

Developing Beginning Reading Skills among Primary School Pupils in Cross River State, Nigeria: A Pilot Study Report

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Abstract: The paper determined the effects of Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) method in developing primary one pupils reading level, oracy skills level, English sight words level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills level, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skill. The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of Primary One pupils' reading level, oracy skill level, English sight words level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills level, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skill. It also examined the extent to which the CLE method of teaching reading will help to develop oracy skill, English sight words skill, print awareness skill, phono-phonemic awareness skill, letter recognition skill, and comprehension skill. One research question and six hypotheses were posed for examination. The study utilized pretest, posttest quasi experimental designs (expost factor). Seventy (70) primary one pupils participated in the study. The instruments used included the Oracy Test (OT), Sight Word Recognition Test (SWRT), Print Awareness Test (PAT), Letter Recognition Test (LRT), Phono-Phonemic Awareness Test (PPAT) and Comprehension test (CT). Four instruments were developed by the researcher and two were not. These instruments were used for assessment during pretest and posttest. The result indicated that the general reading ability of the pupils with reading problem needs was poor in all the skills during pretest. However, the experimental groups improved significantly in acquisition of all the six skills after intervention, using concentrated language encounter method. Based on this finding, the researchers made some recommendations for the improvement of all the skills in primary school pupils with reading problem in public school settings. The pilot study has provided insight that the main study will yield positive outcomes or results. It has shown that the instruments proposed for the main study will be reliable and valid. Again, the pilot study has confirmed its importance and usefulness as a guide for applying the research design in obtaining data for providing solutions to research problems in the main study. It provided guidance on how to effectively teach reading as well as improve their understanding of the nature of the reading process, since instructional activities are usually influenced by our understanding of the nature of what we teach.

Key words: beginning reading skills, concentrated language encounter, Oracy Test, sight word recognition test, Print Awareness Test, letter recognition test, phono-phonemic awareness and comprehension

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1. Background of the Study

An important task of primary schools is to teach pupils to read. Hence, the basic objective of primary education as reflected in the Nigerian Policy on Education is “inculcation of permanent literacy and ability to communicate effectively” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1981, p. 12). Reading is not just an important tool for learning but it is the basis for all aspects of learning (Oyetunde, 1997). It is very difficult to achieve academic success without being able to read. Consequently, pupils need to learn to read in order to achieve academic excellence. This highlights the close relationship between reading ability and academic achievement as well as the critical role of reading as a tool for the pupil’s successful living and functioning in today’s complex society.

In view of the significance of reading and the activities involved, beginning reading instruction is an important stage in the act of teaching and reading process (learning to read). The content of a beginning reading programme and the initial approach to the teaching of reading are of extreme importance. The pupil’s introduction to the activity the teacher calls “reading” will establish a fundamental attitude towards all subsequent activities in learning to read.

To achieve this, teachers should be acquainted with foundational reading skills for beginning readers and the strategies they can use to teach beginning reading (learn to read) and comprehension skills (reading to learn). This calls for the need for a well designed beginning reading programme to equip the teachers of reading with the various reading objectives, contents, lessons, activities or strategies, and assessment techniques to help them inculcate and develop beginning and appropriate reading skills in pupils. In addition, teachers need to understand the nature of the reading process because instructional activities are usually influenced by the nature of what is taught (Oyetunde, 2002).

The Nigerian education system has failed in developing efficient beginning reading skills especially in public primary school pupils (Oyetunde & Mmuodumogu, 1999; Umolu, 1998). Experiences of parents and teachers as well as studies conducted by scholars indicate that most primary and secondary school leavers are illiterates or semi-illiterates (Oyetunde, 2002; Dahl, 1981). This is proven by the fact that many of such pupils cannot cope with the reading demands of the curriculum and with what the society demands from them as literates.

For beginning readers in a public school system to meet the reading demands of their social environment, teachers must develop in them reading readiness concepts and skills such as oral language foundation, print awareness, letter recognition skills, phono-phonemic awareness skills, sight word recognition skills as well as comprehension skills. These concepts and skills serve as a gradual development from non-reading to beginning reading (Oyetunde & Mmuodumogu, 1999; Davis, 2000).

Oracy refers to general abilities in the oral language. But when one talks about oral language development across the curriculum, it means improving pupils’ ability to talk or communicate more effectively. Research shows, beyond question, that pupils gain language skills valuable for their success in reading and writing through talking and listening to teachers and peers (Dahl, 1981; Gambrell, 2001).

Developing sight vocabulary is key to reading, to writing, to verbal expression, and in many ways to building analytical and critical thinking (Davis, 2000). Also, to be successful readers, pupils need to be familiar and comfortable with the letters of the alphabet. Pupils whose knowledge of letters is not well-developed when they start school, require organized instruction and practice that will help them learn to identify, name, and write letters (Rosenberg, 2006).

Phono-phonemic awareness is essential because our writing system is a representation of speech sounds

which are represented by the symbols on a page. Most of the time, pupils who have reading problems have a weakness in their ability to detect and identify speech sounds because printed symbols may appear arbitrary to learners without phono-phonemic awareness (Ruby, 2004).

One of the skills that pupils need to master before they can read books is the possession of a broad, general appreciation of the nature of print (Rosenberg, 2006). Pupils need to be exposed to forms of print in everyday life, including conventions associated with book reading. Learning reading comprehension, for beginning readers, requires having them prepare to hear a story, reading the story to them, and then following up with questions to strengthen their reading comprehension skill (Torgesen & Matthews, 2000).

The Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) is a method of reading instruction that enables learners to learn language mainly through encounter with others in which the learners concentrate intensely on making themselves understood. The CLE techniques for developing literacy are particularly effective in educationally difficult circumstances, such as are found in developing countries where there is a lack of materials and financial support, there is an irrelevant curriculum to local needs, there is a lack of learner's interest in literacy and there are unqualified teachers or trainers who implement literacy programmes (Walker, Rathavich & Oller, 1992; Rotary International, 1984).

CLE programmes are "immersion" programmes in which pupils do new and increasingly more difficult things with spoken and written language in the course of group activity. Another strong feature of the methodology is called "scaffolding" whereby the teacher just models what pupils are expected to do, and then provide less and less guidance as pupils become more and more able to work without support. CLE method is based on Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist learning theory which is pupils' centred. It states that pupils' learning is based on adult guidance, social interaction, meaningful experiences and responsible risk-taking. The philosophical basis is that teachers provide a literacy rich environment for their pupils and combine literacy, speaking, reading skills.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Most Nigerian public primary school pupils are not learning to read. The public primary school system has more or less collapsed in the sense that only a very small percentage of pupils who go through it learn to read. Therefore, the specific problems of this study include pupils' lack of reading readiness or foundational skills for developing reading attitudes, concepts and skills, lack of a reading instructional programme that clearly spells out objectives, contents, activities or strategies, instruments, and assessment techniques for developing beginning reading skills, as well as pupils' lack of basic linguistic skills that can help them read texts. Besides, reading instructional methods have not been able to spell out specific techniques or phases that can be used to develop specific or particular reading skills and concepts of public school primary one pupils in Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop beginning reading skills in primary one pupils, in rural public schools, using the Concentrated Language Encounter method of teaching reading.

The specific objectives of the study include:

- (1) To find out primary one pupils reading level, Oracy skills level, English sight words level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills level, letter recognition skills level and comprehension level.
- (2) To determine the extent to which the CLE method of teaching reading will help primary one pupil develop oracy skills level, English sight words skills level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic

awareness skills level, letter recognition skills level and comprehension level.

1.3 Research Question

The research question guided the study:

What will be primary one pupils reading level, Oracy skills level, English sight words level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills level, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skills?

1.4 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

(1) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in Oracy skill.

(2) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in English sight word recognition skill.

(3) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in print awareness skill.

(4) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in letter recognition skills.

(5) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in phono-phonemic awareness skill.

(6) There is no significant mean difference in achievement mean scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it in comprehension skill.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was the quasi experimental design. Specifically, design adopted the pretest-posttest design in which intact groups were assigned to the experimental and control groups. The choice of this design was informed by the fact that intact groups were desired in order to avoid disrupting the school system.

The two intact groups were class one comprising of class 1A and 1B representing two arms. While treatment was applied to class 1A which was the experimental group, no treatment was applied to class 1B which was the control group. The pretest scores were used to assess their competence in the skills before treatment while the posttest scores were used to compare the effects of treatment. Treatment for internal validity was controlled by the use of control group in this design (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2004).

2.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study was Bette-Speaking Primary One Pupils who were beginning readers in rural public primary schools in Obudu Local Government Area. Most of the pupils were not only from impoverished print environments, but they had neither nursery education background nor formal education of any kind but were just being admitted into primary one.

One rural public primary school, comprising of 35 pupils in the experimental group and another 35 pupils in the control group from the same school constituted the sample of the study. Thus, there was a sample of 70 pupils for the study. The pupils were six years old selected through cluster sampling technique.

2.3 Instruments for Data Collection

Instruments for collection of data in this study were six. The main instruments for data collection were pre-posttests instruments and were: Oracy Test (OT), Sight Word Recognition Test (SWRT), Print Awareness Test (PAT), Letter Recognition Test (LRT), Phono-Phonemic Awareness Test (PPAT) and Comprehension test (CT).

2.4 Description of the Instruments

2.4.1 Oracy Test (OT)

The Oracy Test (OT) was developed by the researcher. The purpose of the Oracy test was to find out the pupils' ability to express themselves orally. The pupils were given pictures and scenes while the teacher asked them questions on spoken language. A total of 20 test items were written on long cards and each sentence was read to the pupil one by one. The pupils were expected to express oneself in spoken English.

2.4.2 Sight Words Recognition Test (SWRT)

Sight Word Recognition Test (SWRT) was developed by Umolu in 1985. This instrument was adapted for use in order to determine the pupils' ability to read the common words that a pupil needs to know how to read instantly in order to read print meaningfully. The purpose of this test was to ascertain the number of words the pupils could recognize which were written on the flash cards. These sight vocabulary of 100 high frequency words (100 HFW) by Umolu (1985) were judged because these were the possible words that are used frequently by pupils to express themselves generally, such as description of places, things, situations, attitudes, and feelings.

2.4.3 Print Awareness Test (PAT)

The test of print awareness (PAT) was researcher-made. This test was supposed to find out the extent to which the pupils demonstrated their competence in print awareness. The exercises involved story books. The purpose of this instrument was to find out the pupils level of print awareness and how to use the prints meaningfully. A total of 10 test items were asked. Each pupil was asked each question on a one-to-one with the research assistant and the pupil was expected to perform the action.

2.4.4 Letter Knowledge Test (LKT)

Letter Knowledge Test (LKT) was already standardized and used in English language, which was used by the researcher. A total of 26 small letter alphabets and another 26 capital letters making a total of 52 letters were prepared on flash cards. The purpose was to find out the capital and small letters that the pupil could name one after the other correctly.

2.4.5 Phono-Phonemic Awareness Test (PPAT)

This test assessed phoneme awareness, that is, first initial sounds. First sound test was given orally in order to determine if the pupils used initial sound of each first word. A total of 20 test items words were chosen based on the words that were commonly used by the pupils orally in spoken language.

2.4.6 Comprehension Test (CT)

Comprehension Test (CT) was developed by the researcher. A story which was different from the CLE stories was used during the pre and posttests. There were a total of 10 comprehension questions which were developed by the researcher on the story. Some questions were literal, inferential, and main idea questions. The pupils were asked the questions after the researcher had read the passage to the child one by one and the pupil were asked to answer the questions asked orally.

A brief explanation on how each instrument was developed was provided for clarity. Scoring of the Instruments was as follows. Phono-Phonemic Awareness Test (PPAT) was made up of 20 test items each. Right

answers were scored “1” mark each while wrong answers were scored “0” mark each. The total score obtainable was 20 marks. A score range of 0–7 points was considered low, 8–14 points was considered moderate while 15–20 points was considered high. Print Awareness Test (PAT) and Comprehension test (CT) was scored over a maximum of 10 marks for the 10 items. A score range of 0–4 points was considered low, 5–7 points was considered moderate while 8–10 points was considered high.

The instrument on Letter recognition test (LRT) was scored over 52 points. A score range of 0–20 points was scored low, 21–40 was scored moderate and 41–52 was scored as high. Each letter of the capital and small letters read by the pupil correctly attracted “1” point, and each letter read wrongly attracted “0” point. The sixth instrument, Sight Word Recognition Test (SWRT) was scored over 100. Right answers were scored “1” mark each while wrong answers were scored “0” each. A range of 0–30 points was considered low, 31–70 was considered moderate and 71–100 was considered as high.

In this study, content and face validity of the instrument were determined. The instruments were all subjected to five expert’s judgment. The instruments for pre-test, and post-test including the treatment instrument using the CLE starter books, structured activities and the list of 100 high frequency words using test re-test within two weeks of interval between two administrations on 24 comparable pupils were as follows; The performance of pupils in each of the instruments were correlated using Cronbach Alpha method in order to establish the reliability of the instruments. The coefficient of stability obtained for each instrument were; Oracy skills (OS) was .773; Sight word recognition skills (SWRS) was .710; Print awareness Skills (PAS) .796; Letter recognition skills (LRS) was .920; Phono-phonemic awareness skill (PPAS) was .716; and Comprehension skills (CS) was .799

2.5 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher presented a letter of introduction signed by the researcher’s supervisor to the head teacher of the primary school used for the study for permission and cooperation to carry out the study. This was followed by the training of two research assistants for the treatment class only. The research assistants administered the pretest and posttest on both experimental and control groups. There was also the administration of pre-experimental tests for the participating classes; one experimental and one control class in the sampled school. In addition, there was a weekly record of progress of performance for both experimental and control groups.

2.6 Method of Data Analysis

The data from research question were answered using percentages and bar graphs while t-test was used to present the summary column table for each hypothesis. The pilot study was conducted in one Government Primary School in Ohong, Obudu, and Cross River State.

3. Research Question

What will be primary one pupils reading level, Oracy skills level, English sight words level, print awareness skills level, phono-phonemic awareness skills level, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skill?

The level of English pupils brought to the programme in terms of all the skills namely — Oracy skills (OS); Sight word recognition skills (SWRS); Print awareness Skills (PAS); Letter recognition skills (LRS); Phono-phonemic awareness skill (PPAS); and Comprehension skills (CS) was very poor. For instance the qualitative analysis of the pre-test performance of the pupils for both experimental group and control group showed that in Oracy Skill (OS), the group mean scores of words read were 4 points (20%) for experimental and 5

points (25%) for control groups out of 20 points (100%). For sight vocabulary, the pupil's mean score was 3 points (3%) for experimental group and 2 points (2%) for control group. The pretest group mean scores on print awareness was 2 point (20%) for experimental group and 3 points (30%) for control group. The performance of the pupils on letter recognition of upper and lowercase alphabets was also poor. The mean score for the experimental group was 3 points (5.77%) and that of the control group was also 3 points (5.77%). The pretest mean score performance of both the experimental and control groups was 3 points (15%) each. The pretest mean score performance of both experimental and control groups was 1 point (10%) each.

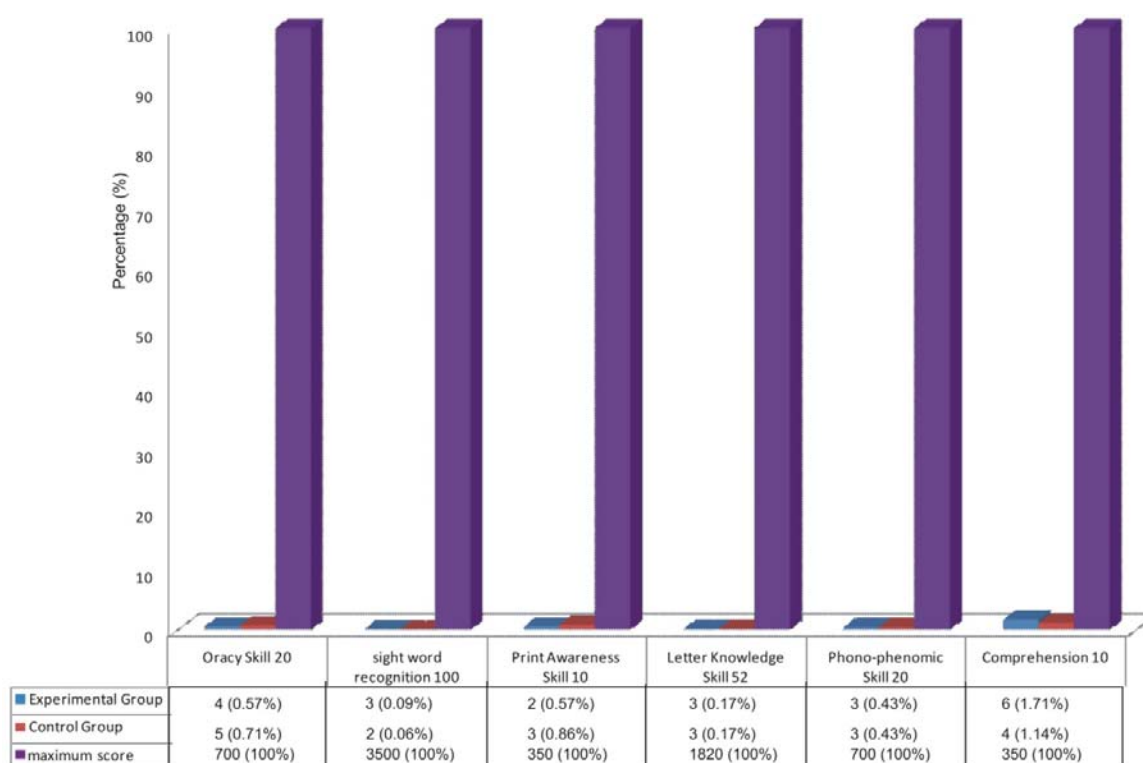


Figure 1 Pre Test Experimental Group and Pre Test Control Group

3.1 Hypothesis One

There is no significant mean difference in Oracy skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 1 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Oracy Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	15.91	1.42	68	38.47	0.000
Control Group	35	3.88	1.18			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 38.47 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of Oracy skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to any treatment at all.

3.2 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant mean difference in English sight word recognition skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 2 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Sight Vocabulary Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	67.94	13.11	68	27.67	0.000
Control Group	35	5.77	2.15			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 27.67 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of sight vocabulary skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to any treatment at all.

3.3 Hypothesis Three

There is no significant mean difference in print awareness skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 3 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Print Awareness Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	7.71	1.31	68	18.76	0.000
Control Group	35	2.20	1.13			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 18.76 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of print awareness skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to any treatment at all.

3.4 Hypothesis Four

There is no significant mean difference in letter recognition skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 4 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Letter Recognition Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	46.88	4.30	68	50.53	0.000
Control Group	35	3.17	2.77			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at 0.05 with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 50.53 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of letter recognition skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to treatment in it.

3.5 Hypothesis Five

There is no significant mean difference in phono-phonemic awareness skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 5 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Phono-Phonemic Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	17.11	1.77	68	39.36	0.000
Control Group	35	4.62	4.62			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 39.36 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of Phono Phonemic skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to any treatment at all.

3.6 Hypothesis Six

There is no significant mean difference in comprehension skills achievement scores of pupils exposed to CLE and those not exposed to it.

Table 6 Results of the Independent Sample of T-test Analysis for Comprehension Skills for Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	35	8.40	1.33	68	13.53	0.000
Control Group	35	4.17	1.22			

P < .05

For degree of freedom of 68 and level of significant at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 13.53 which is greater than the P value of 0.05 level, therefore the null hypothesis one was rejected in favour of primary one pupils in the experimental group. The general findings from the result shows that primary one pupils who received treatment in the experimental group in literacy have higher mean scores in acquisition of comprehension skills than the primary one pupils in control group who were not exposed to any treatment at all.

4. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to develop beginning reading skills among primary one pupils using the concentrated language encounter method. The pilot study result revealed that the CLE method is suitable for the development of beginning reading skills among beginning readers in particular and the teaching of reading in general. This is because the pupils showed significant progress or gains in the development of Oracy skills, sight word vocabulary, print awareness skills, phono-phonemic awareness skills, letter recognition skills, and comprehension skills. The majority of the pupils responded correctly to the activities that were used to assess their progress on the development of these skills most of the time, while some items were rarely missed by the pupils. This is confirmed by the mean score differences and p-values obtained from the pre-experimental and post-experimental performance of the pupils on the six skills.

The situation in the Nigerian primary school today is that reading is not properly taught to children, largely because teachers do not understand the nature of the reading process. Consequently, teachers do not pay attention to the development of beginning reading skills in children. The pilot study has indicated the CLE techniques and activities that teachers can use to help children develop beginning reading skills. These techniques and activities enable teachers to present reading instructional activities in meaningful contexts which will encourage children to learn to read and to love to read.

The pilot study has implications for positively influencing teachers' attitude towards children who have mild behaviour problems as a result of lack of prior exposure to or interaction with print pre reading. The pilot study revealed that these children can make remarkable progress if appropriate methods are used. Teachers need to be more patient with pupils and help build in them self-confidence that will promote positive attitude towards print.

The pilot study also has implications for the need for a beginning reading programme. Such a beginning reading programme will equip teachers for reading with the objectives, contents, activities or strategies and evaluation techniques that will provide guidance on how to effectively teach reading. This will also improve their understanding of the nature of the reading process, since instructional activities are usually influenced by our understanding of the nature of what we teach (Oyetunde & Muodumogu, 1999).

5. Contribution to Knowledge

The present work has made the following contributions to the current state educational knowledge in Nigeria. These include the following:

(1) The researcher has developed four instruments, using construct validity, to identify early primary school pupils who cannot read. These instruments are mainly for testing beginning reading skills, namely: Oracy Skill Test; Print Awareness Skill Test; Phono-Phonemic Awareness Skill Test and Comprehension Skill Test.

(2) The Concentrated Language Encounter method was found to have been very effective in developing beginning reading skills in primary school pupils. The findings from this study will be very useful to researchers interested in developing beginning reading skills, through the production of primers that can be used in training primary school pupils to acquire beginning reading skills.

(3) Nigerian primary school pupils in the rural areas are more disadvantaged in terms of preparatory instruction before the commencement of Primary One, either due to the economic status of the parents or to the prevalent poverty level of rural communities. The acquisition of beginning reading skills can be adequately

supported by Government policies through the Federal and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) with the aggressive provision of requisite physical infrastructures in Nigerian primary schools. Such improvements in infrastructure, especially in the rural areas, would enhance the attainment of some of the Millennium Development Goals in Nigeria.

(4) The standard of literacy in Nigeria is a major problem, as many pupils are not in a position to read simple books by the time they are admitted into Class One. The automatic admission of pupils into Primary One and automatic promotion of pupils into the next class, even when they fail, has worsened the standard of education in the country. The basic pre-reading skills that should have been developed before commencement of Primary Class One are often absent. Most pupils in rural communities are not often exposed to any formal education before being admitted into Class One. The introduction of Concentrated Language Encounter is therefore vital in preventing further deterioration in the standard of education.

(5) The findings from the study has implications for contribution to knowledge in terms of short time in-service training workshop and constant capacity building workshops to train and retrain all Primary school teachers and their Head Teachers on how to use the Language Encounter method to develop Oracy, sight word vocabulary, print awareness, letter recognition, phono-phonemic awareness and comprehension skills in their pupils. Training and re-training in these skills would obviously help to boost the provision of quality education to Nigerian citizens in the 21st century.

6. Conclusion

The pilot study has provided insights that the main study will yield positive outcomes or results. It has shown that the instruments proposed for the main study will be reliable and valid. Again, the pilot study has confirmed its importance or usefulness as a guide for applying the research design in obtaining data for providing solutions to research problems in the main study. Children responded positively to the treatment in all the six skills as the majority of them responded correctly to the assessment and treatment items most of the time, while some of the items were rarely missed by some of the children. The children's attitude towards reading changed positively as shown by their enthusiastic participation in classroom reading instructional activities. The effectiveness of CLE method during treatment was confirmed by post- test performance of the group on the six skills.

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