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THE EFFECT OF ADVANCE ORGANISERS ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN READING COMPREHENSION AND ITS COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS.

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### Abstract

*This paper examined the effect of advance organisers on senior secondary school students' academic performance in reading comprehension and its counselling implications. The purpose was to find if students exposed to advance organisers perform better in reading comprehension than those not exposed and what could be its counselling implications. The study adopted the quasi-experimental research design in which there was no randomization. The sample consisted of 116 Senior Secondary School 2 students randomly selected through stratified random sampling technique from Ekiti State, Nigeria. An instrument titled 'Achievement Test in Reading Comprehension' (ATRC) was used as pretest and posttest to collect data on students' level of mastery and performance in reading comprehension. The instrument was validated through the test re-test method and using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis, a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained. The data collected were analysed using the mean and t-test statistics. The results showed that advance organizer was significantly effective in teaching reading comprehension but not when urban and rural settings were compared. By counselling implication, this shows that advance organizer is a leveler which could be used to enhance performance in reading comprehension in rural areas where students' background and psychological makeup may easily affect their performance. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made.*

Keywords: Counselling Implications, Advance organizer, Reading Comprehension, Academic Performance, Location.

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### Introduction

The English Language is of great importance in Nigeria in that it is the language of official transactions and of learning in secondary and tertiary institutions. This is warranted by the fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multicultural nation and the English language plays the role of a unifying factor in terms of communication (Amuseghan and Omoogun, 2015). This explains the reason it has become a requirement to pass the subject at credit level in order to have a place

in admission into the university to study any course.

However, performance of Senior Secondary School students in English Language has not been encouraging for many years in Nigeria (Sa'ad and Usman, 2014; Akinnaso, 2018). Many reasons have been adduced, which include the background of the learners, inappropriate methodology of teaching, lack of textbooks, lack of instructional materials as well as the inadequate ability of teachers (Asinyanbola, 2010).

Many of the times, even when the students understand the answers to questions, they find it difficult to express themselves in writing. They have poor control of sentences and their writings are full of wrong tenses. The question may, therefore, be asked if this performance can be divulged from their poor reading skills. This is because reading is so important in the development of language and literacy in education especially from second language learners (Tierney, 2012).

Reading involves thinking and the background of students has a lot to do with reading comprehension. Floyd and Carrell in Iqbal, Noor, Muhabat and Kazemian (2015) asserted that students who have lack of cultural knowledge about the target language may have difficulty except by being taught explicitly the cultural knowledge of target language. Moreover, Kulo, Onchera and Indembukhani (2014) found in their study that background knowledge had significant influence on reading comprehension and that it is necessary to give instruction to learners to activate background knowledge in all areas (language, contents, formal) before embarking on the reading process.

In Nigeria English language is a second language which is used for teaching and learning in schools and by this reason, the background of the students cannot but have influence on their reading comprehension. This is because they do not have the cultural knowledge of the English Language. Moreover, many of them especially in Ekiti State reside and school in rural areas, most of which lack the organizational structure and institutions that are similar to the home base of the English Language. This in itself could have some psychological impact on the learners who may ordinarily find it far-

etched relating with the cultural knowledge of the language. This may also make some of them believe that it would be difficult for them to easily comprehend reading material or even do well in English Language.

The reasons for the poor performance of students in the English Language in Nigeria has partially been put at the doorstep of inappropriate methodology of teaching (Sa'ad and Usman, 2014). Most of the time, the conventional chalk and talk method has been adopted in teaching the language. That is why it is important to use advance organizers in the teaching of English Language. Advance organisers may provide the necessary schemata needed to activate background knowledge and enhance reading comprehension (Teacherthompsonblog, 2016).

One would, therefore, wonder if advance organisers enhance the reading comprehension of Senior Secondary School Students, if advance organisers enhance the reading comprehension of students in rural areas, and what would be the counselling implications of the effect of advance organisers on the performance of Senior Secondary School Students in reading comprehension. These constitute the focus of this study.

#### Statement of the Problem

The English Language has become a very important unifying factor in Nigeria, being the official language and the language of instruction in schools. This has also made a credit pass in the subject a requirement for admission into the universities in the country. However, there has been poor performance in English Language especially in reading comprehension among Senior Secondary School students and this has been put partly at the doorstep of inappropriate method of teaching and the

background of students (since many of them live in rural areas). It is, therefore, pertinent to adopt strategies beyond the conventional method, which has become predominantly ineffective like advance organisers, to teach English Language. This study tested if the advance organisers will enhance performance in reading comprehension and do so even in rural areas. The study also considered the counselling implications of this for senior secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

#### Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the pretest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer and the control group.
2. There is no significant difference in the posttest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer and the control group
3. There is no significant difference in the posttest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer in urban and rural areas.

#### Methodology

The study employed the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design. The design had one experimental group exposed to the treatment of advance organizer and the control group which continued with their normal academic activities. The sample consisted of 116 Senior Secondary Class 2 students randomly selected from two secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. They comprised 58 students in the experimental group and 58 students in the control group. They were also selected through stratified random

sampling technique to ensure representatives from rural and urban schools. The instrument used to collect data was titled Achievement Test in Reading Comprehension (ATRC) which was used as pretest and posttest to collect data on students' level of mastery and performance in reading comprehension. The Advance Organizer Instructional Guide was also used as a lesson plan covering six weeks and used to teach reading comprehension.

The ATRC was validated by ensuring the face and content validity through expert judgement and using the test re-test method to ensure reliability. The instrument was administered twice on a group of students who were not part of the study. The interval of both administrations was two weeks. The scores obtained were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis and a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained which was regarded as adequate for the study. The instrument was administered on the subjects through research assistants and scores obtained were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics.

#### Results and Discussion

##### Results:

Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the pretest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer and the control group.

To test this hypothesis, the pretest mean scores of the two groups were compared using t-test statistic. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: t-test summary of the Pretest Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>table</sub>
Advance Organiser	58	19.14	5.93	114	-0.57	1.65
Control	58	19.76	5.65			

Table 1 reveals that the critical value (-0.57) is lesser than the table value (1.65). Hypothesis One: is thereby not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference in the pretest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer and the control group.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the posttest mean scores of

Table 2: t-test Summary of the Posttest Mean Scores of the Experimental and Control Groups.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>table</sub>
Advance Organiser	58	39.88	7.44	114	6.98	1.65
Control	58	28.38	8.73			

Table 2 reveals that the critical value (6.98) is greater than the table value (1.65). hypothesis Two is thereby rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the posttest mean scores of students taught with advance organizer and the control group.

Hypothesis Three: there is no significant difference in the posttest mean scores of

Table 3: t-test Summary of the Posttest Mean Scores of Urban and Rural School Students exposed to Advance Organiser.

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t <sub>cal</sub>	t <sub>table</sub>
Urban	28	43.96	7.14	56	-4.77	1.67
Rural	30	36.07	5.40			

Table 3 reveals that the critical value (-4.77) is lower than the table value (1.67). Hypothesis 3 is thereby retained. There is no significant difference in the posttest means scores of students taught with advance organizer in urban and rural areas.

Discussion

From the findings, one could deduce that the two groups compared had equal pre-treatment academic performance. This

students taught with advance organizer and the control group.

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students taught with advance organizer in urban and rural areas.

To test this hypothesis, the posttest mean scores of urban and rural school students exposed to advance organizer were compared using the t-test. The result is presented in Table 3.

shows that there were no extraneous factors which could have tampered with the genuine outcome of the study. Since the groups were equal before treatment, it shows that the performance of the group exposed to advance organiser was truly warranted by the exposure to advance organiser. This shows that the groups were homogenous.

The findings showed a significant difference between the performance of those exposed to advance organiser and the control group. The advance organiser group (Mean = 39.88) performed significantly better than the control group (Mean = 28.38). This means that students performance in reading comprehension can be enhanced with the advance organiser strategy. This finding is in line with the findings of Okewole and Osinowo (2017) who found same when they experimented on primary school pupils. Jafari and Hashim (2012) also found advance organisers responsible for improving learners' listening comprehension when they experimented on second year university students. All these attest to the efficacy of advance organisers in enhancing performance in reading comprehension.

However, the findings showed no significant difference between urban and rural school students exposed to advance organisers. This may be a bit interesting because it has been claimed that learners' background affects their reading comprehension performance (Kulo, Onchera and Indembukhani, 2014). It should have been expected that students from urban schools would have better background knowledge of the English Language which should make them perform better in reading comprehension than rural school students. This could only mean that the advance organiser is a leveler which has same impact on students no matter the circumstances of their location.

#### Implication for Counselling

Researchers have opined that psychological factors play a vital part in the process of reading (Lee and Shute, 2010; Sani and Zain, 2011). In which case, a learner's performance in reading and reading comprehension may have to do with his/her attitude, self-efficacy, interest, motivation or even anxiety. These may not be far-fetched with learners in rural settings who may be conscious of their

disadvantage of inadequate background knowledge when it comes to reading comprehension in English Language.

From the findings of this study, it has been established that the advance organizer strategy is a leveler that has the same impact on performance in reading comprehension irrespective of the location of learners. So, whether the challenge is self-efficacy (Yoguntan, 2012), anxiety (Alrabai, 2014) or even interest and motivation, the use of advance organiser will downplay the effects of these on performance in reading comprehension. The use of advance organiser has been known to reduce foreign language learner's anxiety (Schwartz, 1995, Ambard, 2010). It has also been known to arouse learners' interest (Nemer, 2017).

Therefore, teachers of English language could easily achieve a lot when they make use of advance organisers especially to teach reading comprehension. Not only this, teachers of learners in rural schools need to see the advance organiser strategy as a veritable tool not only in enhancing learners' performance in reading comprehension but also in giving them the assurance that the circumstances of their location are not strong enough to place them at a disadvantage compared with their colleagues in urban schools.

#### Conclusion

It is concluded in this study that the advance organiser strategy will enhance performance in reading comprehension when used on Senior Secondary School students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It is also concluded that the advance organiser strategy is leveler which has the same effect on performance in reading comprehension irrespective of learner's location of school. This, therefore, has counselling implications as teachers in rural schools could use this strategy to

reduce students' anxiety, arouse students' interest and assure students that the circumstances of their location are immaterial to their performance in reading comprehension.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Secondary school teachers of English Language should always adopt the advance organiser strategy in teaching reading comprehension
2. Teachers in rural schools where students may have difficulty with doing well in reading comprehension due to psychological factors should always adopt the advance organiser strategy as a solution not only to the problem of poor performance but also to reduce or even strike out the psychological challenges.
3. Teachers whose secondary school children have inferiority complex issues in their academics should always encourage them to interact with advance organisers in conducting their studies as this could help reduce the inferiority complex and assist in enhancing their performance.

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