

Original Research Article

Effects of Repeated Reading Approach on Primary 3 Pupils in Public-Primary Schools in Central Nigeria

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Abstract: The study looked at the effects of repeated reading approach on primary three pupils reading in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, North Central Nigeria and was carried out in five (5) different public schools located in the rural areas of the Local Government. The main objective of the study was to significantly remedy the reading challenges of primary 3 pupils by increasing their reading ability. The study was a true experimental design of pre-test and post-test with a sample of 110 pupils. The study was conducted within one academic session: September 2022 – July 2023. Means, standard deviation and ANCOVA using IBM SPSS version 22 and Microsoft Excel Spread sheet were used. The study revealed that pupils achieved a significant level of fluency in their reading ability, and it recommended the use of the Repeated Reading Approach to teach learners who have challenges with reading in primary schools.

Keywords: Repeated Reading, Approach, Reading Ability, Public Schools.

INTRODUCTION

The foundation for competent reading and writing are laid down from the age of three to seven but learning to read is a complex task for beginners because understanding the relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the way those sounds can be represented by one or more letters of the alphabet is as fundamental to reading in English as well as to writing and spelling. This also suggests that teaching at this level should follow a deliberate and purposeful planning of instructional materials and activities as Oyetunde (2013), states that instructional activities in a language class room must be structured and goal oriented, informed by some sound linguistic and psychological theories and principles.

The implication of the forgoing is that the ability of a child to read effectively is an important aspect in the academic development of the child. FRN (2012) emphasises the centrality of English Language and by implication reading in English Language; to the overall academic development of the child as it states that one of the objects of primary education is to inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively; the teaching shall be participatory, exploratory, experimental and child centered; the medium of instruction in the primary school shall be language of immediate environment for the first three years in monolingual communities. During this period English shall be taught as a subject. Yet as central as reading is to the overall academic development of the child, weaknesses still remain in teaching children to read effectively with the result that the standards achieved by children at the end of the primary school years fall stubbornly short of what is desirable. Similarly Ojo (2012) observes that there has been a downward trend in the literacy level of children in public schools and those in educationally disadvantaged Communities in Nigeria and adds that the failure of many children to develop early reading skill usually leads to lower overall academic performance. Pupils with such difficulties have also been found to continue to experience failure in latter grades and later life.

The frustration faced by parents, children and teachers are worthy reasons to make every parent and teacher to look into ways of finding solutions for teaching children to read effectively. The children must be taught to coordinate

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many cognitive processes to read accurately and fluently; including recognising words, constructing meaning of sentences, texts and retaining the information read in memory. An essential part for beginning readers involves learning the alphabetic system that is letter sound correspondences, spelling patterns and learning how to apply this knowledge in their reading. The Repeated Reading Approach in combination with systematic phonics instruction is an easy method of teaching children to read as it stresses the acquisition of letter sounds which helps the child to read fluently and effectively.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of failure in public examinations and subsequent dropout of school pupils/students have been attributed to their inability to read efficiently, particularly at the primary school level which is the foundation of education. The failure of many children to develop early reading skills usually leads to lower overall academic performance. This situation has become a lingering problem for the fact that many teachers want to teach their pupils how to read but do not have the skills and ability. This has led to the inability of pupils/students to read efficiently; consequently, increasing the failure rate in public examinations. This is also traceable to the fact that most Nigerian teachers are not trained on the pedagogies of teaching reading especially in early years in teachers training institutions. We are also disturbed that there is no agreed approach and effort towards teaching reading in the nursery and primary schools. Hence, there is need for a programme to improve the quality of learning in primary schools, especially reading competence and comprehension.

Objectives

- The main objectives of this study are to Significantly increase the reading ability of Primary 3 pupils in the public primary schools in Pankshin L.G.A of Plateau State.
- Equip Primary 3 teachers in Pankshin L.G.A with the techniques of Repeated Reading Approach which they can use to improve the reading ability of their pupils.
- Guide the teachers in the production of teaching materials they can use to teach thereby leading them to the establishment of class libraries to boost reading materials for their pupils.

Literature Review

Reading is getting meaning from print. It is the ability of the reader to not just pronounce the words but to also understand the meaning of the pronounced words. Grell (2023) describes reading as the cognitive process of decoding symbols to determine a text's meaning. The symbols are the text itself and the process of decoding requires that the reader quickly matches a symbol or combination of symbols (letter(s)) to a sound and then recognises the patterns of sounds that create words. These words then convey meaning to the reader. The author further adds that reading is an active process that requires both simple and complex components. The reader must have a base knowledge of the symbols that create the language as well as a vocabulary in that language. The reader also needs to have an understanding of the grammar rules. In addition, the reader will use higher-level processing to determine the meaning of the text and author purpose, among other things. Hence, readers need to use different techniques to translate symbols in to a cohesive meaning.

This skill is important because it plays many roles in the life of an English Language Learner (ELL). Reading is foundational to success in school and life (Routten in Sparks, 2022). Hence, the author reemphasises that schools need to take evidence-based action, aligned with the science of reading and work closely with teachers to ensure that elementary and middle school students become strong readers and can access more complex work as they progress through their education. Pressley, Gaskins and Fingeret in Landa (2009) submit that academically, students who read well read fluently and with comprehension. They are able to summarise, interpret and accept or reject the information on the printed page. Similarly, students who read well are able to read long passages with ease and complete assignments in a reasonable time (Rasinski in Landa, 2009). These very pupils or students attain academic success during the term or session.

As important as reading is to school children, many of them in public primary schools cannot read. They are reportedly deficient in English language reading comprehension and this partly accounts for the poor results recorded in English language at public examinations (Ararom & Olatubosun, 2018). Experience during teaching practice has also shown that many pupils and students read without understanding and some cannot even pronounce the words correctly. For these readers, learning how to read fluently and with comprehension is a big challenge.

Academically, students who do not read well cannot complete their assignments and they are exposed to less information because they typically cannot read quickly. Students who do not read well may exhibit disruptive or withdrawn behaviours that distract them from learning activities (Hitchcock et al. in Landa, 2009). The negative social outcomes correlated with an inability to read well include having a negative outlook and low participation in extracurricular school activities, lagging academically behind other students/pupils and having a higher probability of dropping out of school (Lazarus & Callahan in Landa, 2009).

English language learners (ELLs) and mostly those in the rural areas and public schools are significantly at risk for the negative outcomes associated with not reading well in English. These students/pupils who struggle with reading

face many challenges in school because reading in English is a prerequisite for all of their other subject areas in Nigeria. Once they fall behind one academic year in reading, students who are ELLs have a difficult time catching up with their mates in the same class. This is supported by a study that was carried out by Nyarko and Kugbey (2018) on English reading proficiency and academic performance among lower primary school children in Ghana. The study showed that a positive relationship existed between reading proficiency and academic performance. The study also revealed that students in private schools were more proficient in reading than those in public schools and that also reflected in their academic performance. This supports the fact that public primary school pupils have deficiency in reading and this affects their performances in other subjects and public examinations.

Researchers like Elhoweris (2017), Naji (2023), Southward (2019), Cox (2015) among others, indicate that one intervention that has been shown to be effective in improving reading fluency and reading comprehension is Repeated Reading. Repeated reading is when a learner reads the same text usually no more than 200 words over and over again until the rate of reading has no or few errors. This strategy can be done individually or in a group setting. This method was originally targeted for students with learning disabilities until educators realised that all students can benefit from this strategy. With repetition of text, the likelihood of recognising the words when later encountered increases, therefore building automaticity of text.

The method of Repeated Readings, which came out of the Automaticity Theory of LaBerge and Samuels (1974), is used to improve reading fluency and comprehension in struggling readers. Repeated Reading involves having the reader repeatedly read a short passage of usually no more than two hundred words until a satisfactory or predetermined level of fluency is reached (Samuels, 1979; Therrien & Kubina, 2006). Repeated readings grew out of the Automaticity Theory (LaBerge & Samuels) as mentioned above which stated that a fluent reader could decode text without devoting attention to the process of reading, therefore leaving attention free to dedicate to comprehension of the text (Samuels, 1979). According to this theory, beginning readers need to focus on letters and sounds, but as they become more fluent readers they can focus their attention on phrases, sentences and meaning. Samuels stated that the practice provided in Repeated Reading makes the decoding necessary for automatic reading, therefore leading to better comprehension. It is interactive in nature which encourages students to interact with each other and with the subject matter. Rather than sitting at their desks listening passively ready to absorb the material, the students are part of the lesson, with the interactive approach.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study include the following:

1. What is the difference between the pre and post tests reading scores of Primary 3 pupils of public schools in Pankshin L.G.A of Plateau State?
2. What is the nature of improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils of the selected schools after the training?
3. What is the mean performance scores of Pre and Post tests reading ability of male and female Primary 3 pupils in Pankshin L.G.A

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between reading performance of Primary 3 pupils in the Pre and Post tests

H₀₂: There is no significant improvement in the reading ability of Primary 3 pupils after learning to read using the Repeated Reading Approach

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the reading performance of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin L.G.A

METHODOLOGY

An experimental research design (a pre – and post – test) was utilised to guide the research study. This enabled the researchers to determine whether there was any significant change in the reading ability of the pupils at the end of the study. The sample of the study comprised five (5) Primary 3 pupils schools selected from public primary schools in Pankshin L.G.A of Plateau State with a total of one hundred and ten (110) pupils representing the population. The study covered a period of one academic session of 3 terms. The assessment also comprised four sets of tests and a context interview in the following areas:

1. Identification of letter sounds.
2. Word reading test.
3. Sentence reading test.
4. Short reading passage test that is not more than 100 words.

A context interview was conducted with each pupil to ascertain age, gender, poverty indicators, language(s) spoken at home and whether pupils have had Early Childhood Care Development (ECCD) experience or not.

Also in order to ensure effective teaching with the Repeated Reading Approach, there was an initial 3-day train the trainer workshop for the primary 3 teachers in the five (5) selected schools. Members of the research team followed up with monitoring and mentoring the teachers to ensure the strategy was properly used.

The data collected from the pre – and post – tests were subjected to inferential and descriptive statistical tools such as means, standard deviation, ANCOVA and figures using IBM SPSS statistics version 22 and Microsoft Excel 2010 spreadsheet.

RESULTS

This section presents results in relation to the analysis of the research questions and hypotheses. The data range from the outcomes of the research of the conducted pre-test assessment of the pupils in the five (5) selected schools. The pretest data was analysed to determine whether the Repeated Reading Approach can remedy the reading deficiency of the primary three (3) pupils in the selected school. The post-test was then analysed by testing the research hypotheses to also determine the level of effectiveness of the Repeated Reading Approach to remedy the reading deficiency of the pupils.

Pre-test Data

Five public schools were selected for the research. All the selected schools are rural schools in Pankshin L.G.A of Plateau State. This is essential to determine any possible impact on the interpretation of the results.

Table 1: Pretest Demographic-context Interview

Variable	Category	
Gender	Male	52
	Female	58
	Total	110
Location	Rural	All
	Total	5
Language spoken at home	English	Nil
	Hausa	Nil
	M.T.	110
Use of English at home	Yes	Nil
	No	110
ECCD Experience	Yes	Nil
	No	110

Pupils were taught using the repeated reading Approach. The total number of pupils selected for the research was 110, 52 males and 58 females. All the schools were in the rural area of Pankshin L.G.A Plateau State. The 110 pupils speak only their mother tongue at home and do not use English at home with no ECCD- early childhood care development experience.

Results of the Pre and Post Tests

Analysis of the pre and post tests results obtained from the assessment of the pupils in relation to the research questions and hypothesis are presented in tables and figures as shown below.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the difference between the pre and post-tests reading scores of primary 3 pupils of public schools in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State?

Table 1: The mean score and standard deviation of pre and post-tests readings cores of primary 3 pupils of public schools in Pankshin LGA of Plateau State

Group	N		
Pre-tests	109	2.9725	2.67173
Post-tests	110	70.0545	20.40904

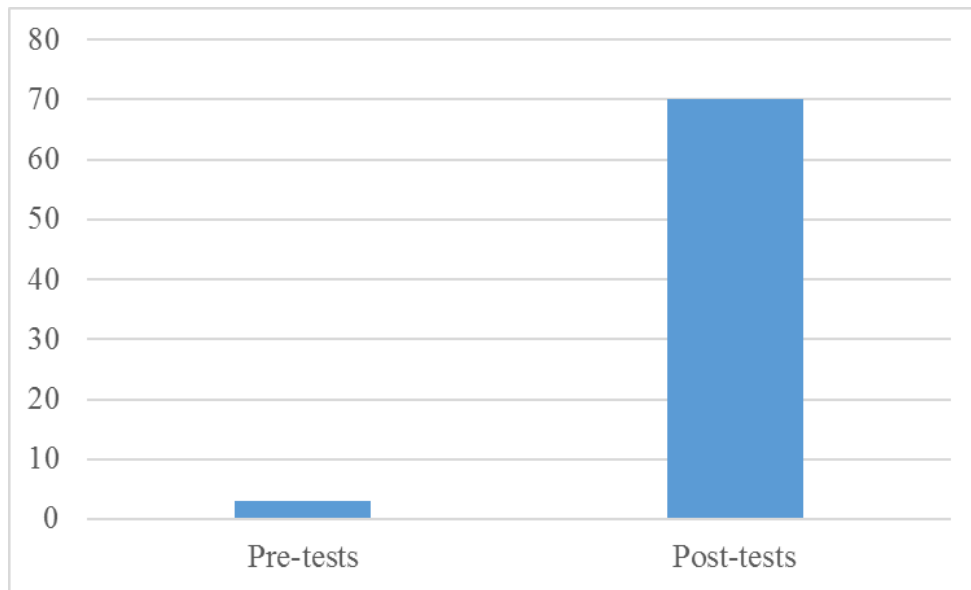


Figure 1: Showing pre and post-tests reading scores of primary 3 pupils of public schools in Pankshin LGA of Plateau state

From the results presented in the Table 1 and Figure 1 above, it shows that the pupils’ performance in the post-test was higher than the pre-test with a mean’s score of 70.0545 against 2.9725.

Research Question 2

What is the nature of improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils of the selected schools after the training?

Table 2: The mean score and standard deviation of the reading ability of primary 3 pupils of the selected schools after the training

Group	N	Mean	SD
Pretests	109	1.5000	1.34715
Posttests	110	34.6591	10.54543

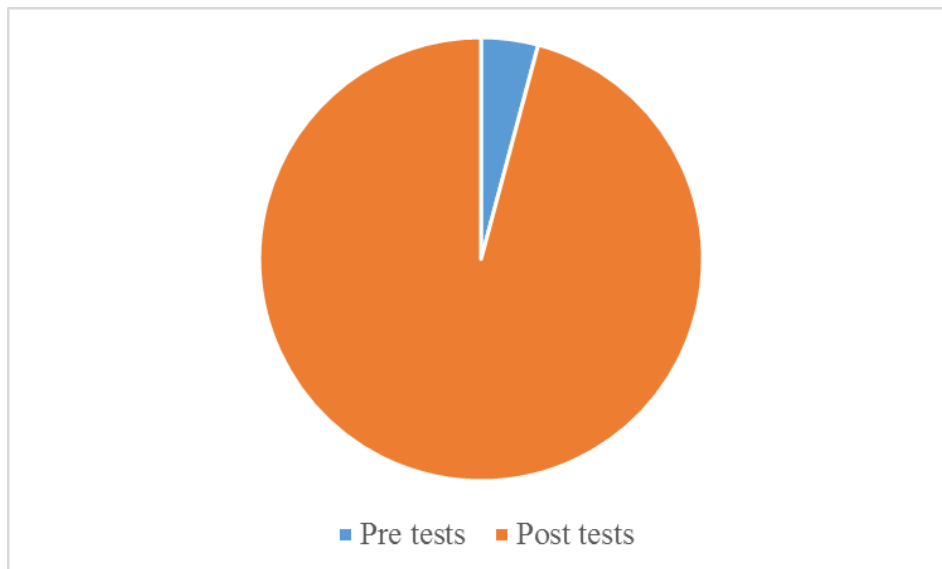


Figure 2: Showing reading ability of primary 3 pupils of the selected schools after the training

The table and Figure 2 clearly show that there was a remarkable improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils.

Research Question 3

What is the mean performance scores of pre and post tests reading ability of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin LGA?

Table 3: The mean score and standard deviation of pre and post tests reading ability of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin LGA

Group	N	Pretest		Posttest	
Male	52	2.6200	2.38952	52.923	15.74035
Female	58	3.2414	2.87341	50.379	18.34258

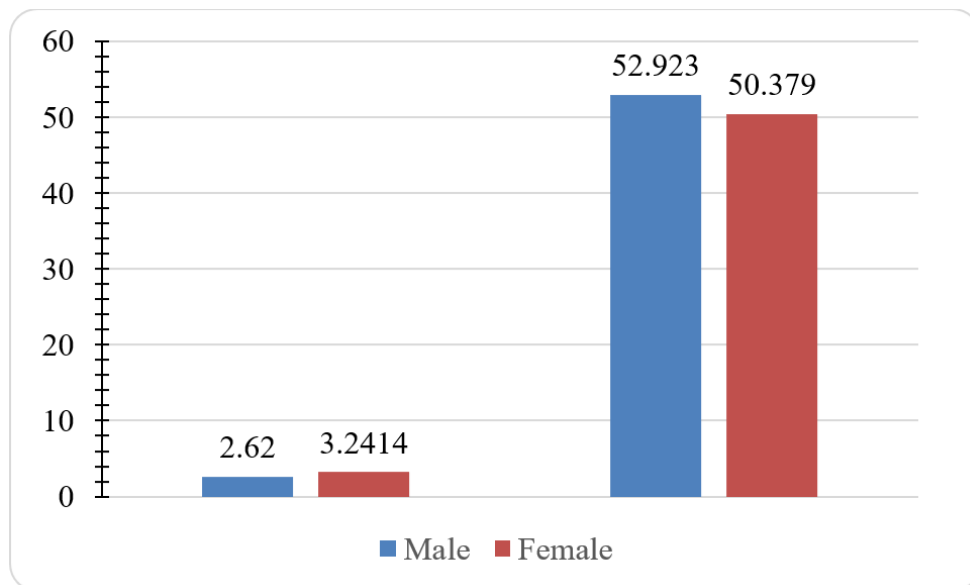


Figure 3: Showing pre and post-tests reading ability of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin LGA

Table 3 and figure 3 show that there was no much difference in the mean score and standard deviation of pre and post tests reading ability of male and female primary 3 pupils. This shows that gender is not a determining factor in the performance of primary 3 pupils in repeated reading approach.

Hypothesis One

H0₁: There is no significant difference between reading performance of primary3 pupils in the pre and post-tests.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Reading performance					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	757.254 ^a	2	378.627	4502.306	0.000
Intercept	0.026	1	0.026	0.304	0.582
Pre-test	745.592	1	745.592	8865.934	0.000
Post test	.017	1	0.017	0.201	0.655
Error	8.746	104	0.084		
Total	1729.000	107			
Corrected Total	766.000	106			

a. R Squared = 0.989 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.988)

The null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level. The result indicated that, there is significant difference between reading performance of primary3 pupils in the pre and post-tests.

Hypothesis Two

H0₂: There is no significant improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils after learning to read using the repeated reading approach.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Reading performance					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	15.540 ^a	1	15.540	2.201	0.141
Intercept	31.540	1	31.540	4.468	0.037
Repeated Reading	15.540	1	15.540	2.201	0.141

Error	755.377	107	7.060		
Total	1734.000	109			
Corrected Total	770.917	108			
a. R Squared = .020 (Adjusted R Squared = .011)					

The null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 significance level. There is significant improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils after learning to read using the repeated reading approach.

Hypothesis Three

H0₃: There is no significant difference between the reading performance of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin LGA.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Reading performance					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.085 ^a	2	1.543	0.276	0.760
Intercept	82.630	1	82.630	14.793	0.000
Female	2.676	1	2.676	0.479	0.492
Male	0.232	1	0.232	0.042	0.839
Error	262.535	47	5.586		
Total	641.000	50			
Corrected Total	265.620	49			
a. R Squared = 0.012 (Adjusted R Squared = -0.030)					

The null hypothesis is retained since the p-value is 0.000 which is lesser than the 0.05 significance level. The result indicated that there is no significant difference between the reading performance of male and female primary 3 pupils in Pankshin LGA.

FINDINGS

The results presented above show that there is a significant improvement in the post-test scores of the pupils as compared to the pre-test scores from the data collected and analysed although the analysis between the assessment scores of the males and females show a negligible difference. The findings of this study confirmed the results of previous studies that indicated that the use of repeated reading approach increases learners' reading fluency and comprehension. For example in a study carried out by Elhoweris (2017), indicating repeated reading as an intervention for remedying learners with reading difficulties in schools. Similarly, Vandenberg, Boon, Fore and Bender (2008) studied the effectiveness of the repeated readings instruction on both oral reading fluency and reading comprehension of practiced and unpracticed passages. The result showed that the use of the repeated reading increased all participants' oral reading fluency rates and the number of comprehension questions accuracy of practiced and unpracticed passages.

Another meta-analysis study was conducted by Therrien (2004) revealed that repeated reading can be used effectively with students with and without disabilities. In another study carried out by Landa and Barbetta (2017) on the effects of repeated readings on reading fluency, errors and comprehension of 4, third-to-fifth grade English language learners (ELLs) with specific learning disabilities (SLD). The results of this study revealed that repeated reading significantly affects the participants' reading fluency, errors and comprehension.

Therefore, in conclusion the results of this study show that there is a significant improvement in the reading ability of primary 3 pupils who have difficulties in reading fluency and comprehension. The findings of this study have some implications for teaching reading in primary schools. Hence, teachers may need to be conscious of the positive effects of repeated reading approach in the classroom setting.

CONCLUSION

Considering the analysis above, the following conclusion could be ascertained. Repeated Reading approach is effective in remedying and improving the reading ability of all the pupils that participated in the programme as shown in the assessment pre- and post- test. The results presented justify the effectiveness of Repeated Reading approach.

The researchers believe the provision that quality instruction in teaching the pupil to read at the primary school level will definitely lay a good foundation for future academic progress of the pupils. Quality English instruction should be taught repeatedly in the early grades to help the learners to read. This will ensure reading fluency and prepare the pupils

for the transition to reading to learn in English from primary 4. It is therefore concluded that the Repeated Reading Approach can be used to remedy the reading deficiency as well as increase the reading ability of primary 3 pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study as well as a careful consideration of the data analysed, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should be encouraged to use the Repeated Reading approach to teach learners who have challenges with reading.
2. The three tiers of government (local, state and federal government) should make adequate plans in their budgets to provide resources for teaching and learning as well as improve on infrastructure like classroom and seats for the pupils because most of the schools are dilapidated
3. Refresher courses, seminars and workshops should be planned and held periodically to equip the teachers with new and effective strategies of teaching and learning.
4. The welfare of teachers must be given a priority to forestall case of strike actions which hinders learning for a long period of time.
5. The local government Education Authorities must provide adequate monitoring and monitoring of teachers to ensure they put in their best in teaching the pupils.
6. Curriculum planners should continually work on a review of the school curriculum in line with the best practices that are being used in the 21st century.

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