

ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS UTILIZATION AND PROMOTION OF READING LITERACY IN UGANDAN AND NIGERIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

¹Ado Sanda Yandamo & ²Zanna Babagaji

¹Federal College of Education (Technical), Bichi, Kano State, Nigeria
08028786830, 08052100061/ sandayandamo1@yahoo.com

²Yobe State College of Agriculture, Gujba, Nigeria
08065105092

Abstract

This study compared the utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools in response to the Newspapers in Education campaign (NIE). Four primary schools were selected two from Kampala, Uganda and two from Kano, Nigeria. The sample size used for this research was 268 respondents. This comprised 240 primary five pupils and 28 English teachers of the selected primary schools. The research design used was the descriptive and the data collected was analyzed using inferential analysis. A self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings show that there was significant difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools in terms of English newspapers utilization in the promotion of reading literacy. Based on this, recommendations were made that both teachers, parents, government, newspapers publishing companies and other relevant organizations need to work together to ensure that English newspapers are available and utilizing effectively in teaching/learning reading literacy in the two countries' primary schools.

Key words: Newspapers, utilization, literacy promotion, primary schools

Introduction

Literacy has to do with someone's ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, working place as well as in the community at large to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential (Muwanga, et al, 2007). It has also been defined by UNESCO (2015) as the ability to identify, comprehend, decode, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to update their experience and potentials and to participate actively in their community affairs and wider society. Thus, literacy is traditionally perceived as the ability to read and write. This is to say, that the key to all literacy is reading development, a progression of skills that begins with the ability to comprehend spoken words and interpret written words, and culminate in the deep comprehension of the text.

Therefore, reading literacy refers to the behaviour which expresses the desire of reading. It is a pattern with which an individual organizes his or her reading. Reading is important for everybody in order to cope with new knowledge in a changing world – that of the technological age. The ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning (Busayo, 2011). Yet, reading culture in sub-Saharan Africa is not encouraging. Based on this Sangkaeo (1999) clearly viewed Africa as not reading society but chatting society, where the background of learning is through culture; the cultural habit of people... prefer to listening and chatting more than reading.

Reading development involves a set of complex language underpinnings including phonetic and phonology of the target language, spelling patterns, semantic, syntax and morphology, all of which provide a necessary basis for reading fluency and comprehension. Once these skills are acquired, the reader can attain full language literacy, which includes the abilities to apply to printed material critical analysis; to

write with accuracy and coherence; and to use information and insights from text as the basis for informed decisions and creative thought. Consequently, the inability to do so is called illiteracy or analphabetism.

So, the importance of cultivating good reading habit to the pupils cannot be over emphasized as it has direct connection with the performance of an individual learner in other school subjects. It will help learners to have completed their primary school as lifelong readers, writers, and learners. Over many years, researchers have been calling the attention of public to the need for effective reading programmes. N'namdi (2005) is of the opinion that the purpose of an effective reading programme is to build reading abilities of the children to decode the meaning of what is read, this can be achieved by giving them adequate training on how to analyze a sequence of ideas, information or thought and arrive at logical conclusions. The programme should appeal to every child, meeting his or her needs, abilities, and interests by constructing a positive attitude towards reading. Teachers and curriculum planners should be able to develop clear learning objectives, and the scope and sequence of a reading programme that should lead to achieving them. This can be done by the use of appropriate learning activities, motivational materials, and a variety of teaching approaches in which the children are actively involved. The ability to read is very much essential, not only for academic success, but for a general life skill that is necessary in a literate society. As a result, outlying methods that will improve children's reading through engagement in reading different materials/texts are essential.

This study focuses on how English Newspapers use in promote reading literacy in primary schools in Uganda and Nigeria. The researchers investigate the extent to which English teachers are utilizing newspapers (pullouts) in promoting the reading culture of primary school pupils. It is well known that a newspaper is a serial publication containing news, other current affairs and usually adverts. It is usually printed on

relatively inexpensive, low-grade paper such as newsprint. Newspapers publish news articles on national and international issues as well as local news. A wide variety of materials are published in newspapers. They include weather forecasts, criticism and reviewing arts such as literature, film, television, theater, fine arts and of local services such as restaurants, obituaries, entertainment like crosswords, editorial cartoons among others and this will help a lot in developing primary school pupils reading ability.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is important for everybody in order to cope with new knowledge in a changing world – that of the technological age. The ability to read is at the heart of self-education and lifelong learning (Busayo, 2011). However, reading literacy has been a serious issue in recent times. It has its negative impacts on students' academic performance because a student that exhibits poor reading literacy will not be able to read and pass in an examinations. This study therefore investigated English newspapers utilization and promotion of reading literacy in Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to compare English newspapers utilization in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools. Specifically, its objectives are to:

- i. determine no difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion
- ii. examine difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school teachers in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion.

Hypotheses

The study tested the null hypotheses that:

H01: There is no difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion

H02: There is no difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school teachers in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion.

Literature Review

The roles of English newspapers in the promotion of reading literacy in primary schools Important as the work of teachers is, they cannot by themselves break down all the barriers which prevent children from becoming readers. Of equal importance with the teachers are the materials that are available. In too many cases, African children are taught to read solely from texts that are written on the board or the posters stuck on the classroom walls. While, they may learn how to decode from such materials, they will never learn to read extensively, let alone critically and without access to longer texts.

Access to different types of books and other reading materials such as magazines and newspapers enhance that process. However, for teachers, newspapers offer a special attraction and that is why some called it a living textbook and it lives up to that name. It has been stated by Ajuna, (2016) that, when children were discovered as ardent readers, New Vision (a Ugandan newspaper) had catered for them (younger children) through the production of a number of children-friendly sections and pullouts to meet their needs. This has drastically minimized the challenge of many schools inability to purchase enough teaching aids like textbooks. New Vision started the publication of weekly pullouts of questions and answers, which were set by some of the best teachers in Uganda.

However, in order to boost the reading culture and love for books among the younger children, New Vision started the publication of a newspaper called “children’s vision” the four page pullout, which was first published on 15th April, 1989 in Saturday Vision, which was the first of its kind in Uganda. The reason behind this idea is to address the problem of reading and writing skills of the primary school pupils. A part from New Vision, Toto magazine has become of late a household name for children. This magazine was well-received and it has contributed immensely in providing reading content for the children, it has been viewed as a magazine for the children and by the children, hence promoting children journalism.

Newspaper can be used to enhance skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, Mathematics, Social Studies and Sciences. Critical thinking is the natural outgrowth of using a newspaper to learn. Newspaper is considered as living text unlike textbooks, which are several years outdated by the time they get into students’ hands, newspaper comes alive with current information. It enriches the curriculum with an unlimited amount of information to use as background for learning activities. As a result, Sanderson (1999) has stressed that using newspapers within the classroom promotes extensive reading, by giving learners the confidence, motivation, and ability to continue their reading outside classroom during their leisure time. He however asserted that newspapers keep students informed about what is happening in the world, thereby extending their knowledge and deepening their understanding of what is going on in their immediate environment.

In addition, Mathew (2000) has stated that the importance of magazines and newspapers is that they provide a rounded education hence they cover all the areas of curriculum content and much more they contain news and features on politics, sports, consumer issues, education and business among others. They actively encourage learner participation. He added that newspapers and magazines serve as a bridge

between the real world outside and the classroom being that they are up-to-date and link closely with the lives of people in the community. If the younger children are motivated to read newspapers and magazines, it usually leads to a life-long habit of reading all sorts of other printed materials.

Similarly, Newspaper Association of American Foundation (2018) emphasized the importance of newspaper in developing the reading ability of younger children hence news develops every day. The beauty of the newspaper in the classroom is that, it is fresh each day. It comes to you with the latest news and information and unlike other media it comes beautifully written with lots of details. Consequently, there is truly no better record of the world's happening than a newspaper, it offers a special attraction.

Nevertheless, newspapers often come out with activities that will help pupils improve their skills in reading and writing. These skills are among the ones they will practice to find the main idea on how to increase vocabulary, form sentences, ask good questions and write great summary. They will employ critical thinking skills as they are required to interact with authentic material found in the newspapers.

Okebukola, et al (2013) in their research on the assessment of reading motivation skills of primary school teachers, discovered that Nigerian primary school teachers mostly adopt the basal reader approach, where they use reading aloud to children as the major activity that guides instruction. However, reading aloud using the basal reader approach as practiced by the teachers follows the pattern of teacher reading from the prescribed textbook. This means that pupils are made to learn reading by rote memorization as the only possible option in the absence of enough and relevant texts. The resultant effect here is the learners' inability to recognize or read unfamiliar words. Although a few brilliant ones among the pupils pick up reading by this laborious method, while the majority of them will end up as non-readers, since teachers focus

attention on the negligible few readers in the reading classes whilst the non-readers, who form the majority part of the class, are left in limbo or forgotten. In addition, Omuse, et al (2016) established that the instructional resources for teaching and learning of English reading skills are not adequately provided and utilize in primary schools.

Muwanga et al, (2007) emphasized that the use of non-textbook reading materials (NTBRMs) is a better alternative in nurturing the reading culture of the younger children. Many of the available materials use in primary schools still have a strong foreign cultural base which does not reflect the realities of the pupils' lives and this leads to pupils' inability to identify fully with the texts they are reading. And this is why Headlam (2005) opined that beginning readers need to be shown how to correlate what they know about the world with what is presented in the text. Yet, Parry (2005) emphasized that, children must feel that they own the texts that they read, and they cannot experience such ownership unless those texts reflect the realities of their own lives. In this regards, it is obvious that newspaper in education programme has a vital role to play.

Namata (2010) asserted that Newspapers in Education (NIE) is a strategy in which a teacher uses all kinds of newspapers content as the raw material to help teach lessons in all the school subjects. In addition, Newspapers in Education (NIE) is the use of newspaper as educational resources for any subject. It is clear that, children who are participating in NIE programme are enthusiastic about reading any text and are actually relating well to it. Therefore, the myth that newspapers are considered an adult medium does not seem to hold because children seem to relate positively to the newspapers.

The Pioneer News, (2020) has stated that Newspapers in Education (NIE) is a collective effort between schools and the newspapers publishing companies to promote the use of

newspapers as an educational resource. The publication (NIE) provides schools with the newspaper at no cost to teachers or schools hence it is a partnership that benefits both schools and publishers now and in time to come. Through the use of daily news, editorials, features and even advertising, learners at all grade levels can learn math and cost comparison skills, geography and meteorology, history, and current events and how they shape our world, all while improving reading and comprehension skills. Magasampige and Magasanpige (2016) also stated that newspapers have been the most important tool in shaping the growth and development of any society in the modern world. The newspaper industry of any country for that matter develops experience and awareness amongst the people by propagating itself as a medium that covered virtually a wide area of human endeavour such as politics, sports, social issues, medicine, entertainment, advertising and marketing, and more recently in education as Newspaper in Education (NIE).

In addition, kidsstoppress.com (2014) cited an instance of a “Magicpot Magazine” for pupils which is a very popular and interesting magazine for pupils that combine fun with a scientific approach. Magicpot has stories, puzzles, colouring pages, and activities to encourage English reading and writing. It contains different stories which younger children love and would want to read them over and over again. Similar instances of these magazines/newspapers also are “Toto” published by New Vision, “Rainbow” by Daily Monitor, “Young Punchers” by Sunday punch and “Mixakids Newspapers” for young minds among others.

Consequently, one essential factor in getting pupils to read independently is access to enough and relevant reading materials. As such providing interesting reading materials for children is a powerful incentive for reading. Teachers of English language learners often struggle with selecting reading materials that are appropriate for language audience. Their concern revolve around the following questions: what is the most

linguistically accessible material for English language learners? Is the material that is linguistically accessible to readers also age appropriate/developmentally appropriate? Is the material that is understandable to readers also of interest to them and does it motivate them? Does the text connect to the pupils' cultural experience or is there a gap between the text and the learners' background?

Methodology

This section covers the entire procedures followed by the researchers in the process of conducting the research. It comprises research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, and research instruments.

Research design

The descriptive design was used in this study. The design was used to describe the existing situation in English newspapers utilization and promotion of reading literacy in Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools by collecting data over a large population.

Population of the study

The population of the study was 604 primary five pupils and 28 English teachers of the selected primary schools. This made the total of research population 632. This total was obtained from the four selected primary schools; two from Kampala, Uganda and the other two from Kano, Nigeria: Dorayi Special Primary School is a public school in Kano, Nigeria and Apex International primary school is a private school in Kano, Nigeria. However, Railway Children Primary School is a public school in Kampala, Uganda and Kansanga Hill Primary School is a private school in Kampala, Uganda.

The researchers selected two public schools to represent the other public schools because they have the same homogenous characteristics. Likewise the two private

schools were selected to represent the remaining private schools because they have the same homogenous characteristics.

Sample and sampling technique of the study

The population sample was 269. In this sample, 241 were primary five pupils of the selected primary schools, while the remaining 28 were the English teachers of the selected primary schools respectively.

The researchers used simple random, purposive and proportionate sampling techniques. The simple random technique was used by the researchers where pieces of papers were labeled 'yes' and 'no' and spread on the table where each pupil asked to pick one. Those who picked the ones labeled yes were the ones who participated in the study. The purposive technique was used because only English teachers of the selected primary schools were considered as the research respondents and for the pupils, only primary five pupils of the selected primary schools were qualified to participate in the study. However, the proportionate technique was used because not all primary five pupils of the selected primary schools participated in the study, instead some part of them were selected depending on the total number of the pupils in each primary school.

The sample size of the study was obtained from the total number of primary 5 pupils of the selected primary schools using the Slovene's formula as indicated below:

n= sample size

N= population size

e= significance level= 0.05

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

$$0.052 = 0.0025$$

$$n = \frac{604}{1 + 604(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{604}{1+604 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{604}{1+1.5} = \frac{604}{2.5} = \frac{604}{2.5} = 241$$

Then, all 28 English teachers of the selected primary schools were made the respondents in the study because they are not many. Therefore, the variation in the sample selected from each school for pupils and teachers depend on the variation of the number of teachers and pupils respectively.

Table1:

Target Population and Sample Size

Schools	Target population	Sample size
Dorayi Special Primary School, Kano, Nigeria	350	140
Apex International Primary School, Kano, Nigeria	45	18
Railway Children Primary School, Kampala, Uganda	161	64
Kansanga Hill Primary School, Kampala, Uganda	48	19
Total	604	241

Table 2:

English Teachers of the Selected Primary Schools

Schools	Target population	Sample size
Dorayi Special Primary School, Kano, Nigeria	10	10
Apex International Primary School, Kano, Nigeria	5	5
Railway Children Primary School, Kampala, Uganda	7	7
Kansanga Hill Primary School, Kampala, Uganda	6	6
Total	28	28

Research instruments

The researchers administered two sets of questionnaires; one for the pupils and the other for the English teachers. The content of the questionnaires was divided into two parts (A and B). Section A was the respondents’ profile, and section B tested the research’s variables. The instrument for data analysis used by the researcher is four Likert scale. It is an instrument for data analysis where the mean in the analysis was divided and graded into four categories as follow:

3.21	-	4.00	highly sufficient
2.61	-	3.20	sufficient
1.81	-	2.60	low sufficient
1.00	-	1.80	insufficient

Findings

This section presents the tables of t-test results showing the difference between Nigeria and Ugandan primary school pupils and teachers newspapers utilization in literacy promotion.

H01: There is no difference in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils.

Table 3:

Difference Between Nigerian and Ugandan Newspapers Utilization in Literacy Promotion in Primary Schools Based on the Pupils’ Responses

	Nationality	N	Df	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig (2-tailed)	t-value
Utilization of Newspapers	Nigeria	151	232	3.0980	.41817	.000	-4.509
	Uganda	83	160.265	3.3494	.38867		-4.606

From Table 3 above, pupils' responses indicate that, the mean for Nigeria is 3.0980, std. is .41817, sig is .000 2-tailed and t is -4.509, while Ugandan mean is 3.3494, std. is .38867, sig is .000 2-tailed and t is -4.606. The table above revealed that the t-value for Uganda is -4.606 compared to that of Nigeria which stands at -4.509. This indicates that there was significant difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools in the utilization of newspapers in literacy promotion. Therefore, the Ho1 which states that there is no difference in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils is hereby rejected.

Ho2: There is no difference in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school teachers.

Table 4:
Difference Between Nigerian and Ugandan Newspapers Utilization in Literacy Promotion in Primary Schools Based on the Teachers' Responses

	Nationality	N	Df	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sig (2-tailed)	t-value
Utilization of Newspapers	Nigeria	14	24	2.7857	.18337	.000	-4.646
	Uganda	12	14.939	3.3667	.39848		-4.896

In Table 4, analysis of teachers' responses show that the mean for Nigeria is 2.7857, std. is .18337, sig is .000 at 2-tailed and t is -4.646. Whereas, the mean for Uganda is 3.3939, std is .39848, sig is .000 (2-tailed) and t is -4.896. Also, the t-value for Uganda is -4.869 compared to that of Nigeria which is -4.646. This finding shows that there was significant difference between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school teachers in utilization of newspapers in literacy promotion. Therefore, the Ho2 which states there is no difference in terms of utilization of English newspapers in literacy promotion between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school teachers is hereby rejected.

Discussions of Results

The purpose of the study was to establish the significant difference (if any) between Nigerian and Ugandan primary schools in literacy promotion in primary schools using English newspapers. So, in comparison, the research findings revealed that, there was a significant difference in the utilization of English newspapers meant for younger children in Nigerian and Ugandan primary schools at the t value of -4.646 for Nigeria against -4.896 for Uganda. This indicates that the difference exists between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils and teachers in the utilization of newspapers in the promotion of reading literacy in their respective primary schools.

The study's findings here agreed with Okebukola, et al (2013), whose study's finding established that the instructional materials needed for teaching reading literacy were not adequately provided in the Nigerian primary schools. As a result, teachers adopt the basal reader approach, where they use reading aloud to children from the recommended textbook as the major activity that guides instruction, hence it was the alternative available to them. This mostly results into the learners' inability to recognize new vocabulary items or unfamiliar words, where only a few of them used to acquire the necessary reading skills, while others who formed the majority part of the class end up with a very low literacy level. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in terms of English newspapers utilization between Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools in teaching reading literacy was rejected.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was conducted with a view of making a comparison between Ugandan and Nigerian primary school pupils and teachers in newspapers utilization in literacy promotion. In doing so, the study discovered that there was a significant difference in English newspapers utilization in reading literacy development in primary schools of the two countries. The finding has shown that Ugandan primary school

pupils and teachers are utilizing English newspapers more than the Nigerian primary school pupils and teachers do.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

1. Enough newspapers should be provided in Ugandan and Nigerian primary schools. It can be done by the education ministries in collaboration with Parent Teachers Association (P.T.A.) of the respective primary schools. This will encourage both teachers and pupils to use it effectively when teaching/learning reading literacy.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to put more effort in utilizing English newspapers meant for younger children in literacy promotion. This can be done by intensifying the NIE campaign by the education ministries and media houses of the two countries through organizing seminars/workshops.
3. The policy makers need to include newspapers in the recommended texts for teaching/learning reading literacy at primary school level in the two countries.

References

- Ajuna, J. (2016). How new vision's Toto Magazine is easing Child Learning, Saturday Vision, Saturday, December, 24, 2016
- Amin, M.E. (2005). Social science research: Conception, methodology and analysis. Makerere University.
- Busayo, I.O. (2011). The school library as a foundational step to children's effective reading habits. Retrieved from <http://unilib.unl.edu/LPP/LibraryPhilosophyandpractice2011>
- Headlam, (2005). Hattaway, M. (ed). A new companion to English renaissance literature and culture. <https://books.google.com.ng/books?id=irjdx7ldgC&pg=PA105&dq=headlam+2005&source=bl&ots=BPnrrsQ>
- Kidssloppress.com, (2014). Top 11 newspapers and magazines for kids in India
- Mathew, J. (2000). The role of print media in education division in South Africa. <http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/docs/2000/appendices/000912printMedia.htm>
- Muwanga, N.K., Aguti, J.N., Mugesha, J.F., Ndidde, A.N. & Siminyu, S.N. (2007). Literacy practices in primary schools in Uganda: lessons for future interventions; Fountain Publishers.
- Nagasampige, M. & Nagasampige, K.M. (2016). Effectiveness of newspaper in education (NIE) program on the student performance in educational quest. In International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences Vol.7(1)
- Namata, W. (2010). *Newspapers as a tool of literacy in Uganda: a case study of Daily Monitors' Newspapers in education (NIE) programme addressing literacy-related issues in Uganda's primary education*. Unpublished masters of philosophy dissertation. University of Oslo.
- Newspaper Association of American Foundation (2018). A teacher's guide to using newspapers to enhance language arts skills. www.readingrockets.org/article/teachers-guide-using-newspapers-enhance-language-arts-skills

- Okebukola, F., Owolabi, T. & Onafowokan, B.O.A. (2013). An assessment of the reading motivation skills of primary school teachers, implications for language and science education: reading and writing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/rw.v4i.33>
- Oliveira, J. (1996). Textbooks in developing countries. In Greaney Vincent (Ed) promoting reading in developing countries, Newark, International Reading Association.
- Omuse, M.O., Onchera, P.O & Kimutai, C.K., (2016). Availability and use of instructional resources for teaching and learning of English reading skills in secondary schools in Teso North Sub County, Kenya. In International Research Journals vol. 7(1), pp.15-31
- Parry, K. (2005). Reading materials for school children in literacy for all in Africa: Teaching reading in African schools, Vol.1, Foundation Publishers.
- Sanderson, P. (1999). Using newspapers in the classroom, Cambridge: University Press.
- Sangkaeo, S. (1999). Reading Habit Promotion in Asian Libraries 65th IFLA Council and General Conference, Bangkok, Aug. 20 – 28th
- The Pioneer News (2020). What is newspaper in education?
<https://www.pioneers.net/content/what-newspaper-education>
- UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2015). *List of Countries by Literacy Rate*.
<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/hist-of-countries-by-literacy-rate>.