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EFFECT OF RECIPROCAL PEER TUTORING ON PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) approach on reading comprehension achievement of primary school pupils. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design which utilized the non-random pretest and posttest control group design. The study was carried out in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra State. A sample of 67 primary five pupils out of a population of 2,361 pupils from public primary schools in Awka South LGA was involved in the study. Pupils' Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT) was used as an instrument for data collection. Pupils in the experimental group were taught reading comprehension using RPT and the control group was taught reading using conventional method. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings showed that reading achievement was higher in RPT than control group, and there was a significant difference in their mean achievement. Male readers did better in their mean achievement than the female in RPT. There was no significant difference in reading comprehension as a result of gender. It was concluded that RPT was more efficient in teaching reading and reading skills to pupils. It was recommended among others that teachers should be trained in the use of more innovative methods like RPT so that pupils learning outcome could be enhanced. Also it was recommended that teacher training institutions should incorporate RPT in their curriculum so that prospective teachers will be acquainted with the basic skills of designing instructional materials for use and implementation of RPT in their respective classrooms.

Keywords: Reading, Reciprocal Peer Tutoring, Primary School Pupils, Achievement

Introduction

An exploring spectrum of human qualities abounds in any primary school classroom and each individual has his or her unique and innate academic needs, some learn how to read with ease, others learn with certain difficulties, some achieve highly and some poorly even below what is expected of them. The essence of teaching English language is geared towards the mastering of listening, speaking, reading, and writing which are the basic skills of any language. According to Yadav (2014), reading is considered as the most vital of these skills in learning a second language. Quite interestingly, the Federal Government of Nigeria seems to have realized this by stating in her National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) that one of the goals of primary education is to inculcate

permanent literacy, numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively in the recipient. Reading is a tool for pupils' academic success and for obtaining information in other endeavors of life. To be academically 'informed or deformed' depends to a large extent, on one's reading effectiveness.

The ability to read is the key to educational achievement. Aggarwal as cited in Nwosu (2012) sees education as process which draws out the best in the child with the aim of producing a well-balanced personality, culturally refined, emotionally stable, ethically sound, mentally alert, morally upright, physical strong, socially efficient, spiritually upright, vocationally self-sufficient and academically balanced. The school serves as one of the agents for achieving this worthwhile aim. To achieve this aim and be successful in this 21st century, an individual requires the ability not just to read and write but also the possession of strategies that enables one to read critically so as to solve the ever complex and challenging problems confronting the society. According to Nwosu (2017), the achievement of basic foundations in literacy is indispensable for any academic success in formal education as it creates a basis for further learning. A child who acquires the ability to read at an early stage is bound to improve on other cognitive demands because reading is key to educational achievement. Therefore, a child's success in school and throughout life depends to a high extent on their ability to read.

For effective reading, Igbokwe and Obidike (2013) suggest acquiring the rudiments for reading. The implication of their suggestion is that anyone who desires to be an effective reader needs to develop some rudimental skills to process and derive meaning from printed or written texts or materials. Such skills include the knowledge to understand how speech sounds are connected to print, the ability to decode unfamiliar words, the ability to read fluently, sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension, the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print, and development and maintenance of a motivation to read.

The development of reading skills involves the participation of children, parents, educators and community as a whole. Reading involves a lot of cognitive processing to make meaning and constructing meaning (Okika, 2021). In this context, reading has skills which help readers to acquire knowledge and learn new information. Kemba as cited in Nwosu (2012) asserts that, reading skills enable learners to benefit from education activities, and to participate in the social and economic activities in their immediate environment. In addition, reading is fundamental to progress and success in all other school subjects. Preparation of pupils who possess the knowledge and reading skills that will enable them face the challenges of this age should be the goal of every society.

An aspect of reading skills taught to English language learners is reading comprehension. Reading comprehension means the ability to read, process, and understand the meaning of a text, message or any written or printed material or document. Wallot (2016) sees reading comprehension as a means of understanding by extracting the necessary information as efficiently as possible from written materials. Wallot's definition suggests that reading comprehension involves a process of meticulous sifting of information in order to extract the underlying meaning of any written material. This makes reading comprehension a vital part of reading. Studies have shown

that one of the gateways to achieving this is to make pupils strategic readers with positive dispositions to reading since reading is fundamental to personal, social, political, cultural, economic progress and successful academic achievement (Ezeokoli and Ezennandu, 2013).

Reading is a skill that aims at facilitating the acquisition and development of relevant literacy skills for effective communication in different contents. Reading is important as it aids in the cognitive demands of learners and becoming a reader is a continuous process that begins with development of oral language skills that leads to independent reading over time. Reading for comprehension helps pupils to construct meaning from text as well as to examine and extend the meaning of the text to previous reading. However, Loan (2012) opines that reading is a much more complex process involving the understanding of a whole text composed of written signs and not just mere extraction of visual information from a given code. Reading is an academic activity that requires skills and efforts which must be cultivated through proven instructional procedures and methods. Reading has been taught to consist of separable critical areas which are phoneme awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (The University of Central Florida College of Education and Human Performance, cited in Nwosu, 2017). This implies that in ascertaining reading achievement, these critical areas are examined.

The areas of fluency, comprehension, vocabulary among others are the critical areas that of reading achievement which entails the reading outcomes and an indicator of the extent a reader has accomplished. Poor literacy skills limit opportunities, not only at school, but throughout life, both economically and in terms of the enjoyment and appreciation for the written word. The relevance of reading is emphasized in English language curriculum as indicated by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2017). According to NERDC, adequate and proper instructional delivery of reading comprehension helps pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and experiences they must have if they are to become competent and enthusiastic readers. Therefore, pupils who fall behind during the early years of primary school have an extremely difficult time closing the reading achievement gap in later levels. In addition, Erlbaum, Vaughn, hughes and Moody as cited in Anidi, Obumneke-Okeke, Nwune, and Okwuduba, (2022), stated that pupils who fail to acquire basic reading skills during early primary school level are at risk not only for school failure, but also for negative outcomes beyond the school years. The importance of reading intervention in the early years of formal education is emphasized in causing changes in individual reading skills which occurs at the primary level. Additionally, poor academic outcomes, increased behavioral problems, higher probability of dropping out of school are all more likely to result following failure to acquire literacy skills at primary school level.

There have been downward trends in pupils' performance in external examinations among Nigerian primary pupils and also most pupils reading abilities are very poor and has led to low performance in reading comprehension (Okika, 2021). Also, Aina, Ogundele and Olanipekun, as cited in Anidi, et al. (2022), reported that, over the years, reading achievement of pupils at primary school has been below eighty percent and this has led to a great deterioration in their external examinations. The authors further

stress that inability to comprehend materials read leads to failures in examinations at primary school level with its parallel effect at the secondary level of education. Considering the importance of reading comprehension, one would expect high performance in this aspect of the English Language. Unfortunately, pupils do not perform well in reading comprehension, thereby jeopardizing their overall performance in English Language.

According to Menakaya, Uloh-Bethels, Nwafor, Ossai, Onuorah and Okon (2022) ability to use appropriate teaching approach that will encourage the pupils to actively engage in learning reading may adversely influence pupils' general performance in English Language. The weaknesses of the pupils were traced to the inability to read and this in turn makes the pupils to provide the wrong answers. One who fails to understand materials read is likely to fail in other disciplines since much of reading at the young level is reading to learn. The reports have it that candidates lost a lot of marks as a result of lifting seeming answers from the passage and that many candidates were yet to come to grips with the skills of comprehension (Okika, 2021). The author further stressed that the poor performance of our children has continued to create concern in the minds of teachers, parents, curriculum experts and evaluators.

Success in school requires that learners read for comprehension. According to (Nwosu 2017), this is showing that in-ability to comprehend materials read leads to failures in examinations at primary school level with its parallel effect at the secondary level of education if not corrected. This is totally unacceptable considering the government, human and material investment in education. Bolunde as cited in Menakaya et al. (2022) asserts that the teaching approach used by teachers can affect pupils positively because it is a weapon of enhancing the language ability of their pupils. Lending credence to Bounde's assertion, Patrick, Uloh-Bethels and Ukwueze (2020), stress that the sustainability of how much pupils learn and what content they absorb may be assured by the appropriate instructional methods as well as appropriate instructional materials used. The poor performance could be due to the approach used in teaching and insufficient instructional methods.

It should be recalled that teaching with right approaches or strategies lead to better understanding and mastering of the subject matter. Nwosu, Unachukwu and Hickman (2021) stress that poor reading culture and reading skills, worsened by unproductive instructional approaches adopted by teachers for reading proficiency. Ezeugwu as cited in Okika (2021) states that the majority of teachers still employ conventional (expository) approach in teaching. This approach, though not without some advantages are found to be didactic, stereotype, ineffective and non-result oriented. Menakaya et al. (2022) stress that in most schools, conventional/traditional approach is the most common strategy of teaching used by teachers in carrying out the teaching and learning of reading comprehension. Ughamadu as cited in Menakaya et al. (2022) sees conventional approach as the easiest, cheapest, and most familiar of other strategies. Perhaps, this is why it is the dominant approach of teaching reading comprehension in primary schools, this in turn had caused children's lack of reading comprehension strategies and hardly read comprehensibly.

Furthermore, Udosen as cited in Anidi et al (2022) report that the Nigerian society is familiar with the hue and cry of our

pupils' reading failures and lack of interest in reading, but has not paused to find out if the pupils are being taught how to read. According to the researcher, teachers are quick to use conventional modes of instruction in teaching pupils, which makes these pupils very passive in the learning process, despite research evidence showing that reading success is related to the type of instructional approach used. The conventional methods of instruction are chiefly and commonly used at all levels in Nigerian school (Oviawe, as cited in Anidi et al., 2022). Oviawe further noted that in this method, the teacher assumes the more active role in the lesson, as he exposes the learners/pupils to new ideas, more like a harbinger of information. Also Menakaya et al. (2022) state that conventional (expository) method is widely practiced by the teachers in carrying out the teaching and learning reading of comprehension hence a teacher can reach a large number of pupils at the same time and a large amount of materials can be covered within a short period of time. The basic underlying assumption is that the teacher can acquire and transmit knowledge to the pupils and its conventional nature provides the teacher a feeling of security as the authority figure in teaching.

To a large extent, the conventional (expository) method appears workable for those who have little or no difficulty comprehending new and abstract things as presented to them by the teacher and has been used for decades of primary school instruction. However, its continued use appears inimical to the success of the modern curriculum, which is learner centered and requires more active participation on the part of the learner while the teacher serves as an overseer of learning activities. The conventional method emphasizes academic, intellectual and cognitive aspects of learning and tends to neglect the human, social and affective dimensions of learning. From experience, the conventional method of teaching might not be that effective or systematic to address pupils learning differences in the classroom in order to aid or improve reading achievement.

Although the conventional method of teaching is not without merit, it does have problems. Teachers use the convetional approach, in which reading is viewed as a solitary activity in which the learner is engrossed in its material and is not encouraged to read and converse with classmates or in groups. The consequence of use of conventional method in teaching reading in English Language is that pupils are unable to retain their learning and apply it to a new situation (Abbas and Jafar, 2012). As a result of these shortcomings, there is need for educators and scholars to seek for intervention or innovative approaches and effective reading instruction that can improve reading achievement of readers, thereby causing pupils to monitor and evaluate their cognitive processes and achieve better comprehension of the learning tasks in a cooperative approach.

Cooperative learning and direct instructional approaches fall respectively under the two approaches mentioned above. They are among the foremost instructional approaches used in teaching reading comprehension with very many benefits promulgated by their advocates. Cooperative learning approach on one side is seen as a learning strategy aimed at exploiting pupils' involvement in teaching and learning process, drawing its strength from the interaction among learners. It is a teaching strategy that can help learners to actively participate in reading comprehension lessons. Muniz, Garcia and Fernandez (2017) define the cooperative learning approach as an

educational methodology based on work in small and generally, heterogeneous groups, in which pupils work together to improve their own learning and that of other members of their group. This means that this approach allows discussion and critical thinking. This collaboration among pupils creates the prospect for learners to engage in mental processing of information and thereafter share their knowledge among their peers (Grosser, 2014). According to Abbas and Jafar (2012), cooperative learning is an interactive process in a social setting that allows pupils to explore and work in groups, making meaning of tasks and setting out to solve problems that are perplexing to them. Pupils interact with each other on the grounds that with their peers, they are able to operate on equal footing. Also, they see that throughout the interaction, there is non-authoritarian exchange of ideas, and freedom to ask questions and express opinions as the interaction is more horizontal than vertical. According to Oviawe as cited in (Nwasor 2017), cooperative learning among peers promotes learning outcomes, higher thinking skills, social interaction, experiences and context that make pupils willing and able to learn. Oviawe further identified three distinct areas of cooperative leaning among peers namely: Cross-Age Tutoring (CAT), Peer Tutoring (TP), and Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT). In this study, RPT will be used.

Reciprocal peer tutoring is a collaborative strategy of instruction where pupils of the same class and age bracket alternate between the role of a pupils and teacher and will follow a structural format to help team members make academic progress. Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT) as explained by Gazula, Mckemma,Coopes and Paliadelis (2017) involves a situation whereby the learners reverse the roles of tutor and tutee in a reciprocal manner. It is an instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and pupils regarding segments of a text. RPT approach is a successful example of a direct teaching of metacognitive skills like; summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting (Ofodu, as cited in Anidi, 2016). Ofodu went ahead to stress that RPT is designed to help pupils learn effective techniques for reading comprehension.

RPT method is a situation whereby the pupils reverse the roles of tutor and tutee in a reciprocal manner. It allows each child to reap the benefit derived from preparing to teach another child. Pupils are taught to question, clarify, summarise and predict in a cooperative group text. A pupil working in a small group reads aloud a brief passage of text and immediately generates a question. Children provide instruction, evaluation and reinforcement to one another, thereby creating mutual assistance and social support among themselves. RPT approach tries to present the picture of social interdependency natural to human beings; hence builds upon the social instincts of children as well as supplementing and replacing independent seat work with activities for small mixed-ability groups. (Crosby and Owens, as cited in Nwosu 2017). This implies a learning situation where pupils take turns acting as the tutors and tutees for instruction or review of academic materials. In this case, pupils exchange roles during tutoring session, both giving and receiving academic assistance, while the teacher supervises rather than be a participator in the intervention. The teacher serves as a mediator of the activity. The pupils dialogue among themselves as each learner acts in response to another. Durukan (2011) sees RPT strategies integrated in reading as one of the learning techniques based on cooperation (which) is designed to develop or enhance reading, writing and

other language skills in the upper grades of primary education. The goal of RPT is to use discussion to enhance pupils reading comprehension, develop self-regulatory and monitoring skills and achieve overall improvement in motivation. Apart from a good teaching approach, gender is another variable that has been of interest to researchers in the learning process of reading.

The issues of Gender differences have been put into consideration in instructional plans in both cooperative and competitive classroom practices (Adesoji, Omilani and Nyinebi, 2015). Adesoji et al. (2015) observe that researchers have differed on the impact gender has on these instructional strategies leading to inconclusive findings. They further assert that gender stands to be a moderating variable which others say that it has no impact on these instructional strategies. Therefore, there is the need to see if actually gender will be a moderator variable in this study more especially in the case of reading achievement in which female pupils have been stereotyped to do better than male pupils. Gender stresses the roles and responsibilities of males and females. Gender refers to one`s subjective feelings of maleness or femaleness irrespective of one`s sex (Ezeh, 2013). Ezeh further stated that gender is classified into masculine or feminine and is concerned with the attitudes that describe males and females in the socio-cultural context. The issue of gender on reading achievement of pupils has become an area of interest to researchers. Following these argument, it is pertinent to resolve this research finding controversy on gender, as it affects reading comprehension achievement.

In Anambra state, Nigeria, pupils who struggle with reading can be found in primary schools. This has become worrisome that parents often employ the services of home tutors to basically review what has been taught in school: perhaps the child might assimilate reading skills on a second teaching attempt. However, this does not appear to always solve the problem in which these children find themselves, which can hinder their psychosocial adjustment if the problem is not solved. It is thus expedient to try other approach such as RPT in a cooperative environment to ascertain if they will improve pupils' reading achievement and acquisition of reading skills.

Statement of the Problem

Reading for comprehension has been indicated to be very important in academic achievement as it helps pupils to construct meaning from text as well as to examine the meaning of the text. Pre-primary and primary education stages serve as the bedrock of education and foundation of a child's education throughout his life. As pupils advance in school, their reading materials become increasingly tasking. This suggests that they need to be equipped with reading strategies or approaches that will help them confront more complex materials. Evidence abounds of poor academic achievement among all categories of pupils in Nigeria. The weaknesses of the candidates were traced to the inability to read, comprehend and answer the questions correctly. From the forth going, the prevailing problem is that reading achievement of pupils has been declining steadily. Teachers, parents, curriculum experts and evaluators are worried especially when the poor achievement has been blamed on inadequate reading comprehension skills. This may be as a result of poor reading comprehension foundation at the primary level.

It is believed that if the reading comprehension achievement of pupils in the primary school remains like this, it will affect the future academic achievement of these

children and more so the economic and technological growth of the country. More so, pupils reading achievements appear to have been hampered by the predominant adoption of deficient instructional approach (expository teaching methods) by many teachers which has made it difficult for pupils to be actively involved in the learning process. This conventional method used is considered inadequate as it makes pupils remain passive leaners, thereby truncating societal need and primary education objective. There`s need for innovative and more effective instructional approach like RPT. It is against this back drop that the study sets out to examine the effects of reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) l approach on primary school pupils` reading comprehension achievement in English language in

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean achievement scores of primary five pupils taught reading comprehension in English Language with RPT, DI and conventional teaching method?
2. What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean achievement scores of male and female of primary five pupils taught reading comprehension in English Language with RPT?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There will be no significant differences in the mean reading achievement scores of pupils of those taught reading comprehension with RPT, and that of those taught using conventional method.
2. There will be no significant differences in the mean reading achievement scores of male and female pupils taught reading comprehension with RPT.

Research Method

The study was conducted to determine the effect of RPT approach on the reading achievement of primary school pupils in Awka south L.G.A. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A quasi – experimental design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 2,361 primary five schools pupils in the 45 public primary schools in Awka south. A sample size of 67 primary five pupils from two schools selected randomly was used. The instrument for data collection in this study was Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT). The lesson plan that covered every unit in the RCAT was used as an instructional tool. The reading achievement test was based on six weeks lesson plan. The RCAT is a 30 items, four options multiple-choice test compiled from six-comprehension passage from Macmillan English Textbook for primary five. Primary five was used for the study because it is the onset for preparing pupils for external examinations and it is assumed that the pupils in this class must have been fluent in reading comprehension. The RCAT and the lesson plan were subjected to both face and content validation by two experts in the Department of Early childhood and Primary Education and one expert in the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation unit) all from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

To determine the reliability of the instrument RCAT, the internal consistency of

RCAT was determined using the Kuder – Richardson formula 20 (K–20). The coefficient of internal consistency was found to be 0.89. It was administered to the pupils (control and experimental group) as pre-test before they were taught for six weeks using validated lesson plans for RPT techniques and conventional method. At the end of the treatment, the items were reshuffled and administered to the subjects as post-test. The research questions were answered using statistical mean, while the null hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. In this case, the pre test scores were used as covariant measures on the post-test score.

Results and Discussion

Research question 1: What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean Achievement Scores of primary five pupils taught reading comprehension in English language with RPT and conventional teaching method?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation for pre-test and post-test Achievement Scores of primary five pupils taught reading comprehension in English language with RPT and conventional teaching method

	Pre-test			Post-test			
Group	N	Mean	S.D	N	Mean	S.D	Mean diff
Conventional	32	20.69	7.93	32	27.19	13.01	6.50
RPT	35	24.23	9.11	35	36.23	8.38	12.00

Table 1 showed the pre-test mean and post-test scores of the pupils on reading achievement in the RPT and control groups. The pre-test mean scores of the RPT were higher than that of the control group. Also, the post-test means scores treatment group was significantly higher with mean gain of 12.00 than that of the control group with mean gain of 6.50. This shows that RPT enhanced reading comprehension achievement in English language.

Research question 2: What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test mean Achievement Scores of male and female primary five pupils taught reading comprehension in English language with RPT?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Pre-Test And Post-Tests Achievement Scores of Male and Female Primary Five Pupils Taught Reading Comprehension in English Language with RPT.

	Pre-test			Post-test			
Gender	N	Mean	S.D	N	Mean	S.D	Mean diff
Male	17	24.35	9.91	17	38.00	8.31	13.65
Female	18	24.11	8.58	18	34.56	8.34	10.45

Table 2 result shows that the mean difference achievement score of primary five male and female pupils' taught reading comprehension using RPT to be 13.65 for male and 10.45 for female pupil. The result indicated that the male pupils had a higher mean difference

score than their female counterparts after experiment.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean reading achievement scores of pupils taught reading comprehension with RPT and that of those taught using conventional method.

Table 3: Analysis of covariance Difference in the Mean Reading Achievement Scores of Pupils of those Reading Comprehension with RPT and that of those Taught Using Conventional Method.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Corrected Model	2398.441[a]	6	399.740	4.209	.001	
Intercept	7108.378	1	7108.378	74.855	.000	
Pretest	507.561	1	507.561	5.345	.023	
Group	1116.584	2	558.292	5.879	.004	Significant
Gender	66.898	1	66.898	.704	.403	
Group * Gender	387.372	2	193.686	2.040	.136	
Error	8641.559	91	94.962			
Total	113192.000	98				
Corrected Total	11040.000	97				

Table 5 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean achievement scores of primary five pupils' taught reading comprehension using RPT and conventional teaching method $F(1, 98) = 2.040$, $p = .004$ less than p value. This means that there was a significant difference in the achievement means scores of pupils in the RPT and conventional method. Therefore the hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference in the achievement mean scores of pupils in RPT and conventional method is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean reading achievement scores of male and female pupils taught reading comprehension with RPT.

Table 4: ANCOVA analysis for difference in the mean reading achievement scores of male and female pupils taught reading comprehension with RPT.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	672.544[a]	2	336.272	6.265	.005	
Intercept	2725.242	1	2725.242	50.772	.000	
Pretest	568.817	1	568.817	10.597	.003	
Gender	97.273	1	97.273	1.812	.188	
Error	1717.628	32	53.676			
Total	48328.000	35				
Corrected Total	2390.171	34				

The result in table 6 shows that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean achievement scores between male and female pupils taught reading comprehension with RPT method F(1, 35) = 1.812, p = .188 greater than p value . This means that there was no significant difference in the achievement means scores of male and female pupils in the RPT groups. Therefore the hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference in the achievement mean scores of male and female pupils in RPT method was not accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The effectiveness of reciprocal peer tutoring was demonstrated through significant improvement in the reading achievement of pupils taught with it. The result of the data clearly shows that the experimental group who were taught with RPT achieved better than the control group who were taught with the conventional method. The analysis of hypothesis 1 using ANCOVA also shows a better reading achievement by the experiment group. This means that reciprocal peer tutoring seems to have contributed immensely to the improvement of pupils reading achievement. The result of the findings is in agreement with previous research findings of Anidi etal (2022), who state that that reciprocal peer tutoring are beneficial to students, because they encourage students to read more, think deeply about books, listen carefully to classmates, share their responses and interpretations of texts, and often become lifelong readers. Also in line with the study, Nwosu (2017) examined the effect of RPT on students' reading performance as well as students' levels of comprehension and performance levels. The author's report proved that RPT was more effective in teaching reading. There was no significant difference between the reading achievement of male and female pupils taught reading with reciprocal peer tutoring. This wasshown from the result of the data that male and female pupils taught with RPT performed equally. The analysis of hypothesis 2 using ANCOVA as shown in table 2 shows equal performance in the reading achievement of male and female pupils taught with RPT. This is in line with the study of Igbo (2004) who maintain that instructional approaches neither favor nor disfavor a particular sex in achievement. A well-applied teaching strategy would produce the same effect on the pupils' achievement in reading English irrespective of gender.

Conclusion

The findings from the study revealed that reciprocal peer tutoring, a type of cooperative learning is effective in improving pupils reading achievement in English language. In this regard, there was an observed significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils taught with RPT and those taught with conventional method. It was thus concluded that pupils taught with RPT achieved better than those taught with the conventional method.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and taking into cognizance its educational implications, the following recommendations were made:

1. To enhance pupils reading achievement, new innovative instructional strategies such as RPT should be adopted in the primary schools, especially in teaching English language. Also, school authorities and educational administrators should ensure that RPT is integrated in our schools since it will

help pupils in becoming cooperative learners and problem solvers.

2. Teachers training colleges and universities should incorporate reciprocal peer tutoring in their curriculum so that prospective teachers will be acquainted with the basic skills of designing instructional materials for use and implementation of RPT in their respective classrooms. Teachers should be well equipped and integrated with RPT for an effective teaching, mastery and its application in the teaching and learning processes.

3. School authorities and educational administrators should organize seminars, conferences and workshops for teachers to acquire skills for effective use of reciprocal peer tutoring in schools since it improves reading achievement.

4. Government should finance the use of RPT by sponsoring conferences and workshops for teachers and curriculum planners, so that curriculum planners can develop improved instructional materials that would meet up to the needs of the global society and encourage teachers to use them in their instructional activities.

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