EFFECT OF RECIPROCAL PEER TUTORING BLENDED WITHCOUSELLING ON READING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG STUDENTS WITH READING DISABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract - Non-equivalent pre-test, post-test control group design of quasi-experimental study involving one treatment and one control group was employed to find out the effect of reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) on reading comprehension in English language among students with reading disability. The treatment group was taught reading comprehension in English Language using RPTC while the control group was taught using conventional method (CM). The area of the study was Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Forty eight (48) senior secondary 2 students with high incidence of reading disability drawn from two co-educational secondary schools in Onitsha North constituted the sample size for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select both the sample schools and students. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument used to collect data for the study was titled test of reading comprehension (TORC), developed by the researcher that was duly validated with stability values of 0.67 and 0.76 using test re-test method. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Results got indicated that the students taught using RPTC performed significantly better than those taught with conventional method both in post-test and delayed post-test (Follow-up). The results also showed that there was no significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of the male and female students taught reading comprehension using RPTC. It was concluded that using RPTC in teaching reading comprehension improves students' reading ability irrespective of gender. Based on the findings, discussions and recommendations were made. One of the recommendations was that students with reading disability should be proactively encouraged by teachers, school counsellors and or psychologists to learn to use the skills in RPTC techniques in reading to minimize their reading disability that negatively affect their performances in school subjects.

Keywords - English language, students with reading disability, RPTC technique and counselling.

I. INTRODUCTION

English language is the language of official communication in Nigeria. It is the language of instruction in almost all subjects in schools. English language is variedly used in government, business of all types and culturally, it is a unifying means of interpersonal relationship. Based on the importance of English language in Nigerian scheme of things, it has been made a compulsory subject to be passed for any upgrading in education. Identifying the widened importance of English language in Nigeria educational system, Onyekwere and Nkoro (2007) asserted that the issue of passing English language examination at all grades has on its own invested the language with the aura of a colossus.Unfortunately students perform poorly in English language especially in external examinations such as senior school certificate Examination (SSCE) almost yearly.

Reading comprehension which is the focus of this study is very vital to a learner. Inability to do well in it results in poor grade and poor achievement in other subjects because according to Onuigbo (2002), the need to read for comprehension permeates all the school subjects irrespective of the area. Reading comprehension enables learners not only to construct meaning from texts but equally helps a learner to examine the texts and transfer knowledge.Reading raises the level at which the human mind works according to Level in Onu and Agbo (2008) who also emphasized that ready is the visual means of acquiring and retaining information in all areas of knowledge.

However, reading disability known as dyslexia has no gross effect on an individual's intelligence. Abigail (2004) earlier confirmed that it is the environment that is grossly affected. This implies that if poor reading habit is reduced in a student he/she could improve academically. This informs Ashamis' (2013) assertion that improvement in ones reading ability will enhance ones achievement in school. Therefore, it is obvious that students with reading disability are not less intelligent than their counter-parts with better reading ability. All they need is a teaching strategy or model that has the potential of continually enhancing reading ability in learners. But the present study is on the teaching model or strategy called reciprocal Peer tutoring blended with counselling and how it could improve reading comprehension performance in English language among students with reading disability. It is a teaching model or strategy that affords learners the unique opportunity of clarifying their thought processes and those of others, learn how they learn and modify their already deflected self-concept leading to heightened interest to work with other learners in a supportive way. This is far from the conventional method (CM) of teaching students reading comprehension in English language in

Nigerian. The convention method (CM) is teacher-centered. It hardly allows students to interact with other learners during reading and learning.

Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) exposes students to group situations where they could learn better. It is dependent on counselling and modeling at its initial stage of learning. It aims at training students in problem solving skills use by experts. It is remedial in nature and involves the application of five (5) strategic skills of counselling predicting, clarifying,questioning and summarizing, some of which are found in Reciprocal teaching.(Uroko, 2010).The goal of RPTC is to use counselling, modeling and role playing, role reversal and discussion to achieve overall improvement in motivation and facilitation of students' reading comprehension ability.During lesson using RPTC, learners observe the teacher adopt the five strategic skills while teaching and when he/she is through, learners are assigned into small groups where each takes turns to practice using the skills and reverse turns. One good advantage of RPTC is that it provides grounds for improved self-confidence, learning and communication that are involved in acquiring the skills inherent in RPTC. The idea is that once a learner develops positive self-concept, he develops positive attitude towards his academic work and improves his academic achievement.

The initial phase of RTPC which is counselling affords the teacher opportunity to play his roles as counsellor very well, bringing into the exercise of solving the learners reading problem his patience, interest, understanding, encouragement, concern and co-operation. The task of the teacher is to help each of his students to succeed. Counselling in the class or school is a process in which the teacher tries to help his learners with problems such as reading problem in a face to face situation. And the most important thing in counselling is the child's feeling (NTI, 1996 and Nwaoba, 2015). Thus, the first strategic skill in RPTC centres on the learners feeling that enables him to succeed in promoting thinking while reading. In it, one learns by interacting with persons around him.And Santrock in Onuigbo (2008) related that when a learner is trained in a relevant learning strategy, his cognition can be improved resulting in improved learning outcome. The researcher in this study is interested in finding out the effect RPTC could have on the reading comprehension in English language among students with reading disability.

In using RPTC to teach male and female students with reading disability, the issue of which gender benefits more comes to mind. Some scholars argue that females are superior to males in languages especially in reading achievement (Viadero 1998 and Coley 2000). Okeke (2001 and Harbor-peters (2011) reported in their individual studies that males achieve better than females. This study want a long way in settling the controversy over superiority in reading achievement among male and female students with reading disability especially in Onistsha North Local Government area of Anambra state, Nigeria.

The researcher felt that the problem of poor reading habit among secondary school students could be tackled using reciprocal Peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC). RPTC tends to have the potential of assisting to develop and maintain the interest of students in learning and eventually enhance their academic achievement; how RPTC would improve the reading comprehension in English language among students with reading disability is yet uncertain.The specific objectives of the study included to find out the mean and standard Deviation (SD) scores of the students taught using RPTC and those taught using conventional method (CM) and ascertain the mean and SD scores of students taught using RPTC at post-test and follow-up. Research questions and hypotheses raised to guide the study included:what are the mean reading comprehension test and SD scores of students taught using RPTC (treatment group) and those taught using the conventional method (CM) (Control)?andWhat are the mean reading comprehension test and SD scores of the treatment group at post-test and follow-up?

Hypotheses: $H0_1$: There is no significance difference in the mean reading comprehension test scores of students with reading disability taught using RPTC and those taught using conventional method. ($P<0.05$) and $H0_2$: There is no significance gender difference in the mean scores of the students taught using RPTC (Treatment group) at post-test and follow-up ($P<0.05$).The design of the study was non-equivalent pre-test control group design of quasi-experimental study. One experimental treatment group was taught using Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) while the control group was taught using conventional method (CM) of teaching reading comprehension in English language in Nigeria.

The study was conducted in two co-educational schools in Onitsha North Local Government area of Anambra state, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised all senior secondary 2 students of 2016/2017 co-educational classes, numbering about 2789 (948 males and 1841 females). (PPSC, Zonal Office, Onitsha, 2017).Forty-eight (48) SS 2 students (24 in treatment and 24 in control groups) made up the sample size for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select both the schools and students. The instrument for data collection was titled Test of Reading Comprehension (TORC) developed by the researcher. TORC has 3 sections-A, B and C. Section A was about the bio-data of the respondents such as class, gender, school etc. Section B consisted of a reading comprehension passage from senior secondary two (SS 2) intensive English text book titled "The Entertainment industry" The passage has thirteen (13) questions (1-12 = Oral and No 13=written) which subjects in both groups responded

to.Questions 1-10 were allotted 4 marks each, giving a total of 40 marks. Questions 11 and 12 were to test the students' ability in summarizing the passage. Number 11 was specifically to summarize the main point of the passage in one sentence. This was allotted 4 marks and number 12 was to summarize the supplying details of the main idea in two sentences. It was allotted 6 marks giving a total of 10 marks. Section C of TORC was a writing test that tested for the students' ability to put down their thoughts on paper. This was allotted 50 marks. The total score for the reading test was 100 marks.

The instrument (TORC) was face and contents validated by 3 research experts. The reliability/stability of the instrument was established using test re-test method; after computation, reliability/stability values of 0. 67 and 0.76 were obtained respectively using Pearson product moment correlation procedure.Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling lesson plans and conventional method lesson plans were developed, validated and used by researcher to co-ordinate the two regular English language teachers in the two schools; who served as research assistantsin conducting the treatment respectively.

During the treatment proper, RPTC lesson plans were used to teach the treatment group in one school while the control group in another school was taught using the conventional method (CM).The scoring of the students' responses was on the minimum of 50 marks and maximum of 100 marks. Mean and standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANOVA).

RESULTS: Research Question 1: What are the mean reading comprehension test and standard Deviation scores of students taught using reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (Experiment group) and those taught using the conventional method (control group)?

Table 1: Mean (x) and standard Deviation (SD) scores of the students in the control and Experimental groups.

Methods	Pre-test		Post-test		No of students
	X	SD	X	SD	
Control group (cm)	20.9375	7.31483	22.9792	6.88647	24
Experimental (RPTC)	19.4375	5.88539	57.4375	22.393	24

Data on table 1 show that the experimental group's (RPTC) mean (X) and standard Deviation (SD) scores at pre-test and post-test are 19.4375 and 57.4375 with standard deviation scores (SD) of 5.88534 and 5.22393 respectively while the control group's (cm) mean scores at pre-test and post-test are 20.9375 and 22.9792 with standard Deviation scores of 7.31483 and 6.88647 respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the mean (X) reading comprehension test and standard Deviation (SD) scores of students taught using reciprocal Peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) at post-test and follow-up (Retention)?

Table 2: Mean (X) and standard Deviation (SD) scores of experimental group (RPTC) at post-test and follow-up.

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Follow-up		No
	X	SD	X	SD	X	SD	
Experimental Group (RPTC)	19.4375	5.88534	57.4375	5.22393	60.9583	6.09689	24

Table 2 shows that the experimental group (RPTC) performed better still in the follow-up than at pre-test and post-test. Mean scores at pre-test, post-test and follow-up are 19.4375, 57.4375 and 60.9583 with standard Deviation (SD) scores of 5.88534, 5.22393 and 6.09689 respectively. The mean (X) scores at post-test and follow-up are all above 50% average score.

Hypotheses: $H0_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean reading comprehension test scores of students taught using Reciprocal Peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) and those taught using conventional method (CM) ($P<0.05$).

Table 3: ANCOVA results for the hypothesis (Tests of between-subjects effects). Dependent variable: post-test

Source	Type IIIsum of squares	Df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Corrected model	15299.422[a]	2	7649.711	515.715	.000
Intercept	2971.033	1	2971.033	200.296	.000
Pre-test	1050.901	1	1050.901	70.848	.000
Group	14956.460	1	14956.450	1008.309	.000
Error	667.495	45	14.833		
Total	93569.000	48			
Corrected Total	15966.917	47			

a.R squared = .958 (Adjusted R. square = .956).

Table 3 shows a p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha-value of 0.05. $H0_2$: There is no significant difference between the mean reading comprehension test scores of male and female students taught using Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC), ($P<0.05$).

Table 4: ANCOVA results for hypothesis 2 (Tests of Between-subjects effects). Dependent variable: gender

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected model	140.855[a]	2	70.428	3.114	.065
Intercept	9833.057	1	9833.057	434.830	.000
Pre-test	113.100	1	113.100	5.001	.036
Gender	67.860	1	67.860	3.001	.098
Error	474.885	21	22.614		
Total	80023.250	24			
Corrected Total	615.740	23			

a.R square = 229 (Adjusted R. square = .155)

Table 4 shows a p-value of 0.98 which is greater than the alpha-value of 0.05. Thus, the hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean reading comprehension test scores of male and female students taught using reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) was not rejected.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

The results from the analysisrevealed that Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC) improved the reading comprehension performance of students with reading disability taught using it. The results are not unexpected that Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counsellingas an instructional strategy in the classroom of students with poor1. reading habit should make for excellent performance. 2.

This is because ever before instruction occurred, the students in the treatment group were helped to raise their self-concept (by instilling in them self-confidence) leading to heightened interests in the academic work unlike the control group subjects. Thus, counselling them helped to resolve the feeling of negative self-concept and attitude to academic work that have been hitterto unresolved. The finding is an eye opener that in teaching students using such an approach as reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling (RPTC), the teacher could utilized his role as a counsellor to help each of his learner to succeed. It is pertinent to note from the findings of the study that using RPTC approach in teaching demands that the teacher has to be careful, determined and above all competent. It is therefore not surprising that Reciprocal peer tutoring blended with counselling could produce better performance in students with reading disability taught using it (RPTC).From the findings both the male and female students improved their performance uniformly. This finding disagrees with the earlier findings of Coley (2001), Okeke (2001) and harbor (2001) that males are superior in language performance to females.The conclusion therefore is that using RPTC in teaching reading comprehension improves students' reading ability irrespective of gender.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students with reading disability should be proactively encouraged by teachers and school counsellors to learn to use the strategic skills in RPTC in reading to minimize their reading disability that negatively affect their performance in school subjects.English language teachers should learn to change all gender supportive instructional techniques by adopting the RPTC in order to effectively improve their students' reading ability irrespective of gender.

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