

The Impact of Jolly Phonics on the Vocabulary Achievement of Pupils in Primary Schools

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Abstract

The impact of Jolly Phonics on vocabulary accomplishment in elementary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, was examined in this study. The vocabulary achievement scores of students who were taught reading skills using Jolly Phonics and those who were not, the vocabulary achievement scores of students who were taught spelling skills using Jolly Phonics and those who were not, and the vocabulary achievement scores of students who were taught writing skills using Jolly Phonics and those who were taught without Jolly Phonics in the Local Government Area were all considered in this study. With a non-randomized pretest-posttest control group and a sample size of 120 participants, the study used a quasi-experimental methodology. The data was analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). In primary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, there was a significant difference in vocabulary achievement scores between students taught reading skills using Jolly Phonics and those taught without it, between students taught spelling skills using Jolly Phonics and those taught without it, and between students taught writing skills using Jolly Phonics and those taught without it, according to the study's findings at the 0.5 level of significance. Recommendations were provided when needed.

Keywords: Jolly Phonic, Pupils' vocabulary, Achievement, Primary school

INTRODUCTION

The UK-based Jolly Learning Ltd. created the synthetic phonics program known as Jolly Phonics. In recent decades, educational experts have observed a great deal of interest in the synthetic phonics system following comments regarding its implementation. Artificial or analytical phonics education has been a controversial topic throughout history. For bilingual children or English language learners that require simultaneous improvement, administrators can now select from a wider variety of top synthesized phonics program operators (Oyibe & Nnamani, 2016).. It is now widely accepted that children need to have a solid foundation in English proficiency in order to excel in social and educational contexts. Jolly Phonics is one of the best strategies for improving young people's reading and writing skills. The tactic is widely used and successful, but instructor ignorance prevents it from being used at the moment. While the word "phonics" denotes letter groupings utilized in reading, the word "jolly" frequently refers to "fun." Jolly Phonics is the term for play-based reading. Jolly Phonics is a child-centered approach to teaching reading that makes use of synthetic phonics (Roehr-Brackin, 2018).. Teachers and children find this multisensory approach, which includes exercises for each letter sound in a language, to be incredibly motivating as they watch their students grow. A certain arrangement is used to introduce the sounds. Kids can

start forming phrases as soon as possible thanks to this approach. Jolly Phonics teaches kids the five basic reading and writing abilities (Okon & Archibong, 2015).

Similar to other phonemic awareness approaches, Jolly Phonics methodically promotes children's reading, writing, spelling, and vocabulary development by connecting letters with sounds. Learners frequently create English spelling sequences and acquire new vocabularies. It begins with the most common alphabet and sounds, progresses to phonetic symbols (which combine two alphabetic letters), and concludes with the final single-letter alphabet sounds in sequence of increasing complexity. As a component of the phonological awareness system, newborns learn how to process and decode words as well as the relationships between letters and sounds. Phonics development and instruction have been thoroughly discussed by effective learning instructors (Suarnajava, 2018). Some defended its use in phonics training, while others contended that all kids should learn to read through an explicit phonics approach. A significant change in teaching approaches is implemented through the use of synthetic phonics. The synthetic phonics strategy improves reading comprehension, increases accuracy and fluency, and promotes oral reading. It allows children to practice word recognition and phonics (Mitchell et al., 2019). Starting with the most often occurring alphabet sounds, the 42 letter sounds that make up the Jolly Phonics teaching method are arranged in order of complexity. The remaining single-letter alphabet sounds are followed by digraphs, which require a combination of two alphabets. As children progress through letter sounds, they should be able to correctly pronounce them (learning the letter sound), write them down (formation), blend them to read new words (blending), and hear them in words to aid in spelling (segmenting). Learning letter sounds comes before teaching challenging words like "i," "come," and "because" that don't frequently match the letter and sound association. In a same spirit, Jolly Phonics made learning easy and fun by creating songs, stories, and games centered on each letter sound. The following are the 42 letter sounds in Jolly Phonics order:

1. s a t i p t
2. c/k e h r m d
3. g o u l f b
4. ai j oa ie ee or
5. z w ng v oo OO
6. y x ch sh th th
7. qu ou oi ue er ar

With activities for each of the 42 English letter sounds, Jolly Phonics is an enjoyable and kid-focused method of teaching literacy that uses a synthetic multimodal approach to

teach five essential reading and writing skills. "Jolly Phonics: Teaching Literacy," December 2014. The Jolly phonics technique is broken down into five fundamental skills, according to Lloyd and Wernham (2012), Perez (2014), Lodosa (2013), and Suarnajava (2018). These are: Learning the letter sounds: Children are taught forty-two main letter sounds.

1. Learning to form letters: Children learn to form and write letters using a variety of multisensory techniques.
 2. Blending: To read and write new words, children are taught how to blend sounds together.
 3. Recognizing the sounds in words: The greatest way for kids to start getting better at spelling is to listen for the sounds in words.
 4. Tricky words: Children learn these words independently since they have irregular spelling.
- In Jolly phonics classes, these abilities are taught in an enjoyable, multisensory manner.

These skills help children have a firm grasp of letter sounds. This strategy includes information and tools that seem to be quite helpful for teachers and students. Nhung (2016) asserts that learning English is crucial for everyone and that practice is necessary for growth from a young age. Since the majority of information and technologies are now communicated in English, English literacy has emerged as the most crucial component of any education. Kids can utilize it in their daily lives as well as for educational purposes. There are several English learning programs available for early learners. Learning a language makes it possible for people to communicate with a variety of people and express their thoughts with ease, claim Lloyd and Wernham (2012). Since English has become a foreign language that gives its residents a competitive edge everywhere, the beginning must focus more on the field of English competence in order to engage with a large society worldwide. Additionally, they noted that the best time for people to learn English appears to be while they are young, since this provides them a greater chance to succeed in the long run (Petrides, 2018; Yusuf, 2019).

Similarly, Ozfidan and Burlbaw (2019) claim that motivated individuals may easily accomplish their objectives even if they are not fluent in English or another language. This point of view is presented in contrast in the literature. According to some scholars, learning a second language requires a lot of dedication and work. It takes dedication, intense focus, and purposeful memory of the target language's grammatical principles to learn a language effectively. According to Jolly (2014), among many other crucial elements, learning a foreign language in a classroom setting—often referred to as T.F.L. (Teaching Foreign or Second Language)—requires strong motivation, deliberate initiatives, a suitable educational framework, and qualified instructors. It seems that learning a foreign language is a collaborative process that necessitates the participation of both instructors and students in

order to deliver quality training. On the other hand, Petride (2018) contends that it is incorrect to assert that a foreign language learner (FL) could strive for native-like competency in a language that is mainly taught in a classroom.

All of the words that are employed in a language and have meanings, including verbs, idioms, pronunciation, and other components, are referred to as vocabulary. It is hence the fundamental building block of all languages. When people misuse words, communication falls down. According to research, language is used by everyone who want to express ideas or emotions, whether orally or in writing. It is clear that English is a second language (L2) in Nigeria. Therefore, in order to enhance their ability to comprehend and produce in the foreign language, English language learners must constantly expand their vocabulary. Because vocabulary is so important, learners may feel the need to study it even when they are at a higher level of language proficiency and performance. The foundation of communication is vocabulary proficiency; also, language is a defining characteristic and the most durable artifact of any community. It is important for social interaction and the dissemination of social values. Language is the focal point of education everywhere in the world. The importance of English around the world helps donor organizations, like the British Council, fund initiatives aimed at raising non-native speakers' English competence in developing nations (Marsh and Lange, 2000).

Students learning English as a second language must approach it carefully because it is the world's wealthiest language with a vast vocabulary (Jolly, 2012). To learn a language, one must acquire vocabulary. As a result, vocabulary study has taken center stage in instructional activities. Therefore, vocabulary serves as a fundamental component that is necessary for language development. Without vocabulary, speaking would be meaningless and possibly impossible with just structure. For this reason, teaching vocabulary is one of the most crucial aspects of any language course. It is a medium that conveys meaning; learning to comprehend word meaning and express oneself in a meaningful way is essential to learning a language. As a result, vocabulary knowledge is crucial to students' overall academic success. It aids students in understanding what they read. Without knowing the meanings of the majority of the words in the sentence, paragraph, or passage, students cannot comprehend what they read. Therefore, the foundation for success in reading, writing, and spelling is vocabulary knowledge.

The issue of low vocabulary achievement among English language learners has persisted among elementary school kids despite numerous research attempts in the past. Therefore, the researcher wants to close this gap by examining how the jolly phonics instructional technique affects the vocabulary accomplishment of primary students in Akwa

Ibom's Uyo Local Government Area. Based on the background, The study's objectives were to find out how the happy phonics teaching method affected the vocabulary achievement of elementary students in Akwa Ibom's Uyo Local Government Area. In particular.

METHOD

In this study, a quasi-experimental design with a non-randomized pretest-posttest control group will be employed. This decision was required since determining the cause and effect of occurrences is the fundamental goal of experimental research. This design is therefore appropriate in enabling the researcher to achieve the purpose of the study. The independent variable will be manipulated such as the instructional strategies which include Jolly Phonics instructional strategy and pupils' reading skills, spelling skills and writing skills. Hence, an experimental study is a systematic empirical enquiry in which the researcher can manipulate at least one independent variable.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all 2,786 primary three pupils in public primary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom in the 2023/2024 school year. Comprising 1,638 males and 1,148 females (State Universal Basic Education Board, 2024). The study concentrated on primary three pupils and on their course content in English Language. The choice of primary three classes is because it is presumed that primary three pupils are exposed to vocabulary lessons because it is the final lower Basic primary class.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sample size used for the study consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) primary three pupils from four primary schools in Uyo Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selection of four primary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. One intact primary three class was randomly selected from each of the four primary schools and each class has a total of 30 pupils these gave a total sample size of 120 pupils. Hence, the researcher had 60pupils in the control schools and 60pupils in the experimental schools. The four schools selected for the study were randomly assigned to the different treatment conditions. Thus, the researcher had two experimental schools and two control schools.

Instrument for Data Collection

The data for the study was collected using Jolly Phonics and Pupils Vocabulary Achievement Test (JPPVAT). The pupils' vocabulary Achievement Test consists of 30 items, and it is sub-divided into three sections (sections A, section B, and section C). Ten questions

each will be used to test each of the variables considered which include reading vocabulary, spelling vocabulary, and writing vocabulary.

Scoring

The scoring procedure of the Jolly Phonics and Pupils Vocabulary Achievement Test (JPPVAT) was as follows. The four aspects of vocabulary have equal numbers of test items (which were 10 test items each). These gave a total number of 30 test items and each attracted 2 marks. Hence, the total score of Jolly Phonics and Pupils Vocabulary Achievement Test (JPPVAT) was 60%.

Validity/Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was done through face and content validated processes. The test items were given to the researcher's supervisor and one expert lecturer in Early Childhood Education Department at a state university in Nigeria. It was also given to two specialists in Measurement and Evaluation and one expert lecturer in Educational Curriculum, all in the University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. They were specifically expected to scrutinize the appropriateness of the items in respect to the grammatical expressions and the extent to which the items measure pupils' vocabulary achievement scores based on reading, spelling and writing. The instrument was corrected following their recommendations. Split-half reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. To do this the researcher divided the test items into two equal halves (odd number items and even number items) and administered them to 40 primary three pupils who were not part of the main sample size of the study. Person Product Moment Correlation and Spearman Brown Formula were used to compute the result which gave the reliability coefficient of 0.78 which is high enough to justify the use of the instrument. A pilot study was carried out in a primary school. The pilot study used a sample of 20 primary three pupils from two intact classes. The school will not be used for the main study. However, the sample possessed similar characteristics as the school that will be used for the main study.

Method of Data Analysis

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data obtained from the study. The Analysis of Variance was particularly selected because it allows for comparison of three or more variations. It is a test of difference, and it was used to remove the effect of the pretest and find the main effect of the treatment. The means and standard deviations of experimental and control groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils reading skills can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard deviations of Experimental and Control Groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils reading skills

Achievement Test	Group Respondent	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	Experimental Group	4.68	1.24	60
	Control Group	3.85	0.95	60
	Mean Difference	0.85	-	-
Post Test	Experimental Group	12.53	4'64	60
	Control Group	8.72	2.34	60
	Mean Difference	3.81	-	-

Table 1 shows that the pre-test reading skill means for the experimental and control groups were 4.68 and 3.85. It's mean that the experimental group is better than the control group. The means and Standard deviations of Experimental and Control Groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils' spelling skills can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Means and Standard deviations of Experimental and Control Groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils' spelling skills.

Achievement Test	Group Respondent	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	Experimental Group	5.12	1.13	60
	Control Group	3.86	0.04	60
	Mean Difference	1.26	-	-
Post Test	Experimental Group	15.53	3. 12	60
	Control Group	9.15	2.56	60
	Mean Difference	6.38	-	-

Table 2 shows that the experimental and control groups' pre-test spelling skill scores were 5.12 and 3.86. It's mean that the experimental group is better than the control group. The mean and standard deviations of experimental and control groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils writing skills can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviations of experimental and control groups in vocabulary achievement of pupils writing skills.

Achievement Test	Group Respondent	Mean	SD	N
Pre-test	Experimental Group	4.42	1.14	60
	Control Group	3.85	1.05	60
	Mean Difference	1.37	-	-
Post Test	Experimental Group	16.64	4'36	60
	Control Group	8.72	2.48	60
	Mean Difference	7.68	-	-

According to Table 3, students' pre-test writing skill scores for the experimental and control groups were 4.42 and 3.85. It's mean that the experimental group is better than the control group. the anova results for experimental and control groups in the vocabulary achievement reading test on english language can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Results for Experimental and Control Groups in the Vocabulary Achievement Reading Test on English Language

Source of variance	SS	df	Ms	F-cal	F-Crit
Between group	34.82	1	34.82	6.42*	3.92
Within group	1037.07	118	6.21		
Total	1971.89	119			

N= 120 * Significance $p < .05$

Because the resulting F of 6.42 was higher than the threshold F of 3.92 at df of 1, 119 and at the.05 level of significance in Table 4, the null hypothesis was rejected. The ANOVA results for experimental and control groups in the vocabulary achievement spelling test on english language can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Experimental and Control Groups in the Vocabulary Achievement spelling Test on English Language

Source of variance	SS	df	Ms	F-cal	F-Crit
Between group	148.73	1	148.73	8.12*	3.92
Within group	3730.78	118	22.34		
Total	3879.51	119			

N= 120 * Significance $p < .05$

Because the obtained F of 8.12 was higher than the threshold F of 3.92 at df of 1, 119 and at the.05 level of significance in Table 5, the null hypothesis was rejected. The ANOVA results for experimental and control groups in the vocabulary achievement writing test on english language can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. ANOVA Results for Experimental and Control Groups in the Vocabulary Achievement writing Test on English Language

Source of variance	SS	df	Ms	F-cal	F-Crit
Between group	149.3	1	149.63	5.26*	3.92
Within group	1621.57	118	9.71		
Total	1771.2	119			

N= 120 * Significance $p < .05$

Since the obtained F of 5.26 was higher than the critical F of 3.92 at df of 1, 119 and at the.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis in Table 6 was rejected. Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant difference between the vocabulary achievement score of pupils taught reading skills with Jolly phonics instructional strategy and those taught without jolly

phonics. The result in Table 4 indicated that there is significant difference between the vocabulary means achievement score of pupils taught reading with Jolly phonics instructional strategy and those taught reading without jolly phonics in Uyo Local Government Area. This result is in consonant with Ekpo et al., (2007) who stated based on research findings that Jolly Phonics Instructional Strategy effectively enhanced pupils reading skills as the experimental group used in the study gained from 5.3 to 5.7 in the Burst reading test compared to the control group. In the same vein, shepherd (2013) supported the findings of this study affirming that children subjected to Jolly Phonics Early Grade Reading Assessment Tools performed extremely high level on literacy skills than those subjected to normal literacy instruction. Likewise, Edobor and Ogun (2010) agreed with the findings of this study stating based on research findings that Jolly Phonics Instructional strategy significantly improved pupils reading comprehension and vocabulary achievement than those taught with the conventional method.

Additionally, Eshiet (2012) supported the findings of this study emphasizing based on research study that Jolly Phonics instructional strategy significantly improved pupils reading achievement as well as increased teachers' interest in teaching reading skills in English Language lessons. Lodosa (2013) supported the findings of this study affirming that the problem of reading skills can be overcome with effective teaching strategies such as Jolly Phonics Instructional Strategy which is play oriented and can help the children have good mastery of language skills which involves readings and writing, and invariably facilitate their vocabulary achievement. Moreso, Kaweera (2013) in line with Farokhbakht (2015) opined that Jolly Phonics instructional strategy has improved the literacy skills of preschool pupils expose to Jolly phonics method in learning English by significantly indicating a higher improvement in their reading and vocabulary skills compared those taught with the convention method which agrees with the findings of this study.

According to hypothesis two, students who were taught spelling skills using the Jolly Phonics instructional technique and those who were taught Jolly Phonics did not significantly differ in their vocabulary accomplishment levels. Table 5's results showed a significant difference in vocabulary mean accomplishment scores between students in the Uyo Local Government Area who were taught spelling skills using the Jolly Phonics teaching technique and those who were taught spelling skills without it. This result agrees with Dixon, Schengen and Seedhouse (2011) who affirmed based on research findings that Jolly phonics instructional method significantly improved pupils spelling and vocabulary achievement

scores, as pupils taught reading and spelling using Jolly phonics significantly improved in their achievement score compared to those taught with the conventional method.

Johnson and Watson (2005) supported the findings of this study stating that Jolly Phonics Instructional method significantly improved the spelling ability of pupils which also enhanced their reading comprehension ability which is in line with the findings of this study. In the same vein, Asia (2006) stated that individualized reading strategy which is an embodiment of Jolly phonics instructional strategy can improve pupils spelling and vocabulary acquisition since it is pupils centered, play oriented and multisensory in nature. Hence, pupils are able to manipulate sounds to form words which facilitate their spelling skills and invariably enhance their vocabulary mean achievement scores. Consequently, Oluwale (2011) revealed that keyword instructional method significantly influenced pupils spelling vocabulary achievement based on research study which is also in consonant with the findings of this study.

According to hypothesis three, there is no discernible difference in vocabulary performance levels between students who are taught writing skills using Jolly Phonics and those who are not. The results in Table 6 showed that students in the Uyo Local Government Area who were taught writing skills using Jolly Phonics had significantly higher vocabulary achievement levels than those who were not. This agrees with shepherd (2013) who stated based on research findings that children taught with Jolly Phonics instructional method significantly improved in writing skills compared to those taught with the conventional methods of teaching. In the same vein, Perez (20 14) asserted that there is a relationship between visual Cues (letters) and sounds which enable children to recognize sounds and words. Thus, they improve their writing skills through identification of letters sounds thereby enhancing their vocabulary acquisition which invariably improved their vocabulary achievement scores, which is in consonant with the findings of this study. Additionally, Ruhaena (2008) agreed with the findings of this study stating that Jolly phonics method can improve the mastery of reading and writing for children who are native speakers of English or adopt English as their second language.

CONCLUSION

Given the results of this investigation, it is relevant to draw the conclusion that:

1. The vocabulary means accomplishment scores of students who received instruction in reading abilities using Jolly Phonics and those who did not showed a significant difference.
2. Students who were taught spelling skills using Jolly Phonics had significantly higher vocabulary meaning accomplishment scores than students who were taught spelling skills

using Jolly Phonics.

3. The vocabulary mean accomplishment score of students who were taught writing skills using Jolly Phonics differed significantly from that of students who were not.

The results of this study offer empirical proof that the Jolly Phonics teaching approach significantly improves primary three students' vocabulary achievement in the research setting and, by extension, in other situations. As a child-centered, play-based, multisensory approach that actively engages students through the five essential skills—learning letter sounds, letter formation, blending, segmenting, and mastering challenging words—it highlights the educational value of Jolly Phonics. Jolly Phonics helps young learners acquire strong phonological awareness, which is a crucial foundation for vocabulary development, reading fluency, spelling accuracy, and writing ability, by making phonics education methodical, entertaining, and participatory. The approach appears particularly beneficial in the Nigerian context, where English is taught as a second language and many pupils enter primary school with limited exposure to English literacy, and in other similar contexts with same characteristics.

SUGGESTIONS

Jolly Phonics can be used in the learning process. It can be used not only in local area, but also in the national and international lens. We only translate it into various languages according to the country which will use Jolly Phonics. The national curriculum should include Jolly Phonics as learning media. For the next research should develop artificial intelligence-assisted Jolly Phonics. This new approach will have big impact on students' achievement especially in this era.

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