PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF MEMORIZATION AND SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING STRATEGIES ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH STUDIES IN IDEMILI NORTH LGA, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

The study was designed to determine the perceived influence of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of 428 primary school teachers in 70 public primary schools in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 80 primary school teachers from 10 public primary schools out of the 70 public primary schools. The researcher developed a questionnaire titled "Perceived Influence of Memorization and Self-Instructional Learning Strategy on Pupils Academic Performance (PIMSLS-PAP)". The instrument was validated by three experts two from Department of Early Childhood and Primary education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Educational Foundations all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument and reliability coefficient of 0.83 and 0.76 was obtained with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. Findings of the study revealed that primary school teachers agreed that memorization strategy enhances the reading culture of pupils, reduces tensions among pupils' when studying English studies and is easy and quick for teaching pupils among others. The study disclosed that primary school teachers perceived that self-instructional strategy improves pupils' reading, speaking, writing and pronunciation skills among others. It was recommended among others that English studies teachers in primary school should create an atmosphere that is conducive for pupils to memorize and use self instructional learning strategy in order to instil reading culture and improve their proficiency in English studies.

Keywords: education, primary education, memorization, self-instructional learning strategy and academic performance

Introduction

Education is universally recognized as an instrument for social, political, scientific and technological development. This is the reason why developing nations like Nigeria cannot afford to toy with the education of its citizens as this could result in slow development (Azikiwe, 2010). This implies that, education also has an overriding influence on the dynamics of a society. A comprehensive look into the Nigerian educational system shows that, it is categorized into pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education (Ementa & Onokpaunu, 2019). Primary education is a spring board from which other levels of education take off. In 2008, the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Nigerian Educational

Research and Development Council (NERDC) developed and introduced the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum by realigning the primary and junior secondary school together.

The 9 Year Basic Education Curricula in Nigeria is categorized into Lower Basic (Primary 1 to Primary 3), Middle Basic (Primary 4–6), and Upper Basic (Junior Primary School, 1-3). In the process of review, efforts were made to further reduce content overload, repetition or duplications within and across subjects. The structure of the nine-year Basic Education Curriculum is made up of ten (10) core compulsory subjects and three electives for the Lower and Middle Basic Education Curriculum and four electives for Upper Basic Education Curriculum. One of the core compulsory subjects is English studies. English studies or language is the foundation of all learning in schools.

English study serves as a foundation for excellent performance not only for effective usage in oral and for written communication but as a means of learning other subjects in schools. Thus, its functional role is simply multi-faceted that no subject area or even business escapes its application. In Nigeria educational system, English Study has always been treated as a compulsory subject. It is used as the medium of instruction after the first three years in primary schools Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) while at the primary level it is studied as a core subject. In view of its importance, Nwachukwu–Agbada (2012) posited that it is the central role the subject plays that makes it a compulsory subject at all levels of education and a requisite for employment in most modern organization operating in the country. The purpose of teaching and learning English studies is to satisfy the set objectives of the subject with the aim of improving pupils' academic performance.

Academic performance is the outcome of pupils' determination and hard work in an academic setting. Academic performance is defined as the scholastic standing of a pupil at a given moment (Akanbi, 2010). This scholastic standing could be explained in terms of the grades obtained in a course or groups of courses. Academic performance is the quality and quantity of knowledge, skills, techniques and positive attitudes, behaviour and philosophy that pupils achieve or acquire (Mwiigi, 2014). For the purpose of this study, academic performance is the knowledge and skills acquired by pupil which is usually access through test and examination. The academic performance of primary school pupils in English Language, in particular do not appear to be as good as they are expected to be as shown in the analysis and statistics of school records (Igbinedion & Omodolor, 2016). In Nigeria, researches have shown that pupils' academic performance is declining at a disturbing rate (Tenibaje, 2009). Some of the reasons that have been identified for such decline are personal factors such as individual pupil's

intelligence, achievement motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, locus of control and socio-demographic variables teaching strategy as well as learning strategies (Akinleke, 2012). Learning strategies are suggested ways or procedures used by pupils to learn so as to achieve the goals of education. A good learning strategy can arouse pupil's interest in learning and improve their academic performance in any given subject (English studies).

Learning strategies refer to ways and procedures used by pupils to acquire knowledge and skills that will be used achieving the goals of education. According to Kafadar (2013), Learning strategies are the total effort that the students need to process, understand and adopt the information introduced in learning-teaching processes. Cohen in Khamees (2016) states that learning strategies are those processes which are consciously selected by the learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning of second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about the language.

In the context of this paper, the researchers are concerned about memorization and self-instructional learning strategies. Richards and Schmidt (2013) posited that memorization, sometimes called rehearsal is a learning strategy that involves saying or writing something over and over until the learner is able to reproduce the material automatically. According to Richards and Schmidt, memorization usually refers to the conscious process of establishing information in memory. This means that this strategy is a conscious process, which includes some mental activities intentionally carried out by learners (Ozcan & Kesen, 2008). In their own view, Li and Chun (2012) asserted that memorization as a strategy help pupils to improve the development of their language skills. Strategies such as memorization has the power to affect the language learning process by increasing attention and retrieval of information and also enhancing rehearsal, integration and encoding of language material.

The fact that memorization learning strategy does not lead to the development of comprehension skills among pupils necessitated the advent of deep learning strategies in the teaching and learning of primary school subjects. Hence, Adprima (2010) stated that certain learning strategy such as activity-based learning strategy, peer tutoring, think-per share and self-instructional strategy among others should be employed by teachers in teaching and learning processes in primary schools. Self-instructional learning strategy is a self-regulation strategy that pupils can use to manage themselves as learners and direct their own behaviour while learning (Adani, Eskay & Onu, 2012). It is a strategy by which pupils self-tutor and self-monitor themselves. This is quite different from the conventional teacher-dominated strategy of teaching, where the teacher dishes out learning content and the learner merely struggles to

learn and understand (Steedly, 2009). In the conventional strategy, the teacher directs the activities of learning, but self-instructional strategy is learner-directed, where the student takes charge of the learning activity, while the teacher merely guides.

For self-instructional learning to occur, two conditions must be satisfied; firstly, the learner must take care of his learning by making decisions concerning all aspects of learning including determining the objective, defining progressions, selecting techniques used and evaluating what has been acquired (Anyichie & Onyedike, 2012). To do this, the learner is trained in certain learning strategies like planning and organizing, evaluating, practicing, timed practicing, developing and using memory aids, getting help, asking for correction and peer-learning. Secondly, there must be a learning structure in which the learner can exercise control over the learning process. Therefore, for learners to succeed in self-instruction, they must have the skills to manage their own learning (Nasrollahi-Mouziraji & Nasrollahi-Mouziraji 2015).

With this in mind, Montague (2008) noted that self-instructional learning involves the use of self-regulation strategies like self-instruction, self-questioning, self-evaluation, self-monitoring and self- reinforcement which help learners in gaining access to cognitive processes that facilitate learning, guide learners as they apply the processes within and across domains, and regulate their application and overall performance task. Self-instructional learning strategy helps pupils internalize the cognitive processes and metacognitive strategies in order to use them automatically while handling problems in English studies. As a learning strategy, self-instructional learning strategy breakdown learning into bits, which makes it easier for learners to comprehend more effectively.

Literature abounds on memorization and self-instructional learning strategies but there seems to be paucity of empirical investigations on teachers' perception on the influence of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies on primary school pupils' and poor academic performance of pupils in English studies in Anambra State. It is against this backdrop that the researchers were motivated to determine the perceived influence of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of English studies in primary schools in Nigeria, the objectives of teaching and learning English studies seem not to have been achieved. Marjah (2010) asserted that English language learners demonstrate narrow range of ability in the English studies. The Basic Education Certificate Examination analysis released for 2014 and 2015 academic year show that pupils from Anambra State have 40 percent average in English language. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, the results were worse, as pupils have 30 percent average in English language (Basic Education Certificate Examination Chief Examiners report, 2018).

The poor performance of pupils in English studies in both internal and external examinations has been of serious concerns to all stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria. This may be attributed to several factors among which is the use of the conventional teaching Method that dominates classrooms and makes teaching and learning of English studies uninteresting and pupils' achievement in the subject very low. Most importantly, primary school pupils find it extremely difficult to recollect basic facts needed to enhance their performance in English studies. To redress this situation, however, there is need to find instructional strategies that will address the poor academic performance associated with English studies in primary schools. This is the worry of the researchers hence, the determination to examine teachers' perception on the influence of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State is not clearly known due to limited research works. In order to fill this gap, this study was carried out.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the perceived influence of memorization and self-instructional strategies on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine teachers' perception on the influence of memorization learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.
2. Determine teachers' perception on the influence of self-instructional learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study;

1. What are teachers' perceptions on the influence of memorization learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. What are teachers' perceptions on the influence of self-instructional learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Method

The study was designed to determine the perceived influence of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. Two research questions were raised for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised of four hundred and twenty-eight (428) public primary school teachers from the 70 public primary school in Idemili North Local Government Area. Simple random sampling techniques was used to sample 80 primary school teachers selected from 10 public primary schools sampled from the 70 public primary schools. The researcher developed an instrument title "Perceived Influence of Memorization and Self-Instructional Learning Strategy on Pupils Academic Performance (PIMSLS-PAP)" Questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 20 items from the two clusters on a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA-4 points), Agree (A-3 points), Disagree (D-2 points) and Strongly Disagree (SD-1 point). Face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts; two in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundation all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbach alpha was used to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.85 and 0.76 with an overall coefficient of 0.80 for the two clusters of the instrument. The data collected were analyzed using mean (x) mean to answer the research questions and standard deviation to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' views. In analyzing the mean, value of 2.50 and above was regarded as agreed and value below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

Results

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions on the influence of memorization learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Ratings on the teacher's perceived influence of memorization learning strategy on pupils' academic performance in primary schools (N = 80)

S/N	Perceived influence of memorization learning strategy on pupils' academic performance	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
1	Memorization strategy improves pupils' speaking skills	3.22	0.51	Agree
2	Memorization strategy improves pupils' writing skills	3.31	0.30	Agree
3	Memorization strategy improves pupils' reading skills	3.18	0.73	Agree
4	Memorization strategy improves pupils' pronunciation skills	3.40	0.46	Agree
5	Memorization strategy improves pupils' grammatical skills	3.11	0.25	Agree
6	Memorization strategy help pupils' learn new words from their English studies textbook	3.03	0.62	Agree
7	Memorization strategy enhances the reading culture of pupils	3.77	0.37	Agree
8	Memorization strategy promotes study habits among pupils	2.84	0.59	Agree
9	Memorization strategy reduces tensions among pupils' when studying English studies	3.69	0.28	Agree
10	Memorization strategy is easy and quick for teaching pupils	3.95	0.64	Agree
	Cluster mean	**3.35**	**0.48**	**Agree**

Data in Table 1 show that all the 10 items with mean scores ranging from 2.84 and 3.95 were agreed by the respondents as the influence of memorization learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The cluster means score shows 3.35 and the standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

Research Question 2: What are Teachers' perceptions on the influence of self-instructional learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Ratings on teacher's perceived influence of self-instructional learning strategy on pupils' academic performance in primary schools (N = 80)

S/N	Perceived influence of self-instructional learning strategy on pupils' academic performance	$\overline{X}$	SD	Remarks
11	Self-instructional strategy improves pupils' speaking skills	2.64	0.61	Agree
12	Self-instructional strategy improves pupils' writing skills	3.00	0.42	Agree
13	Self-instructional strategy improves pupils' reading skills	2.55	0.70	Agree
14	Self-instructional strategy improves pupils' pronunciation skills	3.17	0.43	Agree
15	Self-instructional strategy improves pupils' grammatical skills	2.88	0.26	Agree
16	Self-instructional strategy help pupils' learn new words from their English studies textbook	2.95	0.80	Agree
17	Self-instructional strategy enhances the reading culture of pupils	2.73	0.58	Agree
18	Self-instructional strategy promotes study habits among pupils	3.22	0.65	Agree
19	Self-instructional strategy reduces tensions among pupils' when studying English studies	3.31	0.49	Agree
20	Self-instructional strategy is easy and quick for teaching pupils	3.46	0.53	Agree
	Cluster mean	**2.99**	**0.55**	**Agree**

Data in Table 2 shows that the 10 items listed on the influence of self-instructional learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies were agree by respondents with mean ratings ranging from 2.64 to 3.46. The cluster mean score of 2.99 implies that primary school teachers agree that the listed items are the influence of self-instruction learning strategy on primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

Discussion

Findings of the study in table 1 revealed that primary school teachers perceived that memorization learning strategy influences primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study showed that primary school teachers strongly agreed that memorization strategy enhances the reading

culture of pupils, reduces tensions among pupils' when studying English studies and is easy and quick for teaching pupils. The study also revealed that primary school teachers agreed that memorization strategy improves pupils' speaking; writing reading, pronunciation and grammatical skills among others. This finding is in line with Hummel and French (2010) who posits that memorization learning strategy is an effective learning strategy in learning English language among pupils. This finding supports, Ikuo (2013) who states that memorization learning strategy helps learners get familiar with the content and quickly instil reading culture with the ability to find the correct answers to the English language questions without tension. This finding tally with the study of Wen-Chin, Min-Chuan and Kuan-Ming (2016) which posits that memorization learning strategy not only improved pupils' listening, speaking and reading skills, but also increased their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structures.

More so, findings of study in table 2 revealed that primary school teachers perceived that self-instruction learning strategy influences primary school pupils' academic performance in English studies in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The study revealed that self-instructional strategy improves pupils' reading, speaking, writing and pronunciation skills among others. The results showed that teachers believed that engaging learners in self-learning made them more responsible in learning English language. The study also disclosed that self-instructional learning strategy help pupils learn new words from their English studies textbook, enhances the reading culture and study habits among pupils among others. In agreement with the above findings, Chia and Ellis (2003), who posits that self-instructional learning strategy improves English language skills. The findings correspond with that of Laila (2011), who posits that self-instructional learning strategy improve learner's attitude toward learning and improved their proficiency in English language.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of teaching and learning at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in learners. In order to facilitate qualitative academic performance among primary school pupils, teachers must apply appropriate teaching and learning strategies that best suit the achievement of objectives of subject matters. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the use of memorization and self-instructional learning strategies by primary school teachers would internalize the phonetic, grammatical, lexical abilities among pupils with which to read comprehension passages and make exemplary sentences in English language.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. English studies teachers in primary schools should provide a conducive environment where pupils can memorize by providing the necessary reading materials in order for them to understand the concept better and reduce tension in reading.
2. English studies teachers in primary school should create a conducive environment for pupils to use self -instructional learning strategy by allowing pupils to take the full responsibility of their learning in order to be more responsible in learning English studies

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