



## Effects of Story Retelling on the Listening Comprehension of Primary School Pupils in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

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### Abstract

*This study examined the effect of Story Retelling on the Listening Comprehension of primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Non-randomized pretest-posttest control group research design was adopted for the study. Population of the study consisted of 694 primary one pupils in public primary schools. The sample size of the study was 66 primary one pupils. This was obtained using simple random sampling technique to select the two schools and then the intact classes in the sampled schools were used. Two research purpose of the study and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The result of the study shows that there is a significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. The results also showed that there is no significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with the conventional method with respect to gender in primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Based on the findings of the study recommendations were made which include; that teachers should incorporate story retelling as an instructional strategy to improve comprehension of pupils in the primary level of education.*

**Key words:** Story retelling, Listening, Comprehension, Listening Comprehension

### Introduction

Literacy creates a foundation for a life time and allows a wide range of opportunities. Primary school literacy can be said to involve the development of oral and written communication skills in all subject areas (Oduolowu & Oluwakemi, 2014). One of the most important goals in the national policy on Education regarding primary education is to inculcate permanent literacy in primary school children (FRN, 2013). Primary school pupils can learn literacy skills through instructions and practice of language skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Grayson, 2013).

Listening comes first among the four basic language skills and it has been identified to develop first in children. It is the most widely used and the most important communication



skill in personal, academic and professional settings alike (Wolvin & Coakley 1996). A larger portion of English as a second language (L2) research findings have also indicated that listening is the most important skill for language learning since it is the most widely used language skill and it develops faster than the other three language skills (speaking, reading and writing) which can also facilitate the emergence of other skills (Morley, 2001). Studies on time spent in communication suggest that listening takes up 40-50%; speaking 25-30%; reading 11-16% and writing about 9%; and that both in and out of the classroom, listening consumes more of daily communication (Fang, 2009; Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011).

Listening is defined as a form of communication that involves hearing, interpreting and constructing meanings; an active process that is not limited to the spoken words; and an essential way of participating in daily routines as well as wider decision making process (Clark, 2005 and Jalongo, 2010). Listening is the process of taking in information through the sense of hearing and making meaning from what was heard. According to Tomlison (2012), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. The process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary and the comprehension of meaning. Listening is said to be successful when the listener fully attends to the message from which he or she tries to make a coherent interpretation of what is been comprehended.

Listening comprehension is a complex interactive process in which the listeners are involved in a dynamic construction of meaning (Arafat 2013). It involves speech perception, for instance, the ability to discriminate sound, recognize stress patterns and intonations. It also involves word recognition which has to do with the ability to organize sound patterns as words; sentence processing which includes sentence constituents, holding of information, inferring meaning, predict what is to be said and decide how to respond. Listening comprehension is regarded as the ability not only to discriminate auditory grammar, but also to extract essential information, remember it and relate it, everything that entails processing sounds and construction of meaning (Morley, 2001). It is a mental process in which the listener attempts to construct meaning out of the information received from the speaker. It encompasses attention, perception, word recognition, syntactic processing, comprehension and interpretation.

Listening comprehension is a very vital skill which prepares young children for later reading comprehension (Jalongo, 2008). It is crucial for children to develop good listening skills in order to cope with the academic demands of school and to learn adequate literacy skills. Listening comprehension helps to guide child's self-inquiry and discovers their individual possibilities. Children who are active listeners can incorporate the things which they hear faster in their frame work of knowledge than a mere passive counterpart. Tramel (2011) in his view observed that children can also exhibit better concentration and memory when they develop good listening comprehension skill. Vandergrift (2007) points out that listening comprehension is a highly integrative skill as it is usually the first skill that learners develop. In addition, listening comprehension skill helps to facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical competence. It is central to a child's development of other skills, including survival, social and intellectual skills. Hence, listening comprehension is



considered one of the skills most predictive of overall long-term school success (Jeanne, 2010; and Brown, 2012).

In their studies, Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer and Lowrance (2004), and Gallets (2005) revealed that storytelling improves the listening skills of children. As children listen to a story been told in the oral tradition, they are introduced to various forms of syntax, dictation and rhetoric. Story is a living context for making meaning and reinforces the imaginative framework of the child, give validity to important feelings, promote insight, nourish hope and reduce anxiety. Research supporting the use of storytelling revealed that it had an effect on children's listening comprehension which also affects their reading comprehension (Weller, 2010). Weller also added that finding meaning from words and story understanding is the foundation for reading comprehension. As children regularly hear stories, subconsciously, they acquire familiarity with narrative patterns and this gives them a chance to develop their listening comprehension. Children who are fully engaged in a story form of learning combined with judicious questioning and retelling strategies can develop comprehension (Weller, 2010; Oduolowu & Oluwakemi, 2014).

Children can learn to predict, summarize, retell and discuss things after hearing a story; hence they should be given the opportunity to construct a model of meaning for a text or story after hearing it (Lucas & Cuspec, 2007). Researchers have revealed that listening comprehension can be enhanced by various verbal responses on the part of the student during and after listening (Abdulhamid, 2012 and Massa, 2008). Teaching listening strategies appeared to help children become more conscious of their listening habits. Activities involving verbal interaction such as story retelling seemed to improve listening comprehension (Leung, 2008).

Research on improving children's comprehension indicates that reading strategies can be taught during read-aloud sessions with kindergarten age children and one of such strategy is story retelling (Weller, 2010). Story retelling is a post-reading of listening recall in which children tell what they remember from their reading or listening. Story retelling provides experience through the use of oral language. Retelling is a strategy which employs active participation after listening.

Engaging young children in retelling stories read to them by parents or teachers is a strategy that is often used to promote story related comprehension and expressive vocabulary (Gambrel and Dromsky, 2000). When using retelling stories with young children, a child or group of children is asked to retell, rehearse or recall part of the story read to them or told by the adult or older children. Retelling stories encourages children to use their imagination, expand their ideas and create visual images as they transfer the plot of the story to new settings including characters or new voices (Dunst, Simkus & Humby, 2012). A retelling episode typically includes a teacher or a parent scaffolding child engagement in story, book reading or storytelling. This often includes asking open ended questions, asking a child to make predictions and engaging a child in verbal elaborations (Dunst et al 2012). Story retelling is characterized by actively involving a child in the story reading or telling episode, promoting additional child elaborations and expansions and asking the child to retell the story in his or her own words.



Morrow (1985) conducted a research about the values of retelling stories in relation to improved comprehension. Kindergarteners in an experimental group were asked to retell a story which had been read to them. The control group was asked to draw a picture about the story. The experimental group had higher score in comprehension than the control group. In the second study the experimental group had eight stories read to them and asked to retell each of the stories. The control group was asked to draw eight pictures, one for each story. The control group showed gain of 9.3% in the comprehension score while the experimental group showed a gain of 27.6%. Morrow concludes that the study offers empirical data and anecdotal support for the educational value of story retelling. Story retelling appears to have potentials for skill development but it has not been widely tested. It is possible that story retelling could affect the listening comprehension of children; hence story retelling is considered to be an instructional strategy capable of improving children's dictation of original story and oral complexity.

Factors such as gender can affect the listening comprehension skills of children, and several researches lend support to this. Tannen (2001) stated that men and women have very distinct communication styles that influence how they listen. For instance, women listen to understand the other person's emotions to find common interest whereas men listen in order to take action and solve problems. Also males listen to hear facts while females listen to be aware of the mood of communications. Purdy (2000) examined the stereotype about listening behaviors that has contributed to the sustained belief that one gender functions better as listener than the other, characteristics of good and poor listeners were collected. The most frequent characteristics of good listeners (Top 30) and poor listeners (top 28) were randomized and participants were asked to respond to each on a scale from male, somewhat-male, true of both sex, female, and somewhat-female. Results showed that most of the good characteristics were associated with female while the poor characteristics were associated with males. Oduolowu and Oluwakemi (2014) in their study on the effect of storytelling on primary one pupils' listening scale revealed that there was a significant main effect of gender on the listening skills of the pupils. Girls had a significantly higher mean score than boys in all the groups. It is against this background that the researchers tend to find out if story retelling has an effect on the listening comprehension of boys and girls in primary schools in Kolokuma/ Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Primary school children with retelling and listening difficulties face serious learning challenges and are more likely to fall behind their peers as they progress through school and this has led to their poor performance in academics. This problem can be attributed to some factors such as teacher-pupil's ratio, teacher's attitude and experience and poor instructional strategies used by teachers. Listening comprehension has been identified as highly predictive of overall academic achievement (Jalongo 2010). Despite the fact that listening comprehension is vital to the overall academic success of the child in primary school, it has not been given top priority like other school subjects such as reading and writing or mathematics in the primary school classrooms, especially the public primary schools. Instructional strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the listening comprehension of pupils. Some of the researches conducted in the past have sought for ways of ameliorating the problem of listening comprehension among children using different strategies. The researchers



therefore sort for more strategies that can be employed to ameliorate the problem of listening comprehension among primary one pupils. Therefore, can story retelling have an effect on the listening comprehension of primary one pupils in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out the effect of story retelling on the listening comprehension of primary one pupils in Kolokuma/ Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State. In a more specific term, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools.
2. Determine the mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method with respect to gender in primary schools.

### **Null Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools.
2. There is no significant difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method with respect to gender in primary schools.

### **Methodology**

The non-randomize pretest-posttest control group research design was used for the study. The population of the study consists of all the 694 primary one pupils in all the public primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa (Bayelsa state Universal Basic Education Board, 2016). The sample size of the study consists of 66 primary one pupils who were drawn from two public primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State. The simple random sampling technique was used to select two schools which were randomly assigned to experimental and control group; while the intact classes in these schools were used. School A, thirty-four pupils while school B, thirty-two pupils (35 boys and 31 girls). School A was used for the control group while school B was used for the experiment group. The instrument for data collection was the pupils' Listening Comprehension Performance Test (LCPT). It was used to measure the listening comprehension of the pupils during pretest and posttest. The instrument was divided into five sections which are character and setting, theme, plot episode, morals of the story and sequence. It is graded as four points for character and setting, four points for theme, four points for plot episode, four points for morals of the story and four points for sequence. The face and content validity of the instrument was done through the process of expert review. The instrument was given to three experienced primary one teachers who made necessary corrections to make sure it was suitable to measure what it was designed to measure. In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to forty primary one pupils who were not part of the population of the study in a test retest process. Pearson's Product



Moment Correlation co-efficient (PPMC) was used to establish the reliability co-efficient. The reliability co-efficient of (.72) was obtained. Pretest was administered to the pupils in the experimental and control group in the first week before the treatment was given. The study lasted for five weeks. Four stories were selected for the study. The researcher enlightened the research assistants (class teachers) on how to conduct the story telling sessions in the classroom. The experimental and control groups were read aloud for four times in a week for three weeks by the research assistants. The research assistants modeled the story retelling to the experimental group and gave them the opportunity to retell the stories which they heard. The control group on the other hand was not given the opportunity to retell the stories which they heard. At the end of the fourth week, posttest was administered to both the experimental and control group. In order to ensure proper administration of the instrument, the researcher trained the research assistants (class teachers) on how to conduct the story telling sessions. The teachers helped in the administration of the pretest which was done in the first week. They conducted the story telling sessions and also administered the posttest. The data collected was analyzed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Null hypothesis 1: There is no significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools.

Table 1: Summary of ANCOVA on mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method

Table with 6 columns: Source, SS, df, MS, F cal, Fcrit. Rows include: Interception, Experimental, Control, Mean Effect(Experimental & Control), Error, Total.

N=66, Significant P<.05

Table 1 shows the Analysis of Covariance significant test for the mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State. The result shows that the calculated F-value is 4.618. At (1,63) degree of freedom and .05 level of significance, the critical F-value is 3.143. Since Fcal is greater than the Fcrit, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus, there is a significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method primary schools.



**Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of boys and girls taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools.

**Table 2: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for Null Hypothesis 2**

Source	SS	df	MS	Fcal	Fcrit
Model	72.295	1	4.016	32.980	
Pretest (Covariate)	.000	17	.000	.000	
Posttest	11.455	14	1.636	13.437	
Mean effect (Pretest and Posttest)	167	19	.028	2.290	4.149
Error	1.705	14	.122		
Total	74.000	62			

N=66, Significant P<.05

Table 2 shows the Analysis of Covariance significant test for the mean difference in the performance scores of pupils in listening comprehension based on gender. The result shows that the calculated F value is 2.290 at (1,63) degree of freedom and .05 level of significance while the critical F value is 4.149. Since Fcal was less than the Fcrit, hence the null hypothesis was accepted, thus, there is no significant difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of boys and girls taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of primary one pupils**

The findings in hypothesis one shows that the calculated value 4.618 at 1,63 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance is greater than the critical value 3.143. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area in Bayelsa State was rejected, Hence there is no significant mean difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method in primary schools. The pupils that were given the opportunity to retell the stories they heard performed better in their listening comprehension scores than those who were not given the opportunity to retell the stories they heard. From this study, it was found out that retelling stories by children encourages them to use their imaginations, expand their ideas and create visual images as they transfer the plot of the story to new setting including characters.

The finding is consistent with that of Morrow, (1986) who concluded that story retelling can be used as a strategy to improve children’s listening comprehension. The findings also lends support to Gambrel and Dromsky,(2000) who postulated that engaging



children in retelling stories can enhance their listening comprehension. This will greatly facilitate the listening development of primary school pupils.

### **The mean difference in the performance scores of pupils in listening comprehension with respect to gender**

Findings in hypothesis two as shown in Table 2 revealed that the calculated F-value 2.290 at 1,63 degree of freedom and .05 level of significance was less than the critical F-value 4.149, this means that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the listening comprehension performance scores of pupils taught with story retelling instructional strategy and those taught with conventional method with respect to gender in primary schools was accepted. This implies that when children are actively involved in the story retelling session, irrespective of the gender, when been given the opportunity to retell the stories which they have heard, it can improve their listening comprehension. This finding is in variance with the earlier findings of Oduolowu and Oluwakemi (2014) who in their study on the effect of storytelling on primary one pupils' listening scale revealed that there was a significant main effect of gender on the listening skills of the pupils.

### **Conclusion**

Giving children the opportunities to retell stories they have heard improve their listening comprehension. This can positively affect their academic performance and general school success. Story retelling has proved to have a significant effect in pupils listening comprehension.

### **Recommendations**

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

- 1) Teachers should incorporate story retelling as an instructional strategy to improve comprehension of pupils in the primary level of education.
- 2) Before reading a story to the pupils, teachers should instruct the pupils on the story structure and actively involve the children in a retelling process of the stories they have heard.
- 3) Primary school pupils should be encouraged to retell the stories which they hear so as to improve their listening comprehension level which in turn improve reading comprehension.

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