EFFECT OF ROLE-PLAY METHOD ON READING ACHIEVEMENT AND INTEREST OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN AWKA EDUCATION AUTHORITY OF ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of role-play method on reading achievement and interest of primary school pupils in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 alpha level. Quasi-experimental research design involving pretest posttest non-randomized control group was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 2,250 basic five pupilsin the 18-state owned schools in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw a sample size of 77 pupils for the study. Reading Achievement Test (RAT) was used for data collection. The reliability of RAT was determined using Kuder Richard Formula 20 which yielded coefficient value of 0.81. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study indicated among others that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had higher achievement and interest scores than those taught using conventional teaching method. It was also found that there is no significant difference between the mean achievement and interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that English Language teachers should use role-play method of teaching to improve the interest and achievement of pupils in reading comprehension.

Keywords:

Pupils, Role-play, Conventional, Teaching Method, Reading Comprehension, Achievement, Interest

Introduction

English Language is oneof the compulsory subjects taught at basic and secondary levels of education. Anidi, Obidike and Anyachebelu (2023) maintained that the essence of teaching English language is geared towards the mastering of listening, speaking, reading, and writing which are the basic skills of any language.Furthermore, Anidi et al pointed out that the teaching of English language enables pupils tounderstand how speech sounds are connected to print materials, decode unfamiliar words, read fluently and use vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is the act of studying to enable one understand the main ideas or specific information from a given text or passage. According to Dewi and Pramerta(2021), reading comprehension is related to studying and interpreting a particular text or materials. They added that the purpose of reading comprehension is to improve the ability of learners to understand written materials text in English. It entails thorough examination of information in text to understand the extract meaning.Menakaya, Uloh-Bethels, Nwafor, Ossai.Onuorah and Okon (2022) noted that reading comprehension means the ability to read, process, and understand the meaning of a text, message or any written or printed material or document. In the same vein,Okika, Anyamene and Anyachebelu (2021) described reading comprehension as the ability to understand word meaning in a text. Reading comprehension is concerned with studying a text to have a clear understanding and provide correct answers to questions on the passage. Reading comprehension is dominantly taught in primary schools using conventional teaching method.

Conventional teaching method is a teacher-centred instructional approach that involves the use of chalk, chalkboard and text in presenting lessons without or little explanation. In the same vein, Conventional method of teaching is the verbal delivery of lesson to learners using black board and chalk. Conventional teaching method may not meet the diverse learning needs of pupils in the classroom. Menakaya et al (2022) noted that apart from being teacher-centred, the conventional teaching method appears not to activate students' prior reading knowledge of reading. These shortcomings of conventional teaching method give rise to the use of pupils-centred teaching method which could improve their active participation in instructional activities in the classroom. One of the pupils-centred method is role-play method.

Role-play method is an instructional activity in which the teacher prepares learning content to reflect a real-file scenario, explain and assign characters to be displayed by pupils to enhance their understanding of the subject matter. According toUdenwa and Akudolu (2022), role-play instructional method is a learning activity where students are expected to act specific roles through saying or doing what one would be required to do or say in a particular situation. Continuing, Udenwa and Akudolu stressed thatrole play method requires students' active participation in presenting instructional activities in the classroom by taking up roles enable them master the skills of the language.The role of the teacher in role-play method is to guide the activities of pupils. According to Huda cited in Malinda, Utama and Mulyani (2024), the syntax of the role-playing method is that the teacher prepares a scenario that will be displayed, ask the learners to study it, assign character to them, provides an explanation of the objectives to be achieved, call out learners to act out the scenario that has been prepared, other learners observe the scenario being demonstrated and the teacher gives a general conclusion and evaluation. Role-play method which creates room for practical learning could arouse the interest of pupils towards classroom activities.

Interest is the curiosity to know or learn about a given thing. Pupils aremore likely to participate in the activity in which they have interest in. According to Nwachukwu, Onah, Obijiofor,

Nwankwo and Nwakile (2020), interest is curiosity or attention developed by pupils as a result of learning experience. Interest is the eagerness to pay attention and concentrate towards learning a set task or engaging in activity for mastery of knowledge of the subject matter. Onyeka, Nwamaradi and Chimuanya (2023) defined interest as a subject feeling of concentration or persisting tendency to pay attention and enjoy some activities and contents.Anisiobi, Wadi and Ushang (2023) posited that interest attracts attention of pupils during lesson presentation and also gives them the feeling of wanting to learn more. The authors added that pupils' interest in learning can make them to be excited to engage in classroom activities and promote the understanding of the subjects which is likely to improve their academic achievement.

Academic achievement is the grades of students which represent learning in educational institutions.Okpala and Okigbo (2021a) defined academic achievement as the total of a learner's performance in a given standard test over a specified period of time.Academic achievement which is measured by the examination results is one of ways to assess the intellectual capacity of pupils. According to Okafor and Samuel (2024), academic achievement is the examination outcome of students exposed to instruction in the classroom. They added thatit is the students' results which are assessed by their scores in tests and examination. Also, Aribisala and Igweh (2024) averred that the criterionfor judging academic achievement of students is the examination results which show the quality of education by learning institutions.

The academic achievement of pupils is below expectations in primary schools inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State. Anidi, Obidike and Anyachebelu (2023) noted thatmany pupils struggle with reading comprehension which thereby jeopardizing their overall performance in English Language in primary schools in Anambra State.The low interest and poor achievement of pupils in English Language could be traced to many factors which include teaching method. To buttress this, Anidi et al (2023) maintained that pupils reading achievements appear to have been hampered by the predominant adoption of deficient instructional approach (conventional teaching methods) by many teachers which has made it difficult for pupils to be actively involved in the learning process.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of role-play method on reading achievement and interest of primary school pupils inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to find out the:

1. Mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.
2. Mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of AnambraState?
2. What are the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method in Awka Education Authority of AnambraState?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Method

Quasi-experimental design involving non-randomized control group was adopted for the study. The design is deemed appropriate for the study because it allowed the researchers to randomly sample the subjects without disrupting the academic programme of the schools drawn for the study. The study was carried out in Awka Education Authority of Ananmbra State. The population of the study consisted of 2,250 basic five pupilsin the 18-state owned schools in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to draw a sample size of 77 pupils for the study. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select schools that meet the criteria of study based on gender and qualified teachers. In the second stage, simple random sampling technique was used to draw two intact classes for the study. The classes comprised 31 pupils (14 males and 17 females) for the experimental group, while 36 pupils (16 males and 20 females) for the controlled group.

Reading Achievement Test (RAT) was used as the instrument for data collection. KurderRichardson formula 20 (KR-20) was used to determine the reliability of the instrument which yielded coefficient value of 0.81. Prior to the commencement of the study, the researchers briefed the regular English Language teachers to teach the experimental group on the use of role play method. The initial differences of pupils in the two groups were controlled usingANCOVA.

The pupils in both the experimental and control groups were pre-tested before the commencing ofthe treatment. The treatment lasted for six weeks after which arearranged copy of the pre-test instrument was administered to pupils as post-test. The pretest and post-test of pupils were marked, scored, recorded and analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses.

Result

Research Question 1: What are the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Achievement Scores of Pupils taught Reading Comprehension using Role-play Method and those taught using Conventional Teaching Method

Method	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
RPM	31	15.02	37.22	7.12	4.33	22.20
CTM	36	14.17	21.09	6.01	4.98	6.92
DF		**0.85**	**16.13**			**15.28**

Table 1 shows that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had pre-test achievement mean score of 15.02 with standard deviation of 7.12; while their posttest mean achievement score was 37.22 with 4.33 value of standard deviation and mean gain of 22.20. On the other hand,pupils taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching methodhad pre-test achievement mean score of 14.17 with standard deviation of 6.01, while their posttest mean achievement score was 21.09 with 4.98 value of standard deviation and 6.92 mean gain.

The mean achievement gain difference between pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and those taught using the conventional teaching method was 15.28 in favour of the experimental group. The spread of score in the posttest is more homogenous among pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play methodbecause the SD scores is smaller (4.33) compared to the SD score (4.98) of those taught using conventional teaching method. The result indicated that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had higher achievement score than those taught using conventional teaching method.

Research Question 1: What are the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Interest Scores of Pupils taught Reading Comprehension using Role-play Method and those taught using Conventional Teaching Method

Method	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
RPM	31	10.21	33.45	5.08	3.01	23.24
CTM	36	12.07	24.01	6.13	4.15	11.94
DF		**1.86**	**9.44**			**11.30**

As shown in table 2, the pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had pre-testinterest mean score of 10.21 with standard deviation of 5.08; while their posttest meaninterest score was 33.45 with 3.01 value of standard deviation and mean gain of 23.24. On the other hand,pupils taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method had pre-test interest mean score of 12.07 with standard deviation of 6.13, while their posttest mean interest score was 24.01 with 4.15 value of standard deviation and 11.94 mean gain.

The mean interest gain difference between pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and those taught using the conventional teaching method was 11.30 in favour of the experimental group. The spread of score in the posttest is more homogenous among pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method because the SD scores is smaller (3.01) compared to the SD score (4.15) of those taught using conventional teaching method. The result indicated that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had higher interest score than those taught using conventional teaching method.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Table 3: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils Taught Reading Comprehension using Role-Play Method and that of those taught using Conventional Teaching Method

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	5321.327	2	10642.654	195.025	.000	
Intercept	2008.175	1	2008.175	138.090	.000	
Pretest	312.643	1	312.643	21.796	.000	
Method	4123.198	1	4123.198	324.087	.000	S
Error	1134.344	74	15.329			
Total	54211.000	77				
Corrected Total	53454.726	76				

a. R Square = .723 (Adjusted R Square = .705)

Table 3 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 92 df denominator, the calculated F is 195.025 with P-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Interest Scores of Pupils Taught Reading Comprehension using Role-Play Method and that of those taught using Conventional Teaching Method

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	4810.231	2	9620.462	218.110	.000	
Intercept	3043.129	1	3043.129	174.221	.000	
Pretest	401.854	1	401.854	34.854	.000	
Method	3107.052	1	3107.052	234.914	.000	S
Error	1091.276	74	14.747			
Total	43876.208	77				
Corrected Total	47611.976	76				

b. R Square = .798 (Adjusted R Square = .773)

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 92 df denominator, the calculated F is 218.110 with P-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Discussion

The result of the study indicated that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had higher achievement score than those taught using conventional teaching method. This is line with the finding of Okpala and Okigbo (2021b) which showed that studentstaught using role-play method had a higher mean gain interest score than those taught using conventional method.This agreement in finding could be attributed to similarity in the location of the study. Role-play method provides opportunity for pupils to have first-hand experience of information presented in text which enhance their understanding and increase their reading achievement. The realistic learning environment created by role-play method enable pupils to actively engaged in classroom activities which help them to understand written text and improve their reading achievement. Further result revealed thatthere is significant difference between the mean achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State.Okpala and Okigbo (2021a) there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught chemistry using role play method and those taught using conventional method.The pupils taught with role-play become active actors in classroom activities which help them learn more and perform better in reading comprehension than those taught using conventional teaching method.

The finding of the study showed that pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method had higher interest score than those taught using conventional teaching method. This agreed with the finding of Udenwa and Akudolu (2022) which indicated that students in experimental group taught with role-play method had the higher posttest mean score than those in the control group taught using conventional learning methods.This also affirmed the finding of Ikwuka, Akudolu, Ejikeme, Olugbemi and Okoye (2021) which revealed that studentsaught using role-playing method performed better than those taught using conventional teaching method. Pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method experience a real-life scenario of information in a text which arouses their interest in reading comprehension inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.It was also found thatthere is significant difference between the mean interest scores of pupils taught reading comprehension using role-play method and that of those taught using conventional teaching method inAwka Education Authority of Anambra State.Role-play method provides opportunity for pupils to put their knowledge into practice which can stimulate their interest in reading comprehension. This is in consonance with the finding of Okpala and Okigbo (2021b) which showed that there was significant difference in the mean interest rating scores of students taught using role play method and those taught with conventional method. This also disagreed with the finding of Ikwuka et al (2021) which indicated there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught using role-playing method and those taught using conventional teaching method in favour of group taught using role-playing. This disagreed with the finding of Suobere and Eniekenemi (2017) which showed that there was no significant difference in academic achievement of students taught simple blue print reading using role-play teaching strategy and those taught simple blue print reading using conventional lecture method. The disagreement with the finding could be attributed to difference in geographical location and participants of the study. Role-play arouses the interest of pupils in reading comprehension through making them pay attention in classroom activities.

Conclusion

Based on the finding, it is concluded that role-play method is effective for teaching reading comprehension in primary schools in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State. Role-play method has aroused the interest and improved reading achievement of primary school pupilsthan the

conventional teaching method. Role-play method creates an exciting learning experience which stimulates the interest of pupils and enables them to remember and apply what they were taught during examinations to enhance their reading achievement in primary schools in Awka Education Authority of Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. English Language teachers should use role-play method of teaching to improve the interest and achievement of pupils in reading comprehension.
2. Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board should organize periodic workshops and seminars for English Language teachers to familiarize and upgrade their skills in the use role-play method in teaching reading comprehension.

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