

UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR AND STEPPING STONES NIGERIA
REPORT OF SECOND ASSESSMENT PILOT TEST CONDUCTED IN CROSS RIVER
STATE, NIGERIA.

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The study took place in six public primary schools selected from the three senatorial districts of the state. The selection of the schools was done by the state Ministry of Education. The study which involved a pre-test and a posttest adopted a quasi experimental method using an original projected sample of 263 primary school pupils and 18 teachers. The study which lasted for one full academic session, beginning in September 2011 and ending in July 2012, had its original sample dropped to 217 because 46 participants absconded during the posttest.

Twelve of the 18 teachers (two from each selected school) were first trained in the Jolly Phonics sound identification and reading method by experts. Of the two teachers, in each school, one was the head teacher. With the help of the State Universal Basic Education Board, the six Primary one teachers assisted by their head teachers were asked to apply the Jolly Phonics method of teaching throughout the session. Before the teaching commenced two classes were formed in Primary One. One of the classes was the treatment group (taught with the Jolly Phonics method), while the other was the control group (taught with the conventional alphabet identification method).

An instrument called Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was used in collecting data for the study. The instrument was administered to the subjects in the two groups of each school before teaching commenced in September 2011 and at the end of the third term in June 2012. The research team comprising three lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling of the University of Calabar administered the instrument with the assistance of nine well trained graduate students. Interview method was used in administering the instrument considering the nature of the items. One member of the research team or a research assistant interviewed one pupil at a time using the EGRA test.

The study Problem

The education system in Nigeria over the years has been faced with several challenges. One of such challenges has been the inability of most pupils in public primary schools to read and write before graduation in Primary six. The situation has been so bad that, federal and state governments attempt sometimes to proffer solutions through re-training programmes for teachers. This has not yielded any meaningful results. Most parents have resorted to enrolling their wards into private schools where learning seems to be more serious, but the problem is that private schools are expensive. Not all parents can afford the school fees. The big question is; what can be done to ensure that children read and write in English Language before they get to Primary three? The quest for an answer to this big question resulted into this pilot study.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

1. What is the difference between the experimental (Jolly Phonics) group and the control group in their performance in the EGRA assessment pretest?
2. What is the difference between the experimental (Jolly Phonics) group and the control group in their performance in the EGRA assessment posttest?

Results

At the end of the interview scores obtained by the respondents were coded and analysed. Results of the analysis are presented in three parts. Part one is the summary of pupils' demographic variables presented in Table 1. Part two is the summary of pupils' context interview presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Part three comprise results of the performance in the eight test items of EGRA. Since the assessment involved a Pre-test and a posttest several comparisons were made within and across groups. Independent t-test statistics was adopted in answering the research questions posed. Results of the analysis are presented in Tables 5, and 6.

Table 1: Summary data for pupils' demographic variables

S/No	Variables	Category	Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	118	54.4
		Female	99	45.6
		Total	217	100.0
2	Location	Urban	149	68.7
		Rural	68	31.3
		Total	217	100.0
3	Group	Jolly Phonics	112	51.6
		Control	105	48.4
		Total	217	100.0

Table 2: Summary data for Language spoken at home

S/No	Variable	Category	Frequency	%
1	Main Language used at home	English	33	15.2
		Others	184	84.8
		Total	217	100.0
2	Use of English at home	Never	11	5.1
		Rarely	40	18.4
		Some of the time	110	50.7
		Most of the time	36	16.6
		All the time	20	9.2
		Total	217	100.0

Table 3: Summary data for ownership of household property

S/No	Variable	Category	Frequency	%
1	Radio	No	44	20.3
		Yes	173	79.7
		Total	217	100.0
2	Phone	No	29	13.4
		Yes	188	86.6
		Total	217	100.0
3	Electricity	No	11	5.1
		Yes	206	94.9
		Total	217	100.0
4	Television	No	37	17.1
		Yes	180	82.9
		Total	217	100.0
4	Refrigerator	No	94	43.3
		Yes	123	56.7
		Total	217	100.0
5	Inside Toilet	No	173	79.7
		Yes	44	20.3
		Total	217	100.0
6	Bicycle	No	175	80.6
		Yes	42	19.4
		Total	217	100.0
7	Motorcycle	No	138	63.6
		Yes	79	36.4
		Total	217	100.0
8	Other Vehicles	No	135	62.2
		Yes	82	37.8
		Total	217	100.0

Table 4: Summary data for Education

S/No	Variable	Category	Frequency	%
1	Attended Nursery School before	No	109	50.2
		Yes	108	49.8
		Don't Know	Nil	
2	Primary School	No	175	80.6
		Yes	42	19.4
		Don't Know	Nil	
3	Mother's Education	None	25	11.5
		Primary	47	21.7
		Secondary	39	18.0
		University	9	4.1
		Don't Know	97	44.7
4	Father's Education	None	17	7.8
		Primary	23	10.6
		Secondary	67	30.9
		University	13	6.0
		Don't Know	97	44.7

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis of the difference in performance between Jolly Phonics group and the Control group in the pretest

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t
Letter Name Knowledge	Jolly Phonics	112	13.17	16.52	-.969
	Control	105	15.29	15.61	
Letter Sound Knowledge	Jolly Phonics	112	2.97	5.62	-.706
	Control	105	3.56	6.66	
Familiar word Reading	Jolly Phonics	112	1.93	4.07	-.949
	Control	105	2.62	6.46	
Invented Word Decoding	Jolly Phonics	112	0.18	0.87	1.057
	Control	105	0.08	0.53	
Initial Sound Identification	Jolly Phonics	112	1.13	2.17	.035
	Control	105	1.11	2.37	
Oral Passage Reading	Jolly Phonics	112	0.75	2.88	.961
	Control	105	0.46	1.26	
Reading Comprehension	Jolly Phonics	112	0.07	0.29	.121
	Control	105	0.07	0.28	
Listening Comprehension	Jolly Phonics	112	2.28	1.47	.625
	Control	105	2.15	1.47	
Dictation	Jolly Phonics	112	1.31	3.05	-.296
	Control	105	1.36	3.02	

P > .05, df = 261, critical t = 1.96

Results in Table 5 indicate that there was no significant difference between the Jolly Phonics group and the Control group in performance in the EGRA test using the pretest. Each calculated t-value was less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 215 degrees of freedom.

Results in Table 6 were for the comparison between the Jolly Phonics group and the control group with regards to their performance in the posttest. The results show that apart from in letter name knowledge, the Jolly Phonics group was significantly superior to their counterparts in the Control group. The calculated t-values were each higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 for all the reading tests except letter name knowledge. That is, pupils from the different groups had almost the same ability in identifying letters of the alphabetical order.

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis of the difference in performance between Jolly Phonics group and the Control group in the posttest

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t
Letter Name Knowledge	Jolly Phonics	112	21.13	21.73	0.750
	Control	105	18.94	21.06	
Letter Sound Knowledge	Jolly Phonics	112	16.85	17.32	8.014*
	Control	105	2.80	4.91	
Familiar word Reading	Jolly Phonics	112	7.29	9.04	2.502*
	Control	105	4.42	7.74	
Invented Word Decoding	Jolly Phonics	112	2.29	5.25	2.948*
	Control	105	0.50	3.51	
Initial Sound Identification	Jolly Phonics	112	5.67	3.87	9.387*
	Control	105	1.35	2.78	
Oral Passage Reading	Jolly Phonics	112	4.34	7.99	4.066*
	Control	105	0.85	3.80	
Reading Comprehension	Jolly Phonics	112	0.58	1.14	3.687*
	Control	105	0.12	0.58	
Listening Comprehension	Jolly Phonics	112	3.15	1.44	3.254*
	Control	105	2.50	1.49	
Dictation	Jolly Phonics	112	6.13	6.25	3.026*
	Control	105	3.82	4.89	

P > .05, df = 261, critical t = 1.96

Implications of the findings

The education system in Nigeria over the years has been faced with several challenges. One of such challenges has been the inability of most pupils in public primary schools to read and write before graduation in Primary six. The situation has been so bad that, federal and state governments attempt sometimes to proffer solutions through re-training programmes for teachers. This has not yielded any meaningful results. Most parents have resorted to enrolling their wards into private schools where learning seems to be more serious, but the problem is that private schools are expensive. Not all parents can afford the school fees. The big question is; what can be done to ensure that children read and write in English Language before they get to Primary three? The quest for an answer to this big question resulted into this pilot study.

