Role of Instructional Materials in Improving Pupils with Dyslexia in Public Primary Schools in Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra State

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Abstract

The study was conducted to determine the role of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A of Anambra state. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted to carry out the study. The population of the study consisted of 235 public primary school teachers from 38 public schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 public primary school teachers from 10 schools randomly selected from the 38 public primary schools in the study area. The instrument used for data collection was a 17 item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Instructional Materials for Improving Pupils with Dyslexia (IMIPD)". The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha was to determine the reliability of the instrument and the overall reliability of 0.70 was obtained. Mean was used for data analysis. The findings, among others, revealed that instructional materials help dyslexic pupils to develop interest and participate in activities, improve understanding and retention. The findings also revealed that lack of fund to make purchase, inability of teacher to improvise and make suitable selection of instructional materials among others are factors that are against the use of instructional materials in improving dyslexic pupils. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that teachers should always use suitable instructional materials that address the need of dyslexic children while teaching and state government and school authority should aid in providing instructional materials in schools.

Key words: Primary education, Dyslexia, Instructional materials.

Introduction

Education in any form, is a powerful tool for human and nation development. It poses as a driving force for developing nations of the world which they utilize for their transformation and development. Nations achieve these development and transformation mostly through educating their citizens who contribute directly to the developmental goal of their nations. Unamba, Nwaneri and Nwaebo (2015), sees education as a process of systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and acquisition of skills, potentials and abilities which will enable individuals to contribute efficiently to the growth and development of their society and nation. Muskan (2017), also defined education as inculcating morals and ethical values, positive thinking, attitude of helping and giving to the society to bring change to their society. These show that it is an all-round affair of individual development in terms of socially, mentally, morally, physically and intellectually in bringing change in the society that will amount to its development. Nigeria like

most nations of the world is undergoing rapid social, economic and political reforms. These changes and reforms have indicated the need for proper education of her citizens to help in meeting her developmental goals to meet the ideal development of the emergent world. Having every child to access quality education that will nurture their mind will help create a good society that meets up with the ideal development of the world today. To achieve this, the Nigeria education system is structured into Early childcare and development (0-4), Basic education that comprises pre-primary, primary, and junior secondary education (5-15), Senior secondary education (15-18) and Tertiary education (18 and above).

Primary education as one of the education structure has a purpose it serves. According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), primary education is the education given to children aged 6-12 years. The objectives of this level of education, as stated in the policy is to: inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound bases for scientific, critical and reflective thinking; promote patriotism, fairness, understanding and national unity; install social, moral norms and values in the child; develop in the child the ability to adapt to their changing environment and provide opportunity for the child to function effectively in the society within the limits of their capacity. In pursuance of these objectives, the curriculum at this level is focused on English studies, Mathematics, Prevocational studies, Basic science and technology, Religion and National values, one Nigerian language and Cultural and Creative art.

The first among the objectives emphasized on inculcating permanent literacy in children which is gotten through proper English studies. This is required to enable pupils gain the ability to communicate effectively. This implies that every child must have the ability to read and write to enable them to communicate effectively in expressing themselves either in writing or in speaking. These objectives cannot be achieved if the children are not exposed to quality education at this level. Children, however, are faced with a lot of factors that may prevent them from this quality education. This problem could be linked to various factors ranging from the pupil's background, exposure and experience, quality of the teacher, application of effective teaching strategies and instructional materials, learning difficulty among others.

School pupils always run into difficulties in learning and understanding some concepts they are learning in class. These learning difficulties that confront children during learning process are numerous. Learning difficulties have been defined in many ways by scholars and researchers of various disciplines. Learning Disability Association of America (LDA, 2019), defined learning

disability as an umbrella term describing a number of other more specific learning disability. Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (2017), referred to learning disability as a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information which affect learning in individuals. However, Ugwu (2008), expressed that learning disability or difficulty is not seen as a disease in children. The author observed that though these children are not blind, deaf or mentally retarded, they cannot accurately perceive things visually, hear or listen attentively or learn like other normal children do. These disabilities and difficulties can be in form of Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, aphasia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) dyslexia amongst others. Teachers are more likely to discover pupils under their care that suffer from these difficulties while learning and as such, they will be challenged to help them overcome it. For the purpose of this research, focus was laid on dyslexia.

Dyslexia as a learning difficulty has grown a major concern in the poor performance of pupils in English studies. Ikediashi (2012) argued that when a pupil is deficient in reading, spelling and writing skills, a drop in academic achievement is resultant. This is because the usual problem with dyslexia in children is mostly seen in language area even when they could be very intelligent in other areas. Ugwu (2008), defined dyslexia as a condition where a child has difficulties in reading which could be a problem on pronunciation, word recognition, reading speed or special reading skill as map reading, use of index and reading of mathematical or other technical material. However, researchers such as International Dyslexia Association (IDA, 2017), Reid (2012) and Gavin-raid (2011) agreed that dyslexia is a type of learning disorder affecting specifically language, writing and reading skills more than it concerns mathematical skills, attention deficits or motor problem. In line with these definitions, dyslexia is a learning difficulty caused by the inability of an individual to read properly and fluently, struggles to decode, recognize, pronounce and spell words properly. Hence, dyslexia can be seen or referred to as a learning difficulty that interferes with a child's learning skill and ability which increases their difficulties in reading, understanding, spelling, word recognition and pronunciation. Many pupils have failed to achieve permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively because of this learning disorder. Lawal (2018), revealed that there are hundreds of thousands of dyslexic primary school children in Nigeria who are subjected to ill treatment and stigmatization; this is so due to ignorance and impatience of teachers and parents. Dyslexia Foundation of Nigeria (2017), reported that more

than 17 million people are living with dyslexia in Nigeria. According to Dyslexia Foundation of Nigeria, this has been responsible for high rate of school dropout and increasing number of juvenile crimes.

Children with this learning condition need to be understood by their teachers if at all they will be helped to improve. Ikediashi (2012), expressed that teachers need to know why their pupils are not performing well in reading and writing and, an experienced teacher by way of careful observation can easily detect dyslexia. However, the increase in the rate of frustrated learners that leads to school dropout and juvenile crimes in schools and society, as indicated by Dyslexia Foundation of Nigeria (2017), could be seen as a result of the stigmatization, ill treatments they face and inability of the teacher to understand their learning condition. Understanding their learning condition will task the teachers handling them to strategically and actively engage them in learning activities that will help their conditions and less their frustrations. To improve their performance in learning how to effectively spell, recognize, pronounce and read words fluently, teachers need to be creative and engage them actively in class while using effective teaching strategies. This could be assisted with instructional materials which will help to capture their mind in understanding and solving their problem in areas of their learning difficulties. Ikediashi (2012), posited that there is no significant or generally accepted management of or cures for dyslexia but can be assisted to learn reading and writing with appropriate instructional strategies and educational support creatively introduced by the teacher.

Instructional strategy and educational support have always proven to help teachers achieve their lesson objectives during teaching and learning process. It makes learning realistic and practical. Unamba, Onyepandu and Nwaebo (2015), expressed that such opportunity and exposure give children the opportunities to develop, interact and actively engage in the learning process. Instructional material could help to improve the learning difficulties of dyslexic children as it serves as an educational aid during instruction. Anigbogu (2012), defined instructional materials as any item or materials that help the teacher to present skills and knowledge to a learner and the learner in turn perceives instructions better. The author further expressed that instructional material especially in primary schools influences the teaching of concepts and ideas in any subject matter which helps pupils to understand, comprehend and perform better in their activities. California Education Code (2019), defined instructional materials as all material that are designed for use by pupils and their teachers as a learning resource and help pupils to acquire facts, skills or opinions

or to develop cognitive processes. In the view of Pham (2015) and Obasi (2013), instructional materials are pupils and teachers friendly because it helps the teacher to teach better and pupils to learn joyfully and retain better what they have learnt. In line with these definitions, instructional materials can be seen as any content that conveys the essential knowledge and skills of a subject in school curriculum through a medium or a combination of media for conveying information to learners. These medium or combination of media includes books, supplementary materials, computer software, magnate media, DVD, CD-ROMs, electronic media among others. As such, a lot of scholars have tried to categories instructional material. Akude (2004), classified instructional materials into four major groups which are visual materials, audio materials, audio-visual materials and the individualized learning and interacting materials. Those classified instructional are printable materials, projectable materials and non-projectable materials. All these media of instructional materials if applied strategically by the class teacher and actively engage, these dyslexic children in class activities could go a long way in improving children who are unfortunate to be dyslexic. Against this backdrop therefore, the researchers intend to determine the role of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo LGA of Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Lack of understanding children with dyslexia has led to some stereotype and labeling by their teachers, parents and even their mates. This has made people to see them as lazy learners with low motivation or zeal to learn and pupils with low intelligent quotient, among others. The stereotype and labeling have attacked their self-esteem, induced self-doubt in them, made them socially reclusive and caused them to hide whenever the idea of school or academic related activities or work are mentioned. As a result, children with this learning condition are not usually carried along with during teaching process primarily because teachers failed to understand their learning conditions. This, however, has contributed to their unimproved learning condition since no efforts were made in addressing their difficulties or involve teaching materials to aid their understanding and retention. The act of teaching is primarily concerned with passing of ideas, skills and attitudes from the teacher to the learner and once this objective is not achieved, it will surely lead to an ineffective and inefficient desired learner's outcome. This could be due to the fact that children were subjected to learn in a way that is not suitable for their brains to capture and

understand information. The objective of inculcating permanent literacy and ability to communicate effectively in dyslexic children can never be achieved with this state. Therefore, is need to balance this gap of how these pupils are seen, taught and treated and, barriers broken to enable dyslexic children to learn better and become better version of themselves. It is in this context that this study investigated the role of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to determine the role of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A of Anambra State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Determine the impact of instructional materials in improving children with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State.
2. Determine the factors militating against the use of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexic in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State.

Research Questions

1. What impact does instructional materials have in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State?
2. What are the factors militating against the use of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State?

Method

The study was conducted to determine the role of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted to carry out the study. The population of the study consisted of 235 public primary school teachers from 38 public schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. Simple random sampling was used to select 100 public primary school teachers from 10 schools randomly selected from the 38 public schools in the study area. The instrument used for data collection was a 17 item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Instructional Materials for Improving Pupils with Dyslexia (IMIPD)". The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach Alpha was to determine the reliability of the instrument and

the overall reliability of 0.70 was obtained. A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree (D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD, 1 point) was used to answer the research questions. Mean was used to analyze the research questions and in taking decision, mean scores above 2.50 were considered as agreed while those below 2.50 were considered as disagreed.

Results

Research Question 1: What impacts does instructional materials have in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State?

Table 1: Teacher's Mean Responses on the Impact of Instructional Materials in Improving Pupils with Dyslexia in Public Primary Schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State.

S/N	Impact of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia	X	DECISION
1	Instructional materials influence pupils to attempt exercises in areas they once shy away from.	3.3	Agree
2	Instructional materials help dyslexic children to master the essential skills in words recognitions and pronunciation.	2.8	Agree
3	Audio and audio-visuals materials help them to connect to the reality of what they are learning and experiencing in spelling and sound recognition.	3.4	Agree
4	Dyslexic children show great interest to learn when instructional materials are involved in learning new words.	3.0	Agree
5	Children express themselves well in storytelling and reading when flashcards and posters are involved.	2.7	Agree
6	Page reading and comprehension seems easy when posters and pictures are used.	2.9	Agree
7	Practices and drills with instructional materials accelerate children's reading and speaking attributes.	3.2	Agree
8	Blending and pronunciation of words are easier when instructional materials are used in instruction.	3.0	Agree
9	New words derived from lessons taught with instructional materials are easily learnt, spelt and retained.	2.6	Agree

The data presented in table 1 showed the mean scores of the entire items are above 2.50. Based on the mean ratings, all the items in table 1 showed that the respondents agreed with the entire items presented as the impacts of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia.

Research Question 2: What are the factors militating against the use of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State?

Table 2: Teacher's Mean Responses on the Factors Militating Against the Use of Instructional Materials in Improving Pupils with Dyslexia in Public Primary Schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State.

S/N	Factors militating against the use of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia	X	DECISION
10	The school management provides adequate instructional materials for use during English studies.	1.8	Disagree
11	High cost of materials and Lack of fund to purchase suitable materials to assist dyslexic children.	2.6	Agree
12	Lack of non-projected materials like flips and flash cards to use for pupils with dyslexia.	2.9	Agree
13	Inability of teachers to improvise instructional materials to assist learning and understanding when not available.	2.5	Agree
14	Inability of the teacher to create time during lessons to involve the usage of instructional materials while teaching.	3.3	Agree
15	Inadequate knowledge on the right selection and usage of suitable instructional materials to address the difficulties dyslexic pupils face.	3.2	Agree
16	Poor maintenance culture to the usage and storage of instructional materials.	2.7	Agree
17	Teachers show insufficient concern and interest in using instructional materials to teach dyslexic children.	1.9	Disagree

Date presented in table 2 indicates that items number 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 with mean scores of 2.6, 2.9, 2.5, 3.3, 3.2 and 2.7 respectively were agreed by the respondents and, items number 10, and 17 with mean scores of 1.8 and 1.9 respectively were disagreed by the respondents. Therefore, the table revealed the factors that are militating against the use of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia are items number 11-16.

Discussion

The findings in table 1 revealed that instructional materials influence pupils to attempt exercises in areas they once shy away from, instructional materials help dyslexic children to master the essential skills in words recognitions and pronunciation, children express themselves well in storytelling and reading when flashcards and posters are involved, page reading and comprehension seems easy when posters and pictures are used and practices and drills with instructional materials accelerate children's reading and speaking attributes among others are the impact of instructional materials in improving pupils with dyslexia in public primary schools in Ekwusigo L.G.A. of Anambra State. The findings are in line with that of Anigbogu (2012), who posits that instructional materials help pupils to understand, comprehend, and performs better when applied in their teaching. The findings are also in agreement with that of Obasi (2013), who posits that instructional materials are pupils and teacher friendly which helps the teacher to teach better and the pupils to learn joyfully and retain better. Similarly, Unamba, Onyepandu and Nwebo (2015), posits that the use of instructional materials gives the pupils the exposure and opportunity to interact, actively engage in the learning process and thereby attain maximum potentials.

The findings in table 2 revealed factors that militate against the use of instructional materials in teaching and improving pupils with dyslexia. From the findings, it revealed that the school management provides adequate instructional materials for use during English studies, high cost of materials and lack of fund to purchase suitable materials to assist dyslexic children. lack of non-projected materials like flips and flash cards to use for pupils with dyslexia and inability of teachers to improvise instructional materials to assist learning and understanding when not available among others. The findings are in agreement with that of Dyslexia Foundation of Nigeria (2017), who posits that teachers lack the basic understanding of dyslexic learning conditions which requires them to be creative and strategically engage the children with teaching aids in an attempt to enhance their performance in area of their learning difficulties. The findings are in consonance with that of Simplinotes (2019), who posits that how effective the teaching and learning process becomes depends merely on the knowledge and masterly of the teacher to make suitable decisions that will help them to demonstrate their content easily to their learners and improve learning.

Conclusion

The education objectives at this level are of utmost important especially in inculcating permanent literacy and ability to communicate effectively. Learning disability like dyslexia that pose as a stumbling block in achieving these educational objectives should be seen as a great enemy to the future of these children and the development of the society; and as such should be defeated with any teaching strategy and materials. To get to the core of this objective and to assist learning process, instructional materials that helps dyslexic pupils to assimilates, retain and memorize content easily have to be involved during teaching by teachers. This involvement is sure to make dyslexic pupils too control anxiety and pace of learning, promote better understanding and as such, help them to overcome their learning difficulties and improve. The availability and use of instructional materials is a top priority in increasing the effectiveness of teaching dyslexic children and, teachers alone cannot provide all the needed supporting materials to foster an effective teaching and learning process with dyslexic children. It can be considered that if these are not maintained properly and available in adequate amount for teachers to utilize, then dyslexic pupils will not be able to learn properly to improve. If such problems are not corrected or improved at this level which serves as the bedrock of education, the future of these children will be in jeopardy which may influence their academic and social life, denying them the right to contribute to the development of their society and nation at large.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The state Government and school authorities should help in providing instructional materials for effective teaching of children with dyslexia by teachers.
2. Teachers should always consider the use of suitable instructional materials in handling dyslexic pupils and also crates enough time during teaching process to involve its usage.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to improvise instructional materials when not available to ensure that their lesson objectives are achieved and also map out special time and classes for dyslexics in their class.
4. Teachers should grow the necessary maintenance culture in using and storing instructional materials that is available to them or able to improvise. This will ensure continues usage and longevity of theses available and improvised instructional materials.

5. The government should partner with private sectors like the Dyslexia Foundation of Nigeria in creating much needed dyslexia awareness for everyone, especially for teachers, through workshop and seminars-training in producing professionally enlighten teachers. This would go a long way in reducing the stereotype and labeling directed towards the dyslexics in the society.

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