



ANALYSIS OF READING DEFICIENCIES AND STRATEGIES FOR REMEDIATING THEM AMONG PUPILS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OYO EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF OYO STATE

Awolere, O. O. and Oluyide F. B.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Primary Education

Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Oyo State.

<sup>2</sup>c/o Federal School of Surveying, Oyo, Oyo State

Abstract

*Pupils in Nigerian primary schools manifest some reading deficiencies which serve as barriers to their attainment of efficiency in reading. This study therefore aimed at analyzing reading deficiencies among selected primary school pupils in Oyo East Local Government in Oyo State. Five schools were randomly selected for this study out of which one hundred and fifty pupils were used from the sampled schools. Two instruments were used in this study namely: questionnaire for both teachers and pupils and classroom observation. The pupils' questionnaire is titled "Pupils' Deficiency in Reading Questionnaire while that of teachers is Questionnaire on Reading Deficiency and Ways of Remediating Them. Classroom observation was also carried out to ascertain pupils' reading deficiencies. The most frequent reading deficiencies found among these sets of pupils are: inability to interpret what is read (82.6%), finger-tracing (78.6%), regression (52.6%), vocalization (64.8%), regression (52.6%), inability to interpret what is read (82.6%). The findings also revealed the remediation strategies that could be used for these sets of pupils. Employment of specialized teachers of reading 75%, the teaching of reading as a separate subject which is 65% and provision of well-equipped library and language laboratory claimed 62.5%. On the basis of these findings, recommendations have been made to school authorities, teachers, pupils, parents or guardians and government towards the development of profitable reading habits in our schools in Oyo East Local Government and Nigeria in general.*

Keywords: Reading deficiencies, primary schools, primary school pupils

Introduction

Reading is perhaps the most important of the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing and it is therefore a necessary tool to be possessed by everyone in every school system because it is a means of acquiring information while schooling and also after leaving school. It is a skill that students are expected to develop and use in the pursuit of their life endeavours. This is because no pupil/student can survive in the world of academic without the ability to read. It is a torch bearer of the mind and the gateway to the acquisition of knowledge. It is therefore necessary that the definitions of reading put forward by some scholars first be examined.

There are many definitions of reading as there are linguists. According to Ogunsiji (2014), to read is to

grasp language patterns from their written representation. Reading is a process of communication involving the writer and the reader; the encoder and decoder. To put it simply, reading is a process of extracting meanings from written language. Its process involves both the acquisition of meaning intended by the writer and the readers own contribution in form of interpretation, evaluation and reflection of these meanings. It is the ability to comprehend the written symbol and sign. Reading is a tool subject and a learner's ability to read is the centre of educational process.

Reading has also been defined as the interpretation of reading materials, this interpretation is based on the ability of the reader to understand the purpose of the author as well as what the author is saying (Ezeokoli 2011). Reading is not only a rapid



recognition of verbal symbols but also an understanding of the thoughts and ideas for which they stand. In a sense, reading comprehension has not taken place unless the reader is able to interpret what he has read.

Educational processes all over the world are largely dependent upon the printed word and thus make reading the centre of the school experiences, and the means through which the child learns about his environment. For a child to learn and comprehend what he is being taught, he must have acquired the basic skills for reading without which he cannot perform effectively as a student. These reading skills, according to Kolawole (2009) in Adeyinka

(2011) include:

- Ability to decode meaning from printed text
- Ability to separate facts from opinions or attitudes
- Ability to draw inferences.
- Ability to recognize linguistics and
- Ability to make connections when reading.

It is not an overstatement to assert that reading skill is one of the tools that human beings cannot afford to do away with in order to perform effectively in their environment. One of the popular sayings is, "Reading makes a man and the leading nations are the reading nation". It can therefore be unequivocally stated that anybody who is not able to read will not survive in the "Global village" where so much depends on the skills of reading and writing. Reading is therefore the crux of intellectual development. At the primary, secondary and even tertiary levels of learning, students confront varied printed materials in order to learn effectively. The fact is that, for a pupil/student to develop mentally, possession of reading skill is sine-qua-non.

Also, it is fast becoming a necessity for survival in our complex social arrangements. In the past when social arrangement was simple the primary language skills of listening and speaking adequately served the traditional role of language as a means of social control. With the society becoming more and more complex, the higher other skills of reading and writing have proved imperative. However, reading is recognized commonly to be the most essential subject taught in the primary school. In the light of

this, teaching students to read effectively has been one of the most important objectives in the school curriculum. It is now seen as an isolated phase of learning that has no relationship with the rest of the programmes.

Reading has also been defined as a complex language processing behavior that entails interpreting or getting meaning from written or printed materials (Opoola 2009). He further stressed that the relationship between reading and thinking for the non-literate is either non-existent or not a reality. Reading is thus intricately woven to the literacy level of any group of individuals. Similarly, David (2011) observed that reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of construction or deriving meaning (reading comprehension). It is a means of language acquisition, of communication and of sharing information and ideas like all languages, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experience attitude and language community which is culturally and socially situated.

It is hardly imaginable today that a person can achieve success in any field of human endeavour without the ability to read. This is because, besides the printed books that often erroneously seen as the only material to read, a lot of other pieces of information necessary for daily survival are written for people to read. Reading is therefore very important in that, it provides information that brings about changes in attitude, belief and practice. It also socializes man and helps him to live a fulfilled life and be a contributor to the development of his/her nation.

There is no doubt that reading is the key that opens the door to formal education. Reading helps to improve the status of pupils/students by giving minimum education needed to improve their way of living. It helps to eradicate illiteracy which in turn helps to solve personal problems as well as group problems that are within the society.

Reading is functional. It is an independent way to learning. It introduces a reader to the surrounding world. The reader can view ever-widening horizons and explore ever-new areas in the world of things, people and event. A reader wants to find out information to satisfy his curiosity and to find answer



to his questions. Besides, reading affects the entire personality of the reader. The ideas encountered on the printed page may shape a reader's attitude towards his fellow men, parents, his environment and his lifestyle in general. Likewise, Opoola (2009) noted that, reading makes a reader to be an active member of a society. He gets to know a lot of problems which may lead to destruction of human life and creation of human misery and how these kinds of problems can be avoided. When one reads about his society, one appreciates the society better. However, further education depends on the quantity and quality of reading. It is the advanced stage of reading development that allows the reader to satisfy intellectual demands and spiritual needs. Though the importance attached to reading in Nigeria and over the world is enormous, it is an open secret today that the performance of Nigerian primary school pupils in reading is highly deteriorating. This has been a great concern to many educators, educational administrators, teachers, parents or guidance and indeed the researcher.

As important as reading is to learning, it is the most neglected skill of language. It is not found in instructions curriculum in the school syllabus or time table. It should not be surprising that, there are few or no effective and efficient reading activities taking place in nearly all our educational institutions. The neglect of reading instructions has also led to the rapid, uncontrollable, constant and consistent fall of education standard in Nigeria. The tendency is to believe that, the majority of the relatively poor readers are pupils from primary schools who read a little or nothing in their various schools. It is very likely that they have not learned to enjoy reading because their reading is confined to some school subjects.

In addition, pupils are not adequately exposed to different methods that can facilitate an effective reading habit in them. Pupils need to be encouraged to read through the promotion of different materials such as motion pictures, radio, television, computer, picture reading and a miscellany of modern mechanical gadgets providing competing forms of entertainment. These materials should be made available to the students at the initial stage of their education career. Most parents have strong desire to help their children but not knowing how best to be

involved can be a confusing and even daunting task for them (Ronald 2006).

There is a wealth of research evidence that shows the impact of teachers' attitude on pupils' success. Whether a pupil sees himself or herself as worthy or unworthy, competent or incompetent, confident or unsure of himself or herself will be largely determined by his or her teachers' reaction to him or her. Studies have shown that teachers' expectancy alone can determine the academic success and intellectual growth of students in school (Ronald 2006).

Most of the times, teachers do not consider the difference(s) in students' learning abilities before imposing the same textbooks, instructional materials and evaluation method on them. They ignore the fact that pupils are from different backgrounds, experiences, economic situation, interests and abilities. Teaching materials are not made available in schools and where they are, they are inadequate.

English language is both a subject and a medium of instruction in the Nigeria system of education. Therefore, a pupil who has developed a good reading habit has a better prospect of not only being interested in reading widely but is likely to have trained himself or herself to decode meaning from materials read or heard with more precision.

Learners express reading deficiencies in the process of learning in their academic careers. According to Tijani (2007), these deficiencies mostly occur in the following ways.

- Difficulties in recognizing the language and graphic symbols in a text.
- Difficulties in grasping the content i.e. the message in a text.
- Difficulties in understanding the tone and style of the writer.

The reading deficiencies manifest in almost all the subjects taught in primary schools today. Awodele (2009) affirmed that this problem becomes more complex when pupils have to study other subjects in the curriculum. Information for knowledge is presented in different ways and different styles are used in different subject areas. While subjects in the Arts use much of continuous prose, the sciences including the social sciences use symbols, graphs,



diagrams, pictures or drawings in addition to prose to provide adequate information. Reading deficiencies occur in all the above mentioned subjects areas. Reading is not just a visual task but an ability to see and identify symbols, interpret what are reads in the light of one's own background, associate it with past experience and project this in terms of ideas, judgment, application and conclusion (compre-hension).

The hopes and aspirations of many parents or guardians have been dashed since inability to have a good reading comprehension skill right from primary schools often spells dooms/failure on the pupils in their common entrance examinations. It closely follows that, the parents or guardians spend exorbitant fees annually on education. Pupils are tired and dejected to see no glorious days coming ahead of them.

Previous studies in reading deficiency have focused on secondary and tertiary institutions to the neglect of primary education level. As such, this study aimed at analyzing the causes and strategies of remediating reading deficiencies in selected primary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. Reading is adjudged to have taken place only when a reader is able to get the total message, information, understanding of meaning of what is in print and it is therefore necessary that the research finds out those things that hinder students from being able to read effectively and device ways of solving those problems.

#### Significance of the study

The study highlighted the reading deficiencies among primary school pupils and strategized ways of remediating them. The findings would expose teachers to various causes of readings deficiencies and introduce them to the strategies that could be used to help pupils out of their reading deficiencies.

The findings would help pupils to develop readings skills, generate interest in reading and sustain effective reading habits.

#### Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

- (i.) Do pupils manifest any deficiency in reading?
- (ii.) What are the factors responsible for reading deficiencies in the study area?

- (iii.) In What ways, if any, can the deficiencies be remedied?

#### Scope of Study

This study was limited to Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State and out of which five primary schools were selected through random sampling. A subject size of one hundred and fifty primary school pupils was selected and forty English language teachers were also used from the sampled schools.

#### Research Methodology

##### Design of the Study

The study is a descriptive research which analyses through observation and questionnaire the reading deficiencies among selected primary school pupils in Oyo East Local Government in Oyo State.

##### Population

The population comprises all primary five pupils in all primary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

##### Sample and Sampling Technique

Five schools were randomly selected out of all the primary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. A total number of One Hundred and Fifty (150) pupils were involved in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participating teachers.

Distribution of participants according to schools is represented in the table below:

S/N	Names of School	Number of students
1.	Methodist Primary School, Apaara, Oyo	28
2.	L.A Primary School Jabata, Oyo	30
3.	L.A School New Durbar, Oyo.	34
4.	Baptist Primary School, Agboye, Oyo	30
5.	St. Michael Primary School, Araromi, Oyo	28
Total		150

#### Research Instruments

Two types of instruments were used for the study namely: questionnaires and classroom observation. The questionnaires were designed for teachers and



pupils respectively. The questionnaire for pupils titled: Pupils' Deficiency in Reading Questionnaires (PDRQ) which partly answered the first research question while the classroom observation was done by the researcher which provided the remaining answer. The researcher personally observed the pupils in their classroom to note their reading deficiencies. The second questionnaire titled: Questionnaire on Reading Deficiency and Ways of Remediating them was administered on forty teachers. This provides answer for the second and third research questions.

#### Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The comprehension passage and the questionnaire used for both the classroom observation was adapted from one of their English language textbook titled; *Evans Modular English for primary Schools(book five)* and this was subjected to experts' opinion for scrutiny. After the scrutiny, their corrections were effected. This was to ensure content and face validity.

In determining the reliability of the instruments, the questionnaire was administered twice with the use of Test-Retest method. The reliability coefficient index was 0.79 which was considered adequate.

#### Research Procedure

The questionnaire was administered on the respondents (both teachers and pupils) by the researcher. In all the five selected primary schools,

the respondents were made to understand that, the questionnaire was designed to analyze pupils' reading deficiencies and ways of remediating them. The researcher assured the respondents that all information supplied was for a research purpose and strictly confidential. This was carried out in the first week in all the five selected primary schools. Classroom observation took place in the second and third week. During this observation period, a period (of forty minutes) was used in each of the schools to observe students' reading habits through a comprehension passage that was given to them to read and the reading deficiencies exhibited by the students while reading the text were noted by the researcher.

#### Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the study was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages and distribution.

#### Results and Discussion

##### Introduction

The results are presented in the order of the research questions raised in chapter one.

##### Research Question 1

Do pupils in the primary schools in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State manifest any deficiency in reading?

Table 1: Reading Deficiencies

	Yes	No	Total
I cannot answer questions on comprehension passages myself.	119 (82.6%)	26 (17.1%)	145 (100%)
I like tracing with finger/stick when reading.	114 (78.6%)	31 (21.4%)	145 (100%)
I vocalize when reading	94 (64.8%)	51 (35.1%)	145 (100%)
I repeat a word or phrase twice or more when reading	77 (52.6%)	68 (46.9%)	145 (100%)

Table 1 showed that, inability to answer questions on comprehension passages, finger-tracing, vocalization and regression, are the reading deficiencies manifested by students in the sampled schools. 82.6% of the pupils indicated their inability to answer questions on comprehension passages, 78.6% of them trace lines with their fingers when reading,

64.8% vocalize when reading while 52.6% regress (repeat a word or phrase twice or more) when reading. There was an indication that 60% respondents have more than one reading deficiencies. Please note that the total no of pupils was not up to 150 because some of the pupils were absent during classroom observation and five of them did not return the questionnaire.



To ascertain the claims in the questionnaire, pupils were observed in their various classrooms during reading comprehension lesson. From the observation, it was discovered that the majority of the pupils manifest one reading deficiency or the other.

#### Research Question 2

What are the factors responsible for reading deficiencies among pupils in the study area?

Table 2: Factors Responsible for Reading Deficiencies

	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Visual impairment is a barrier to the attainment of competency in reading	35 (87.5%)	5 (12.5%)	00 (0%)	00 (0%)	40 (100%)
Students with hearing impairment are always poor at reading.	20 (50%)	10 (25%)	05 (12.5%)	05 (12.5%)	40 (100%)
Tracing with fingers do not make students to read very fast.	15 (37.5%)	18 (45%)	04 (10%)	03 (7.5%)	40 (100%)
Mouthing the words or reading it internally slows the rate or reading	13 (32.5%)	17 (42.5%)	05 (12.5%)	05 (12.5%)	40 (100%)

The table revealed, as indicated by the teachers, that visual impairment, hearing impairment, finger-tracing, vocalization or sub-vocalization are among the factors responsible for reading deficiencies.

87.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that visual impairment is a barrier to the attainment of competency in reading. There was no dissenting view.

Also, 50% and 25% of the respondents indicated that hearing impairment makes students to be poor at reading while 12.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

37.5% and 45% of the respondents indicated that finger-tracing do not make students to be very fast at reading, 10% and 7.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the statement. 32.5% and 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that vocalization/sub-vocalization is among the factors responsible for reading deficiencies. This table therefore shows that, the causes of reading deficiencies can be in different forms.

#### Research Question 3

In what ways can the deficiencies be remedied?

Table 3: Reading Deficiency Remediation Strategies

	SA	A	SD	D	Total
Employment of specialized teachers of reading would help pupils out of their reading deficiencies.	25 (62.5%)	05 (12.5%)	05 (12.5%)	05 (12.5%)	40 (100%)
The teaching of reading as a separate subject should be allowed in school.	10 (25%)	18 (45%)	07 (17.5%)	05 (12.5%)	40 (%)
A well equipped school library and language laboratory would serve as means of enhancing efficient reading habits in pupils	13 (32.5%)	12 (30%)	05 (12.5%)	10 (25%)	40 (100%)



62.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that employment of specialized teachers of reading would help pupils out of their reading deficiencies while 12.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the opinion. In the same vein, 25% and 45% of the teachers agreed that the teaching of reading as a separate subject should be allowed in school while 17.5% and 12.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed.

Also, 32.5% and 30% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that a well equipped School library and language laboratory would serve as means of enhancing efficient reading habit in pupils while 12.5% and 25% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the opinion.

This table shows that, reading deficiencies can be remedied through the employment of specialized teachers of reading, teaching or reading as separate subject, provision of a well-equipped school library and language laboratory.

#### Discussion of Findings

From the pupils responses in Table1, inability to answer questions on comprehension passages, finger-tracing, vocalization and regression, are the reading deficiencies manifested by students in the sampled schools. 82.6% of the pupils indicated their inability to answer questions on comprehension passages, 78.6% of them trace lines with their fingers when reading, 64.8% vocalize when reading while 52.6% regress (repeat a word or phrase twice or more) when reading. Findings revealed that, there were respondents that have more than one reading deficiencies. From the classroom observation, it was also discovered that the majority of the pupils manifested reading deficiencies during reading comprehension lessons. This implies that teachers needed to improve significantly on their methodology so as to help pupils overcome their reading deficiencies. This findings is in consonance with Kolawole (2005) who reported that deficiency in reading is a major bane to students' academic achievement in English language and other content areas.

On factors responsible for reading deficiencies as pointed out in Table 2, 87.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that visual impairment is a barrier to the attainment of

competency in reading. There was no dissenting view Also, 50% and 25% of the respondents indicated that hearing impairment makes students to be poor at reading while 12.5% and 12.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. 37.5% and 45% of the respondents indicated that finger-tracing do not make students to be very fast at reading, 10% and 7.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the statement. 32.5% and 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that vocalization/sub-vocalization is among the factors responsible for reading deficiencies. This table therefore showed that, the causes of reading deficiencies can be in different forms.

Concerning the strategies of remediating reading deficiencies, it was found that 75% of the teachers showed positive response to the employment of specialized teachers of reading which could help pupils out of their reading deficiencies. 70% of the teachers claimed that teaching of reading as a separate subject should be allowed in schools and 62.5% of the teachers showed positive response towards the provision of a well-equipped school library and language laboratory which could also serve as ways of remediating reading deficiencies in pupils.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be maintained that primary schools pupils in the study area manifested reading deficiencies such as vocalization, regression and finger tracing which consequently account for their poor reading habits. If pupils are helped to overcome these deficiencies, it is assumed that they will perform better in their academic. In addition, the role of teachers in helping pupils out of their deficiencies cannot be less emphasized. Dada (2002) noted that, pupils in primary schools have suffered so much linguistic attack from their teachers who did not see themselves as teachers of reading. This is as a result of not being professionally trained for it.

We can affirm from the foregoing that, the teachers' method of teaching plays a significant role in the teaching-learning process. It could be inferred that the poor performance of Nigerian pupils in the school examinations and in almost all school subjects is as a result of poor method of teaching. As far back



as the early 1970s, educators have stressed the need for teachers to use strategies that encourage the learner to inquire, discover and solve problems on their own (Tijani, 2007). Teachers of reading should be exposed to several methods from which they can choose the most appropriate in teaching reading skills.

The majority of the schools do not have libraries and where they have, they are not being well-equipped with textbooks and modern gadgets that could promote reading in the secondary schools system.

Pupils should be seen as active participants in the process of teaching while the teachers' role is to promote the intellectual interpersonal and social development of the child. There is need for teachers of reading to update their knowledge periodically in order to reach perfection.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should be familiar with the pupils that exhibit reading deficiencies and strategize ways of helping them out of the problems. Every teacher in primary school should be a registered member of Reading Association of Nigeria where they will be exposed to sound knowledge on how to promote reading in their schools.
2. Pupils with visual/hearing impairment should not see it as disability or hindrance to effective reading but should see medical practitioners that would recommend to them the appropriate reading visual/hearing aids to use in assisting them in reading activities.
3. Parents should be ready to provide their wards with reading materials and the enlightened ones among them should be positive towards extensive reading; they should not only surround their wards with interesting books and magazines but also actively encourage them to read books other than recommended texts.
4. Schools and other relevant authorities should provide libraries, well-equipped with

textbooks and modern gadgets, that could promote reading in the primary schools system.

#### References

- Adeyinka, A. A. (2011). Strategies for teaching, reading and writing skills in training manual: Training workshop for English language units, Obafemi Awolowo University. 16-24.
- Awodele, R. A. (2009). Causes and remediation of reading disability. M.Ed Dissertation: Education, Language Unit, Obafemi Awolowo University of Ibadan. 29-44.
- David, G. (2011). NAEP Reading Framework- National Assessment Governing www. Slate.com/2011
- Ezeokoli, F. O. (2011). Advances in the teaching of reading an unpublished M.Ed Manuscript. University of Ibadan.
- Kolawole, C.O.O. (2009) Advance in teaching reading an unpublished M.Ed Manuscript, University of Ibadan.
- Kolawole, C. O. O. (2007). The state of reading in selected secondary schools in South-Western Nigeria: A preliminary report. In Ayorinde Dada, Alade Abimbade & Olusegun Olaniran Kolawole. *Issues language, communication and education*. Constellations Books, Ibadan.
- Ogunsiji, A. (2014). Developing the basic skills for communication competence in learners of English as a second Language In Nigerian, *Ibadan Journal of English Studies*. 19-34.
- Opoola, B.T. (2009). Tips for effective teaching and learning of reading skills in training manual: Training Workshop for English Language Teachers for Secondary Schools.





Ed/OYSCOED CONSULT. Oyo Emmanuel  
Alayande College of Education  
Ronald, S.R. (2006). *Journal of Affective Reading  
Education*. Vol xviii: Carrollton: University of West  
Georgia. GA 30118-5110.

Tijani, T. T. (2007). Strategies for promoting effective  
reading among junior secondary School  
Students. M.Ed Dissertation English language,  
Unit. University of Ibadan.