

Teacher's Perception of Current Radio Literacy Programme's Effectiveness for the Development of Basic Language Skills in the Primary School Pupils: The Case of Cross River Radio

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the numerous literacy programmes aired through the radio, Nigeria is still ranked among the ten nations of the world that experience high illiteracy rate. This research was to find out teachers' perception of the effectiveness of the current radio literacy programme including the development of the basic language skills by the Cross River Radio among primary school pupils in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas (L.G.As) of Cross River State. The subjects were 120 sandwich undergraduate students of Elementary Education, who are teaching in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas. The study was guided by three research questions that tried to find out the level of teacher-involvement in the radio programme; the extent to which the programme helped the pupils acquire the four basic language skills and to find out other variables that make the programme irrelevant to the school experiences of the pupils. Teachers' Perceived Radio Programme Questionnaire (TPRPQ), a four-point likert instrument was used. The generated data were analysed using simple percentages and the following deductions were made: (a) that most teachers are not involved in the current radio literacy programme; (b) that the programme has not helped pupils to attain the basic language skills; (c) that the language needs of the pupils are not considered by the programmers and there is no collaboration between the radio and the school, hence the radio programme is ineffective in aiding the acquisition of literacy skills. A new focus for the radio programme was recommended and some counseling implications were reviewed.

KEYWORDS: Teachers, Perception, Radio, Literacy and Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

An effective radio literacy programme can open the gate of life for useful information to come in: improved health condition, longevity, meaningful participation in politics, acceptable interpersonal relationships, development of the spirit of independence, confidence and self-reliance, while illiteracy on the other hand, tends to leave one permanently in darkness, a state of uncertainty and ignorance.

Literacy, the skill of reading, writing and computing is the hope of every citizen but only a dream to those who cannot attain it. The use of electronic media for imparting literacy skills to its large audience in Nigeria has been going on for sometimes now. The question that comes to the mind is: How effective has the electronic media been in imparting the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)? Has it carried the primary school population along?

This paper considers the use of the radio as information medium to encourage and promote the development of literacy skills among primary school pupils in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas, using the Cross River Radio. The researcher has observed that in the three Local Government Areas used for this study, many homes have more radios than televisions; hence more pupils have access to radios in their homes or

immediate neighbourhoods. She also observed the listening habits of Nigerian Primary School children to radio programmes to be very poor and without purpose.

The situation, therefore, motivated the researcher to carry out an exploratory survey to find out the effectiveness of the current literacy programmes carried out by the Cross River Radio in terms of aiding the primary school pupils in Calabar Municipality to attain the four language skills.

THE PROBLEM

The use of the radio for imparting literacy skills to all primary school pupils in Calabar Municipality has failed to be effective because:

- i The objective of radio lessons bore no relationship to the task of classroom teaching;
- ii There was little or no involvement of teachers or any attempt made to help them understand the significance of their programmes; and
- iii Very little collaboration took place between the researchers and radio programmers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant in many ways:

- i It would sensitise language teachers to take active role in planning and implementing the radio literacy programme.

- ii It would strengthen the ties between the radio and the school.
- iii It would motivate the pupils to participate actively in the programme in order to attain the literacy skills. By enticing the pupils to this programme, they would be exposed to valuable information about world affairs generally.
- iv It would motivate the government to equip the schools with radios and to ensure that all primary schools take part in the radio instructional programme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher is unaware of any studies of this nature that have a Nigerian background; hence the literature review is based on foreign studies. Schramm (1977) reported that instructional radio in Thailand dates back to 1958. The first school broadcasts went out to 386 schools. By 1987, the number of student using the service increased to about one million. The programme includes two social studies programmes of twenty minutes each per week for the first five primary grades and one English programme of twenty minutes per week for primaries 5, 6 and 7.

In 1982, the Ministry conducted a large field study to evaluate the learning from Instructional Radio. The experiments concluded that radio teaching appeared to be more effective in social studies. The result with radio English in the upper primary were inconclusive.

Palmer (1964) advocated that language learning should be made interesting to the learners because not many people learn anything well unless they are interested in it. He further suggested some steps that could make learning a worthwhile undertaking: giving some game-like activities, ensuring the right relation between the teacher and the pupil; providing a variety of experiences and giving them feedback. These steps can only be met, when Nigerian teachers participate in the radio literacy programmes.

Egbe (1999) emphasizing the role of the mass media in development said: "In Bogota, Columbia, radio was used to teach literacy for both youth and adults", (p.57). There is, therefore, the need to design and package special literacy programmes to be transmitted to specific audience. This could be done in the form of radio fora, which involve discussion, dialogue, etc. using experts in English language.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The paper was guided by these research questions:

1. To what extent are teachers involved in the current literacy programmes in the Cross River Radio?
2. Has the current literacy programme on radio helped the primary school pupils to acquire the four language skills?
3. What variables are responsible for making this programme not relevant to the school experiences of the pupils?

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory survey. This introductory research is being carried out as an agenda for further research. The population is comprised of all primary school teachers in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas that receive information from the Cross River Radio. The sample consisted of 120 randomly selected sandwich undergraduates of Elementary Education in the University of Calabar. The subjects are current practising teachers in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas of Cross River State.

INSTRUMENTATION

Teachers Perceived Literacy Radio Programme Questionnaire (TPLRPQ) was the only instrument used. A four point likert scale was developed, validated and used by the researcher. The questionnaires were administered; coded and simple percentage was used for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

This is concerned with the presentation of the results of research data and the interpretation of results. The research questions were taken one after the other.

In Table III, 316 (66.4%) and 39 (8.1%) of the respondents positively support the fact that there are several variables that have contributed to ineffectiveness of the radio literacy programmes in the primary schools. Non-involvement of educational text books in planning radio literary programmes was greatly opposed as 120 respondent (100%) responded negatively.

DISCUSSION

This study has indicated that only a few nursery school teachers are involved in the radio literacy programme in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani, and Akpabuyo Local Government Areas.. Teachers have neither been involved at the planning nor implementation stages of these programmes. The public schools have been completely left out at the primary level. Since all primary school teachers are not involved in the radio programmes, no activities are assigned to the pupils before, during and after the specific literacy programme that could have helped to motivate both the teachers and pupils to develop the four language skills. When teachers are involved, radio literacy programmes will not just end when the programme is over in the radio but there will be some follow-up activities in the school so that Palmer's (1964) steps of giving pupils game-like activities to stimulate interest in language learning could be attained.

Other variables that contribute to ineffectiveness of radio literacy programmes in our schools include: lack of radios in our schools; relating radio programme objectives to the language needs of the primary school child; lack of collaboration between the radio and school and failure on the part of radio programmers to involve educationists at both the planning and implementation stages of the programmes.

TABLE 1: Percentage Frequency Analysis Showing Teachers' Involvement in Literacy Programme

	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total
1 Only a few nursery school teachers are involved in the radio literacy programme	70	58	50	42	0	0	0	0	100
2 Most teachers are not involved in the radio programme.	80	67	35	29	5	4	0	0	100
3 Primary school teachers are involved in the planning of the radio programme	0	0	0	0	30	25	90	75	100
4 Teachers from the public schools are left out of the programme	84	70	30	25	6	5	0	0	100
	234	48.7	115	24	41	8.5	90	18.7	100

In Table 1, 234 (48.7%) and 115 (24%) of the respondents positively supported the fact that teachers are not involved in the current radio literacy programmes. This view was further emphasized when 90 (75%) and 30 (25%) of the respondents opposed the fact that teachers are involved in the planning of the radio programmes.

TABLE 2: Percentage Frequency Analysis Showing How Radio Literacy Programme Helped the Pupils to Acquire the Four Language Skills

	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total
5 Only a few people from selected nursery schools can speak fluently.	60	50	42	35	10	8.3	8	6.6	100
6 The programme does not create activities to encourage language skills development	90	75	28	23.3	2	1.6	0	0	100
7 The programme only favours children from rich homes who have radios.	60	50	40	33.3	12	10	8	6.6	100
8 The language skills are not acquired because pupils memorize most of what they say during the programme	88	73.3	22	18.3	10	8	0	0	100
n = 120 Total	298	62	132	27.5	34	7	16	3.3	100

298 (62%) and 132 (27%) of the respondents that agree that the current literacy radio programme does not help the primary school pupils in Calabar Municipality, Odukpani and Akpabuyo Local government Areas to acquire the four language skills, while 34 (7%) and 16 (3.3%) of the respondents disagreed.

TABLE 3: Percentage Frequency Analysis Showing Variables that do not make Radio Programmes Relevant to school experiences of Pupils

	SA	%	A	%	D	%	SD	%	Total
9. Schools have no radios.	112	93	8	7	7	0	0	0	100
10. The objectives of radio programmes do not consider the language needs of pupils	90	75	25	20.8	5	4.2	0	0	100
11. There is no collaboration between radio and school personnel.	114	95	5	5	0	0	0	0	100
12. Educational text books are not involved in the planning of radio literacy programme.	0	0	0	0	0	0	120	100	100
n = 120 Total	316	66.4	39	8.1	5		1	25	100

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of this exploratory research, the researcher recommends the adoption of "Integrated Cooperative Literary Programme". What is advocated here is not isolated reporting on literacy topics in the radio. Rather, both the radio programme planners and some school personnel will be implementing specific literacy programmes in the Cross River Radio with the aim of developing the four language skills in the primary schools.

The need to adopt this programme cannot be over-emphasised. For most of the pupils in the public schools, the school is the only place where they are taught, given assignments or directed on how to develop literacy skills through the radio. When the school fails to provide leadership in these areas, then majority of the pupils may pass through primary education without developing any interest for the radio programmes. Unfortunately, teachers in many of our schools do not show any interest for the the radio programmes. Only a few nursery school children participate in programmes like "Kiddies Request" or "Young Brains", a debate programme for schools. For these programmes, the children are assisted to cram. There is very minimal avenue for reinforcing these programmes at school; hence the children forget what they had crammed as soon as the programme is over.

Consequently, learning to listen to the radio, or write about what is being said becomes tedious and slow. It becomes an experience to be avoided rather than being an exciting activity to be looked forward to. This programme would stimulate pupils' interest in listening, discussing, writing and reading after each radio programme. This would help them to develop interest for listening to other world event in the radio. Learning in this manner would help pupils to come to "an intuitive understanding of themselves as readers and of various processes involved in reading and writing" (White, Vaughant, Roriel, 1986:84).

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING

1. Correcting the Impression that Everybody Can Teach
In Nigerian, everyone thinks that he can become a teacher at will. It is necessary for the counselors to enlighten the masses that a teacher is one that has been given a professional training in teaching methods, educational psychology as well as being exposed to several months of supervised teaching practice. It is, therefore, recommended that staff of the radio houses be counseled on the need to liaise with the appropriate school personnel to plan all literacy programmes.

2. Establish Instructional Radio Programme in Nigeria
School counselor and radio personnel in collaboration with curriculum specialists, should plan to establish instructional radio programme. Scholars like Opubor (1985) and Uchedu (1993) all agreed on the potency of mass communication to effect change basically because mass media ensures rapid transmission of organized messages.

3. Mass Education Enlightenment to Attain Literacy for all Nigerians

Nigeria is a nation of 88 million people, 47 of whom are illiterates (World Bank, 1998). Counselors should lead in a massive campaign to encourage the attainment of literacy for all Nigerians.

4. Equip Schools with Radio or Establish central Viewing Centres

There are no radios in our primary schools. To make instructional radio literacy a reality, counselors should persuade the Ministry of Education, the Primary school Board and the Local government to provide each school with a radio. Counselors should also appeal to the school personnel and pupils not to abuse such privileges. All schools should have access to electricity. Alternatively, the government can establish a central viewing center so that different schools can have access to it.

5 Develop Previewing, During-Viewing and Post-Viewing Activities for the Pupils

Counselors should liaise with teachers to develop Previewing, During-viewing and Post-viewing activities for the radio literacy programmes to motivate pupils to effectively participate in the programme in order to develop the basic language skills.

CONCLUSION

In order to reduce the large illiterate population in Nigeria, effective instructional radio literacy programme should be established. The success of such a programme will be possible through the implementation of Integrated Cooperative Radio Literacy Programme.

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