



IMPACT OF READING TECHNIQUES ON STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT:

The study focused on the impact of reading techniques on students reading comprehension in Ebonyi local government area of Ebonyi state. The specific purpose of this study was to find out whether reading comprehension tools and techniques such as graphic organizers, scaffolding, and SQ3R and vocabulary development have impact on students' academic performance. Four objectives and four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study utilized the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted four thousand (4000) students and teachers from the five selected public schools in Ebonyi L.G.A. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected for the study through the simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire and a reading comprehension narrative passage. The instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.89 using Cronbach's Alpha. Statistical tools of mean and standard deviation were used for data analysis. Findings showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group as the students who were taught reading comprehension using graphic organizer, scaffolding, and SQ3R and vocabulary development performed better than those taught with the traditional method. Based on this, one of the recommendations is that teachers should utilize graphic organizer such as venn diagram, concept map, main idea web, circle map, T-chart in the reading classroom to improve students reading comprehension.

KEYWORDS:

READING, COMPREHENSION, PERFORMANCE, GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS, SCAFFOLDING, SQ3R

INTRODUCTION

According to Maduabuchi (2013) reading is an act of communication in which information is transmitted to a receiver. According to Hijaz (2018), reading is the fastest and simplest way that enables students to strengthen their knowledge base. It improves learners spelling abilities and enriches their vocabulary storage. Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to decode what they read; make connections between what they read and what they already know and think deeply about what they have read (www.readingrockets.org). According to Brandon (2021) comprehension refers to the ability to understand written words. Comprehension adds meaning to what is read. Hence, reading comprehension occurs when words on a page are not just mere words but thoughts and ideas.

According to Snow (2002) reading comprehension is the process to simultaneously constructing and extracting meaning through interaction and engagement with print. According to him the success of a comprehension event depends on a good match of reader skills, text difficulty and task definition. Reading skills of vocabulary and background knowledge are particularly important. Compe (2018) observes that reading comprehension is a complex undertaking that involves many levels of processing. According to him, the fundamental aspect of comprehension is the ability to deal with unfamiliar words in the text. This means that explanation of the meaning of

difficult and unfamiliar words is very important if the comprehension of a text is to take place. According to Tompkins (2011) reading comprehension is the ability to read a text, process it, and understand its meaning. According to him an individual's ability to comprehend a text is influenced by their traits and skills, one of which is the ability to make inference. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. According to Oakhill, Cain & Elbro (2014) reading comprehension is the ability to read a text, process it and understand its meaning. It relies on two interconnected abilities: word reading (being able to decode the symbols on the page) and language comprehension (being able to understand the meaning of the word and sentences). Reading comprehension is one of the most essential skills that should be developed and nurtured in a child at home and in school because it is fundamental to success in academic life and beyond, (Meniado, 2016).

Reading comprehension requires readers to interpret the mental image from the given text through the interaction between both conceptual knowledge (e.g vocabulary knowledge, metalinguistic knowledge) and procedural knowledge (e.g. reading strategy) and reading the text, (Snow, 2002). The reading comprehension involves word recognition. The only reason for students learning how to

comprehend and decode words is to help them construct meaning. In order to read English texts effectively and efficiently, one must be able to discern the separate elements of meaning within a selection and organize the element into a meaningful whole. Vocabulary is fundamental to reading comprehension because one will find it difficult to understand a text if most of the words is difficult to understand. Nawal (2019) observes that vocabulary is essential in reading comprehension as it is part of background knowledge. According to him, the more words the readers know, the easier the learners are able to have a good grasp of the text they were presented with. Vocabulary knowledge is also essential in reading comprehension because it has a similar function to background knowledge in reading comprehension.

There are some reading techniques and tools that can be used to improve reading rate and comprehension such as SQ3R which means survey, questions, read, recall and review; scaffolding, graphic organizer etc. SQ3R is a comprehension strategy that helps students think about the text they are reading while they're reading. SQ3R helps students understand a text the first time they read it by teaching students how to read and think like an effective reader.

Graphic organizers are visual aids that help students organize, understand and share information. They typically have a title that focuses the students on the reading comprehension skill they are working on. In addition, they include a series of bubbles, boxes, or other shapes that represent different pieces of information, (www.differentiatedteaching.com). Examples of graphic organizers include the following: venn diagram for comparing and contrasting information; story webs for outlining the plot of a story; concept maps for illustrating relationships between ideas, etc.

CONCEPT OF READING COMPREHENSION

Reading is an extraordinary achievement when one considers the number of levels and components that must be mastered. Reading is an important tool for academic success. Patel & Jain (2008) state that reading is not only a source of information and a pleasurable activity but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Reading is certainly an important activity for expanding knowledge of a language, through reading readers are able to get new information and that will improve their knowledge in daily life. It means that while the process takes place readers could reach many speculations in their mind about the written text that they read. Thus, comprehension means the series of action concurrently putting and building sense by using interaction and participation with the written text. Caldwell (2008) stated comprehension in reading there would be no purpose to reading words. In other words, comprehending the text refers to understanding the context of the whole text. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer's word and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer's message. Without

comprehension, reading is a frustrating, pointless exercise in word calling. The reader just read without understanding the texts. McNamara (2007) states that comprehension arises from a series of cognitive processes and activity including word decoding lexical access, syntactic processing, inference generation, reading strategies, and post-reading activities (e.g., summarization, question asking and answering, and argumentation). To comprehend the texts, the reader must be able to decode words or recognize words. These contribute to a reader's ability to connect the meaning of multiple sentences into a coherently connected mental representation of the overall meaning of the text. They try to understand what the texts tell about. According to Snow (2002), comprehension is a meaning is a part of reading elements because understanding the context of the text is important in reading activity. Comprehension is a meaning construction process, involving integral interaction between text and reader. Reading comprehension requires motivation, mental frameworks for holding ideas, concentration and good study techniques or strategies. One of the goals of reading is comprehension. Reading can help the students improve their comprehension. Successful comprehension process involves the readers' ability to discover the meaning needed to achieve the particular piece of information. Reading comprehension is a multi-component, highly complex process that involves many interactions between reader and text (Harris & Graham, 2007:8).

It is obvious that without comprehension, students will not understand what they read and perform well academically. When they read and comprehend a written text, academic performance will be enhanced. Brandon (2021) observes that comprehension strategies are used to increase children's understanding of the text to help them become active readers by engaging with the text. It must be noted that vocabulary is a very important aspect of reading comprehension. Nawal (2019:87) observes that having a larger number of vocabulary gives the learner a larger database from which to guess the meaning of unknown words or behavior of newly learned words, having deeper vocabulary knowledge will likely improve the result of guess work.

READING TECHNIQUES THAT ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION

Using instructional scaffolds to help develop reading comprehension in English classes provide the support, assistance, and the confidence students need to read and to comprehend effectively. Alber (2014) observes that scaffolding is breaking up the learning into chunks, then providing a tool or structure to use with each chunk. When scaffolding is used you could preview the text and discuss key vocabulary or chunk the text and read and discuss as you go. According to Graves & Graves (2003) there are three sets of scaffolding reading experience (SRE): pre-reading activities, during-reading activities, and post-reading activities. Pre-reading activities is the first set of optimal activities in SRE by preparing students to read,

making sure that they get off to a good start. The teacher models how to do it and uses think aloud method to illustrate his or her thought process as she employs the strategy. In guided practice teachers and students practice the skill together, with the instructor providing feedback and correction. Peer/collaborative learning opportunities can occur prior to or after reading where students work in peer groups to practice the target skills. Through reciprocal teaching the teacher may demonstrate the skill in one chunk of text and then turn the reins over to a student who demonstrated the skill on the next session. (www.rit.edu).

Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review (SQ3R) is a reading comprehension technique where students independently scan through a chapter turning headings into questions, then answers the questions when reading. When done, they recite the questions and answers, and afterwards they review the material they learned when reading the material, (Robinson 1978). Davey & Davey (2014) see SQ3R as a reading comprehension method designed to help students build a framework to understand a text. According to Wandt (2017) activating SQ3R is the key for readers to achieve reading comprehension and help students become independent readers.

According to Shanahan (2022), in addition to being effective for vocabulary instruction, graphic organizers can also enhance reading comprehension by helping students to categorize information and to show relationships among important concepts. Graphic organizers are visual representations of information from a text that depict the relationships between concepts, the text structure, and/or key concepts of the text (Jiang & Grabe, 2007). Graphic organizers display information, structure, and key conceptual relationships using visual and spatial arrangements or maps. Graphic organizers provide a framework for students to connect existing knowledge to new information. Some of the most commonly known graphic organizers include semantic maps, semantic feature analysis, cognitive maps, story maps, framed outlines, and Venn diagrams. Asuzu (2009) observes that graphic organizer can be used throughout the reading of a passage or story. Graphic organizers are also good tools to use to keep students engaged in the reading and assess their comprehension as they navigate through the text. Graphic organizers provide visual representations of the concept in expository text. Representing ideas and relationships graphically can help students understand and remember them, (www.readnaturally.com). They help improve reading comprehension in the classroom and are effective because they provide a visual representation of the text, (www.differentiatedteaching.com).

SQ3R is a comprehension strategy that helps students' think about the text they are reading while reading. According to Anjuni & Cahdi (2019) SQ3R is a reading strategy that provides students with a great deal of repetition of important parts of the text, breaks the task of reading into smaller segments and has a built-in comprehension monitoring system. This strategy includes

the following five steps (Robinson, 1946).

- Survey: Students review the text to gain initial meaning from the headings, bolded text, and charts.
- Question: Students begin to generate questions about their reading from previewing it.
- Read: As students read, they need to look for answers to the questions they formulated during their preview of the text. These questions, based on the structure of the text, help focus students' reading.
- Recite: As students move through the text they should recite or rehearse the answers to their questions and make notes about their answer for later studying.
- Review: After reading, students should review the text to answer lingering questions and recite the questions they previously answered.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Many scholars have conducted studies on the impact of students reading comprehension on their academic achievement.

Amir & Amir (2019) conducted a study on the effect of reading strategies and speed reading on students' reading comprehension skills in higher education. Findings showed reading strategies had a significant effect on students' reading comprehension.

Compe (2018) carried out a descriptive research study on the impact of reading comprehension on academic performance of grade 9 students of San Miguel National Comprehensive High School students for the 2017-2018 academic years. Findings revealed that majority of the students were in their frustration level in reading comprehension skills and developing level in their academic performance in English. This implies that the reading comprehension of students influences their performance in English language.

A descriptive study conducted by Tunde-Awe, Ogunyemi & Olajide (2017) on English textbook readability and junior secondary school students performance in reading comprehension in Ondo state, Nigeria. Data were analyzed using simple mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that the prescribed English textbooks matched the level of the students, yet majority of them read at a frustration level.

In a related study conducted by Menaka & Jebaraj (2017) on reading comprehension in relation to academic achievement in English among higher secondary school students. A sample size of 300 students was randomly selected for the study. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between reading comprehension and academic achievement of the students in English language.

Also, a similar study was conducted by Igboke (2012) on the effect of reading comprehension on students' academic

achievement in Afikpo south local government area of Ebonyi State. Findings showed that factors such as shortage of specialist teachers, shortage of competent teachers, insufficient time allotted in the time table and inadequate infrastructural facilities were responsible for problems in reading comprehension.

Hijaz (2018) carried out a study on the relationship between students reading comprehension and their achievement in English at Yamouk University. A sample size of 150 male and female students was selected for the study. Findings showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between students reading comprehension and their achievement in English since reading comprehension positively affects students' achievement.

Salem (2017) carried out an investigation on English language teachers' use of scaffolding strategies for developing their students reading comprehension skills or just for assessing their comprehension. The descriptive qualitative research design was adopted for the study. Findings showed that non-native English language teachers are not aware of the scaffolding strategies to use.

MinYing & AbdulAziz (2019) carried out a study on scaffolding approach with reading strategies in teaching reading comprehension to rural year 3 ESL learners in Malaysia. Findings revealed that scaffolding enhanced their reading comprehension.

Lasim & Lasim (2021) investigates the effect of using scaffolding to enhance reading comprehension of ninth-grade in SMP Negeri 04 Batu, East Java, Indonesia. The study utilized the quantitative research design which involves 30 participants. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The result of the study indicates that the scaffolding strategy improves students reading comprehension.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, the students reading comprehension in English language in most secondary schools in Ebonyi local Government Area of Ebonyi State has continued to decline. The poor performance of students in reading comprehension in English language has been blamed on so many factors such as: lack of qualified language teachers, lack of instructional materials, unequipped libraries, poor teaching methods among others. It is on this note that the researcher is poised to investigate the impact of students reading comprehension on their academic performance in English language in Ebonyi local government area of Ebonyi state.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of students reading comprehension on their

academic performance in English language. Specifically, this research study sought to:

- i. Find out how the use of graphic organizer affects students reading comprehension in English language.
- ii. Find out how the use of scaffolding affects students reading comprehension in English language.
- iii. Find out how the use of SQ3R techniques affects students reading comprehension in English language.
- iv. Find out how vocabulary development affects the performance of students reading comprehension in English language.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The following research questions were formulated by the researcher to guide the study;

- i. How does graphic organizer affect students reading comprehension in English language?
- ii. How does scaffolding strategy affect students reading comprehension in English language?
- iii. How does SQ3R technique affect students reading comprehension in English language?
- iv. How does vocabulary development affect students reading comprehension?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive research design. The population of this study consisted four thousand (4000) students and teachers from the five selected public schools in Ebonyi local government area. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected for the study through the simple random sampling technique. The experimental group was taught reading comprehension using graphic organizer, scaffolding, SQ3R and vocabulary development while the control group were not exposed to the reading techniques. A narrative reading comprehension test with five objective questions was also administered to the respondents and each question had a score of 20% making a total of 100%. A structured questionnaire was also used as instrument for data collection. The instrument yielded a validity of 0.89 reliability index using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected were analyzed using simple mean and standard deviation. The decision rule for acceptance and rejection was determined through the mean scores of the rating scale. Therefore, mean score less than 2.5 was rejected, while mean score from 2.5 and above stands for acceptance.

RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: How does graphic organizer affect students reading comprehension?

TABLE 1: IMPACT OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZER ON STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	Remark
1.	It makes you interested in the concept and gives a clearer understanding.	215	137	35	13	400	3.4	Accepted
2.	It provides a framework for students to connect prior knowledge with new information in the text.	258	59	46	37	400	3.2	Accepted
3.	It helps to represent ideas, facts, and concepts with the aid of lines, arrows, text boxes or bubbles, pictures, and other visual depictions.	251	100	32	17	400	3.5	Accepted
4.	It helps the students' to understand information in the text which improves their reading comprehension.	200	15	30	20	400	2.0	Rejected
5.	It serves as a good tool to keep students engaged in the reading text for clearer comprehension.	122	253	33	3	400	3.3	Accepted

Table 1 above shows that items 1, 2, 3, and 5 with the mean scores of the 3.4, 3.2, 3.5 and 3.3 respectively are accepted by a good number of respondents as ways students reading comprehension could be affected through the use

of graphic organizers. While item 4 with the mean score of 2.0 which is below cut-off mean (2.5) was rejected.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: How does scaffolding strategy affect students reading comprehension in English language?

TABLE 2: IMPACT OF SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTIONS ON STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	Remark
6.	Provision of support and assistance in reading comprehension	199	213	40	48	400	3.9	Accepted
7.	It makes students share their experiences, idea and prior knowledge about the concept of study.	256	103	22	19	400	3.5	Accepted
8.	It helps students to understand what the texts is all about by being active participants in the reading class.	36	21	80	263	400	1.6	Rejected
9.	Use of visual aids such as pictures and charts improves reading comprehension.	131	176	10	83	400	2.9	Accepted
10.	It exposes the learners to reading strategies that enhance reading comprehension such as questioning.	114	215	29	42	400	3.0	Accepted

Table 2 above shows that items 6, 7, 9 and 10 with the mean scores of 3.9, 3.5, 2.9 and 3.0 respectively were accepted by a good number of respondents as the way scaffolding instruction could affect students reading comprehension positively. The acceptance was based on

the fact that mean scores of the above mentioned items were above the cut-off mean (2.5), while item 8 with the mean score of 1.6 was rejected as it was below 2.5).

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: How does SQ3R technique affect students reading comprehension in English language?

TABLE 3: IMPACT OF SQ3R TECHNIQUE ON STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	Remark
11.	It helps students to survey the text they are reading while they're reading through questioning.	180	117	25	18	400	2.8	Accepted
12.	It helps students understand the text at a glance by looking at the illustrations and pictures in the text through survey.	15	20	150	215	400	1.9	Rejected
13.	It helps students review the text to gain initial meaning from the headings, bolded text, and charts	190	170	15	25	400	3.1	Accepted
14.	It helps the students recall important points and retain it in their memory.	167	150	65	18	400	3.2	Accepted

15.	Reviewing the entire lesson gives the students a clearer understanding.	195	180	15	10	400	3.4	Accepted
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Table 3 above shows that in item 11, 13, 14 and 15 with the mean scores of the 2.5, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 respectively are accepted by a good number of respondents as the ways

students reading comprehension could be improved through the application SQ3R. The acceptance was based on the fact that the mean score of the above mentioned

items were above the cut-off mean (2.5) while items 12 with the mean scores of 1.9 which was below the cut-off mean (2.5) was rejected.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: How does vocabulary development affect students reading comprehension in English language?

TABLE 4: IMPACT OF VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT ON STUDENTS READING COMPREHENSION

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	N	\bar{X}	Remark
16.	To find the main idea of a given passage	215	137	35	13	400	3.4	Accepted
17.	It helps me understand the passage better.	258	59	46	37	400	3.2	Accepted
18.	It helps me to retell the story in my own words.	251	100	32	17	400	3.4	Accepted
19.	It helps me to provide the synonyms of difficult words.	200	15	30	20	400	2.0	Rejected
20.	It helps me to explain difficult words.	122	253	33	3	400	3.3	Accepted

Table 4 above shows that all the items (16, 17, 18, and 20) with the mean scores of the 3.4, 3.2, 3.5 and 3.3 respectively are accepted by all the respondents as the ways students reading comprehension could be improved through vocabulary development. The acceptance was based on the fact that the mean scores of the above mentioned items were above the cut-off mean (2.5). While item 19 with the mean scores of 2.0 which was below the cut-off mean of (2.5) was rejected.

Similarly, on the reading comprehension text, all the respondents in the experimental group scored higher than those in the control group

DISCUSSION

The result obtained from the analysis of data as shown in Table 1 depicts that items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were accepted as the ways graphic organizer could positively affect students reading comprehension. This simply means that graphic organizers can be of great importance to students reading comprehension. This is so because the result of the study proved that graphic organizer helps students to know the relationships between concepts, the structure, and/or key concepts of the text. It also provides a framework for students to connect existing knowledge to new information. It also helps the students' to understand text structure which significantly increases their reading comprehension. All the findings in this table are in line with Asuzu (2009) and Shanahan (2022) who observe that graphic organizer is effective for vocabulary instruction and for improving reading comprehension.

The result obtained from the analysis of data as shown in Table 2 shows that items 6, 7, 9 and 10 respectively were accepted by a good number of respondents as the ways scaffolding instruction affect students reading comprehension. Only item 8 with the mean score of 1.6 was rejected. Findings indicated that scaffolding provides support and assistance in reading comprehension. It

makes reading enjoyable and helps the students to understand the text more clearly. The findings of this study corroborate with the findings of MinYing & AbdulAziz (2019) and Lasim & Lasim (2021) scaffolding reading instruction improves students reading comprehension in English language.

The result obtained from the analysis of data as shown shows that items 11, 13, 14 and 15 respectively were accepted by a good number of respondents as the ways students reading comprehension could be affected positively through the application of SQ3R while only item 12 was rejected. The findings of the study corroborate with the findings of Igboke (2012), Menaka & Jebaraj (2017), Hijaz (2018) and Compe (2018) that reading comprehension improves students' academic performance. The findings are also in line with that of Amir & Amir (2019) that reading strategies had a significant effect on students reading comprehension.

Analysis of data in table 4 shows that all the items (16, 17, 18, and 20) were accepted by all the respondents as ways students reading comprehension could be improved through vocabulary development. Only item 19 with a mean score of 2.0 was rejected. Findings indicate that vocabulary development helps students in understanding the meaning of words during reading for easier comprehension. It predicts outcome, and comprehension of meaning phrase-by-phrase. The findings of this study corroborates with the findings of Awal (2019) that vocabulary development is a very essential part of reading comprehension.

Results of the reading comprehension narrative text also showed that the experimental group who were exposed to the reading techniques performed better than the control group.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

THE FINDING OF THE STUDY REVEALED THAT:

1. Graphic organizers affect students' reading comprehension positively.
2. Scaffolding strategy enhanced students reading comprehension positively
3. SQ3R is a reading technique that improved students' reading comprehension.
4. Vocabulary development improved students reading comprehension in English language.

CONCLUSION

Reading comprehension is influenced significantly by a student's level of vocabulary development, as well as the utilization and application of graphic organizers, scaffolding and SQ3R by teachers in the reading classroom. Hence, teachers can facilitate the growth of words knowledge through the explicit teaching of word patterns and word-solving strategies within the context of a word-rich classroom.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Teachers should utilize graphic organizers such as venn diagram, concept map, main idea web, circle map, T-chart etc. in the reading classroom to improve students' comprehension.
2. Curriculum planners should include scaffold instruction in English language curriculum of Nigerian secondary school students as they are second language learners of English.
3. Government should organize teachers' professional development regularly through seminars, workshops and conferences to keep teachers abreast of innovative reading strategies such as graphic organizers, SQ3R, scaffold for teaching reading comprehension.
4. The Federal and State Ministries of Education should introduce reading in the secondary school time table with emphasis on vocabulary development across the curriculum by providing dictionaries and palm tops for teachers and students.

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