

## SQ3R Method and Its Implications on the Reading Skills of English Language Students in Adamawa State Polytechnic Yola, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*Reading as a basic literacy skill has continuously been referred as one of the factors responsible for students' performance in schools. The attraction to enhancing reading skills among students calls for unceasing research. Therefore, the study investigated reading proficiency and comprehension among English language students in selected departments in Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, Nigeria. Two departments were selected purposively for the study. Also, the departments chosen were with population above one hundred. This research was guided by Schema theory. Indeed, the ability to read efficiently in English is an essential skill in all spheres of life. Moreover, the effects of reading proficiency on comprehension was examined to achieve the objective through the employment of the SQ3R method for reading texts. An extract of a comprehension passage served as a research instrument for the purpose of pre-test and post-test in the study. The findings revealed that students from both departments performed inadequately before the intervention. Also, there was significant improvement after applying SQ3R method of teaching reading. The study recommended the application of SQ3R as an effective method in enhancing reading proficiency and comprehension in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Reading; Proficiency; Comprehension; SQ3R; tertiary institution.

### Introduction

In Nigeria, English serves several purposes, especially in governance, education and business. Despite the significance of the language in education, it is observed that some students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, especially those in Northern Nigeria, are unaware of or do not apply effective strategies in reading. Reading is a lifelong skill to be used both at school and throughout life as rightly observed by Kucukoglu (2013). Reading is not as crucial as effective reading, especially at an advanced level. Several factors are responsible for effective reading. These range from eye span, to absorption rate. Indeed, effective reading improves comprehension and makes the process more meaningful and enjoyable. To Bojovic (2010), "Reading is a complex, purposeful, interactive, comprehending, flexible activity that takes considerable time and resources to develop. Reading is rapid, which means that readers should maintain flow of information at a sufficient rate to make connections and inferences vital to comprehension". It is noteworthy that increasing improvement in technology poses higher and greater challenge on reading skill in current education system and teachers are interested in methods that could sustain students' interest in reading. Also, stakeholders in education sector are desperately raising alarm on the perceived decline in reading of students across different levels.

Proficient or efficient reading centres on reading in a manner that allows adequate understanding of the message, which differs absolutely from speed reading. An appropriate strategy is determined by the nature of the text. A strategy that suits an academic passage is different from a strategy of reading a newspaper. Consequently, efficient reading strategies are vital to tertiary institutions' students in order to achieve their designed objectives and academic goals. In order to realise the above mentioned, the study used the SQ3R method in teaching reading during the intervention period by the teacher. SQ3R method is a strategy employed in reading comprehension according to five steps of survey, question, read, recite, and review. It was introduced by Francis Pleasant Robinson, an American education philosopher in his 1946 book on *Effective Study*. There are previous studies that border on enhancement of reading. Such include Kucukoglu (2013) that outlines predicting, visualizing, making connections, summarizing, questioning, inferring are strategies of reading as strategies that improve comprehension in reading.

While, Gilakjani (2016) emphasises kinds, theories and strategy of reading. Others are Duke and Pearson (2002), who analyses effective practice for reading comprehension;

English is regarded as an international language used both globally and locally. English, which functions as a second language in Nigeria, has been widely utilised as a means of interaction in various fields particularly in education. The ability to read efficiently in English is deemed an important skill to be acquired for academic, business and other purposes. In Nigeria, English is a compulsory subject in all schools. Reading strategies are part of language learning strategies. Mckey (2002) posits that: “Reading strategies are deliberate, goal-directed attempts to control and modify the reader’s efforts to decode text, understand words and construct meanings of text”. However, some students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, especially those in Northern Nigeria, have paid less attention to the conscious and deliberate application of reading strategies to understand and interpret English reading materials. This study presents the SQ3R method as a reading strategy through which teachers could guide students.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study conducted an investigation into SQ3R model in the enhancement of students’ performance reading comprehension. Thus, the main thrust of this experimental research is to achieve the following objectives:

- i) Assessment of students on reading comprehension without the SQ3R model;
- ii) Assessment of students on reading comprehension after the introduction of SQ3R model;
- iii) Comparison of the performances of the students before and after the intervention; and
- iv) Recommendation of SQ3R model in enhancement of reading comprehension based on the results.

### **Methodology**

This study was grounded on schema theory of reading comprehension by Barlett (1932), which provides the theoretical underpinning for the study. Schema is a term used in psychology and cognitive science, which describes a systematic pattern of thought and behaviour. Schemata affect attention and the absorption of new information. People use schemata to organize prior knowledge and provide a framework for future understanding. There are various influential ways of defining schema, and nearly all cognitive definitions of schema stem from Bartlett (1932). He claimed “an active organization of past reactions and past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operational in any well-adapted organic response”. In consonance with the above, Widdowson (1983) defined schema as “cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in a long-term memory”. From the above definitions, it is explicit that schema is the prior knowledge gained through experiences stored in one’s mind. It is an abstract structure of knowledge. Also, Bolovic (2010) posits that “readers make use of their existing background knowledge (schemata) to make predictions about what is coming next in the text and about how some new, unfamiliar piece of information relates to what is already known”. Just as Kaya (2015), and Alfaki and Siddiek (2013) argue that reading is an active process which cannot be achieved without background knowledge. Therefore, schema theory is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study.

Experimental technique was employed as a design of the study while the simple random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of the study. The population of this study was 200, by selecting 100 students from each department. Pre-test and post-test were administered on the students. The students were first examined on a given comprehension passage. After which, they received an intervention for the period of three weeks each on reading proficiency and comprehension. The intervention was realised via the use of a teaching method known as survey, question, read, recite and review (SQ3R) method of teaching reading; then a post-test was administered. The results were analysed based on the research objectives.

The selected departments were Department of English Language Education (DELE) and Department of Business Administration and Management (DBAM), in which a total research subjects were 200; i.e. 100 students from each Department within Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola. The instrument for data collection was an extract from their recommended National Diploma 1 English textbook (*Understanding Use of English: For Schools and Colleges*). The reading topic was 'Bride Price'. The performance of the students was collated via ticking of 5 linker scales designed by the researchers to ascertain the establishment on the effect of reading proficiency on comprehension. The descriptive method was used to analyse data on objective one to three to determine if there is any significant relationship between the variables because the outcomes of the pre-test and post-test were to assess how the students of the two selected departments perform in the context of a given text.

### Analysis of Results (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

The results were analysed and classified on the basis of pre-test and post-test. These were done for easy reference and clarity.

### Pre-Test for Students (DELE AND DBAM)

Below are the results of pre-test for both students of Diploma in English Language Education and Diploma in Business Administration and Management, all from Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola.

Table 1: Pre-Test's Result of Students of Department of English Language Education (DELE)

Ability to actively involve with the text and understand what has been read		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	2	3.5
	Good	23	40.4
	Fair	23	40.4
	Poor	9	15.8
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to interpret strange words		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Good	17	29.8
	Fair	32	56.1
	Poor	8	14.0
	Total	57	100.0
Improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies ie prediction, making connections, visualizing etc.		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	3	5.3
	Good	21	36.8
	Fair	25	43.9
	Poor	8	14.0
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	2	3.5
	Good	18	31.6
	Fair	25	43.9
	Poor	12	21.1
	Total	57	100.0

Ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Good	19	33.3
	Fair	29	50.9
	Poor	9	15.8
	Total	57	100.0

Source: Field Data 2017

Table 2: Pre-Test's Result of Students of Department of Business Administration and Management (DBAM)

Ability to actively involve with the text and understand what has been read		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	3	5.3
	Good	17	29.8
	Fair	22	38.6
	Poor	15	26.3
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to interpret strange words		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	2	3.5
	Good	19	33.3
	Fair	26	45.6
	Poor	10	17.5
	Total	57	100.0
Improvement of students' comprehension through instructions of reading strategies, i.e prediction, making connections, visualizing, etc.		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	2	3.5
	Good	14	24.6
	Fair	26	45.6
	Poor	15	26.3
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Good	18	31.6
	Fair	26	45.6
	Poor	9	15.8
	Total	57	100.0
	Ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage		Frequency
Valid	Very good	4	7.0
	Good	20	35.1

Fair	23	40.4
Poor	10	17.5
Total	57	100.0

Source: Field Data 2017

### Discussion of Pre-field Test Results

The objective of the study was how to establish the effect of reading proficiency on comprehension through the application of SQ3R model. To achieve this, students of Department of English language Education (DELE) were assessed based on the above objective; the above tables were used for assessment. The table shows that 17 students had the ability to actively engage with the text and understand what was read, which was rated as very good at 29.8%, while 36 students were rated as good at 63.2%, 4 students were evaluated as fair at 7.0% . Also, 17 students were assessed as very good at 29.8% in terms of ability to interpret strange words, while 29 students were graded good at 50.9%, 10 students were rated fair at 17.5% and 1 student was assessed poor at 1.8%.

From Table 1, 16 students were rated very good at 28.1%, 34 students were graded as good at 59.6%, 7 students were assessed as fair at 12.3%, all in terms of improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies i.e. prediction, making connections, visualizing etc. In fact, only 19 students were rated as very good at 33.3% in terms of ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience, while 27 students were assessed as good at 47.4% and 11 students as fair at 19.3%. More so, 12 students were evaluated as very good at 21.1% in terms of their ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage. However, 34 students were rated as good at 59.6%, 8 students graded as fair at 14.0% and 3 students were assessed as poor at 5.3%.

Table 2 shows the pre-test performance of Diploma in Business Administration and Management's (DBAM) students. The respondents were assessed and their results on the table are explained as follows: It was observed that 3 students had the ability to actively involve with the text and understand what was read, rated as very good at 5.3%, while 17 students were assessed as good at 29.8%, 22 students were graded as fair at 38.6% and 15 students evaluated as poor at 26.3%. In addition, 2 students were rated very good at 3.5% in terms of ability to interpret strange words, while 19 are assessed good at 33.2%, 26 students were rated fair at 45.6% and 10 students were evaluated as poor at 17.5%.

Moreover, 2 students assessed as very good with 3.5%, 14 students rated good at 24.6%, 26 students were graded as fair at 45.6% and 15 students evaluated as poor at 26.3%, these were in terms of improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies i.e. prediction, making connections, visualizing etc. Also, 4 students were rated as very good at 7.0% on the ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience. While, 18 students were assessed as good at 31.6%, 26 students were graded as fair at 45.6% and 9 students were rated poor at 15.8%. Also, on Table 2, 4 students were rated very good with 7.0% on the basis of their ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage. While 20 students were assessed as good at 35.1%, 23 students were adjudged fair at 40.4% and 10 students were evaluated as poor at 17.5%.

Table 3: Post-Test's Result of Students of Department of English Language Education Department (DELE)

Ability to actively involve with the text and understand what has been read		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	17	29.8
	Good	36	63.2
	Fair	4	7.0
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to interpret strange words		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	17	29.8
	Good	29	50.9
	Fair	10	17.5
	Poor	1	1.8
	Total	57	100.0
Improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies ie prediction, making connections, visualizing etc.		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	16	28.1
	Good	34	59.6
	Fair	7	12.3
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	19	
	Good	27	
	Fair	11	
	Total	57	
Ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	Very good	12	21.1
	Good	34	59.6
	Fair	8	14.0

Poor	3	5.3
Total	57	100.0

Source: Field Data 2017

Table 4: Post-Test's Result of Students of Department of Business Administration and Management (DBAM)

Ability to actively involve with the text and understand what has been read		Frequency	Percentage
	Excellent	2	3.5
	Very good	19	33.3
Valid	Good	26	45.6
	Fair	10	17.5
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to interpret strange words		Frequency	Percentage
	Excellent	2	3.5
	Very good	19	33.3
Valid	Good	28	49.1
	Fair	8	14.0
	Total	57	100.0
Improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies ie prediction, making connections, visualising etc.		Frequency	Percentage
	Very good	18	31.6
	Good	33	57.9
Valid	Fair	6	10.5
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience		Frequency	Percentage
	Excellent	2	3.5
	Very good	15	26.3
Valid	Good	30	52.6
	Fair	10	17.5
	Total	57	100.0
Ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage		Frequency	Percentage

Valid	Very good	24	42.1
	Good	25	43.9
	Fair	8	14.0
	Total	57	100.0

Source: Field Data 2017

### Discussion of Post-field Test Results

The students were re-assessed after the intervention as earlier stated and the results, as stated on the basis of each department (Tables 3 and 4) showed that 17 students have the ability to actively involve with the text and understand what was read and they were rated as very good at 29.8%, while 36 students were assessed as good at 63.2%, 4 students were graded as fair at 7.0%. Also, 17 students were evaluated as very good at 29.8% in terms of ability to interpret strange words, while 29 students were graded as good at 50.9%, 10 students were rated as fair at 17.5% and 1 student was rated poor at 1.8%.

Table 3, also, shows that 16 students were rated as very good at 28.1%, 34 students were assessed as good at 59.6%, while 7 students were graded as fair at 12.3%, on the basis of improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies ie prediction, making connections, visualizing etc. Indeed, 19 students were rated as very good at 33.3% in terms of ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience. While, 27 students were assessed as good at 47.4% and 11 students as fair at 19.3%.

More so, 12 students were rated as very good at 21.1% on their ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage. However, 34 students were assessed as good at 59.6%, 8 students were graded as fair at 14.0%, while, 3 students were rated poor at 5.3%.

The post-test of students of Business Administration and Management (BAM) were assessed, and the results showed that 2 students have the ability to actively involve with the text and understand what was read, and they were rated as excellent at 3.5%, 19 students were graded as very good at 33.3%, 26 students were adjudged good at 45.6% and 10 students were rated as fair at 17.5%. Also, 2 students were rated excellent at 3.5% on their ability to interpret strange words, while 19 were graded as very good at 33.3%, 28 students were evaluated as good at 49.1% and 8 students were rated as fair at 14.0%. In addition, 18 students were evaluated as very good at 31.6%, 33 students were assessed as good at 57.9%, 6 students were rated as fair at 10.5%, in terms of improvement of student's comprehension through instruction of reading strategies ie prediction, making connections, visualizing etc.

Table 4 further shows that 2 students were rated as excellent at 3.5% on their ability to activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experience. 15 students were rated as very good at 26.3%, 30 students assessed as good at 52.6% and 10 students adjudged as fair at 17.5%. Finally, 24 students were rated very good at 42.1% in terms of ability to give meaning of the underlined words as used in the passage, 25 students were assessed as good at 43.9% and 8 students were evaluated as fair at 14.0%. After the intervention, the DBAM students seemed to have better performance than their counter part of DELE at almost all the levels. Without any doubt and based on the previous data presented above, it is clear that the reading proficiency and comprehension of DBAM students was of better than that of

DELE. This indicated that the students studying English Education were not as proficient as their counterparts studying Business Administration in the Institution.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes that teachers of English language should equip themselves with effective reading strategies and to master the SQ3R method of teaching reading in order to guide students accordingly. Teachers should also ensure that there is adequate literacy engagement with needed motivation and knowledge of grammar. This will go a long way in enhancing the reading proficiency and comprehension of their students. It has also been researched an effective way of improving reading fluency. The study recommends that establishment of effect on reading proficiency on comprehension was possible; because the road map is clear. The intervention through the application of SQ3R theory in teaching reading led to significant improvement in students' performance.

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