

Assessment of Teachers – Pupils’ Perceptions on Use of Digital Images in Teaching Reading Fluency Skills in Sokoto Metropolis

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Abstract: *This study is an assessment of teachers and pupils’ perceptions use of digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto state (Nigeria). The study employed Mixed-design research method was employed where questionnaires and tests were administered only to both teachers and pupils of experimental group. Two research questions were asked and answered using descriptive statistics in form of frequency and mean. Questionnaires were used for data collection – one each for the teacher and the pupils. The study found that both the teachers and the pupils were of the view that digital pictures are recommendable tools for reading fluency instruction in the study area. Based on these findings, the study concluded that digital pictures are effective tools in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in the study area. The study, therefore, recommends that, primary school teachers should be encouraged to use digital pictures in their reading instructions.*

Keywords: *perception, digital images and reading fluency*

I. INTRODUCTION

Expulsion of digital technology could be associated with the invention of the digital computer in Manchester in 1948. Initially, having access to computer set hitherto was very much restricted. However, most of the electronic equipment that we use in our everyday lives, today such as the digital camera, mobile phone, TV set and washing machine, incorporate a sort of digital technology. Consequently, the use of digital technology in teaching and learning is increasing as the integration of images and visual presentations with text in textbooks, instructional manuals, classroom presentations, and computer interfaces broadens. With these views in mind, the study tries to explore the views and observations of both the teachers and the pupils on the impact of digital pictures as instructional tools for teaching reading fluency in the study area.

Digital pictures refer to images electronically snapped in real time situation or scanned from documents such as printed newspapers, magazines, books and related artworks. Facer & Martin (2005) outlined five key roles that digital images have the potential to fulfil in modern foreign languages teaching and learning. These include: Increasing motivation to learn languages; enabling language learning across institutions and outside formal educational contexts; offering opportunities for meaningful practice of language in authentic contexts; offering opportunities for maximal progress in language acquisition through responsive diagnostic and feedback systems; providing innovative language engineering devices which provide just-in-time support in language use; enabling information and resource sharing between modern foreign language teachers.

Reading fluency is a bridge between decoding and reading comprehension skills. In other words, fluency in reading is the ability to read a text accurately and quickly with appropriate pacing and intonation as if

one is speaking. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Readers who are not yet fluent, read slowly, word by word, their reading is unnatural, but choppy and plodding; and they often have difficulty in reading comprehension (Kruidenier, 2002; Pang, et al 2003, Sherman 2004, Hornstein, 2004, Hudson et al, 2005, Vaugh & Candace 2009, Rasinski, 2011). McIntyre (2011) opines that, it is widely accepted that fluency has been one of the most neglected parts of reading instruction, although it has gained increased attention since the publication of the National Reading Panel (NRP) and other related reports.

Reading fluency is most often associated with oral reading. According to Rasinski & Lorraine (2005), an artistic use of oral reading is performance. Actors, singers, poets, orators, and others who perform regularly engage in repeated and guided reading activities for the purpose of preparing to perform a text for an audience. The purpose of oral performances by actors, singers, and poets are done to produce an aesthetic response. Certain text genres are meant to be performed (Rasinski, 2010). These include scripts, dialogues, monologues, poems, song lyrics, and speeches. When pupils are asked to perform such texts, they have a natural reason to engage in rehearsal - Guided oral assisted and repeated readings – which eventually provides an organic motivation for practice.

N’Namdi, (2005:13) is of the opinion that the role of the teacher in any reading programme is to be responsive to the vast and varied needs of each child, and to promote an educational climate that facilitates motivation and the desire to read. This connection is only achieved by using images that reflect the children’s physical and cultural identity. If children see themselves as contributors, they can take responsibility for the reading process. When developing activities for a reading programme, the tasks should activate and extend the pupils’ background knowledge and should involve real-life issues and interests directly related to the child, and to what that child believes to be important.

II. Statement of the Problem

The problem under consideration in this study was the excessive use of blackboard in teaching reading skills to primary school pupils in the study area, particularly in the public primary schools. Secondly, The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2011:12) in Nigeria, categorically reported that “Research findings in this country have shown that Nigerian learners are poor readers...imagine Nigerian educated person reading at a speed of less than 80 words per minute as against about 360 words per minute attained by secondary school pupils in Britain”.

III. Theoretical framework

The study adopted Vygotsky Scaffolding - Zone of Proximal Development (1978), Samuel’s repeated reading technique (1979), and Gardener’s Multiple Intelligence (1983) from which the researcher fashioned out a framework by way of eclecticism named Repeated Reading Fluency Strategy Framework (2RFSF). Figure 1 represents the framework of the study.

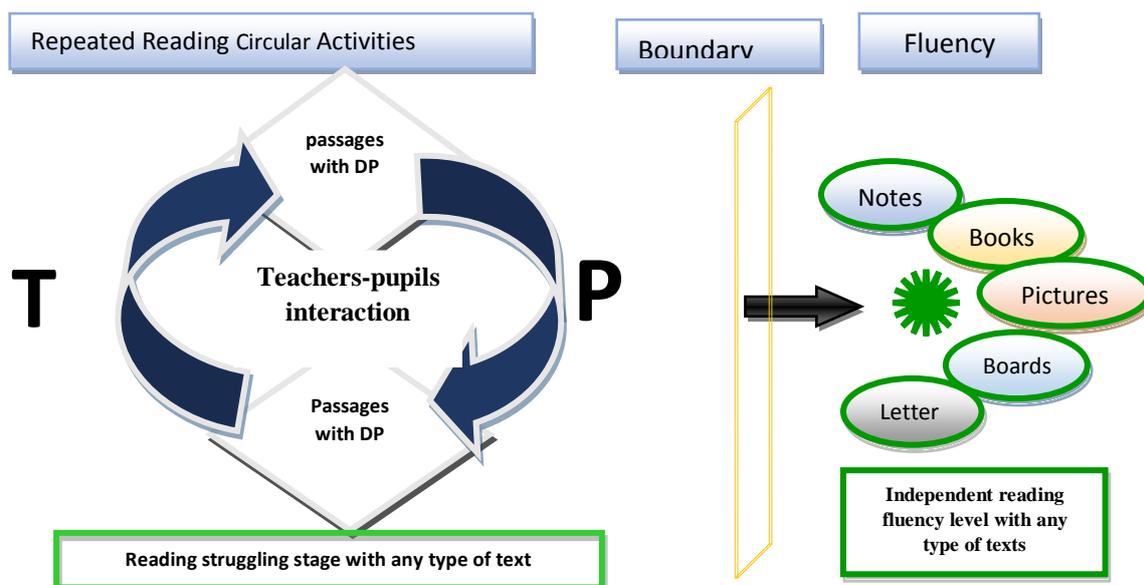


Figure 1: Diagram of the Repeated Reading Fluency Strategy Framework (2RFSF)

The 2RFSF Framework has two major Stages. **The repeated reading circular activities** where at the beginning pupils struggle with any type of text. The stage has two subunits: **Teacher/ Pupils' interaction with the Digital Pictures** where teacher actively interacts with the pupils about the possible meanings derivable from the contents of the digital pictures. Activities at this stage recognize that the same Picture could be interpreted in different ways. It suggests a shift away from author's intended meaning, to richer reading activities in which learners unpack their interpretation skills in consistency with their multicultural backgrounds (Considine, Julie & Gary, 2009). The second subunit is, **Scaffolding stage** where the teacher (T) as a model reads to the pupils out loud and the pupils (P) as well read aloud back to the teacher in what Osborn (2003) called Guided Repeated Reading Technique first developed by Samuels (1979).

The second part of the Model is **the fluency stage** where the pupils attained independent reading fluency level with any type of texts. This stage is systematically withdrawn targeting the next level of reading skills – reading comprehension, when the pupils were noticed to have mastered the skill. Between the first and the second stages is a boundary. Separating those pupils who find it difficult to read any type of text even the intervention, with those pupils who attained to independent reading fluency level as a result of the activities in the Guided reading activities with digital pictures.

IV. Aims and Objective of the Study

The aim of the study was to assess the perception of both the teachers and their pupils on the impact of digital pictures on teaching reading fluency. However, the specific objectives include:

1. To determine the perception of teachers of the effect of digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis.
2. To determine pupils' perception of the effect of digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis.

V. Research Questions

The following research questions were asked:

1. What is the perception of teachers with regards to teaching with digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis?
2. What is the perception of pupils with regards to teaching with digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills in Sokoto metropolis?

VI. Research Methodology

The study employed Mixed design research method where questionnaires and tests were administered only to both teachers and pupils of experimental group, while the control group were only exposed to academic performance test before and after the treatment. The population of the study are the experimental group only that consist of four English language teachers and 88 primary three pupils from four randomly selected primary schools using Microsoft Random numbers. Two structured questionnaires were used for data collection - one questionnaire each for both the teachers and the pupils. The pupils were asked ten questions, and the questionnaire employed two scale responses of 'yes' or 'no' purposely to make the inquiry very simple and precise for the participants considering their educational level (primary three pupils). While the teacher's questionnaires consist of only six question to measure their view on the use of digital pictures in teaching reading fluency to primary three pupils in the study area. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency and mean were employed to answer the research questions. In this respect an item scoring a mean ≥ 90.00 was considered as significant, while any item scoring a mean < 90.00 was considered insignificant. The treatment was composed of five Guided passages illustrated with digital pictures. Each session of the treatment lasted for 30 minutes four times a week for five weeks.

VII. Result

Research Question One:

What is the perception of teachers with regards to teaching reading fluency skills with digital pictures to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis?

Six questions raised to answer this research question as presented in Table 1. Descriptive statistics in form of frequency and percentage was employed to answer the research question.

Table 1: Teachers' Response to Questionnaire on their perception of the effect of digital pictures on teaching reading fluency skills in Sokoto metropolis

Questionnaire Items	Frequency			Mean
	Yes	No	Total	
1. Do you teach reading skills in your school?	2	2	4	.5000
2. Do you teach reading fluency before now?	-	4	4	.0000
3. Do you think pictures could improve pupils' fluency rate?	4	-	4	1.0000
4. Do you think the fluency rate of your pupils improves?	4	-	4	1.0000
5. Do you think pictures motivate pupils to read in this exercise?	4	-	4	1.0000
6. Would you recommend pictures in teaching fluency?	4	-	4	1.0000

According to Table one all the participating teachers (100%) responded that they were not teaching reading fluency to their pupils before to this study. The table also reveals that the teachers unanimously responded that use of pictures have improved the fluency rates of the pupils, and they all indicated that would recommend digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills to primary school pupils in the study area.

Research Question Two:

What is the perception of pupils with regards to teaching reading fluency skills with digital pictures in Sokoto metropolis?

Ten questions were raised to answer this research question. Table two presents the summary of the pupils' responses.

Table 2. Pupils' Response to Questionnaire on their perception of the effect of digital pictures on teaching reading fluency skills in Sokoto metropolis

Questionnaire Items	Freq			Mean
	Yes	No	Total	
1. Do you receive reading fluency instruction in your school?	14	58	72	.19
2. Does your teacher read aloud to you?	71	1	72	.99
3. Does your teacher allow you to read aloud in class?	71	1	72	.99
4. Do you know your reading rate before now?	2	70	72	.03
5. Does your teacher measure your reading rate?	18	54	72	.25
6. Do you know your fluency rate before now?	29	43	72	.40
7. Did you feel like your reading fluency improves?	69	3	72	.96
8. Did you enjoy the study using pictures?	72	-	72	1.00
9. Do you like reading a passage without pictures?	22	50	72	.31
10. Do you like pictures to be used for reading fluency instruction?	71	1	72	.99

Table 2 reveals that, before to this study the pupils were not receiving reading fluency skills in their respective schools. The pupils also indicated that they enjoyed the study and would like pictures to be used for reading fluency instruction.

VIII. Summary of the findings

The study assessed teachers and pupils' perception on use of digital pictures on teaching oral reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in Sokoto metropolis of Sokoto state. Based on the data presented and analysed in Tables 1 and 2, the following are the summary of the findings of the study. With reference to research question one, the summary in Table one reveals that:

1. None of the teachers taught reading fluency skill before this study.
2. The teachers noticed that the oral reading fluency of their pupils has improved, and
3. All the teachers indicated that they would recommend digital pictures in teaching ORF skills.

With reference to research question two, the summary in Table two reveals that:

1. Pupils reading fluency improved after the treatment.
2. They like reading passages with pictures.
3. They like pictures to be used for reading fluency instruction.

IX. Discussions

Findings from research question one revealed that reading fluency was not subject instruction in the study area before this study; teachers noticed that oral reading fluency of the experimental group improved, and all the teachers recommend digital pictures in teaching reading fluency skills primary three pupils in the study area. The findings affirm Feldman (2011) assertion that the use of digital technology in teaching children, improves their self-esteem, increases their motivation, decreases their discipline problems, encourages cooperative learning and problem solving, adding the with proper use of technology for reading, could help them to develop a foundation for lifelong learning.

Similarly, Piller & Marry (2005) investigates teacher lesson delivery and sequence of content and learning expectations used by primary school teachers at one school in New Delhi, India. This research brings broader understanding of strategies for teaching English reading and writing to pupils whose first language is not English. Emerging from the data are nine effective teaching strategies that teachers of English learners can add to their repertoire. One of the strategies is Pictorial illustration. Moody (2010) also found significant higher

levels of persistence favouring the e-storybook condition over the traditional storybook condition when measuring reading engagement in 3- to 6-year-old children from economically disadvantaged homes.

However, the bottom line between this study –e-books in teaching reading fluency skills and related language skills is one single factor. Digital pictures when produced can be used everywhere even in the rural areas where there is no power supply. However, e-books require powerful electronic gadget including computers and constant power supply to be used. In this view, and based on these findings, teachers from rural areas or from low socio-economic environment can design their lesson based on the theoretical model of this study to improve reading fluency rate of their pupils.

Findings from the second research question revealed that Pupils reading fluency improved after the treatment; the pupils like reading passages with pictures; and, like pictures to be used for reading fluency instruction. These findings concur with Stoke (2001) who examined the effects of specific visual skills in facilitating learning. Her findings indicated that the use of colour graphics, as in this study, promotes achievement. Also, Scoter (2005), observes that, the power of using digital images with young children stimulate curiosity and provide rich opportunities for language and literacy.

X. Conclusions

The objective of this study was to assess the perception of teachers and pupils on the use of digital images in teaching reading fluency skills to primary three pupils in the study area. The results of the study, which form the findings of this study, have conclusively inform that, both the teachers and the pupils were of the view that digital images used for reading fluency instruction improved the rate of the pupils.

XI. Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations based on the outcome of the study

1. Use of digital pictures as visual-aids should be encouraged in teaching, not only to motivate the pupils, but more importantly to cater for pupils' individual differences so that no one is left out in the learning process.
2. Digital Photography and information communication technology should be embedded in teachers' training curriculum in a manner that reflects technology across the curriculum to prepare the teachers for inevitable paradigm shift from the older order to emerging technologies of communication in education.
3. That the researcher's Repeated Reading for Fluency Strategy (2RFSF) theoretical framework should be tried to address reading in adverse situation.

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