



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF VOCABULARY GROWTH THROUGH INTENSIVE READING WITHIN THE JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS LEVEL IN KUDAN, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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This research work investigates the impact of vocabulary growth through Intensive Reading within the Junior Secondary School Students level in Kudan LGA. This research sought to ascertain the pretest and post-test performance scores within junior secondary students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional methods. A non-randomized pre-test-post-test control group quasi-experimental design was adopted. The participants in this study were three thousand seven hundred (3,700) JS3 students in Kudan. The sample size used for the investigation is one hundred and twenty (120) JSS 3 students of both genders from the two sampled schools. Stratified random sampling and the sample lottery method were adopted in selecting the sixty (60) students of JSS 3. The tools employed for this study were two test items for the pre-test and the post-test. A reliability coefficient of $r = 0.76$ was obtained from the pilot test of the instrument. Research question was analyzed and answered using descriptive statistics of means and standard deviations. Null hypothesis one was evaluated through the use of one-way analysis of variance. Findings shows that there was a significant level of difference between the performance of students taught vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method. Based on the insights gleaned from this research recommends that integrating intensive reading programs into their curriculum to improve vocabulary growth among Junior Secondary Students. Also, Teachers should be given training and support in implementing evidence-based instructional strategies that focus on enhancing language skills

Keywords: Impact assessment, vocabulary growth, intensive reading, English language, students

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Language, as the bedrock of communication and cognitive development, relies heavily on a robust vocabulary. A rich lexicon empowers individuals to articulate thoughts, comprehend complex ideas, and engage effectively with the world around them. Within the educational landscape, particularly within the junior secondary school level, the expansion of vocabulary is paramount for their overall academic achievement in subject areas. A strong vocabulary enhances students' capacity to understand instructional materials, participate meaningfully in classroom discussions, and express their knowledge effectively in written assignments. Conversely, a limited vocabulary can impede comprehension, hinder academic progress, and potentially impact future educational and professional opportunities.

Recognizing the critical role of vocabulary acquisition, educators and researchers have explored various pedagogical approaches to foster its growth among young learners. Among these strategies, reading stands out as a potentially powerful tool. Extensive reading, characterized by reading large quantities of texts for pleasure and general understanding, has been shown to contribute to vocabulary growth through incidental exposure to new words in meaningful contexts. However, intensive reading, which involves a more focused and in-depth engagement with shorter texts, often incorporating explicit vocabulary instruction and close analysis, presents a potentially more direct and structured pathway to vocabulary enrichment.

This study focuses specifically on the impact of vocabulary growth through intensive reading within junior secondary school students level in Kudan Local Government Area (LGA). Kaduna State, much like other areas is confronted with the ongoing challenge of ensuring strong foundational literacy skills among its students. Understanding the efficacy of intensive reading as a targeted intervention for vocabulary growth within this specific context holds significant implications for educational practice and curriculum design within the area. By investigating the relationship between intensive reading and vocabulary acquisition, this research aims to offer evidence - based insights that can shape educators and policymakers in Kudan LGA and potentially facilitate the broader understanding of effective vocabulary instruction in junior secondary education. This article will thoroughly discuss the methodology employed, the findings obtained, and the subsequent discussion of their



implications, ultimately seeking to answer the question: To what degree does intensive reading influence the vocabulary growth within junior secondary school students in Kudan LGA?

This study is intended to analyze the influence of intensive reading on the vocabulary growth of junior secondary schools (JSS). The motivation for the study is informed by the pivotal place of reading in language teaching, especially with respect to its role in the vocabulary growth of language learners, which is in turn central to the overall intellectual competence of students within the junior secondary school level, especially, intensive reading helps in not just enhancing the cognitive potentials of students but in increasing their stock of vocabulary and the basic grammatical rules of its usage in both speech and writing. A large stock of vocabulary is indeed the basis of word power and the "bricks" by which the composition of language is enhanced.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This research study therefore, intends to achieve the following objective:

- Determine the level of difference between the performance of students taught vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method.

1.2. Research Question

This research question is as follows:

1. What is the degree of difference between the performance of students taught vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method.

1.3. Hypothesis

This study is built on a null hypothesis that stated thus:

1. There is no significant level of difference between the performance of students taught vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading technique and those taught using traditional method.



2.0. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1. Concept Reading

Rereading process is a dialogue between the reader's understanding and the text's content, where meaning is constructed through interaction". In reading, the readers elaborate on meaning and strategies, check their interpretation (revising when appropriate), and use the setting to focus their inspiration. Walker (1992) defines reading as an active, problem-solving process that involves predicting or guessing what the author says based on expectations about story events. He claims that reading involves recalling an individual's life experience and trying to understand what is written. He also states that reading is comprehensive in that it serves as a means of developing human learning skills. In other words, reading is more than just receiving meaning in a literal sense. Hill and Holden (1990) support this idea, stating that reading is the most useful skill for students to develop their understanding of a text, and it is very important since the learner gets immediate feedback about the text. Some scholars, such as Papalia (1984), observe that reading is a problem-solving behavior that involves the reader in the process of acquiring meaning. They also claims, that the reader comprehends contextual information containing syntactic, semantic, and discourse constraints that affect interpretation.

According to William (1988), reading is a process where one looks at and understands what has been written in the text. The reader, according to him, is not a simply passive object who is fed with words and sentences, but one who is working on the text and trying to understand it without looking at every word. Smith (1985), Dupuy (2000), and Rocehler (1986) agree with Williams on the definition above by claiming that the core of reading and comprehension come from the meaning that the reader brings to the language. They also emphasize that comprehension is not in print or in speech, but rather in the language itself. For McCarty (1990), reading is the source of knowledge, whereas Cainey (1990) thought that reading is the structure for organizing information held in memory.

Many studies have shown that readers' recognition of words is positively influenced by an appropriate sentence context. There are also some indications that readers might use context for word recognition to a great extent. The process of recognition may be an integration of



bottom-up and top-down processes. Carol (1986) defines bottom-up as 'analyzing the stimulus input and using that interpreted input' for higher levels of analysis.

In other words, bottom-up processing proceeds from sensory information to semantic information. Carol claims that bottom-up processes are specific reading skills that are involved in identifying letters and words in print. Conversely, top-down processing occurs when a reader uses context to determine the nature of words and sentences,

2.2. Intensive Reading

Reading is a complex, multifaceted activity involving a combination of both lexical and text-progressive skills that are widely recognized as being interactive. Two major approaches have been used for developing reading skills. These approaches are known as intensive reading and extensive reading. Intensive reading is concerned with a close study of texts with the aim of examining their core contents and the features of a second or foreign language at the various levels of word, sentence, paragraph, and the entire text. In intensive reading, the reader's attention is drawn to nearly every grammatical structure, word, or cultural fact contained in the text being read. Extensive reading, on the other hand, is reading materials for pleasure outside the classroom setting. Even though intensive reading and extensive reading differ in terms of their aims in relation to the reader, both approaches have important roles in helping learners gain fluency, first in the critical area of vocabulary and word recognition, and then in developing better reading comprehensive skills.

Thorough reading involves meticulously examining every aspect of a text, from start to finish. This approach is particularly useful when working with shorter texts, where the goal is to extract precise meaning and comprehension. To achieve this, learners must employ intense mental focus and discipline, adhering to specific strategies to avoid fatigue and maintain engagement. In educational settings, intensive reading is often facilitated by instructors who guide students through texts featuring novel vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. This method serves as a foundation for language instruction, emphasizing question-and-answer techniques, explanatory presentations, and systematic vocabulary development. By doing so,



it enhances students' capacity to grasp detailed information and fosters a deeper understanding of the material.

The objectives of thorough reading are multifaceted. This approach focuses on acquiring new linguistic elements, including vocabulary and grammatical structures. By doing so, it enables learners to expand their lexical repertoire and master language patterns, which can be applied in practical contexts. Additionally, intensive reading helps students develop essential skills, such as drawing inferences, identifying central ideas, and navigating textual cohesion. It also enhances their ability to transition smoothly between words, sentences, and paragraphs, ultimately leading to a deeper understanding of the material. Furthermore, this method fosters the development of complementary reading skills, including previewing, searching for specific information, and pinpointing key concepts. Effective intensive reading can have a lasting impact on learners' comprehension and retention."

2.3. Defining Traits of Thorough Reading

Thorough reading approaches are marked by distinct features, including:

- - A meticulous and deliberate reading pace, often accompanied by dictionary use to clarify unfamiliar terms.
- - Typically, this strategy is employed in a classroom setting, where guidance and support are readily available.
- - It fosters the development of reading proficiency and linguistic competence.
- - The primary goal is to expand language knowledge and comprehension, rather than solely focusing on reading skill practice.
- - This approach is particularly useful when engaging with complex texts that demand sustained attention and concentration.

2.4. Concept of Vocabulary

Acquiring vocabulary poses a significant challenge in foreign language education. Historically, vocabulary growth has received limited attention in language programs, with a greater focus or emphasis placed on mastering grammatical structures and communicative skills.



Some scholars (Twaddell, 1973; Wilkins, 1974; Richards, 1976; Judd, 1978; Laufer, 1981; Morgan and Rinvolutri, 1986; Carter and McCarthy, 1988; and Paker, 1989) claim that little importance has been given to vocabulary and the teaching of vocabulary or learning new words and phrases is often seen as an unimportant value, and even it is neglected most of the time in foreign language teaching. Twaddell (1973:61) admits that learners get an ability to understand and use words in the FL, but claims that the reason why it is not really taught is that no single method has gained a general acceptance in teaching vocabulary.

Judd (1978:72) agrees with the above idea and adds that vocabulary knowledge is generally not taught as a skill in itself. However, learning a language mainly involves learning its grammar, vocabulary, and how to use them in an appropriate way. Most methodologists discuss the indirect teaching of vocabulary as a main part of language learning such as reading or listening comprehension. Although vocabulary is not the only important component on its own in language learning, its value should not be underestimated.

In a perspective, Wilkins (1974:111) state that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Related to Wilkins' explanation, Morgan and Rinvolutri also emphasize that words are essential, and the lack of them leads to feeling of insecurity in language learning. According to the researchers, some learners believe that they may communicate in a foreign language by learning a great deal of words, and there are also those who think that language can be mastered by learning its mainly grammar and structure. Wilkins (1974) state that learning nothing but words and a little or no structure would be useless to the learner. Wilkins also adds that learning all the structure and no vocabulary expansion in courses can do no harm in long term but in most situations structure and vocabulary are acquired together. Wilkins' study proves that vocabulary teaching and learning can progress through the incorporation of structure and vocabulary. It can be inferred from this that the necessity and the role of vocabulary is paramount.

3.0. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the use of quasi experimental design, with a total population of three thousand seven hundred (3,700) JSS3 students in the Local Government. The sample size used for this study, therefore, is one hundred and twenty JSS3 male and female students from



two sampled schools Government Junior Secondary Kudan, and Doka Secondary School, Kudan). For the purpose of uniformity, sixty (60) students was selected in Government Junior Secondary School, Kudan, which formed the experimental group, while sixty (60) students were used from Doka Secondary School, Kudan, that formed the control group. A stratified random sampling method was adopted in selecting the sixty (60) students of JSS 3 that participated in the study from each of the schools.

4.1. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Presentation of Results

This study employed descriptive statistics to address the research question and t-tests to examine the hypotheses and test of significance at 0.05 confidence level. Specifically, Table 1 of the research 1 one that stated thus: what is the degree level of the performance disparity between students' taught vocabulary using intensive reading versus traditional methods, descriptive statistical tools (mean and standard deviation) were utilized and the results and the results summarized in Table 1 depicts disparities.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations on pretest posttest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of experimental and control groups

		95% Confidence Interval for Mean					
		N	Mean	SD	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pretest	Experimental	63	7.56	4.227	.532	6.49	8.62
	Control	58	6.63	2.461	.329	5.97	7.28
	Total	121	7.12	3.525	.323	6.48	7.76
Posttest	Experimental	63	15.11	3.041	.386	14.34	15.89
	Control	58	13.86	2.794	.367	13.13	14.60
	Total	121	14.51	2.979	.272	13.97	15.05

Source: Authors' Analysis (2025).

From result of the pretest level reveals that the mean vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of experimental group gave a mean score value of 7.56 and standard deviation of 4.227) respectively. On the contrary, the control group offered a comparatively low mean value of 6.63 and a corresponding low standard deviation of 2.461. In the dimension of post-test performance, the mean of vocabulary growth performance at the basic



word level of experimental group gave a mean value of 5.11, while the standard deviation gave a value of 3.041.

On the basis of the control group, the results revealed that the mean value was 3.86 while the standard deviation gave 2.794 in the series. Retrospectively, the results clearly attests that there was a difference in the mean pretest and posttest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of Junior Secondary Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method.

In an attempt to determine whether there is no significant difference in the mean pretest and posttest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of Junior Secondary Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method based on null hypothesis one, one-way analysis of variance was used and the result of the test is summarized in Table 2 for perusal and comparison.

Outcome of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) summarized in Table 2 revealed that at the pretest $F(1,119) = 2.085, p = 0.151$, which shows that there was no significant difference in the mean pretest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of Junior Secondary Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method. That is, there was a significant difference in the mean pretest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level of Junior Secondary School Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method.

Table 2: Summary of one-way analysis of variance pretest posttest vocabulary growth performance at the basic word level for experimental and control groups

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest	Between Groups	25.672	1	25.672	2.085	.151
	Within Groups	1440.681	119	12.314		
	Total	1466.353	120			
Posttest	Between Groups	46.885	1	46.885	5.483	.021
	Within Groups	1009.106	119	8.552		
	Total	1055.992	120			

Source: Authors' Analysis (2025).

At the posttest level, $F(1,119) = 5.483, p = 0.021$, which shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean posttest vocabulary growth performance at the



basic word level of Junior Secondary Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no statistically significant difference was rejected. That is, there was a significant difference in the basic word level posttest vocabulary growth performance scores of Junior Secondary Students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method.

4.2. Discussion of Findings

The major finding from the data analysis and the test of the hypothesis reach at the course of this study are chronologically presented in the discourses that follow.

In the context of hypothesis one that stated thus: there is a statistically significant differences between the performance of students taught vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading and those taught using traditional method. The result of the data analysis from this experiment reveals among other things that the use of vocabulary growth of basic words using intensive reading is significantly better than those taught using traditional method. In the test of the first hypothesis, the impact of vocabulary growth was tested by comparing the academic performance of the students who were exposed to intensive reading and those students who were in the control group that was not taught using through intensive reading. The result of the test showed that students who were taught with through intensive reading significantly performed better than those who were taught with traditional method of teaching. This result aligns Smiths (2018) established that intensive reading programs led to improved vocabulary growth in students compared to traditional teaching methods. The significant difference in posttest scores suggests that the intensive reading approach had a positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition over time.

5.0. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study shed light on the effectiveness of instructional approaches, particularly intensive reading, in enhancing vocabulary growth among junior secondary students. The significant difference in posttest vocabulary scores between students taught using intensive reading and those taught using traditional methods underscores the impact of targeted interventions on academic outcomes. This suggests that implementing evidence



based teaching practices, such as intensive reading programmes, can lead to tangible improvements in students' language skills and overall academic performance.

Competing Interest

The authors have declared that no conflicting interest exist in this paper.

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