HUMAN SECURITY AND THE SURVIVAL OF ILORIN EMIRATE CULTURE



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CHAPTER 19

ASSESSMENT OF LOWER-BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS READING AND THEIR COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex activity that requires learners' effort, interest, attention and determination. Lawal (1997) affirmed that reading consist of two fundamental processes: the physical or visual process and the mental or intellectual process which are determined by the learners' attitude and disposition. Reading comprehension involves a high degree of mental representation of meaning. Language is at the centre of human life. It used for a number of functions: to achieve goals, to further careers, to gain simple pleasure, for personal enrichment and broadening of educational experience and so on. Some people can do some or all of these with more than one language. Being able to use another language provides a number of opportunities: getting a job, a chance to get educated, ability to take part in the life of the society, an expansion of one's political opinions or religious beliefs and so on (Ogunleye, 2008). The acquisition and use of English language as a second language and language of education is vital to everyday lives of millions of Nigerians because of the dominant role of the English language particularly in the learning process is vivid.

Teachers of English language are expected to ensure that they assist pupils to perform more effectively in English language learning. It is observed that many pupils engaged in learning English as a second language within and outside the classroom but one crucial factor in learning English as a second language is what the pupils bring with them into the process. Ogunleye, (2008)affirmed that most L2 learner's have fully formed their personalities and minds when they start learning the second language and this has profound effects on their ways of learning and how successful they are likely to be.

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A learner who has acquired all the necessary skills in their mother tongue approaches the learning of English language with different experiences, different aptitude, motivation, learning styles and strategies (Ogunleye, 2008). Thorne (2001) also identifies some factors that contribute to performance or under performance in English as a Second Language (ESL). These include anxiety, slow maturation, fearfulness, aptitude, and so on. Learning a second language is a process that requires total commitment from the leaner. The leaner's success in the language depends on his physical, intellectual and emotional responses (Lawal, 2010). Ogunleye (2008) opines that, language is inextricably bound up in virtually every aspect of human behavior and to attain success in second language learning, every component part of second language learning and acquisition must be considered. There exist a diverse collection of cognitive and affective influences on second language learning and acquisition. Most teachers will agree that the attitude of students is one of the most important factors influencing their success or failure in learning the language. Attitude refers to those affective characteristics, which orient the student to try to acquire elements of the second language, and includes the desire the pupil has for achieving a goal and the amount of efforts he expends in that direction. Ogunleye (2008) affirmed that:

> *"Attitude and interest are closely related concepts. The broader term is attitude which subsumes interest. Like all aspects of the development of cognition and affection in human beings, attitude develops early in childhood. Attitudes are required through experiences that have a pronounced affective (feeling) component. They are the result of parental and peer influences, contact with people who are 'different' in many ways as well as in interacting affective factors in the human experiences. Such attitudes form a part of one's perception of self, of others, and of the culture in which one is living (Ogunleye, 2008)".*

The effect of attitude on learning has for a very long time generated a lot of controversy among educationist and psychologists. Tunde-Awe (2012) viewed attitude to be either positive or negative evaluation, feeling or action of an individual towards people, objects, things or issues in his or her environment. She perceived attitude to be a generic concept for belief or knowledge and evaluation, likes or dislikes, affinities for and aversion to objects, persons, groups, situations or any environment including classroom. Attitude is a complex phenomenon, that could be observable or internal and that is why Tunde-Awe typologically categorized attitude into three: positive attitude, negative attitude and neutral attitude. In another development, Tunde-Awe (2012) opined that peoples' attitude can be ambivalent that as to do with possessing both positive

and negative attitude simultaneously. She further identified home, school, the society, teaching methodology and text readability as factors aiding the development of positive attitudes to reading.

Lawal (2005) identified three main types of attitudes relative to readers' reading behaviours namely: intensive, literacy and extensive reading attitudes and he believed that learners could have either positive or negative attitude to reading to determine their reading habits. In his final submission, he perceived reading habits as activities that give answers to why, when, what and where people read questions. Tuckman (1999) referred to attitude as the belief people hold about themselves, their capacities and factors that account for their actions. The general belief among social psychologists is that attitude has a great influence on learning. Mathangwane (2006) posited that the frequency of experience related to children listening to stories and other literacy activities engaged in are strong predictors of reading comprehension performance of children. Somsong (1999) suggested ways parents can promote their wards' reading readiness and positive attitude to reading thus:

a. Set up a personal library that it relevant to learners' age and area of interest
b. Train children to invest in buying books and visiting of public libraries
c. Parent should fix time for reading within the family, and;
d. Help their children to use and apply what they read in real life situation.

Teachers' skills in teaching of reading are germane to the learners' attitude towards reading comprehension performance. Kolawole & Ajayi, (2004) conducted several large scale studies of the relationship between attitudes and language success of senior secondary school students. Their study however, did not include the Lower-basic pupils' relationship between attitudes and language success.

According to Tunde-Awe (2012) most L2 learners have fully formed their personalities and minds when they start learning the second language and these have profound effects on their ways of learning and how successful they are. According to the Nigerian Educational Policy (2014), primary education terminates at primary six. At this level, pupils sit for the Lower-basic Certificate Examination which is conducted by National Examination (NECO) and the state ministries of education across the federation established by law to determine the examinations required in the public interest and to award certificates comparable to those of equivalent examining bodies internationally. The NECO examination body and the ministry of education empowered to conduct the common entrance examinations are expected to:

- Assist in the development of sound education
- Ensure that educational standards are maintained; and give the people of Nigeria a vision of the great potentials which lie beyond examinations.

performance. For instance, one of the best known studies of motivation in second language learning was carried out bylsuigo-Abanihe (2009). So also was the one by Hut (2002) and other extensive studies were systematic efforts to examine the effects of attitudes on language learning.

Objectives of the study are to:

(i) Determine the attitude of Lower-basic school pupils to English reading comprehension in Ilorin

(ii) Find out if there is any relationship between the pupils' attitude towards reading and their comprehension in English language.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of pupils to English language reading comprehension in Ilorin?
2. What is the relationship between pupils' attitude to reading and their comprehension in English language?

Hypotheses

The researcher tested this null hypothesis;

Ho_1 There is no significant relationship between the pupils' attitude to reading and their comprehension in English language.

METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study includes research design of the survey/correlation type with emphasis on statistic tools of Mean and Standard Deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical technique at 0.05 level significance. The population consists of seven hundred and eighty pupils randomly selected from four Lower-basic schools within the Ilorin metropolis using intact class. Data were collected through a researcher developed questionnaire on "lower-basic school pupils' attitude to reading and their comprehension in English language" was used to gather information on pupils' attitude to reading and their comprehension in English Language. The data was collected, analyzed and the results are presented in tables for easy interpretation.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Answering of Research Question

Research question one was answered with the use of frequency counts and percentage.

Research Question 1: What is the attitude of pupils to English Language reading comprehension in Ilorin? In order to answer research question one effectively, pupils' responses to section B, items 1 to 8 of the questionnaire were collected and analyzed.

Table 1: Attitude of pupils towards English language reading comprehension in Ilorin

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive	120	15
Ambivalent	193	25
Negative	467	60
Total	780	100.00

Table 1 shows that out of 780 respondents, 120 (15%) have positive attitude to reading, 190 (25%) have ambivalent attitude to reading, while 467 (60%) have negative attitude to reading. This implies that the Lower-basic school pupils in Ilorin are negatively disposed to reading which in turned affect their comprehension performance in English Language.

In order to answer research question one effectively, the academic performance of sampled pupils' in reading comprehension in English language were obtained through the use of profoma designed by the researcher.

Table 2: Level of lower-basic pupils' academic performance in English language reading comprehension in Ilorin metropolis.

Performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Distinctions	17	2.1%
Credits	187	23.9%
Passes	320	41.2%
Failure	256	32.8%
Total	780	100%

Table 2 shows that out of the 780 pupils sampled (respondents), 17 (2.1%) had distinction (70 and above), 187 (23.9%), had credits (50 - 69), 320 (41.2%) had passes (40 - 49) and the rest 256 (32.8%) failed.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses one was tested with the use of the multiple regression statistics at 0.05 level significance. The results are presented below:

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between the pupils' attitude to reading and their comprehension performance in English Language.

In order to test this hypothesis, pupils' responses to Section B, items 1-8 of the questionnaire administered and the reading comprehension performance of this set of pupils were used. The grades of the results were transformed to raw scores for easy computation on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 10.0).

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing relationship between the pupils' attitude and their reading comprehension in English Language

Variable	No	Mean	Stan. Dev	Df	Cal. value	Re-	Critical r-value
Students attitudes	780	1.8587	0.9719	788	0.969		0.52
Performance in Reading Comprehension	780	6.6825	2.1938				

P< 0.05

Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value (0.969) is greater than the critical r-value (0.052) with 788 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis one is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted that there is a high positive relationship between pupils' attitude and their reading comprehension performance in English Language. However, the independent variable (attitude) of pupils towards the learning of English Language explain 95.33% of the variable as pupils' reading comprehension performance in English Language, which is highly significant as indicated by the F-value (79.491). An examination of the contribution of the variable indicates that attitude contributes (0.722) to the reading comprehension performance of pupils in English Language.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the foregoing results of data analysis, the following are the summary of findings:

1. The attitude of the Lower-basic school pupils in Ilorin towards reading was negative with particular reference to their comprehension performance.
2. There was a high positive relationship between the students' attitude towards reading and their performance in reading comprehension.
3. There was a high positive relationship between pupils' attitude and their reading comprehension performance in English Language.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Reading attitude is a concept that is theoretically complex in terms of construct. Reading attitudes seem to manifest from perceptions acquired from

people's reading history and experience. Literature revealed that reading attitude could be either positive or negative. Okoye and Tenibiaje (2009) opined that teacher needs to work on students' reading attitude because it affects their performance generally. Feniran's (2007) and Sabitu and Babatunde's (2012) findings, independently revealed that students in private schools have better reading attitude than their counterpart in public schools.

Mathewson (2004) in his model of reading attitudes asserted that a positive reading attitude does not guarantee actual reading behaviour. In his finding, he suggested intention to read/continue reading as an additional element and further argued that measuring if attitudes are positive or negative is of little consequence. Mathewson (2004) opined that one's attitude may be positive but lacking the intention to read, resulting in non-reading behaviour being exhibited. Many researchers have delved into the relationship between students' attitudes to the learning of some subject and their performance in such subject. Several researches have revealed that the attitudes of student are related to their performance. Contrary to the above, finding of this study revealed that pupils' attitude, to a greater extent, affects their reading comprehension performance. Abiri's, [1986] finding on the relationship between students' attitudes to biblical language and their performance in Christian religious studies at the University of Ilorin revealed that, student adopted an unfavorable attitude toward biblical language which in turned affects their academic performance. This finding is interterm with Abiri's finding on students' attitude towards biblical language and their performance in [C.R.S].

Mathewson's (2004) finding also revealed that socio-economic status, home environment, availability of spare time, amount of television watched, qualities of kindergarten instruction, availability of library facilities and reading resources are factors affecting the reading attitude of students either positively or negatively. This study did not dwell on all these factors, it only found out the relationship between lower basic school pupils' attitudes to reading and their comprehensive performance in English language and, the finding revealed that pupils' attitude to reading was poor which in turned affects their comprehension in English language. Ali, (2004) researches on attitude and experiences of Saudi English learners foreground acquisition of reading skill. His findings revealed that reading is an important study tool and that positive attitude and experiences enhance students' performance in English language. The present finding agreed with Ali's (2004) finding. Unoh (1991), Lawal (1990, 1991; 2001) and Tunde-Awe (2012) have different views on attitude as a complex phenomenon that influence readers' general learning outcome. They found that learners' positive attitude towards reading determine their success in reading comprehension. The result of this finding is in support of their view, hence, pupils' attitude toward reading influence their reading comprehension performance.

The outcome of the finding of this study revealed that the independent variable of attitude significantly correlated with the pupils' reading comprehension performance in English language. This implies that attitude is one of the strong determinants of pupils' learning outcome in reading and their comprehension performance. The outcome of this study is in support of the view of Ogunleye, (2008) that revealed that attitude and motivation significantly correlates with the academic performance of secondary school students in English language. The finding also correlated with that of Tunde-Awe (2012) which revealed that the reading attitude of secondary school students correlates with their reading comprehension performance. This finding also correlated with Lawal (1989 & 2005), Nishino (2007) and several other researchers of reading who emphasised that reading aids the acquisition of vocabulary which learners could develop to tackle their reading comprehension problem.

CONCLUSION

1. The findings of this study revealed that the independent variable of attitude significantly correlates with the reading comprehension performance of lower-basic pupils in English language.
2. The finding shows the importance, significance, and relationship of the variable of attitude as determinant of pupils' learning outcomes.
3. This finding is in support of Thorndike's law of readiness that focused on the importance of the learner in learning.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. This study could not account for the inter-relationship among some affective variables and performance. Therefore, some other affective variables which are not included in this study but which could affect pupils' reading comprehension performance should be investigated. Such variables include self-concept, study habits, interest, aptitude, and so on.
2. The researcher limited the scope to Ilorin metropolis. It is suggested that this study is carried out taking the sample from upper-basic school, senior secondary school and tertiary education levels across the country.
3. The curriculum for English language of the Lower-basic School needs to be investigated to ensure that the affective domain of learning is adequately catered for. These areas are what future researchers should address.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher gives recommendation with the view of encouraging learners to cultivate positive attitude towards reading so as to improve their reading comprehension performance.

i. The pupils should be aware that their attitude towards reading has a lot to do with their comprehension performance. Pupils should, therefore, develop positive attitude towards reading so as to improve their comprehension performance in English Language and other subjects.

ii. The teachers of English language need to be sensitive to and be aware of the impact of attitude in the teaching-learning process and be guided in their choice of techniques/ strategies to be employed in the teaching of reading comprehension. Finally, teachers should encourage their pupils to develop positive attitudes to their teaching.

iii. To the curriculum planners/developers, the government(s), educational authorities and the parents, as agents of education, they are expected to ensure that the curriculum is well designed to accommodate the affective domain of the learners at the Lower-basic level and provide an enabling environment and other resources that will encourage pupils to cultivate positive attitude towards the learning of reading comprehension.

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