

EFFECTS OF STORY RE-TELLING STRATEGY ON READING DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF, BASSA, PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of story re-telling strategy on reading development of children with hearing impairment in School for the Deaf Bassa, Plateau State. The purpose of this study is to specifically improve the reading development skill of children with hearing impairment through the use of story retelling strategies. Also to determine whether there will be any significant difference in the reading development performance of the experimental groups that was exposed to story re-telling strategies and those who were not. One research question and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study utilized quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design. Ten children with hearing impairment were selected from intact class five A and B. The children were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The instruments comprising Word Recognition Skill Test (WRST) and Informal Reading Inventory Test (IRIT) were validated and used for the intervention. The reliability co-efficient for WRST was 0.88 and 0.81 for IRIT respectively. After four weeks of intervention, the result indicated that there were significant differences between the reading development performance of the children in the experimental group that was exposed to story re-telling strategy compared to the control group who were not. The children in the experimental group performed significantly higher and better than the children in the control group. Based on these findings the researcher recommended that teachers should adopt SRS to teach and improve the reading skill of their children in schools and parents should also develop their children's interest in reading lively moonlight stories at home.

KEYWORDS: Story re-telling strategy, Reading development, Hearing impairment

INTRODUCTION

Parents can do many things at home to help their children succeed in school. They have a significant role to play in the development and improvement of the reading abilities of their children. Unfortunately, many parents are doing much less than expected. For instance, working class mothers on average spend less than half an hour daily talking, telling moonlight stories, explaining or reading with their children, while fathers spend less than 15 minutes. However, it is possible for parents to create a curriculum at home that can teach children what matters. This can be done through story telling and retelling. This is the reason why helping children to learn to

read is regarded as the responsibility of both parents and teachers.

Reading is significantly related to the process of learning and education in general. The ability to read efficiently is always associated with high level of understanding and success in most of the activities undertaken. The importance of reading in educational success is highly reflected in the performances of children with hearing impairment in school. Children with hearing impairment are those whose hearing is non-functional for the ordinary purpose of life. The severity of the impairment may range from mild to profound depending on the degree of hearing loss. These children are categorized into hard of hearing, and the deaf. The deaf are those whose hearing is non-functional with or without the use of amplification system. The hard-of-hearing are those that even though their hearing is non-functional, they can hear with the help of amplification (Aiyaleso, 2008).

There is a great deficiency in the reading ability of children with hearing impairment in School for the Deaf, Bassa, Plateau State. These children are poor readers who usually perform below average in reading ability. This is because of their inability to recall, retell and comprehend the meaning of any story read or heard which results in low academic performance. They also have difficulty in reading because of poor language development and linguistic cultural experiences of readers. They can call words from the book with correct pronunciation but without understanding or making meaning from it. As a result of their academic failure many are unable to complete their primary education. Parents and teachers are worried as these children live hopeless lives, roaming the streets with delinquent acts.

The knowledge of developmental reading programmes and normal growth is necessary for teachers and parents of children with hearing impairment. Benette (1988), and Boison (2001) observed that the sequence of steps that the children normally go through in acquiring reading skills are seen in reading readiness, initial stage in learning how to read, development of reading skills, the stage of wide reading, and the refinement of reading skills. Thus, the need to acquire reading skills early enough in the development of a child is very important because it is a critical skill required by children in order to succeed in life.

Although it is possible for people at different levels of the educational ladder to get by without possessing advanced reading skills, effective learning in school and advanced educational institutions demands the possession and application of at least the minimum skills required for specific reading tasks. Strong support is given to this viewpoint by Strang, Mclaughlin and Allen (2002) when they stated that reading development skills is the highway to knowledge and it is essential for success in all academic subjects. Since most academic activities in schools involve reading, it is expected that children with hearing impairment will surely not do well in their

examinations. This is because they will not be able to understand the instructions and the meaning of questions asked in their examination papers. In order to come out with success in their examination, these children need to read and understand the instructions on their question papers as well as the questions themselves. Apart from educational activities in the schools, the children need to cope with other challenges of everyday living: they need to understand information contained in manuals, pamphlets, road signs, letters from friends and relatives, instructions for safety measures and caution signs.

Reading is therefore a critical skill for children with hearing impairment if they are to succeed both in and outside the school. One of the initial problems of reading in Nigeria resulted from the fact that majority of literate Nigerians were brought up in illiterate homes (environment) where reading for pleasures or as a hobby is not known or appreciated. Even the literate ones have either failed to cultivate the habit of reading or have not fully realised the significance of developing the habit.

Andzayi (2004) demonstrated that reading is a skill without which pupils cannot succeed in school. Andzayi further opines that reading is the most important of the four fundamental language skills, which is necessary at all levels of education in spite of its complexity. Therefore, word recognition and comprehension skills are required by children with hearing impairment for meaningful reading tasks in order to succeed in their education. Word recognition skill is the ability of a child to identify words in a story book with comprehension. Comprehension skill on the other hand is the ability of a child to understand a story previously heard or read and being able to recall or retell the story sequentially in his own words and answer the accompanying questions correctly. Nedosa and Brendenkwap in Aiyaleso (2016) supported the view of Andzayi when they agreed that reading is the most important tool for living. Reading enables a person to get enlightened as he reads about ideas on various fields of study. This ability thus enhances a learner's success at school. Pupils with prelingual profound hearing impairment become more creative when they can react to what they read orally or in writing. To function well as an articulate member of the society, an individual needs to read government policy papers, newspapers, directions or instructions from time to time, either at the work place, at home and even on the road or other public places. Even a farmer needs to acquire reading skills to enable him operate well so far as utilizing agricultural facilities are concerned. Reading is, therefore, important for everyday living of the old and the young, men and women alike.

Story-telling is an age long tradition of educating children in human history. Even before the written history of formal and organized method of education, the act of storytelling was used to pass knowledge and learning from parents to children and from one generation to another. Research findings by Johnson (2002) have shown

that telling young children stories can motivate them to read. Johnson opined that story telling also introduces children to cultural values and literacy traditions before they can read, write and talk about stories by themselves. In order to educate a child in virtues, there is need to polish him at a tender age, and if someone is to advance towards wisdom, he must be opened up for it in the first years of his life when his industriousness, innovativeness and initiatives are still burning, his mind malleable, and his memory still strong. All these characteristics are impactable in a child at the early stage through story-telling.

Story-retelling strategy is having children write or tell everything they remember about a story. It has been in use for the past decades to gather data in an amazing range of language base. Piaget (1929) used retelling strategy to examine children's conceptions of time. Bennette (1988) used retelling strategy to study memory. Carter (1991) collected retellings of a silent movie to study differences between oral and written language. Emenyonu (1989) and his associates used retelling of a specially prepared silent movie to examine, among other things, the ways people from different cultures tell stories. Retelling has been most widely used in the study of comprehension and in particular reading comprehension, where retellings are often referred to as "recall protocols". Because of communication barrier of children with hearing impairment, the use of sign language in the application of the story retelling strategy will be used throughout the intervention activities. The reasons for this is because this is the only way in which children with hearing impairment can communicate and understand societal language and be more educated. In spite of poor language development, limited vocabulary and poor comprehension abilities of children with hearing impairment, the lack of an effective teaching method may also play a key role in contributing to inadequate reading development skills of pupils with hearing impairment. Therefore, it has become necessary to find out the effects of story retelling strategies on reading development of pupils with hearing impairment in the study area.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Majority of the children in Plateau School for the Deaf are unable to read. They usually perform below average in academic activities as a result of low reading achievement. This contributes to their inability to recall or retell stories read or heard in a sequential order. They are unable to make accurate meaningful sentences because of limited vocabulary development and poor comprehension ability as well as ineffective reading strategies. The children can call words from books with correct pronunciation, but without understanding or making meaning from them.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the level of reading development of children with hearing impairment in word recognition skill before story retelling strategies (SRS).

2. To find out the level of reading development performance of children with hearing impairment in comprehension skills before story retelling strategies (SRS).

RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What is the level of reading development of children with hearing impairment?

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between the pre-test word recognition skill gain scores of children with hearing impairment in the experimental and control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the posttest gain scores of children with hearing impairment in comprehension skill in the experimental and control groups.

METHODOLOGY DESIGN

The study employed experimental design. Specifically non-equivalent pre-test – post-test control group type. It adopted quasi-experimental design using control groups pretest and posttest design. The experimental group took a pretest, received treatment and took a posttest, while the control group took a pretest, received no treatment and took a posttest. The design helped to determine the effects of story retelling strategy on reading development performance of children with hearing impairment.

Sample

The sample for this study was ten (10) children with hearing impairment drawn from primary five (5) in the School for the Deaf, Bassa. Simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of participants from the intact classes 5a and 5b. The sample comprises five participants in each class and randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

Instrument

Two instruments were used for collection of data. They are the Word Recognition Skill Test (WRST) and Informal Reading Inventory Test (IRIT). The WRST comprises 100 common words, while the IRIT consists of graded oral reading passages representing a range of reading levels. Content validations of the instruments were obtained using the judgment of experts in test and measurement, and two specialists in reading comprehension. The reliability co-efficient obtained for the instruments were 0.88 and 0.85 for the word recognition test and informal reading inventory test respectively.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The word recognition skill test consisted of a hundred common words used to test the level of word recognition skill ability of the participants. The number of words each participant recognised (by signing) and understood was recorded. The participants were also told stories by reading selected passages to them over a number of times. Each participant was also asked to read a story in a passage. This is to ascertain the instructional reading level of the participant and the level at which the participant can best benefit from the reading instruction. After reading the story in the passage, each participant was asked questions about what he had read, and the participant's ability to answer comprehension questions was also recorded. The word recognition and comprehension performance at each reading level were then compared to the criteria being used with the test to determine their reading level. After four weeks of intervention, the data obtained were analysed using gain score and t-test statistics.

RESULTS

Research Question

What is the level of reading development of children with hearing impairment?

Table 1: Reading Development Performance of Children with Hearing impairment

S/N	Groups	Word Recognition Skill			Comprehension Skills					
		Pretest	Posttest	Gain scores	No. of words read correctly from 120 words passage			No. of sentences read correctly from 12 sentences		
					Pretest	Posttest	Gain Scores	Pretest	Posttest	Gain Scores
1	Experimental	5	53	48	6	65	59	2	11	9
2	Experimental	8	65	57	10	79	69	3	9	6
3	Experimental	6	70	64	7	86	79	4	10	6
4	Experimental		80	7	12	96	84	3	12	9
5	Experimental	7	75	70	8	110	102	4	10	6
6	Control	6	7	1	8	10	2	2	3	1
7	Control	8	9	1	10	8	-2	2	4	2
8	Control	9	8	1	11	8	-3	4	2	-2
9	Control	6	6	0	8	9	1	4	4	0
10	Control	5	5	0	7	10	3	3	3	0

Table 1 revealed the results of reading development performance of children with hearing impairment in word recognition and comprehension skills at the pretest and posttest intervention exercises for all the children in the experimental and control groups. The results showed that in the pretest No. 1 of the experimental and No. 10 of the control groups had the least scores of five (5) in the word recognition skills test. While in reading comprehension skill the experimental participants in No. 1 had the least score. This signified that both experimental and control groups were at low reading development level in word recognition and comprehension skills before they were exposed to story retelling strategy intervention.

The experimental group result shows a higher significant gain score than the control group. The result also indicates that at the posttest exercise the experimental participants performed better with higher gain scores than the control group. This signified that the experimental participants were at the moderate and high reading development level after exposure to Story Retelling Strategies (SRS) than the control group who were not.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the pretest gain scores of children with hearing impairment in word recognition skill in the experimental and control groups.

Table 2: Summary table of independent t-Test for posttest word recognition skill of children with hearing impairment

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Experimental	5	8.60	2.40	8	-153	0.882	Accepted
Control	5	8.80	1.64				

Sig. level 0.05

The results in table 2 revealed the pretest gain scores of children with hearing impairment in word recognition skill of the experimental and control groups. The SPSS output of the analysis showed that the 5 participants in the experimental group had a mean score of 8.60 and a standard deviation of 2.40. The 5 participants in the control group also had a mean score of 8.80 and a standard deviation of 1.64. This signifies that participants in the experimental and control groups were at the same low reading development level and there was no significant difference in the pretest mean scores between the experimental and control groups.

In addition, the calculated value of t was 153, while the P-value was 0.882. Since the P-value is greater than 0.05, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference between the pretest mean scores of participants the

reading development skill performance for those in the experimental and control groups. We therefore accept the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between posttest gain scores of children with hearing impairment in comprehension skill for those in the experimental and control groups.

Table 3: Summary table of independent t-Test for posttest reading comprehension skills of children with hearing impairment

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Experimental	5	87.20	17.02	8	10.25	0.000	Rejected
Control	5	9.00	1.00				

Sig. level 0.05

The result in table 3 showed the posttest mean scores of children with hearing impairment in reading comprehension skills of the experimental and control groups. The SPSS output of the analysis showed that those exposed to story retelling strategy had a mean score of 87.20 and a standard deviation of 17.02 whereas the control group mean score was 9.00 and a standard deviation of 1.00. This showed that there is a difference in performance between the experimental and control groups. In addition the calculated value of t is 10.25 while the P-value is 0.000. Since the P-value is less than 0.05 significant level, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there was a significant difference between the posttest mean scores of the participants in reading comprehension skills performance of the experimental group exposed to Story Retelling Strategy (SRS) than those not exposed.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results revealed that children with hearing impairment in School for the Deaf scored significantly higher in Word Recognition Skill Test (WRST) and reading comprehension skill performance after exposure to story retelling strategy intervention programme. The results also revealed that the performance of children who were exposed to story retelling strategy in reading activities such as identifying hundred common words and reading sentence formation were significantly higher than those who were not. Therefore, we conclude that SRS has a significant positive effect on the participants reading comprehension skill ability. This may be attributed to the fact that the Story Retelling Strategy (SRS) is literature and text comprehension based. The results obtained are in conformity with the findings of

Boison (2001) that telling stories to children can motivate them to read. The percentage performance of the experimental group was significantly higher than the control groups. The finding of the study is also in line with the position of Nedosa (2000) who asserted that the ability of children with hearing impairment to recognize words, comprehend information, recall, retell and freely express what was read or heard can be developed when they are exposed to varieties of reading strategies, reading activities and large number of story books and simple texts.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this study, it was concluded that the use of story retelling strategy programme was effective in improving reading development skill of pupils with hearing impairment.

The result also indicated that SRS did not only improve the reading abilities of the experimental group but enabled them to acquire more vocabularies that facilitate their reading skills. This research study has provided a basis for drawing inferences for future investigators. Therefore, it can be concluded that the reading development of children with hearing impairment is significantly influenced by SRS. Teachers and parents are therefore encouraged to use reading retelling strategy to teach and improve their children's reading skills.