

## Investigating the Impediments to Reading Comprehension in Junior Secondary Schools: Evidence from JSSII Students in Nsukka Metropolis

Isaiah I. Agbo, Goodluck C. Kadiri\*, Joekin Ekwueme

*Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria*

**Corresponding Author:** Goodluck C. Kadiri, E-mail: [goodluck.kadiri@unn.edu.ng](mailto:goodluck.kadiri@unn.edu.ng)

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### ABSTRACT

There has been an outcry concerning Junior Secondary School students' abysmal performance in reading comprehension in internal and external examinations in Nsukka Metropolis; hence, the reason to investigate the factors responsible for this abysmal performance becomes necessary. We adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study comprises one hundred (100) Junior Secondary School II students from five (5) randomly selected secondary schools in Nsukka Metropolis. The sampling technique which the researchers adopted was the simple random sampling and utilized questionnaire as research instrument which was developed on a 4-point scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. Again, a reading comprehension test was administered to the students for correlational purposes. Statistical analysis was used. The findings showed that students performed very poorly in reading comprehension as a result of inadequate and unqualified language teachers, inadequate instructional materials, poor educational background of both students and parents, and the language style and background of some comprehension texts. The implication is that students' comprehension ability maybe determined by their ability to recognize individual words in a passage or text, group words into units and relate those units into meaningful sentences or paragraphs. When students are able to do the above, they will surely have a meaningful comprehension of a text at these three distinct levels of comprehension: (i) factual; (ii) interpretative; and (iii) evaluative. Thus the researchers made strong suggestions and recommendations that would mitigate these problems.

### INTRODUCTION

We are aware of the hue and cry of our students' poor performance in reading comprehension in private and public examinations. This is probably why Garba (2003: 183) lamentably say that "teaching reading comprehension in L2 classes has met with little or no success." Reading comprehension is an integral part of the questions students are confronted with in an English language examination. But it seems however that we have not adequately investigated those factors which may be responsible for the students' poor achievement in reading comprehension. According to Garba (2003), the reading teacher operates in a hostile climate where there is a near total lack of meaningful support for teaching of reading coupled with two other factors: cultural and conceptual difficulties as well as inadequate reinforcement of new skills.

Comprehension has to do with understanding and extracting meaning from spoken communication or materials read. Today's reading researchers are of the opinion that comprehension is a multifaceted process. Factors such as constructivist beliefs, influential teachers, active readers, text and type of instruction play vital roles in the construction

of meaning (Maureen, 2012). This is a marked change from the 1970s, when Durkin (1978) reported that little if any comprehension instruction occurred in the classroom. Garba (2003) adds that "the reading programme is faulty in its approach. The texts are not carefully selected. Students' interest are not accorded due attention and the learners themselves worsen matters by developing negative attitude towards reading comprehension" (p. 183). Reading comprehension, in the current thinking is viewed as the construction of meaning of a written or spoken communication through a reciprocal holistic interchange of ideas between the interpreter and message in a particular communicative content (Maureen, 2012). Oyetunde (1986) in Shwarben (2003: 51) views reading comprehension as "an active constructive process involving the use of textual cues and the reader's background knowledge to build models of the author's intended meaning." The presumption here is that meaning resides in the intentional problem-solving, thinking processes of interpreter during such an interchange, that the content of meaning is influenced by that person's prior knowledge and experience, and that the message so constructed by the receiver may or may not be congruent with the message sent

(Harris and Hodges, 1995:39). Meaning is constructed when readers make connections between what they know (prior knowledge) and what they are reading (the text).

According to Duke and Pearson (2007: 2006), “comprehension is a consuming, continuous and complex activity, but one that, for good readers, is both satisfying and productive”. There are supposed to be motivating factors to develop good readers since comprehension is both complex and time-consuming. In reading comprehension, constructivism is reflected in schema-based learning development, which suggests that learning takes place when new information is integrated with what is also known. The more the prior knowledge and experience readers have with a particular topic, the easier it is for them to make connections between what they are learning and what they know. The social constructivist nature of comprehension suggests that readers refine their understanding by negotiating meaning with others. Oluikpe (2000:145) views comprehension as the skill of extracting meaning from printed materials which is made possible through reading. Reading comprehension involves a lot of reasoning, speculations, guesses, interpretations and evaluations of the author’s point of view as contained in the passage being read. When readers comprehend, they interpret, integrate, critique, infer, analyse, connect and evaluate ideas in the texts. They negotiate multiple meanings not only in their heads but in the minds of others. When comprehending, learners strive to process text beyond word-level. Comprehension is therefore the crux of reading.

Comprehension takes the learners to a new level of active understanding and insight. It enhances language and vocabulary knowledge. Snow et al. (2002: 11) define comprehension “as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. According to them, the use of words “extracting” and “constructing” is meant to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. Comprehension has tripartite components: the reader who is doing the comprehension, the text that is to be comprehended and the activity in which comprehension is a part; this shows that comprehension is indeed a complex activity which is indispensable for achieving success in other school subjects. Olatunde and Chigwong summarily posit:

... the modern man, including the Nigerian, discovers that the ability to read with maximum comprehension in a global language like English is at the heart of his effectiveness as a contributing member of his own society. Hence, the task of inculcating effective and appropriate reading skills in the modern man become quite incumbent on the society if he should remain relevant and effective in the modern age (2003: 24).

It is against this backdrop that we made an attempt to investigate the impediments to reading comprehension in junior secondary schools in Nsukka metropolis. The general objective of this study is to investigate the factors that negatively influence reading comprehension among junior secondary school students in Nsukka metropolitan city, Enugu State, Nigeria. This study also specifically aims to:

- i. find out the extent to which teachers’ qualification influence reading comprehension;

- ii. examine whether students’ academic background influences reading comprehension;
- iii. investigate the extent to which instructional materials influence reading comprehension;
- iv. find out the extent to which parents’ educational background influences students reading comprehension.

We have also posed the following research questions to guide the study:

- i. To what extent do teachers’ qualifications influence reading comprehension?
- ii. Do students’ academic background influence reading comprehension?
- iii. To what extent do instructional materials influence reading comprehension?
- iv. To what extent do parents’ educational backgrounds influence students reading comprehension?

### AVAILABLE LITERATURE

Vocabulary and instruction have strong ties to reading comprehension. As the National Reading Panel (2000: 13) noted, reading comprehension is a complex, cognitive process that cannot be understood without a clear description of the role that vocabulary development and vocabulary instruction play in the understanding of what has been read. Snow, Burns and Griffin (1998: 217) have also supported this view, observing that “learning new concepts and words that encode them is essential to comprehension development. Thus the comprehension of texts by the reader requires conscious monitoring of those factors which may either hinder or encourage the understanding of texts beyond word level.

Scott (2009) carried out a research on the topic “what teachers know and do in the course of teaching reading comprehension.” The research was conducted among students in seven 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms in order to find out why U.S. students failed comprehension tests and what teachers would need to know and be able to do in order to feel adequately prepared to teach reading comprehension skillfully. The researcher adopted questionnaires for data elicitation. The research revealed that the way in which comprehension instruction was taught, policy, assessment method and teaching methodology contributed to students’ poor performance in reading comprehension.

Adeniyi and Omale (2010) also conducted a research on the factors militating against pupils’ learning of comprehension in Oyo State. The researcher adopted questionnaire and administered some to teachers of English in Ibadan North-east Local Government. The result of the study showed that un-conducive learning environment, poor teacher qualification and poor reading skills were responsible for pupils’ poor achievement in English comprehension in Primary School in Oyo State.

Yusuf (2011) reviewed some aspects of the reading process that are relevant in activating Pupils Schema. She confined her study to how pupils’ schema could be activated through pre-reading activities and background knowledge/experience and concludes that step by step lesson plan and constant engagement of pupils in meaningful conversation are relevant to boost pupils’ reading ability. The study, however,

did not investigate factors that hamper students' performance in comprehending texts. Reading is one thing while comprehension is another. It is possible for to read without making any meaning out of what one has read. The issue we raise in this paper is 'what are some of the factors that militate against students' understanding of comprehension textbooks?'

Alice (2011) also investigated how the teachers teach reading in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. She sought to find out whether teachers reading instruction reflect the modern view of the reading process. She selected ten public secondary schools in Uyo urban, western Nigeria, and used two classes in each school for her observation. Her research instrument was two research questions. The results showed that majority of the teachers still teach reading using the old traditional methods that rendered learners passive in the process of reading.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The current study is related to the studies reviewed in that both studies investigate the factors militating against the student's performance in reading comprehension. However, the obvious difference lies in the choice of geographical area. While Scot (2009) carried out his study in the U.S.; Adeniyi and Omale (2010) in Ibadan; and Alice (2011) in Uyo, the current study was conducted using Nsukka metropolis as its research area because to the best of the researchers' knowledge, such a study has not been conducted in Nsukka metropolis. Again, while Yusuf (2011) focuses on reading, the crux of the current study is on reading comprehension and not just reading. The choice of the educational level of the students in this study also differs from the educational levels of works reviewed. These obvious differences identified remain the gap which the current study seeks to fill. In other words, in the present study, we would want to find out if these factors also influence students' performance in reading comprehension. We would also wish to investigate further other factors which may have negative impact on students' success in comprehension activities among Junior Secondary Students in Nsukka metropolis, Eastern Nigeria. We have also developed for research questions to guide us in the study. Evidence has shown from the review of relevant literature that this problem area has not been given proper attention among scholars, especially in Eastern Nigeria where this study is situated, hence the relevance of this study so as to remedy the situation.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted under the following sub-headings: design of the Study, Population, Sample and Sampling techniques, the instrument for data collection, method of data collection, data collection and validation of instrument, and the method of data analysis.

#### **Design of the Study**

A descriptive survey research was designed for this study. A descriptive survey research is one in which a group of

people or items is considered to be representative of the entire group. Descriptive survey research describes and interprets what exists. It seeks to find out the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident or trends that are developing (Akuezilo, 1993).

#### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study comprises one hundred (100) Junior Secondary School II students in five (5) secondary schools Nsukka Metropolis, Enugu State, Nigeria. The ages of the students are between 12-16 years. This population is considered appropriate for eliciting the needed data because it is the foundation of secondary school education and determines the success of the students at the senior secondary education.

#### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sampling technique which the researchers adopted is the simple random sampling. The selection was done at the average of twenty (20) students per school. A total number of one hundred (100) students were used. Random sampling is the method of selecting a sample from a population in such a way that all members of the population have equal chances of being selected.

#### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The research instrument that was used in this study is questionnaire. The questionnaire designed to collect information from the students has fourteen (14) items on it. The items were designed to find out the actors which hamper students' understanding of comprehension at the early stage of their secondary education. The questionnaire for the student was developed on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4points, Agree (A) =3points, Strongly Disagree (SD) =2points and Disagree (D) =1point. Apart from the questionnaire, a reading comprehension test was also used as instrument of data collection for correlational purposes. Five questions are developed for the students to attempt after the reading of a comprehension passage entitled "The Blacksmith at Work".

#### **Data Collection**

The questionnaire was distributed directly by the researchers to the students in the five (5) randomly selected Junior Secondary Schools in the area. One hundred questionnaires, twenty each were distributed to the students in each of the five schools, making it a total of one hundred items. The questionnaire was collected on the spot for analysis. Again, 80 students were given a reading comprehension test which was developed from a reading comprehension passage entitled "The The Blacksmith at Work". The passage was photocopied and distributed alongside with the answer sheets to the students. The students read the passage, wrote down their answers and returned the answer sheets to the researchers.

### Validation of Instrument

After constructing the questionnaire used in eliciting information from the subjects on the factors that militate against the effective teaching and learning of comprehension among Junior Secondary School Students II in Nsukka Zone, it was given to three (3) experts in language and measurement and evaluation at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They evaluated the extent to which the items on the instrument are relevant to the topic and capable of generating the needed data. In a similar way, the experts affirmed that the selected comprehension passage and questions were suitable in measuring the students' performance in the study.

### Method of Data Analysis

The need for a simple but holistic method of data analysis necessitated the method of data analysis we have adopted for this study. The researchers used the mean scores in providing answers to the research questions. The researchers set a mean score of 2.5 and above as the cutoff point. Any score below the set mean was rejected. The test was marked over twenty (20). The researchers set the cutoff mark to ten (10) and any score lower than 10 is considered as 'Fail' and score at 10 or higher is considered as "Pass". This analysis was made in a tabular form. More so, the test scores were marked over 10. However, the researchers set the cutoff marks of the test to 5 marks. Any student who scores below the cutoff mark is said to have failed. This analysis is also presented in tabular forms.

## PRESENTATION OF RESULT

The researchers present in this chapter the findings of the study and their analysis. The findings are presented in tabular form following the research questions which serve as a guide to data collection.

### Analysis of the Comprehension Test

The table above reveals that out of 80 students who sat for the comprehension test, 60 students answered Q1 correctly; while 20 others got it wrong. In a similar way, 28 students answered correctly Q2; while 52 others go it wrong. Again, 14 students ticked the correct answer to Q3; while 66 others ticked the wrong answer. 8 students got the right answer to question 4; while 72 others failed the question. Last but not the least, 16 students answered Q5 correctly while 64 others got the question wrong. It is, therefore, evident that students got most of comprehension questions wrong.

Table 2 presents the analysis of scores that range from 0-10 marks obtained by groups of 80 students who sat for the test. First, a group of 4 students obtained 0 mark each. Similarly, a group 36 students obtained 2 marks each. More so, another group of 32 obtained 4 marks each. The fourth group which consisted of one student got 8 marks; while another which formed the last group obtained 10 marks. From this analysis, it is clear that the first three groups which totaled 72 students failed to meet up the cutoff point which is 5 marks; therefore, they failed the test.

Summarily, out of the 80 students who sat for the test, only 8 students passed; while the 72 others failed. We can, therefore, say very strongly that students have problems with reading comprehension as we have rightly hypothesized in the preamble.

### Analysis of Responses Elicited from the Questionnaires

#### Research question one

To what extent are teachers' qualifications responsible for the poor performance of students in reading comprehension?

The decision of the students' responses in the above table shows that items 1,2 and 3 are accepted having the mean scores of 3.8, 3.04 and 2.61 respectively, while items 4 and 5 which show mean scores of 2.33 and 1.61 are rejected because they are below the average mean score of 2.5 set for this study.

#### Research question two

To what extent do students' academic backgrounds influence reading comprehension?

The responses of the students in the above table show that items 6, 7, 8, and 9 are accepted because they are above the average mean of score of 2.5 we have set. On the other hand, item 10 is rejected because it is below the set mean of 2.5.

#### Research question three

To what extent do instructional materials influence reading comprehension?

In the above, table, the responses of the students show that items 11, 12, and 14 are accepted, while items 13 and 15 are rejected. The responses show that instructional materials influence students' performance in reading comprehension but teachers are incapable of using them, thus influencing students' performance negatively.

#### Research question four

To what extents do parent's educational background influence reading comprehension?

In the above table, the responses of the students show that items 16, 17 and 18 are accepted since they are above these mean score of 2.5 while items 19 and 20 are rejected because they are below the mean score of 2.5.

## DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Here, we shall focus on the interpretation, discussion and educational implication of the study for the improvement of reading comprehension. Finally, we shall present the summary of the study.

### Discussion on the Findings

#### *The teachers' qualification that influences reading comprehension*

From the results in relation to research question 1 in Table 1, it was discovered that few qualified teachers teach reading com-

prehension. It was also discovered that most of the teachers who handle reading comprehension are not specialists in the area. These practices in no doubt can influence the teaching and learning of the reading comprehension as well as the students' performance in the subject very badly. These crops of teachers as indicated in items 2 and 3 on Table 1 are unable to effectively and efficiently use the various methods of teaching reading comprehension. These form part of the factors responsible for students' poor performance in reading comprehension. This finding agrees with Azikwe (1989) that there are various methods to be used for effective learning. The respondents also agreed that most teachers who teach reading comprehension are National Certificate in Education (N.C.E.) holders. This finding agrees with Adeniji and Omale (2010) that unqualified teachers influence negatively pupils' performance in reading comprehension. Unsurprisingly, too, the respondents agreed that teachers have a role in teaching reading comprehension. This also agrees with the findings of Omolewa (2001) and Havighurst (1981), as cited by Adeniji and Omale (2010) in which teachers are portrayed as 'managers of knowledge, mediators of learning, disciplinarians, socialites, supervisors, models or ego ideal, examiners, leaders, second parents, organizers, coaches and motivators of learning'(p.4). Teachers' qualifications show their level of training and their level of training bears on their teaching methods and knowledge of the content or subject. Teachers' qualification and training is therefore a viable factor responsible for the poor performance of students in reading comprehension. The respondents rejected the practice where teachers with no qualifications at all in the English language and who also lack competence in communication teach reading comprehension to students. The shortage of teachers is both in number and quality.

**Table 1.** Comprehension test scores

S/N	PASS	FAIL	Total	REMARKS
Q 1	60	20	80	Accepted
Q 2	28	52	80	Rejected
Q 3	14	66	80	Rejected
Q 4	08	72	80	Rejected
Q 5	16	64	80	Rejected

**Table 2.** Marks obtained by group of students

Scores Obtained	Total Score	Number of Students	Total Number of Students	REMARKS
0	10	04	80	V. POOR
02	10	36	80	V. POOR
04	10	32	80	POOR
06	10	06	80	FAIR
08	10	01	80	GOOD
10	10	01	80	V. GOOD

**Table 3.** Summary of the scores

Number of students that passed	Number of students that failed	Total Number of Students that took the test	REMARKS
08	72	80	V. POOR

***The extent to which student academic background influence reading comprehension***

In addition, in Table 2, it was found that students from illiterate homes and parents lack sound academic background, basic reading skills, and good quality reading materials to enhance their reading comprehension ability. Also, the responses of the students show that the academic background of the learners contribute to their poor reading ability. This finding agrees with Azikiwe (1989) who states that if the home and its environment did not provide the child with the opportunity to use materials that are familiar with the learners, the learners' reading ability will be retarded but children from educated homes and parents make progress in their learning.

***The extent instructional materials influence reading comprehension***

The result in Table 3 shows that the teachers are incapable of using teaching and instructional materials to teach reading comprehension. It further shows that the languages of some comprehension textbooks are difficult for the students to understand. Inadequate instructional materials to teach reading comprehension is identified also as one of the challenges students have in their efforts to master reading comprehension. The importance of instructional materials cannot be out of place. Language teachers are always advised to use instructional materials in order to arouse all the learners' senses in the learning process. Azikiwe (1989) maintains that instructional materials cover whatever the teachers use to involve all the five senses. Items 11 and 12 show that the teachers instructional materials have not been fully utilized in teaching reading comprehension, though little effort is being made by the teachers.

***The extent parents' education influence reading comprehension***

Furthermore, the result in Table 4 shows that our respondents agree that whereas there may be no correlation between parents' educational background and students' performance in reading comprehension, educated parents expose their children to quality reading materials and also teach their

**Table 4.** Shows mean scores of teachers' qualification

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
1	Shortage of qualified teachers poses problems in learning reading comprehension	90	4	2	4	3.8	Accepted
2	Teachers in any discipline teach us reading comprehension	15	76	6	6	3.04	Accepted
3	Most of the teachers who teach us the English language are N.C.E. holders	37	20	10	33	2.61	Accepted
4	Teachers with no qualifications at all in English language teach us reading comprehension	22	20	27	31	2.33	Rejected
5	Our English language teachers lack communication skills	9	11	13	67	1.61	Rejected
	Cluster Mean			2.67			

**Table 5.** Shows mean scores of students' academic background

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
6	Students, from illiterate homes perform poorly in reading comprehension.	53	18	8	21	3.03	Accepted
7	Students with sound academic background perform better in reading comprehension.	29	41	10	20	2.92	Accepted
8	Students with poor academic backgrounds lack basic reading skills.	36	33	29	2	3.03	Accepted
9	Students from illiterate homes are not exposed to good reading materials.	26	40	18	16	2.76	Accepted
10	Students from poor academic background do not understand the importance of reading comprehension.	7	46	4	43	2.17	Rejected
	Cluster Mean			2.78			

**Table 6.** Shows mean scores of instructional materials

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
11	My teacher uses teaching materials to teach reading comprehension.	75	10	5	10	3.5	Accepted
12	Instructional materials help me perform better in reading comprehension.	21	63	12	4	3.01	Accepted
13	My teacher is not capable of using instructional materials to teach reading comprehension.	20	26	19	32	2.28	Rejected
14	My school lacks adequate instructional materials for reading comprehension.	23	19	20		2.54	Accepted
15	The language of some comprehension textbooks is difficult to understand.	15	40	2	4	2.24	Rejected
	Cluster Mean			2.71			

**Table 7.** Shows mean scores of parents' educational background

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
16	There is no correlation between parents' educational background and students' performance in reading comprehension.	51	35	6	3	3.24	Accepted
17	Educated parents expose their children to good reading materials.	60	22	9	4	3.28	Accepted
18	Educated parents teach their children reading comprehension at home	64	12	16	3	3.27	Accepted
19	Students whose parents are illiterate perform better in reading comprehension than students whose parents are educated.	15	10	29	41	1.89	Rejected
20	Educated parents give their children time to practice reading comprehension at home.	21	33	4	37	2.28	Rejected
	Cluster Mean			2.792			

children reading comprehension at home. Item 20 gives support to item 16, where the students reject the assertion that educated parents give their children more time to practice reading comprehension at home, but item 19 maintains that children whose parents are illiterate will not perform well in reading comprehension. We wish to state categorically that parents' educational background has great role to play in the education of their children.

### **Conclusion**

The overall results show a gloomy picture of students' performance in reading comprehension as a result of many factors. The findings of this study show that there are inadequate language teachers. Furthermore, the available teachers are not qualified and cannot handle the teaching of reading comprehension effectively. Teachers with poor educational qualifications thus influence students' efforts at reading comprehension negatively. The result further shows that inadequate instructional materials and poor educational background of both the students and parents contribute to students' poor performance. Finally, our study has been able to reveal also that the language, style and background of some comprehension texts are difficult for students to comprehend because they are far removed from what the students already know and are also beyond the level of the students. Thus they contribute to students' mass failure in reading comprehension in both internal and external examinations among Junior Secondary School Students in Nsukka Metropolis, Enugu State. The comprehension test results confirm these revelations made by the questionnaires because out of the 80 students who took the test, it was only 8 students who passed; while 72 others failed.

### **Educational Implications**

Students' comprehension ability maybe determined by their ability to recognize individual words in a passage or text, group words into units and relate those units into meaningful sentences or paragraphs. When students are able to do the above, they will surely have a meaningful comprehension of a text at these three distinct levels of comprehension: (i) Factual level which involves students reading the lines and picking out the bare facts in the passage. (ii) Interpretative level where students read between the lines and comprehend the meaning that is not expressed but implied. (iii) Evaluative level which involved reading beyond the lines in order to evaluate what is read through mental activities such as judging the authenticity of the materials, associating what has been read with the present or past experiences.

The results of this study indicate that there are few qualified teachers of English language who can handle the teaching of reading comprehension effectively. This factor will ultimately affect the teaching of reading comprehension negatively, not only in the Junior Secondary School but also in the Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Urban. For this reason, therefore, there is the urgent need for the government to employ more competent English language teachers. In addition, teachers should make efforts to obtain a degree B.A.

(ED) and PGDE from higher institutions in relevant areas. The government should also organize in-service training for the teacher to improve on their knowledge of the content and methodology for teaching reading comprehension.

Furthermore, the study reveals that inadequate comprehension textbooks impede effective teaching and learning of comprehension. As result of the above factor, the effort of learners in reading comprehension is adverse affected. This is because reading is the bedrock of education and no further advancement could be made in acquiring knowledge without good reading materials. The provision of instructional materials and their judicious use in teaching reading comprehension are pivotal. When teachers use instructional materials in teaching reading comprehension, they make concepts real and arouse eagerness, willing and the ability to learn the skills of reading comprehension. Efforts should be made by both the government and individuals towards providing instructional materials for the teaching and learning of reading comprehension.

Moreover, the educational background of both the parents and students retard students' achievement in reading comprehension. Effort should be made towards enlightening and educating illiterate parents on the need to provide their children with all the necessary reading materials. When parents are adequately informed on their duties to their children in their education, children will stand a better chance to benefit from their parents and improve on their performance academically.

Lastly, the result of the study reveals that the language, style and structure of comprehension texts hamper effective learning of comprehension among students. This implies that attention and consideration should be adequately paid to the language, style and structure of comprehension texts before recommending them to the students. Writers of instructional materials on reading comprehension should consider the age and cultural background of the students and ensure that they are adequately reflected on the texts. When the language is comprehensible and the content familiar, students stand a better chance to do well in reading comprehension.

### **Recommendations**

Based on our findings, we propose a step-step approach to teaching reading comprehension in the junior secondary school. The steps include:

#### ***Selecting the reading passage***

A resourceful and the research oriented teacher, according to Olatunde and Chigwong (2003), undertakes this selection task with prudence. The teacher should identify and select reading materials whose appropriateness should be measured by the following and similar considerations: length (neither too short nor too long for the level of the students), relevance of contents to the cultural and social background of the Nigerian student, the level of linguistic difficulty (neither too easy nor too difficult for the level), clarity of print, and the ability of the content to motivate and sustain interest in the reader.

### Pre-class preparation

This is a teacher centered activity. The teacher takes time to prepare the reading contents and methods to employ before the actual class begins. The next activity is to read, study and critically analyze the selected passage. The teacher should have a better grasp of the passage than the class he intends to teach it. He should also draw questions from the passage and outside the passage for comparison reasons. He should also provide possible answers to the comprehension questions before hand.

### First In-class activity

Before the usual lesson introduction, the teacher should ensure that every student is seated and has a desk. He should distribute copies of the reading passage to every student in order to ensure maximum benefit from the reading experience.

### Silent Reading

This is the major step in teaching reading comprehension. It is in its entirety a student-oriented and dominant activity. For the Nigerian student, reading comprehension represents the most important aspect of his reading English, this language which is the key to all his formal education. The role of the teacher is that of a supervisor, ensuring that each student is involved in honest reading and that everybody stops at the end of the time given for the reading.

### Evaluation

The basic purpose of this step is assess the level at which the class has actually comprehended the passage read silently. The teacher should start the assessment with those testing questions spelt out by him during preparation stage. The question may be treated orally or in writing. Multiple choice or essay is, however, most recommended in this study because it provides the students opportunity to grow in other language skills in speech and writing. But it must be pointed out that what is being assessed is the students' comprehension ability.

### Assignment

The students should be given a possible take-home assignment such as written composition because writing itself is one of the gains of a successful lesson on reading comprehension in English as a second language. The teacher should encourage students to extract motivating topics for writing during the post reading and evaluation stage.

### Other Recommendations Include

- a. The teaching of reading comprehension should be handled by language teachers who has both the knowledge of the subject and the methodology.
- b. The government and individuals should cooperate to provide adequate and relevant comprehension texts to students.

- c. Text writers should reflect what the students already know in their texts.
- d. The language and style of comprehension texts should be simple and unambiguous to make information in the texts accessible to students.

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