



Silent Reading Difficulties Experienced in English Language by Junior Secondary School Students in Anyigba Education Zone, Kogi State Nigeria.

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Abstract: This study was undertaken to find out the silent reading difficulties experienced in the English Language by JSS 1 students in Anyigba Education Zone of Kogi State, Nigeria. The Ex Post Facto Design was adopted for the study. A total of 134 JSS 1 Students drawn from three schools in Anyigba Education Zone constituted the sample. Two of the schools were public schools, one located in the urban area while the second one is in the rural area. The third school is a private school located in the urban area since there was none in the rural area. In each of the three schools, one intact class was randomly sampled. A teacher-made English Reading Comprehension Test (ERCT) and an English Vocabulary Test (EVT) were developed, validated and used for data collection. Observation techniques were also used to obtain data for silent reading problems. The mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to answer the hypotheses at 0.05 significant levels. The major findings of the study were: The students understood what they read but have problems in reading in vocalization and sub-vocalization as well as finger-pointing. Students from the private school perform better in reading comprehension and vocabulary test than their counterparts in public schools. Some useful recommendations made were that reading courses be incorporated into the Junior Secondary School Curriculum instead of being couched as aspects of the English Language lessons. There should be collaboration between parents, the community and the school in the provision of reading empowerment for the child to help bridge the gap between those from low socio-economic background and those from high socio-economic background.

Keywords: English, Reading Difficulties, Secondary School, EFL Students

1. Introduction

The role of language in effective communication in human life needs not much emphasis as we are aware that language is one of the qualities of man that sets him apart from the lower animals. People of every race have one language or the other which they use in interpersonal relationships. Nigeria as a nation is made up of many tribes that have their respective languages. But the colonial masters on setting their feet on the shores of Nigeria introduced their own Language, English, as a means of communication. The adoption of the imperial tongue as a language of wider communication dates to

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1862 when Lagos was formally established as a colony by the British invaders (Baldeh, 1990). The spread of the English Language, therefore, is linked to British colonial rule and it has continued to enjoy a pride of place in both our national life and school curriculum.

The English Language is a core subject in secondary schools in Nigeria. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education makes several policy declarations on the English Language which reflect the official attitude to the language and its place and role in the country's educational setting. However, in spite of this position of the English Language in Nigeria, it has been observed that many children coming from primary schools into JSS One cannot read as they should in the English Language due to reading difficulties. Reading is of great importance in learning. If a child cannot read, he cannot function effectively in the world of school. In our present world children need to read because we live in a world of printed and written words. Nearly all the information available in the world today is stored in printed or written forms. This store of knowledge can only be opened by one key, reading.

Reading is a fundamental skill, essential for personal, academic and professional development. Krashen (2017). It is a process of retrieving and comprehending some form of stored information or ideas in written form. In other words, reading is a cognitive process of understanding a written linguistic message. This agrees with the view of Kilpatrick (2015) who sees reading as a complex cognitive process involving the recognition of comprehension of written language, including decoding, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

A reading difficulty is when a reader has difficulty meeting reading milestones. A reading difficulty may also be referred to as a reading problem. Reading difficulties involve problems with accurate and fluent decoding, comprehension, and or retention of written information. IDA (2020). A child can have difficulty with one or more aspects of the reading process. These reading problems include finger-pointing, head movement, vocalization and sub-vocalization, eye regression and fixation.

Finger-pointing is a situation where a child points at words with his finger while reading. This is a reading problem that usually affects efficient reading. Head movement is another reading problem whereby a reader moves his head from side to side in the process of reading. An efficient reader is a person who can read at a reasonable speed and is able to understand what he reads. Head movement can prevent a student from attaining reasonable level of speed in reading thereby making him a slow and inefficient reader.

There are different approaches to reading based on different objectives for reading. While some materials need to be read aloud, others require silent reading. The reader applies each of these approaches to the demands of reading. Loud reading is the interpretation or the decoding of the written words in terms of speech sound. In other words, loud reading involves vocalization of printed words. Good loud reading requires that the reader reads with the correct or acceptable pronunciation, stress and intonation which will enable others listening to him to understand or Follow what is being read

without difficulty. On the other hand, incorrect pronunciation, stress and intonation constitute loud reading problems. Silent reading is the skill of reading to extract meaning or information from a written passage without speaking or vocalizing. It involves reading in one's mind without the movement of the lips. To move the lips, head, finger-pointing, regression and eye fixation in silent reading slow down reading rate. These constitute silent reading problems.

2. The Concept of Reading

The process of reading is essential for developing the four language skills within the context of English language learning in schools. Achieving strong comprehension skills is a key objective for language learners (Firman, Haerazi, & Dehghani, 2021). It involves the recognition of morphemes, words, and phrases to derive meaning (Nation, 2006). When learners engage with a text by answering questions or summarizing its content, they are considered effective comprehension (Schmidtke & Moro, 2021). However, reading comprehension encompasses intricate cognitive and metacognitive processes (Sparks, 2019). Reading speed is another crucial factor influencing comprehension; learners who read slowly often struggle to complete their tasks and may become demotivated to continue (Begum & Hamzah, 2018). According to the theory of automaticity in reading, proficient word decoding allows readers to process words with minimal focus on the decoding process itself (Rawian et al., 2018). Effective reading rates are derived from the efficiency of decoding and comprehension (Surtantini, 2019). Poor readers usually have struggles with connecting sentences within paragraphs, resulting in slower reading. Consequently, reading speed is vital for EFL learners' comprehension of texts. In response to these challenges, English teachers implement various reading strategies to assist learners in understanding texts; however, these strategies can also pose difficulties for learners in comprehending English materials (Firman, Haerazi, & Dehghani, 2021).

Reading is the ability to interpret the written words and to gain meaning from them. It is the decoding of information presented in writing. It is the decoding of information presented in writing. It involves making visual contact with the letters of the alphabet and relating them to the sounds of language which they represent (Anderson, 1988). Ogwu (1999) sees reading as the meaningful interpretation of verbal symbols; a complex process that involves the physical, mental and emotional abilities and conditions of the reader, his background and the kind of materials to be read. He added that to read effectively, one must be able to perceive the individual letters of the alphabet, their arrangement into words, and the arrangement of words into groups.

The views of the above experts imply that reading is not a mechanical response to symbols but a process whereby symbols are interpreted and placed within the wider structure of language. The words 'language', 'symbols' and 'interpret' are significant to our conception of reading in this study because when oral language is reduced to written form, it becomes coded in mute symbols with much to be interpreted (by the reader) to elicit the message. The writer or encoder has something he wasn't to communicate to another person. This might be a feeling, an idea, an agreement or a story. Reading, therefore, implies getting out of a text the message that the writer or encoder has put into it. Reading

is also a complex language processing behavior that entails interpreting or getting meaning from written or printed materials (Unoh, 1989). That reading is a process that is self-evident, but it can hardly be over-emphasized that meaningful response is the very heart of the reading process. This is to say that reading should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning involved, feelings of considerable intensity may be aroused, and emotional attitudes may be profoundly altered.

Reading is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in language acquisition and overall academic success. It involves the recognition of morphemes, words, and phrases, which help learners construct meaning from texts (Nation, 2006). This process is essential for developing comprehension skills, which are vital for effective communication and learning in various contexts (Sparks, 2019).

The theory of automaticity suggests that proficient readers can decode words quickly and efficiently, allowing them to focus on comprehension rather than the decoding process itself (Rawian et al., 2018). This automaticity is linked to reading speed Akyol & Kayabasi (2018) as learners who read slowly may struggle with comprehension and often experience decreased motivation to engage with texts (Zulfan, 2018). Effective reading rates are influenced by both the efficiency of decoding and the ability to comprehend the material, highlighting the interconnectedness of these skills (Surtantini, 2019).

However, many learners encounter difficulties that hinder their reading progress. Research indicates that students often find reading tasks tedious, particularly when they lack adequate word recognition skills. According to Cain (2010), the ability to recognize words is fundamental for constructing meaning and building a robust mental lexicon. Without this foundational skill, students may struggle to understand new vocabulary, further complicating their reading experiences.

To address these challenges, educators can employ various reading strategies to enhance comprehension and foster a positive reading experience. However, it is important to note that the strategies used by teachers can sometimes create additional challenges for learners (Firman, Haerazi, & Dehghani, 2021). Supporting students in developing effective reading habits and comprehension strategies is essential for overcoming the obstacles they face in understanding academic texts (Yang et al. 2016).

Reading is a complex process that requires the integration of various skills. By focusing on both decoding and comprehension, and by providing targeted support, educators can help students improve their reading abilities and develop a lifelong appreciation for literature.

3. Reading Speed/Comprehension

Reading speed has to do with how much material a reader can 'cover' in a given time limit, with adequate comprehension. To cover here does not mean to look at or simply run one's eyes through. It

means reading the text with understanding and being able to recall a considerable part of the information that is communicated by the text. Bransford, Stein and Shelton (1984) observe that, in measuring reading ability, what is said to be measured is reading speed and comprehension. According to them, the two are so closely interrelated that it will be meaningless to talk about speed without reference to comprehension and vice versa. Buttressing this assertion, Williams (1990) opines that at the intermediate stage of reading, there is a positive relationship between speed and level of comprehension, i.e. those who read fast read better. He further points out that a student who is reading text material for comprehension and study purposes at the rate of 200-250 word per minute is reading quite efficiently. Williams, however, warned that we should not expect the second language students to know as many words as they find language students. In his words, "it is not realistic to characterize reading for the second language students by the same yardstick as for the first language students" (Williams, 1990:149).

A student who reads at 450 words per minute is not reading but skimming. When he comes to real materials that must be studied, he must slow down. Dawson and Bamman (1980) point out that the purpose of reading is not simply emitting sounds and naming words but rather comprehension. Buttressing this fact, Ogwu (1999) observes that reading without comprehension is a meaningless exercise. He reiterated that comprehension is an essential part of reading process where the reader understands, not only the meaning of isolated words, but also their meanings when combined in phrases, sentences and longer groupings. He concluded that the reader's previous knowledge or experience is very important for comprehension. Ogwu's point of view is that reading comprehension involves using both the information provided in the text by the writer as well as the information the reader has from previous experiences.

Reading efficiency, therefore, is a measure of ability to read fast and ability to comprehend what has been read. The speed of reading, however, depends on the purpose of reading. A reader must adjust his approach to reading depending on the kind of material he is reading. An individual cannot read everything at the same speed. Even slow readers tend to speed up or slowdown in accordance with the case or difficulty of the material (Williams, 1990). Montgomery (1982) observes that more important than rapid reading rate is the skill of flexibility in reading. He opines that a reader should bear in mind that the major factor behind reading flexibility is that it does not make much sense to be fast. What matters is to be fast so long as this does not reduce understanding.

Reading flexibility is the ability to read different kinds of materials at different speeds and with different degrees of comprehension and concentration (Ayodele, 1989). In other words, mobility means ability to change, to be modified according to prevailing circumstances. Flexibility in reading is thus one of the most outstanding traits of a matured and experienced reader.

Reading fast is useful and desirable because of the number of materials needed to be covered in one's engagements. As a student advances in education, he needs to read more materials in less time and with a high comprehension rate. A slow reading rate will prevent him from coping with the reading

demands of schoolwork. This explains why this study upholds the view that it is necessary for a student to develop some measure of speed in reading with sufficient comprehension as soon as he begins to read fluently.

4. Silent Reading

Silent reading is the ultimate in reading. Silent reading is relaying what the graphic signs stand for to the brain and the mind without saying anything aloud or even whispering. Ransome (1981) describes silent reading as listening to the language within oneself. The reader allows the writer to speak to him without the audible sounds of language. Much of what goes on in silent reading is reading for comprehension, the reader looks at words and sentences represented in graphic symbols and let the symbols 'speak' to him. The reader Turns to react to language in print, to make meanings out of a combination of letters, to analyze ideas and to build up new knowledge and experience out of the exercise.

5. The Role of Reading Strategies in Second Language Acquisition

An emerging concern of the past decade has been the key role of reading strategies in second language acquisition (SLA), with increasing attention paid towards how it may promote not only linguistic ability, but also cognitive & academic development. Scholars like Krashen (2023) and Schmidtke & Moro have pointed to the importance of strategies in helping learners engage successfully with texts, eventually promoting not only and target language proficiency, but also academic performance. This acknowledgment is more important in areas where multilingual and multicultural contexts exist, e.g. Nigeria, that learners constantly battle complex linguistic as well as cultural dynamics that impact their educational experiences. Reading strategies are a way of helping learners overcome some of the formidable hurdles in processing unknown vocabulary, syntax and textual discourse structures. These strategies make it possible for educators to help learners shrink the gap in linguistic competence, improve their comprehension and get more securely into texts. But in order to maximize the potential of reading strategies, they should really be undergirded with solid theoretical grounds explaining how learners process and learn from written text in a second language.

Recent research has been able to provide important evidence to the role of reading strategies in SLA. For instance, Zhang & Zhang (2022) established that the explicit teaching of reading strategies, including skimming for general concepts and scanning for specific information, was effective in enhancing learners' reading comprehension and retention in ESL contexts. Similarly, Baker and Brown (2023) explored the use of metacognitive reading strategies-self-monitoring and reflection-and established that such a use improved not just comprehension but also the degree of learner independence.

Reading strategies assume special importance in multilingual settings like Nigeria. Students often must face the double burden of learning a second language while simultaneously dealing with texts that are either distantly related in culture or linguistically challenging. Adebayo, et al. (2023) conducted research on classroom reading interventions in Nigeria and established that interventions like the activation of prior knowledge, prediction of content, and summarization of texts significantly improved students' interest in and performance at reading. They emphasize, in reporting their findings, the applicability of culturally responsive approaches in considerations of learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

6. Theoretical Frameworks

Interactive Model

Originally posited by Rumelhart (1977), the Interactive Model is the foundation for the majority of contemporary reading processes. Overall, the model infers that reading is not a linear process but a dynamic give-and-take process of bottom-up and top-down processes. The bottom-up processes are those involved in the decoding of the elemental features of language, such as letters, words, and grammatical structures. For top-down operations, on the other hand, to take place, meaning depends upon the background knowledge, experience, and contextual awareness of the reader. Zhao and Wang, 2022, also extend this observation of Rumelhart with an application to Second Language learners. In their case, because of defectiveness or deficiency in their vocabulary or grammar knowledge, the decoding of text may pose problems. However, at the same time, they are perfectly capable of using knowledge and contextual information to make up for the deficiencies. For teachers, this underscores the need for developing both the competency for decoding as well as those skills that facilitate making inferences and contextualizing text. Guided questioning and predictive reading activities represent activities that can help students combine the bottom-up and top-down processes.

Schema Theory

Another useful explanation of how readers derive meaning from their reading is offered by Schema Theory, developed by Carrell and Eisterhold in 1983. It predicts that comprehension happens when new information gets incorporated into or appended to the pre-existing knowledge structures or schemas of the reader. When such bridging is not done, students can face difficulty in deriving meaning of texts, particularly if subjected to unknown or culturally-bound content.

Almutairi et al. (2023), has reiterated the importance of schema activation in SLA. What they found was that students who had done some pre-reading activities-brainstorming, discussing topics that are related to reading, or working with visual aids-were more prepared to make meaning out of new information. Such activities not only cause prior schemas but also generate confidence, allowing readers to attack texts more readily. For example, before introducing a text about climate change, the

teacher can have the students discuss their local environment, so that through these connections, they understand.

Socio-Cultural Theory

Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (1978) offers an effective framework through which to examine the socio-cultural dimensions of the reading acquisition process. Essentially, the theory holds that the learning process is social in nature, led by interaction, and mediated by language. Second-language reading cannot be viewed as a separate cognitive act but is a socially and culturally situated activity.

Adebayo and Smith (2022) have further identified that SLA astoundingly correlates with culturally relevant texts and collaborative learning environments. In a study carried out in Nigerian classrooms, students showed more motivation and better performance when they had to read texts the content of which reflected their cultural realities and experience. Besides, collaborative activities, such as peer teaching or group discussion, promote understanding that enables learners to learn from one another and access collective cultural knowledge. These findings have implications that teachers need to generate an inviting space to learn, whereby the students will feel their cultural identity valued and acknowledged.

7. Implications for Practice for Multilingual Contexts

Application in multicultural/multilingual classrooms, such as those in Nigeria, should therefore focus both on theoretical and culturally responsive grounds. Reading strategies with the inclusion of activating prior knowledge, contextualizing new ideas, and fostering collaborative learning can facilitate bridging gaps in linguistic resources for learners toward making connections with the subject matter more deeply. Instructors can, for instance, use culturally responsive materials that make connections to learners' lives since this approach has proven to improve their level of engagement and comprehension - Adebayo & Smith, 2022.

Moreover, technology adoption in SLA opens fresh avenues for reading strategy employment. Interactive e-books and online reading programs are some of the technological tools that introduce novelty in feedback immediacy, personal learning trajectories, and exposure to a variety of texts. In this context, for instance, research by Chen and Li 2023 illustrates effectiveness in vocabulary development and reading fluency in Second Language Learners through technology-enhanced reading programs.

8. Implications for Practice

These synthesized theoretical models wield significant implications for instructional practice in second language education. Lessons planned by instructors, for example, would combine initial decoding abilities with contextual interpretation activities in line with the Interactive Model. The schema-based approaches would be put into use via pre-reading activities which would activate prior

knowledge and scaffold new learning. In the same way, socio-cultural theory stresses group learning and culturally responsive pedagogies that make possible an emphasis on locally meaningful texts and group interactive activities.

Methodologies that treat linguistic and cultural diversity in general are both a challenge and a resource as is the case in Nigeria - are particularly helpful. These facilitate learners overcoming the difficulties of second-language reading while developing cultural and academic identities.

The following hypotheses and questions guided the study:

1. To what extent can JSS One students in Anyigba Education Zone of Kogi State listen to what is read to them in the English Language?

2. What are the silent reading challenges of students in JSS1 in Anyigba Education Zone of Kogi State in the English Language?

HO1: The difference in the mean score of JSS One boys and girls in reading comprehension in the English Language is not significant.

HO2: The difference in the mean score of JSS One students in urban and rural areas in reading comprehension in the English Language is not significant.

The data collection instruments in this study are of two types. First, there is the teacher-made English Reading Comprehension Test (ERCT). This was used with the aim of discovering information on students' reading comprehension level, silent and loud reading issues (see appendix 1 A). This instrument was coupled with observation. The second instrument is a fifteen item English Vocabulary Test (EVT). This was used with the aim of gathering information on students' known and/or unknown common everyday words. The target population consists of all 2,420 JSS One students from the 30 schools in Anyigba Education Zone in Kogi State. Of the estimated number, 1,640 students lived in the urban area, while 780 were seen living in the rural area. The females were estimated at 1,317, while the males' numbers were estimated at 1,103. To ensure that the test instruments were adequately valid, they were exposed to some Language Education experts and another three in Measurement and Evaluation in Kogi State University. Anyigba for face validation. Criticism and observation were therefore employed in revising the instruments through making the test items more specific, removing double-edged junk, and cutting down the number of items to 10 and 15 for comprehension and vocabulary test respectively. The sample is made up of 134 JSS1 students selected from Our Lady of Schools Anyigba, Community Secondary School Okura, and Brain Model College Anyigba. The simple random sampling probability was used to select two public schools: one rural and one urban. The total number of private secondary schools in Anyigba area was one. The purposive sampling technique was therefore employed in selecting the only private schools available in the area. One intact class from each sample school was used in this study.

The researcher introduced himself to the students to have a good rapport; he also welcomed them to identify themselves. After the rapport, the students were distributed the comprehension passage to read

silently. The researcher observed each student as he/she read and marked, on a rating sheet, the noted silent reading problem of such student.

Data for two research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviations whereas those of the hypothesis were analyzed using T=Test. They were tested for significance at 0.05 probability level.

9. Results

Table 1 : Table summary of Comprehension scores

<i>School</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Total score</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<i>BMC</i>	30	267	8.9
<i>OLS</i>	54	412	7.62
<i>CSSO</i>	50	335	6.7

The data in table 1 shows that the lowest mean score in the three groups is 6.7 while the highest is 8.9. This result reveals that the students understand what they read.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Reading Behaviors Across Schools

	<i>Head movement.</i>		<i>Runs finger</i>		<i>Moves lip</i>		<i>Regresses</i>		<i>Eye fixation</i>	
<i>School</i>	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	Score	mean
<i>BMC</i>	77	6.41	81	6.75	73	6.08	104	8.66	108	9.0
<i>OLS</i>	127	5.87	87	4.02	84	3.88	130	6.18	138	6.38
<i>CSSO</i>	105	5.25	78	3.9	63	3.15	117	5.85	122	6.1

This table shows that columns 2 and 3 (running finger under print and movement of the lips) were the major

Table 3:T-test for Boys and Girls in Reading Comprehension

<i>Group</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T- calculated</i>	<i>T- significant (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Alpha (α)</i>
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<i>Boys</i>	58	50.762	16.111	-1.115	0.269	0.05
<i>Girls</i>	58	55.830	18.960	-1.115	56.528	269

This table shows that the T calculated is -1.115 and significant at 2-tad is 269 since t significant of .269 is greater than the set alpha (α) level at 0.05, it follows that the difference between the mean (50.767) of boys and the mean (55.83) of girls in reading comprehension test is not statistically significant at a p-value threshold of 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). We therefore, accept the hypothesis of no significant difference.

Hypothesis 2.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of JSS One students in urban and rural areas in reading comprehension in the English Language.

Table 4: t-test results of urban and rural in reading comprehension.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig(2 tailed)</i>
<i>Urban</i>	53.675	17.856	.231	58	.818
<i>Rural</i>	52.25	17.60	.232	38.609	.818

The above table shows that t calculated is .231 and t significant is .818. Since t significant of .818 is greater than the set alpha (α) level of 0.05, it follows that the difference between the mean score of 53.675 of students in urban area and the mean score of 52.55 of students in rural area is not statistically significant. The hypothesis of no significant difference is therefore accepted.

10. Discussion:

In Nigeria, factors such as linguistic diversity, resource disparity, and socio-economic challenges significantly influence reading acquisition. Studies like Uzoegwu (2004) emphasize the role of family background in access to educational resources, while Akabogu (2004) notes the critical impact of school type on reading proficiency.

This study's findings align with global literature, such as Sparks (2019), which emphasizes the cognitive complexities of reading, and local research, such as Ekpunobi (1989), which underscores socio-economic disparities' influence on literacy development.

The findings of this study reveal that students in the students understood what they read. Students' scores in reading comprehension as presented in Table 1 showed that the students

understood what they read. Students in BMC have a mean score of 8, 9, OLS 7.62 and CSSO 6.7 in reading comprehension test.

The reason for the high score in comprehension could be as a result of the fact that the passage was purely narrative and written in simple and straight forward language. The theme was typical of what usually happened in Nigerian markets which children were familiar with. This supports the view that understanding any piece of information depends largely upon having a large store of information regarding the world. This store of information is derived from experience. Research findings are almost conclusive to the fact that there is a relationship between experience and concept formation. Most Psycholinguists are also of one accord that an environment rich in language experience is a powerful avenue for concept development. This finding agrees with Osisanya-Olumuyiwa (1987) who reported that as the child comes into contact with people, objects and things around him, related experiences stored in the brain are triggered off and comprehension results. There will be little comprehension if a given topic is removed from the learner's experience. Consequently, students' previous experience with the theme of the passage could have been responsible for the high score in reading comprehension.

The research also sought to find out the silent reading problems of JSS One students. The results in Table 2 showed that the major silent reading problems were running longer under print and movement of the lips (vocalization and subvocalization). Students in OLS had the mean scores of 4.02 in running finger under print (and 3.88 in movement of the lips). Their counterparts CSSO had mean scores of 3.9 and 3.15 in running finger under print and movement of the lips respectively. If these scores are compared with 5.87, 6.18 and 6.38 means scored by OLS in head movement, regression and eye fixation; and 5.25, 5.85 and 6.1 means scored by CSSO in the same head movement, regression, and eye fixation, it would be seen that running finger under print and movement of the lips are the silent reading problems of students. BMC, however, did not exhibit these problems as can be seen from table 2 in the preceding chapter.

The results from table 2, revealed that students in public schools in both urban and rural areas have silent reading problems in running finger under print and vocalization and sub-vocalization. This was because most of them came from illiterate homes and were disadvantaged in many areas. They did not have good foundations in reading before coming to secondary school. Some were so poor that they could not buy the required textbooks, and they have little or no time to read at home. On the other hand, students from BMC (private) did not have these problems because most of them were from high socio-economic backgrounds with parents who are literate and could afford to provide them with the required books and good home environment for reading.

This finding agrees with Ekpunobi (1989), Uzoegwu (2004) Akabogu (2004) and Omachonu (2009). These studies commonly agreed that students from high socio-economic background perform better than students from low socio-economic background. The reason being that students from high socio-economic backgrounds have access to modern facilities and stimulating home environment that

encourages reading and comprehension. Conversely, students from low socio-economic backgrounds are found to be academically backward because most of them grow up under poor conditions without stimulation or motivation from their parents (Ekpunobi, 1989).

problems observed in silent reading. The respondents in OLS (urban area) have the mean of 4.02 and 3.88 in the two columns while those in CSSO in CSSO (rural area) have 3.9 and 3.15 in the two columns respectively. BMC (Private) have 6.75 and 6.08 in the two columns. The results, therefore, show that the problem is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas, and that respondents in private school hardly exhibit these problems.

Hypothesis 1.

There is no significant difference between the mean score of JSS One boys and girls in reading comprehension in the English Language.

11. Conclusions

The major problems of students in reading were running fingers under print and vocalization and sub-vocalization. These problems were more prevalent in the rural area than in the urban area. Despite these problems, the students understood what they read. However, students from private schools do not have these problems.

The students from the private schools performed better than their counterparts in public schools in both reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. This implies that school type has influence on students' performance in reading.

Students in urban areas did not perform better than their counterparts in rural areas. This was attributed to a lack of commitment to duty on the part of teachers in public schools and lack of monitoring and supervision on the part of the Government.

Gender had no influence on students' performance in reading as boys did not do better than girls, nor did girls do better than boys. This therefore means that reading do not lend itself to gender stereotyping as far as performance is concerned.

12. Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Curriculum planners should ensure that reading courses are incorporated into the Junior Secondary School curriculum instead of being couched as aspects of the English Language lessons. This will give room for separate periods to be allotted to the teaching of reading on the school timetable.
2. Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for language teachers who are already on the job. Their participation in these seminars should be made compulsory so that they can be acquainted with the new trends and approaches in the teaching of reading.
3. There should be collaboration between the home, the community and the school in the provision of reading empowerment for the child. This will help to bridge the gap between those from high socioeconomic backgrounds and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

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