Availability and Utilization of Cartoons for Effective Teaching of English Language in Primary Schools in Idemili South LGA

[1] Ikwuka, O. I. & [2] Ubah, C. P.

[1,2]Department of Educational Foundations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria
[1] oi.ikwuka@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

The study investigated the availability and utilization of cartoons for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools in Idemili South Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 58 English language teachers in the area. There was no sampling as the population is of manageable size. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by three experts and was found reliable with reliability coefficient of 0.72 and 0.70 respectively for the two clusters using Chronbach Alpha technique. The data collected were analysed using percentages and mean. The findings revealed that cartoons are available and utilized for teaching English language in primary schools. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers should use the informal, progressive and cartoon animation strategies that will develop in pupils high ordered skills needed for exploratory, experimental and creative learning in English language.

Keywords: Availability, Utilization, Cartoons, English Language, Primary Schools

Introduction

The development of any nation is hinged on a solid educational foundation for its citizenry. This pre-supposes that education is a means of effecting changes in the society in order to build a well-developed country. The objective of education includes objectivity, creativity and intellectual adventure. Education enables a child to develop physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and intellectually. In Nigeria, education takes place at different levels - primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary education refers to the education given to children between five and 11 years. Primary education is the Nigerian child's stepping-stone to pursue higher academic and social goals. The academic block in Nigeria has a broad base at the primary stage and tapers towards the top at the tertiary stages. Therefore, pupils that are able to undergo primary education have

a better probability of continuing up to secondary school and to tertiary institution if they so desire. In doing so, a pupil can have an opportunity to find and secure a better job than a pupil that fails to attain primary education (Asodike, 2009). It is in realization of the pivotal role of primary education that effective teaching of primary school pupils has become expedient.

Effective teaching involves the use of relevant, interesting and imaginative introduction, for presentation of lessons that interest, motivate and make learning objectives clear to the pupils. Additionally, it involves the use of language and dictions that command respect from the learners, even distribution of quality questions that pose challenges or stimulate the curiosity of the learners' (Seweje, 2010). The lesson is expected to involve pupils' active participation. That is, instruction is to be more pupil-centred and less teacher-directed so that pupils can solve their problems interestingly and share information on various concepts. In addition, effective lessons help pupils gain much confidence, skills and competence to perform satisfactorily in the subjects such as English language.

English is the language of instruction and evaluation in the educational institutions (mid-primary school -primary 3 to tertiary level). Apart, it is a teaching subject in all strata of the educational system in Nigeria. Additionally, it is considered the gateway to academic excellence. This is because proficiency in English is a pre-condition for success in all other subjects. More so, English language functions as the language of government and administration in Nigeria. It is the language with which government businesses are conducted. In other words, it is the official language of the government. Both in intra and international frontiers, English language is used for communication. It is used for writing minutes of meetings, memoranda, official letters and publications.

Despite the pivotal role played by English language both in the educational society and society at large, its teaching is fraught with a lot of problems. For instance, it takes a long time to learn a new grammar system and thousands of new words. In addition, it takes a lot of

practice to develop listening, speaking and writing skills in a new language. This trend may not be unconnected to the fact that the use of educational technology is not given its pride of place in the teaching of English language in primary schools.

In the last few years, the world of educational technology has witnessed a rapid development in various audio-visual technologies which offer many possibilities for teachers to construct activities around listening to various authentic programmes, watching related videos, and holding conversations in real world. Teachers employ various tools and techniques to make the pupils learn better. A cartoon is one such material with which a teacher can provide joyful environment and also make her/his pupils to think differently and encourage them to create something on their own.

Cartoon is a visual medium with lots of humour which can be either in the form of single picture or series of pictures, captioned or non-captioned. These are seen in magazines, newspapers, books, television etc. The dialogue of cartoons is characterized by sentences that are simple and complete, and repetition is used frequently. Children, therefore, learn significant number of words from the context of cartoons that they can use in real life. Moreover, by watching cartoons, students are-highly stimulated to speak the target language (Haque, 2015).1t is known that when adopting a new language, people adopt a new personality based on the perception they have about the target culture. Adopting a personality of a cartoon character is very common in childhood, because those characters are funny, interesting and care-free. They appeal to children in the course of learning.

Use of cartoon in language learning can be helpful for initiating debate and focused group discussions in a classroom among learners as it stimulates them to engage in critical thinking in order to assess and formulate their views and opinions. Learners are given the opportunity to participate in classroom discussions, to support their own ideas and knowledge as well as identifying others conceptions of a particular topic with cartoons. This approach

helps the teachers to develop imaginative power amongst students by building proper knowledge.

English language lessons require a "positive" atmosphere, and nothing creates a more positive atmosphere than humour (Aboudan, 2013), which cartoons contain in abundance. Cartoons eliminate the pressure of being aware of learning another language. A child may repeat certain funny sentences from cartoons, and they subconsciously become ingrained in his/her mind. English language is pregnant with meaning, and the language in cartoons carries with it a set of values which children are prone to adopt more easily at that age; hence the need for availability and utilization of cartoons for its teaching in private and public primary schools.

The availability and utilization of cartoons is integral to the teaching of English language in primary schools. This is because; present primary education system demands new techniques in teaching and learning process. Today, pupils expect joyful environment in English language classroom for learning with interest and attention because media has attracted them-in very many ways with variety of fun fulfilled programmes such as cartoons. English language lessons depend on the availability and utilization of quality and relevant instructional materials such as cartoons and the skill of the teacher. This is because, cartoons can positively contribute to the learners existing knowledge and increase their participation in English language lessons. More so, cartoons make it easy for learners to follow, understand and retain content of the lesson. The argument above implies that failure to provide cartoons for use may impact on meaningful teaching and learning of English language in primary schools.

Teachers can use cartoons to teach language, human values, ethics and citizenship. The central idea of a cartoon may vary from that of simply wanting to amuse us to that of influencing our thinking (Thakur, 2015). Thakur added that the humour, empathy, and satire created in cartoons enable pupils to better understand the world. Lots of information is packed in a small picture presented with or without a short caption. Such pictures create a powerful

ground for the readers in classroom discussions, to support their own ideas and knowledge as well as identifying others conceptions of a particular topic with cartoons. This approach helps the teachers to develop imaginative power amongst pupils by building proper knowledge. The use of cartoons is one important way to ensure learner motivation and participation. An imaginative and resourceful teacher can work wonders with the help of cartoons in demystifying concepts.

Concept cartoons affects pupils' enquiry learning skill perceptions by helping students to enquire new knowledge with their existing experiences. Teaching via concept cartoons is effective in remedying misconceptions. Concepts may be from any subject of school curriculum. Among many subjects in primary school curriculum, English language is a subject full of controversial issues that provoke teachers to think differently so as to make it free from misconceptions. Cartoons eliminate the pressure of being aware of learning another language. A child may repeat certain funny sentences from cartoons, and they subconsciously become ingrained in his/her mind, as "Suggestopedia," the method of learning a foreign language by memorizing sentences in a playful atmosphere, suggests.

The development of English Language skills depends on many factors and among them is the availability and use of appropriate instructional materials. Adeogun (2010) and Makokha and Wanyonyi (2015) in their studies, observed that public schools in Nigeria are starved by both teaching and learning materials, and that teachers rely on chalk and talk method to teach language skills. They conclude that learners do not perform well in language skills development due to insufficient resources. The studies of Sofowara (2014) and Taher and Tam (2012) on the effectiveness of cartoons in teaching and learning English language in primary schools showed that Cartoon was an effective, creative and motivating method for teaching English Language. It is in view of the foregoing that the investigation into the availability and

utilization of cartoons for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools in Idemili South became expedient.

The poor performance of pupils in English Language in internal and external examinations demands intervention. This is revealed in the persistent high failure rates in the common entrance examinations in English language. This decline in standard and poor performance of pupils in the subjects can be traced to non-availability and non-utilization of instructional materials such as cartoons for teaching and learning. It is evident that there are problems facing the teaching and learning of English language in primary schools. The researchers observed that the cause could be traced to the poor foundation in spelling, reading and phonological processing sub skills in the primary schools. The absence of these skills in English Language may have an untold effect on performance of pupils. Problems faced in teaching tenses, spelling pronunciation, use of articles, summary writing, irregular verbs, punctuation, word order and conditionals are supposedly caused by the non-availability and non-utilization of instructional materials such as cartoons for teaching and learning. Consequently, low' English grades and deteriorating standards as observed in both written examinations and oral communications continue to puzzle people of all categories. This has become a matter of concern and politicians, parents, teachers, quality assurance, standard officers and the policy makers have aired their concern. It is against this backdrop that the researchers sought to investigate the availability and utilization of cartoons for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools in Idemili South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

1. What cartoons are available for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools?
2. What available cartoons are utilized for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools?

Method

The design of the study was descriptive survey. The area of study was Idemili South Local Government Area of Anambra State. All the 58 English Language teachers in the 18 primary schools in the area constituted the population of the study. The entire population was used as the sample for the study. This is because the population is small and of manageable size; therefore there was no sampling. The instruments used for data collection were two sets of questionnaire titled "Availability of Cartoons for the Teaching of English Language" (ACTEL) and "Utilization of Cartoons for the Teaching of English Language" (UCTEL). The instruments were constructed by the researchers. The ACTEL was structured on 2-point rating scale of Available (A) and Not Available (NA) for cluster one. While the UCTEL was structured on 5-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) for cluster two. The instruments were duly validated by three experts. Reliability of the instruments was established by the use of Chronbach Alpha and coefficients of 0.72 and 0.70 were obtained. The researchers considered the values high enough to be used for the study. Percentage and mean were used to answer the research questions. Mean scores from 1- 1.49 was regarded as Very Low Extent, 1.5-2.49 as Low Extent, 2.5-3.49 as Moderate Extent, 3.5-4.49 as High Extent, while above 4.49 as Very High Extent. Percentage from 0%-49% were regarded as Not available, while 50% and above were regarded as Available.

Results

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of available cartoons for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools

S/N	Items	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
1	Textbook cartoons	32	55.2	Available
2	Journals cartoons	19	32.8	Not Available
3	Newspapers cartoons	35	60.3	Available
4	Graphic posters cartoons	39	67.2	Available
5	Charts cartoons	43	74.1	Available
6	Model cartoons	51	87.9	Available
7	Story boarding cartoons	44	75.9	Available
8	Encyclopaedia cartoons	27	46.6	Not Available
	Average Percentage		**62.5**	**Available**

Table 1 shows the items most available with their percentages as: model cartoons (87.9%), story boarding cartoons (75.9%), chart cartoons (74.1 %), graphic posters cartoons (67.2%), newspaper cartoons (60.3%) and textbook cartoons (55.2%) as shown in items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. While the items least available with their percentages are encyclopaedia (46.6%) and journal cartoons (32.8%) as shown in items 2 and 8. This indicates that cartoons are available in teaching English Language in primary schools.

Table 2: Mean of available cartoons that are utilized for the effective teaching of English language in primary schools.

S/N	Items	X	Remark'
1	Textbook cartoons	3.83	High Extent
2	Journals cartoons	2.28	Low Extent
3	Newspapers cartoons	3.85	High Extent
4	Graphic posters cartoons	3.92	High Extent
5	Charts cartoons	4.06	High Extent
6	Model cartoons	4.22	High Extent
7	Story boarding cartoons	4.11	High Extent
8	Encyclopaedia cartoons	2.33	Low Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.58**	**High Extent**

Table 2 shows that majority of the cartoons such as model cartoons, story boarding cartoons, chart cartoons, graphic posters cartoons, newspaper cartoons and textbook cartoons are utilized for the teaching of English language to a high extent as shown in items 7, 6, 5, 4, 3

and 1, while journal and encyclopaedia cartoons as shown in items 2 and 8 are utilized to a low extent as they have mean scores below the cut-off mean 3.00.

Discussion

The result of the study revealed that most of the cartoons are adequately available while very few least available for effective teaching of English Language in primary schools in Idemili South Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is obvious that primary school teachers in the area are aware of the cartoon language with set of values and humours which children are prone to adopt more easily at that age. The result of this study disagrees with the view of previous researchers like Adeogun (2010) and Makokha and Wanyonyi (2015) who observed that public schools in Nigeria are starved of both teaching and learning materials and learners do not perform well in language skills development due to insufficient resources.

The result of the study also showed that most of the cartoons are utilized at high extent while very few are utilized at low extent. This could be due to the fact that cartoons have the potential of making pupils learn better because of humour, motivation and satire created in cartoons that eliminate the pressure of being aware of learning another language. This result further agrees with the views of Aboudan (2013) and Haque (2015) who observed that when used appropriately, cartoons eliminate the pressure of being aware of learning another language and that children learn significantly number of words from the context of cartoons that they can use in real life; and that by watching cartoons, children are highly stimulated to speak the target language.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that cartoons are available, and the available cartoons are utilized for teaching English Language in primary schools to a high extent.

Recommendations

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

1. School administrators should ensure that cartoons are utilized by primary school teachers in order to concretize learning in English Language.
2. Government should organize seminars and workshops to train primary school teachers on the utilization of cartoons for the effective teaching and learning of English Language.

References

Aboudan, R. (2013). Laugh and learn: Humor and learning a second language. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences, 3* (1), 90-99.

Adeogun, A.A. (2010). The principal and the financial management of public secondary schools in Osun State. *Journal of Educational System and Development,*

Asodike, J. (2009). Basic issues in primary education. *European Scientific Journal, 8* (1).

Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014). *National policy on education.* Lagos: NERDC Press.

Haque, S. (2015). *Using cartoons for English language teaching in Bangladesh: Progress, problems and - possibilities. Retrieved* from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318726975_Using_Cartoons_for_English_Language_Teaching_in_Bangladesh_Progress_Problems_and_Possibilities

Makokha, R.N. & Wanyonyi, K.M. (2015). The utilization of instructional resources in teaching Kiswahili poetry in secondary schools in Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Science*, 5(8), 10-18.

Seweje, R. O. (2010). The challenge of science teaching in Nigeria today. *Journal of Educational Foundations,* 1(1), 208-220.

Sofowora, O. A. (2014). Enhancing the attitude and the performance of village health workers in Osun State using interactive socio-drama learning package. *Journal of Agriculture and Rural Development,* 5 (3), 15-23.

Taher, B. & Tam, S.S. (2012). Audio-visual news, cartoons, and films as sources of authentic language input and language proficiency enhancement. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 11(4), 57-68.

Thakur, V. S. (2015). Engaging learners in productive learning: Some pedagogical gateways. In Z. N. Patil, S. Marathe, & A. Patil (Eds.), *Aspects of ELLT: Essays on theory, practice and experimentation in English language and literature teaching in India and elsewhere* (pp, 185-204). Hyderabad: The English and Foreign Languages University.