



## Concentrated Language Encounter Method and Development of Reading Skills among Primary Schools in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria

JULIANA ROTKANGGMWA BODANG, EMMANUEL AGBO OWOBI  
University of Jos, Nigeria

**Abstract.** This paper presented an eight week intervention programme using Concentrated Language Encounter Method in development of beginning reading skills among primary school pupils who are non-readers in Jos North, Plateau State. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of Concentrated Language Encounter method in development of beginning reading skills among primary school pupils who are non-readers. Two research questions and two hypotheses were posed for investigation. This included: What are the reading levels of primary school children who are non-readers before exposure to CLE and to what extent will the reading level of primary school children who are non-readers improve after exposure to literacy instruction using Concentrated Language Encounter? There is no significant difference between the English sight vocabulary and Comprehension Skills acquisition of primary school children who are non-readers in control and experimental groups as measured by post-test mean scores. The study adopted socialization theory propounded by Vygotsky (1978) who stated that interactions with the surrounding environment and social agents, such as parents and more competent peers, contribute significantly to a child's intellectual development. The study utilized a true experimental design involving sixteen primary four non-readers selected through proportionate stratification sampling technique. The instruments used included: Sight Word Recognition Test of 100 High Frequency

English Words (SWRTHFEW), Sentence Comprehension Tests (SCT) and Reading of New Texts Tests (RNTT). The coefficient of stability obtained for each instrument is 0.98 for SWRTHFEW, 1.00 for SCT and 0.99 for RNTT. The treatment consisted of Concentrated Language Encounter module one. Data were administered, analysed using bar chart and t-test unrelated sample. The Results indicated that the reading level of primary four children in both the experimental and control groups before exposure to treatment were the same. They were all non-readers. Post-tests mean scores of children in the experimental group which received intervention in using literacy were significantly higher than that of those in control group who used conventional method. Based on the findings, the study recommends the use of Concentrated Language Encounter method in acquisition of literacy skills with non-readers.

### 1. Background of the Study

One of the objectives of Primary Education stated in the National Policy on Education (2012) was to inculcate permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively. But there would appear to be a confusion on how to achieve these objectives. For example, Unoh (1982) observed that the task of teaching children how to read in schools in Nigeria has been left entirely to the individual teachers. These teachers probably do not understand the great intellectual significance of the simple task

reading. For this reason, most of our Primary and Secondary School learners cannot read simple texts that are meant for them to read independently.

There are several causes for reading failure among our pupils in Jos North L.G.A. of Plateau State. Plateau is a multilingual State. She has the highest number of indigenous languages spoken by each ethnic group in the whole Federation. There are also settlers who have been there long ago for trading purposes; these are the Yorubas, the Igbos and the Hausas. Also being a State capital, there are other people from different parts of the country who come there on transfer basis as civil servants. For those reasons, it is very difficult for teachers to teach young children using their first language. Sometimes the teachers find themselves teaching in a particular ethnic groups that the teachers themselves do not speak nor understand the language of the children found in the class, for this reason teachers may not be able to reach out to children who can speak only their mother tongue.

However, the children in the lower primary school are taught how to read in English (L2) before they actually acquired the oral proficiency in the language. Finocchiaro, (1994) stated in her stages of teaching and learning of reading in second language (L2) that “students read material they have learned to say very well”. This statement is supporting the view that children can read well in the language they have acquired oral proficiency.

In line with this, Unoh (1984) further stated that his ultimate aim of what learning to read and reading to learn, is that the skills associated with listening and speaking are developed before that of reading and writing. One other probable problem which is highly suspected that makes reading very difficult among children in the State is that children are taught how to read English language books by oral recitation. This is when teachers read sentences inside their textbooks and children repeat after the teacher. In most cases, these children memorize the sentences and only pronounce word without identifying the prints that represent these words and teacher assume that these children can read.

One other possible cause of reading failure among these pupils is the issue of automatic promotion of pupils, especially in junior primary classes regardless of the child’s performance in the former class. This negligence of individual differences by teachers to the researcher might again be a contributing factor in the production of graduates at these levels without being able to read simple books independently.

Other possible cause of reading failure among our pupils in the State are lack of text and story books and lack of teachers using appropriate methods to teach children how to read. These problems and many others have left our pupils under a number of disadvantages. For example, the majority of the children leave primary schools without being fully literate.

It is with this view in mind that the researcher wants to investigate the extent to which Concentrated Language Encounter can help develop reading skills among pupils in primary schools in Jos.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Considering the high rate of reading failure in both public and private schools in the State, reading specialists are faced with the challenge of providing effective remediation. Children with problems in reading English as second language have not been taught how to speak English before they are taught how to read it. Which means that children have not been taught in a way they will learn how to read effectively? Similarly, teachers have not been using appropriate strategies that would promote effective reading in English. For effective reading, teachers must use the skills children come to school with to help them learn to read in English. Specifically, it is important to consider how reading specialists can draw on the language skills the children already have as they come to school in teaching them to read effectively in English.

In this light, this study intends to explore the use of Concentrated Language Encounter method to tackle the problem and provide answers to these questions:

- Does Concentrated Language Encounter prove effective in teaching children how to read in English?
- How can the reading specialists make use of the Concentrated Languages Encounter method to train children who are non – readers to learn to read in English?

This study will help the researcher to find out if the Concentrated Language Encounter method when properly used during intervention will help to improve the children’s ability to recognize sight vocabulary and comprehend printed materials in English.

### **3. Purpose of the Study**

The present research is designed mainly to investigate the effect of Concentrated Language Encounter method in development of beginning reading skills among primary school pupils who are non-readers. Specifically:

- To find out the extent to which Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) can help primary school children who are non- readers to make significant gain in the acquisition of English Vocabulary.
- To find out the progress of children in English sentence comprehension.

### **4. Research Questions**

- What are the reading levels of primary school children who are non-readers before exposure to CLE?
- To what extent will the reading level of primary school children who are non-readers improve after exposure to literacy instruction using Concentrated Language Encounter?

### **5. Hypotheses**

There will be no significant difference between the English sight vocabulary of primary school children who are non- readers in control and experimental (CLE) groups as measured by post–test mean scores.

There will be no significant difference between the Comprehension skills acquisition of primary school children who are non- readers in control and experimental (CLE) groups as measured by post–test mean scores.

## **6. Methodology**

### **6.1 Design:**

This study utilized the true experimental design involving the pre-test, post-test control group design. The design featured two groups. Subjects were randomly selected and assigned to experimental and control groups (R). Both the experimental and control groups were administered the post-test (O). Only the experimental group was exposed to the treatment (X) on literacy using Concentrated Language Encounter method while the control group received no treatment but was taught through conventional method.

### **6.2 Sample**

A sample of 16 non – readers who have already received at least three and a half years of primary education were selected after the administration of pre-test which is the 100 English high frequency words for Nigerian children (Umolu, 1985). Eight (8) non readers formed the experimental group and another eight (8) for the control group.

### **6.3 Instruments**

The instruments used for the study includes: Sight Word Recognition Test of 100 High Frequency English Words (SWRTHFEW), Sentence Comprehension Tests (SCT) and Reading of New Texts Tests (RNNT). The coefficient of stability obtained for each instrument is 0.98 for SWRTHFEW, 1.00 for SCT and 0.99 for RNNT. These were established through test re-test method.

## **7. Results**

A period of eight weeks was used for data administration and collection of results. The

results were analyzed using bar chart and t - test unrelated sample. These are presented thus:

**Research Question one:** What are the reading levels of primary school children who are non-readers before exposure to CLE?

**Table 1 English Sight Word Vocabulary before Intervention. Experimental Group**

Child	Score out of 100 Words					Average
	Day 1	Day2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
A1X	1	2	1	1	1	1
A2X	2	2	2	2	2	2
A3X	1	1	1	1	1	1
A4X	1	2	1	1	1	1
A5X	2	1	2	2	3	1
A6X	2	2	2	2	2	2
A7X	1	2	1	1	1	2
A8X	1	2	1	1	1	1

**Table 2 English Sight Word Vocabulary before Intervention. Control Group**

Child	Score out of 100 words					Average
	Day 1	Day2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
B1	1	2	1	1	1	1
B2	2	1	2	2	3	2
B3	2	1	2	2	2	2
B4	1	2	1	1	1	1
B5	1	2	2	1	1	1
B6	2	1	2	2	2	2
B7	2	1	2	2	2	2
B8	1	2	1	1	1	1

The pre-test of the ability of primary school children who are non- readers in both experimental and control groups to read the 100 English Sight Words shows that they are at the same level and are all non-readers. The test scores are shown in Table 1& 2.

**Research Question two:** To what extent will the reading level of primary school children who are non-readers improve after exposure to literacy instruction using Concentrated Language Encounter?

**Table 3: English Sight Word Vocabulary after Intervention n=100 Experimental Group**

Child	Week									Post test	Gain Score
		Pre-test	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
A1X	1	15	15	15	14	10	15	10	5	100	99
A2X	2	15	15	10	10	18	10	10	10	100	98
A3X	2	10	8	13	12	10	15	14	14	98	96
A4X	1	13	12	10	14	15	10	10	10	95	94
A5X	1	10	11	12	14	12	14	13	10	97	96
A6X	2	8	13	10	12	15	10	15	11	96	94
A7X	2	9	12	10	15	13	15	12	12	100	98
A8X	1	15	15	10	10	18	10	10	10	99	98

**Table 4: English Sight Word Vocabulary after Intervention n=100: Control Group**

Child	Week									Post test	Gain Score
		Pre-test	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

B1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	2
B2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1
B3	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	2
B4	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
B5	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	3
B6	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	2
B7	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
B8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1

**Hypothesis one**

There will be no significant difference between the English sight vocabulary of primary school children who are non- readers in control and experimental groups as measured by post–test mean scores.

**Table 5 Group Difference in English Sight Vocabulary t-test**

	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	8	98.03	1.88	14	253.23	0.000
Control Group	8	3.16	0.79			

P<.05

For degree of freedom of 6 and level of significance at .05, with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 253.23 which is significant beyond 0.05 level. Hypothesis one was therefore rejected in favour of primary school children who are non- readers in the experimental group. The general findings from the result showed that primary school children who are non- readers who received intervention in literacy skill have higher mean scores in acquisition of English sight vocabulary than the primary school children who are non- readers who did not received intervention.

**Hypothesis two**

There will be no significant difference between the Comprehension skills acquisition of primary school children who are non- readers in control and experimental groups as measured by post–test mean scores.

**Table 6 Results of the Independent Sample of t-test Analysis for Comprehension Skills**

	N	X	Sd	df	t-cal	P-value
Experimental Group	8	93.53	5.69	58	46.15	0.000
Control Group	8	36.63	3.62			

P<.05

For degree of freedom of 6 and level of significance at .05 with P. value of 0.000, the calculated t-test statistics is given at 46.15 which is significant beyond 0.05 level. Hypothesis two was therefore rejected in favour of primary school children who are non- readers in the experimental group. The general findings from the result showed that primary school children who are non- readers who received intervention in literacy skill have higher mean scores in comprehension skills than the primary school children who are non- readers who did not received intervention.

## 8. Discussion

In analyzing the reading level of children in both the control and experimental groups before exposure to

CLE, the research findings, presented in Table 1, showed that none of them could identify more than three of the 100 high frequency words. Thus they were all non-readers because, according to the guidelines for identification of reading problems, anyone who read less than 10 of the first 25 words during assessment is considered to be a non-reader.

The reading levels of learners should be given priority attention in order to prepare them for the acquisition of a sight vocabulary which is very crucial in learning to read. Words are the building blocks of comprehension and word recognition is the foundation of reading process. It is recognised that without the ability to recognize words in continuous text quickly and accurately, this goal cannot be achieved. According to Rupley, Logan, and Nichols (2009), sight vocabulary is a key component of effective reading instruction. Similarly, Flood and Robb (2007) buttressed the fact that both fluency and comprehension are affected by sight vocabulary knowledge.

The findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the acquisition of English sight vocabulary of primary school children in experimental group with those in the control group. However, the significant difference which was observed in this study showed that Concentrated Language Encounter was very

effective in facilitating learners' acquisition of sight words in English.

This is consistent with the findings of Rayner and Pallatsek (1989) that reading involves visual discrimination and independent identification of words. That is, if a child can differentiate between letters and words perceived, then the visual discrimination is possible. When a child is able to identify words in isolation and read them accurately and can read sentences in a book successfully, then we can say that the child is now ready to process reading materials.

Similarly, Hanson and Reynolds (1980) observed that when a child had acquired oral language proficiency, then the child moves to discriminate and attempt to read in order to identify visual, auditory and context clues. They will also substitute the consonants, the vowels of alphabets as well as attainment. They went on to say that the use of the visual auditory perception was that the child sees the word first, and then tries to sound out the word. From there, the child analyse the word to discover the graphemes (letter clues) to phonemes (sound clues), and relates this to the particular word context. The child then blends the sounds together to pronounce the word and relates its meaning in the language of the child. This they said is why Concentrated Language Encounter is effective because it deals extensively with word recognition, blended with the correct pronunciation and meaning of what was read. It was also noted that the number of words known by the child at any given age was a unique feature of that child.

The findings of this study also revealed that there is a significant difference in sentence comprehension of primary four children in the experimental group as compared with that of those in the control group. The general performance of children in sentence comprehension has actually shown how effective Concentrated Language Encounter method is in aiding children in sentence comprehension.

This confirmed the study carried out by Walker (1975) who stated that at the beginning of

reading, it is essential that all the words to be read should be within the child's vocabulary so that he/she will be able to recognize the words which may lead him to comprehend. The author went on to explain that if a word was an ambiguous one, the teacher needs a process of selection which he operated on, so that the child can get the correct meaning of the word. This is possible when the teacher uses the word in different sentences which could give the word different meanings from each other. To further explain the importance of comprehension, Pearson and Duke (2002) stressed that comprehension guides students in becoming aware of how well they have read as they attempt to put into writing or recall what they have read.

## 9. Conclusion

The study was conducted to find out the effect of using the Concentrated Language Encounter method in developing literacy skill in primary schools in Jos Metropolis. This was based on the gap that existed in literacy training of primary school children. The variables of sight vocabulary and comprehension skills were put to test. Based on the investigation and data analysis, it is evident that primary school children could do well in literacy if appropriate method is employed. From the results and the responses of the samples, the differences in the performance of school children after intervention proved the effectiveness of this method. Therefore, it can be concluded that, the improvement in children's performance in general was mainly due to the intervention given to them.

## 10. Recommendations

It has been noticed from the results of the study conducted that, reading specialists in primary schools are needed to identify, assess and remedy reading problems in children identified as non-readers.

The researcher also observed during the study that, the environment under which children learn and most often the techniques used in teaching affect the children. In most cases children who

are having problems in reading are being lumped together in a class with those who have no problems with reading. This worsened their condition because no individual differences are taken into consideration by the teachers; therefore the researcher recommends that there is need for variation in teaching methods by teachers and resource personnel to cater for the less privileged ones in the class.

Teaching in small groups and if possible individually should be used and the level of books used should vary according to the levels of the children.

Scaffolding technique as in Concentrated Language Encounter method can be used to effect change in learning to read with slow readers.

Training of teachers and resource teachers can be achieved by regular attendance of seminars, conferences, and workshops, especially on the techniques of how to use Concentrated Language Encounter method to minimize some of the reading problems we have in our primary schools today.

## References

- Federal Republic of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Education (2012). National Policy on Education. Lagos Government Press.
- Finochiaro, D.C. (1994) An investigation into some reading problems of pupils in Onitsha Urban Senior Primary Schools. In T. O. Oyetunde; J. Aliyu, & Y.
- Flood, J., & Robb, D.(2007). Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts. New York: Macmillan.
- Hanson, R.A. & Reynolds, R. (1980) Child Development Concepts. Chicago: West Publishing Company.
- Pearson, P.D., & Duke, N.K. (2002). Comprehension instruction in the primary grades. In C.C. Block & M. Pressley (Eds.), Comprehension instruction: Research based best practices (pp. 247 – 258). New York: Guilford.

- Rayner, K; and Pollatsek, A. (1989) The Psychology of Reading. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Rupley, W.H., Logan, J.W., & Nicholas, W.D. (2009). Vocabulary Instruction in a balanced reading method. *The Reading Teacher*, 52 (4), 336 – 346.
- Umolu, J. J. (1985). A high frequency list for Nigerian children. *Nigerian Educational Forum* 8 (1).
- Unoh, S. O. (1982). Reading Improvement in Nigeria as a Multiannual Nation, Problems and Prospects. In S.O. Unoh, R.A. Omojuwa and S.K. M.Crow (Editors). Literacy and Reading in Nigeria. 1,1-33. Zaria: Institute of Education, A.B.U.
- Unoh, S.O. (1984). Moving Towards the Great Intellectual Milestones. A Psycholinguistic view of learning to read and reading to learn. In S.O. Unoh, R.A. Omojuwa, and N.R. Ikonta (Editors) Literacy and Reading in Nigeria, 2.1 – 14, Zaria: Institute of Education in Association with Reading Association of Nigeria.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walker, R. S. (1992). *Teaching all the children to read*. Buckingham: Open University Press.