Education Authority Areas (LGEAs) in Lagos State public lower basic schools. Two research questions were used and three instruments used for eliciting responses were Achievement Test in Reading (ATR), Pupils' Attitude to Reading Questionnaire (PARQ) and Pupils' Verbal Ability Test (PVAT). The instruments were validated by experts in early childhood and measurement and evaluation. The test re-test method was adopted for instrument reliability at 0.75. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard deviation) Variance and Analysis Covariance (ANCOVA) Findings revealed that Jolly Phonics had significant effect on the academic achievement in reading of basic 1 pupil in lower basic schools and their attitude. Pupils taught with Jolly Phonics strategy performed better in reading achievement and had positive attitude than those taught with conventional method. It was recommended that Jolly phonics instructional strategies should be incorporated into basic school reading curriculum. This will help them develop reading skills easily. Individual differences in pupils' reading ability should be identified and addressed through variation of reading strategies as was provided for in the experimental groups with jolly phonics

strategy. Government, school managers and administrators should provide adequate instructional materials that will motivate pupils to easily adapt to jolly instructional strategy.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Attitude, Jolly Phonics, Reading, Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Basic education is recognized globally as the major avenue for promoting mass literacy and consequently rapid national development. Nigeria, like many other countries of the world, has through her Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme provided equal educational opportunities for all her citizens in the basic schools with the mandate of United Nations (UN).

Reading is one of the important aspects of literacy needed in basic education and long-life learning for all learners. Introduction to English language includes four basic skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Reading is the interaction between the reader and the text. Therefore, learners must understand what they read when learning the language; if not, the text will be meaningless to them. Reading skills that are developed during basic school years build the foundation for future literacy development. Hardy (2017) defined reading as a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Similarly, Akpojotor (2019) stated that reading is the ability of the reader to decode text and make meaning out of it. Thus, the ability to read is critical to learning for the basic school child. These children who struggle with reading at the basic schools usually get frustrated and may later decide that they neither like nor want to read. As such, these children are at risk of poor literacy outcomes later in higher levels of education. Reading, which is at the core of literacy, is therefore highly valued in the Nigerian society, whether it is for leisure or for work. The ability to read is a confidence booster. Children, even adults, are more confident in their ability to face life's situations if they can read.

Jolly phonics is an act of reading through play. Jolly simply means fun while phonics refers to letter sounds used for reading. With this instructional strategy, the pupils are taken through different stages which include word formation, phonological awareness, vocabulary, word decoding awareness, comprehension, segmenting and blending of words in order to develop reading and writing skills. These components are critical in teaching reading.

Jolly phonics instructional strategy is usually multisensory, active and designed to help pupils become mastery of letter, sounds, discriminate one sound from each other and blend sounds in spoken words in order for them to be able to read independently at an earlier than average age. To this effect, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in 2016 mandated all the thirty-six State Universal Basic Education Boards in Nigeria to train teachers in using jolly phonics to teach pupils in reading. The strategy is capable of improving teachers' ability to deliver quality reading instruction by exposing them to appropriate approaches in the teaching of reading (Sanchez & Gavilanez, 2017).

Attitude can distort the perception of information and affect the level of pupils' retention. It can also play a substantial role in their learning how to read. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning correlate significantly with their reading achievement. One of the important significant factors which affect pupils' reading success is their attitudes towards school, lessons and academic success (Adeyemo, Babajide & Ediale 2016). Studies reported that attitude is a significant factor which predicts pupils' success not only in reading but in other subject areas. Pupils' positive attitudes towards acquisition of reading skills highly correlate with their achievement in academics.

Statement of the Problem

Basic Education is the hub and foundation of the Nigerian school system. However, reading continues to be an area that is particularly problematic for pupils in public Basic schools as great majority of them are failing to learn to read and many more are unable to read and to learn (Delican, 2018). It has been identified that pupils' inability to read or decode words could be attributed to poor interest in reading and this has been traced to the ineffective strategies used in teaching reading in basic schools and ignorance of teachers as to what good reading entails. This deficiency partly explains why pupils find reading extremely difficult and frustrating as they progress along the education ladder. The reluctant reading and learning syndrome can be meaningfully addressed if appropriate teaching strategies are applied.

In view of this, the present study seeks to investigate the effects of Jolly Phonic strategy on pupils' academic achievement in reading in lower basic schools in Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The study aimed at investigating the effects of Jolly Phonics strategy on pupils' achievement in reading in Lagos State lower basic schools. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. determine the effect of jolly phonics strategy on basic 1 pupil's reading achievement in Lagos State lower basic schools;
- ii. Examine the effect jolly phonics strategy has on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools?

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What effect does Jolly Phonics strategy have on basic 1 pupils' achievement in reading in Lagos State lower basic schools?
- ii. What effect does the jolly phonics strategy have on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a pre-test, post-test control group quasi-experimental research design and questionnaires. The test questions were adapted from the jolly phonics books validated by jolly phonics experts. Pre-test was administered before the implementation of the strategy after ten weeks, post-test was administered. This aimed to measure the pupils' reading ability before and after the intervention. The population of the study included all the public lower basic school pupils in Lagos state. The sample size was three hundred and twenty-four (324) basic 1 pupil and nine (9) basic 1 English studies teacher who were randomly and purposively selected using the simple random sampling technique from selected public lower basic schools in Ikeja, Kosofe and Surulere Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) of Lagos State. 3 public lower basic schools were randomly selected, one school from each LGEA, 9 teachers were randomly and purposively selected. Instruments used to elicit responses from the pupils were Achievement Test in Reading (ATR), Pupils' Verbal Ability Test (PVAT) and Questionnaire in a four-point Likert scale which emanated from research question two. For the face and content validity of the instrument, experts in the Measurement and Evaluation Department validated the instrument. In order to test the internal consistency of the instruments, test-retest method was applied over time. To test the internal consistency of the research instruments, Kuder Richardson, ordinal alpha and Scout Pi were used. The reliability coefficient (r) of the Achievement Test in Reading (ATR) was calculated using Kuder-Richardson (KR)-20. The reliability coefficient of the Pupils' Verbal Ability Test (PVAT), Pupils' Attitude to Reading Questionnaire (PARQ) were calculated using

ordinal alpha. Following established research reliability procedures, reliability coefficient of 0.75 and above were accepted for the study and the calculated values for each of the research instruments.

Results

Research question 1: What is the level of pupils’ achievement in reading in the study area?

Research Question One: What effect does the jolly phonics strategy of teaching have on public basic school pupils’ achievement in reading in Lagos State?

Question one was answered using the pre-test and post- test scores of pupils in the treatment and control groups in achievement in reading by public basic school pupils in Lagos State.

Table 1

Effect of treatment (jolly phonics and conventional strategies of teaching) on public basic school pupils’ achievement in reading

Treatment	N	Pre-test Score		Post-test score		Difference		Remarks
		Mean	Std. dev.	Mea n	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	
Conventional	110	15.83	4.05	18.97	4.64	3.14	4.38	Sig.
Jolly Phonics	93	15.71	3.45	61.43	9.70	45.72	7.28	Sig.

Table 1 shows the public basic school pupils’ academic achievement in reading before and after the treatment (teaching strategies). The table shows that the mean of the pre-test achievement in reading for those assigned to conventional strategy was 15.83 (S.D = 4.05), for Jolly Phonics was 15.71 (S.D = 3.45). Also, the mean of the post-test achievement in reading for pupils taught with conventional strategy was 28.97 (S.D = 4.64), those taught with Jolly Phonics was 61.43 (S.D = 9.70). Table 1 further shows that Jolly Phonics had the higher gain in mean achievement in Reading with 45.72 (S. D=7.28), while conventional strategy had the least gain in mean achievement of 3.14 (S. D= 4.38). The mean gains in achievement for Jolly Phonics is significant and different from that of the conventional strategy. Therefore, the answer to research question one is that jolly phonics teaching strategy has positive effect on basic 1 pupils’ achievement in reading in public lower basic schools in Lagos State.

Research Question Two: What effect does jolly phonics have on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools?

The question two was answered using the pre and post test scores on the pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools based on the treatment's jolly phonics and conventional method of teaching.

Table 2

Effect of Treatments on the Pupils' Attitude towards Reading in Public Basic Schools

Treatments	N	Pre-test score		Post-test score		Difference		Remarks
		Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	Mean	Std. dev.	
Conventional	110	20.31	5.562	22.41	19.04	12.10	13.478	Sig.
Jolly Phonics	93	20.18	4.425	70.12	20.21	49.94	15.785	Sig.

Table 2 shows the effect of the teaching strategies jolly phonics and conventional strategies of teaching) on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools in Lagos State. Table 2 shows that the post-test mean score of the attitude of the pupils exposed to conventional strategy was 22.41 (S.D = 19.04), while the mean score for pupils taught with Jolly Phonics strategy was 70.12 (S.D = 20.21). These results show that the differences in the attitude scores of pupils in the different categories based on the treatments are significant. Hence, the answer to research question two is that the treatment of jolly phonics and conventional strategy has significant effect on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools but jolly phonics has more positive effect.

Discussion of Findings

This study found that:

- Jolly Phonics strategy of teaching has positive effect on basic 1 school pupils' achievement in reading in lower basic schools in Lagos State. Dunn (2022) opined that one of the most acceptable ways to improve young children's reading and understanding skills is through the use of jolly phonics. According to Andualem-Desta (2020), many pupils are not achieving the expected minimum learning competencies because of the learning instruction which must include

phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary word decoding awareness and comprehension.

These components are critical in teaching reading.

- The treatment (jolly phonics and conventional methods) has significant effect on pupils' attitude towards reading in public basic schools but pupils taught with jolly phonic strategy had more positive attitude towards reading.
- The pupils that were exposed to treatments Jolly phonics strategy performed better than the pupils exposed to the conventional method of teaching reading at the public basic schools. In other words, these activities encouraged them to do better than their counter part in a passive chalk and talk class room. The essence of the jolly phonics instructional technique is that pupils collaborate to achieve common goals, meaning that every child helps the class succeed. This act of learning strategy helps pupils in so many areas of their academics, for example, it improves their self-concept, self - esteem, improves their social skills, increased classroom participation, motivation among others.
- The study revealed that there is significant influence of the pupils' attitude on their academic achievement in reading at the basic schools. Trykacz (2019) opined that attention should be paid to reading comprehension studies and developing positive attitude towards reading. Adamma. et al. (2018) observed that children who develop positive attitude towards reading are more likely to enjoy reading and be successful achievers. This implies that the pupils believe to have success in reading are very important to achieving excellent results and applaud from their teacher. However, Ozfidan and Burlbaw (2019) asserted that enthusiastic people may effortlessly achieve their goals even if they do not speak English or perhaps another language proficiently. Pupils with positive attitude practice related problems on their own, ask question from their friends and teachers, and are eager to read, write among other learning activities. The learning activities empower them to perform better than their counterparts with negative attitude towards reading.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, and jolly phonics strategies have been found to be effective in facilitating reading ability. This study has investigated how to improve the reading skills of basic 1 pupil. Reading and spelling skills of pupils can be improved upon by the use of Jolly Phonics strategy in a fun and participatory environment. The findings showed that pupils'

reading achievement improved using Jolly Phonics strategy of teaching. The pupils demonstrated the eager to learn than usual which impacted on their attitude.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Jolly phonics instructional strategies should be incorporated by curriculum experts into basic school reading curriculum. This will help them develop reading skills easily.
2. The conventional class method should be discouraged by teachers through the provision of reading materials and objects that stimulate the children's interest in reading.
3. Government, school managers and administrators should provide adequate instructional materials that will motivate pupils to easily adapt to jolly instructional strategy.
4. Government, school managers and proprietors should constantly sponsor teachers in advancing their teaching strategies and techniques that would shape attitude of pupils towards learning of reading.
5. The government should prioritize reading instructions and assist education courses and seminars.
6. Teachers should be given opportunities to go for jolly phonics trainings and seminars.

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