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ELTT is a bi-annual journal devoted to the publication of articles, research reports and reviews on English Language Teaching for those involved in the teaching of English as a second Language. It aims to:

1. Provide a forum of exchange of ideas and experiences for teachers of English.
2. Encourage teachers and researchers, publishers and writers to work together to develop teaching procedure, ideas and materials for the advancement of ELTT.
3. Promote and support research in the areas of English for Academic/Special Purposes.

Although ELTT welcomes contributions in all areas of English Language and Literature research, greater emphasis will be given to papers with strong practical classroom experience and application. Such areas may cover Needs Analysis, Course Design, Methodology, Testing, Materials Development, Programme Management, Literary studies and criticism,Teacher Training, and Evaluation.

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ANALYSIS OF READING COMPREHENSION NEEDS OF STUDENTS OF ENGLISH IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Reading comprehension skill is a basic tool for all students, hence, the importance and the need for stakeholders in the education industry to clearly identify the various students' reading comprehension needs. Against this backdrop, this study has analyzed the reading comprehension needs of students of English language of colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, 600 students were involved in the study. The instrument used was a researcher designed questionnaire structured into sections A and B. Research questions were raised and answered using ordinary percentage, while the hypotheses were tested with t-test. The major findings indicated that, students' reading needs did not differ on accounts of students' gender and types of college. One of the recommendations was that colleges of education teachers should update their understanding of the reading process and appropriate instructional techniques for teaching reading comprehension. Also, it was recommended that good books be provided to motivate students for greater performance in reading.

Keywords
Reading comprehension needs, Reading performance, School type

Introduction

Reading is an essential tool for the acquisition of all kinds of human knowledge. Reading is a process whereby information stored in books can be processed and utilized for a variety of purposes.

Olajide (1991) laments the failure of teachers in tasking the critical and creative faculties of learners adequately. He ascribes poor performance in reading comprehension among school learners to the teachers' inadequate method of questioning. This is also related to the poor state of performance of students in the reading comprehension component of English examinations.

Ashashim (1991) specifically investigated the performance of students of Nigerian colleges of education in reading comprehension in English, and concluded that this category of learners may not be extra-ordinary achievers. Apparently, he agreed that, there are inadequacies in the teachers' method against the learner-oriented methods, and some of the factors responsible for these shortcomings are overcrowded classes, the pressure to cover the course contents within a limited time frame, lack of instructional materials, and lack of motivation for teachers to do their best.

The dynamic nature of the human language has led to a lot of innovations in language use. Some language elements and features that had not attracted much attention, in the past, are now generating scholarly discussions. In view of the importance of reading comprehension to the achievement of educational goals, in Nigerian colleges of education, results of this study will be useful to students, teachers, policy makers and researchers.

The Concept of Reading

Musilimi and Lawal (1997) see reading as a tool, a discipline and the key that unlocks the gate to literacy, wisdom and the gateway to understanding all other subjects in the school curriculum. Reading is therefore a basic life skill, and the cornerstones for a child's success in school, and, indeed, throughout life. It is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. Skilled reading can thus be described as constructive, fluent, strategic and motivating.

Shaywitz (2003) has observed that reading is the most complex of the human functions. Reading in any language poses a challenge, but reading in English is particularly difficult, especially for second language learners. They re-echoed the fact that any act of reading involves personal choice, emerging from a complex mix of interests, feelings, and ideas. Shaywitz (2003) further stated that reading is the activation of prior knowledge and schemata, engagement with the text, meta-cognitive control, generation of ideas and emotions, integration with existing knowledge and feelings, judgment and evaluation.

However, the above definitions are insufficient to help us understand the true nature of reading abilities, because they do not convey that a reader has several possible purposes for reading; neither do they explain how reading is carried out as a cognitive process that operates under time constraint.

Needs Analysis in English (ESL)

Needs analysis includes all the activities used to collect information about students' learning needs, wants, wishes, desires, etc. Specifically, Nunan (1988) has identified two different types of needs analysis useful in language syllabus design. The first is learner analysis, while the second is task analysis. Learner analysis is based on information about the learner, while task analysis is based on information about what activities (tasks) learners would perform with language. Needs can be described as something like the gap between what is and what should be. Thus, what is considered as a "need" is a matter for agreement and judgement, depending on the ideological preconceptions of the analysts.

Ajileye (2002) has observed that needs analysis is an approach to course planning and curriculum design in language teaching. The process also sometimes involves looking at the expectations and requirements of other interested parties such as the teacher/teacher's aide/tutor, administrators, financial supporters, and other people who may be impacted by the programme (such as students' family members or employers). Ajileye (2002) has stated further that the reading needs of learners could be investigated by finding out the kind of reading materials they are exposed to; and the kinds of reading tasks they are expected to perform; to what extent learners understand the language of a text or what kinds of problem they have in the process of extracting main points from a text, and to what extent the learners find it difficult to do a critical reading and cope with the volume of reading assigned to them. Needs analysis can be very formal, extensive and time consuming, or it can be informal, narrowly focused and quick.

According to Phan (2005); needs analysis procedures were used as initial process for specification of behavioural objectives, which then explored different

syllabus elements such as functions, notions and lexis in a more detailed manner. Hence, needs analysis is warmly embraced as an approach to course design which focuses mainly on learners' needs.

There are various ways of interpreting needs, the concept of learning needs is often interpreted in two ways: as what the learner wants to do with the language (goal-oriented definition of needs) which relates to terminal objectives or the end of learning; and what the learner needs to do, to actually acquire the language (a process-oriented definition of needs) which relates to traditional/means of learning.

However, context and content analysis seems to have a direct correlation with reading comprehension needs of students, which is the focus of this paper. It is an analysis which seeks to specify the main duties and skill level required. Hence, there is the need for students to understand the reading comprehension process, skills, methods, strategies, the appropriate instructional techniques and materials in the learning process of reading comprehension.

Purpose of the Paper

The primary purpose of this paper is to analyze the reading needs of English language students of colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria.

In specific terms, we have attempted to:

1. Find out if the reading needs of English language students in Kwara State Colleges of Education differ on the basis of gender.
2. Find out if the reading needs of English language students in Kwara State Colleges of Education differ on the basis of school type.

Research Questions

This paper has attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference in students' reading needs based on gender?
2. Is there any significant difference in students' reading needs based on school type?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been raised and tested:

HO1: There is no significant difference in male and female students' reading needs.

HO2: There is no significant difference in students' reading needs based on school type.

Scope of the Study

The study on analysis of the reading needs of students in colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria, has covered all the six colleges of education in Kwara State, Nigeria. The six colleges of education have been purposively used as samples due to their few numbers.

Significance of the Study

It is believed that the students, who are the recipients of every effort put in place to improve teaching of reading would benefit greatly from the outcome of this study. This would help them to be abreast of approaches and strategies of text comprehension, and would also help to facilitate their general academic progress. Six hundred (600) 100 level NCE students made up of hundred (100) students from each of the six colleges were selected for this study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The instrument for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire, entitled "Student Variables Questionnaire" (SVQ), which was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured into Sections A and B. Section A sought demographic information of the student's gender, and school type; while Section B focused on identifying the reading needs in relation to the human and material needs of the respondents. The questionnaire consisted twenty (20) items in form of direct questions on which the respondents provided answers on four point *likert* type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected through Section B are here analysed using t-test statistical technique to ascertain if gender and school type affect the reading needs of the students.

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section describes personal information of the respondents (students) using frequency counts and percentage. The output is shown below:

Table 1: Gender Distribution of the Students

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	306	51.0
Female	294	49.0
Total	**600**	**100.0**

Source: The Present Study

Table 1 above shows that out of 600 sampled students, 306 (51%) were males while the rest 294 (49%) were females.

Table 2: School Type Distribution of the Students

School Types	Frequency	Percentage
Public	198	33.0
Private	402	67.0
Total	**600**	**100.0**

Source: The Present Study

Table 2 above shows that out of the sampled 600 students, 198 (33%) are from the public schools while the rest 402 (67%) are students from private schools.

Hypothesis Testing

The Hypotheses postulated for this study have been tested using t-test statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1 There is no significant difference in male and female students' reading needs.

Table 3: The t-test Analysis on Male and Female Reading Needs

variables	No	Mean	Std	Df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Male Reading needs	306	37.02	3.12	598	.367	1.960
Female Reading Needs	294	37.29	4.09			

Critical level of significance = 0.05

Source: The Present Study

Table 3 above has indicated that the calculated t-value is 0.367, and the critical t-value is 1.960 with 598 degree of freedom, at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the reading needs of male and female college of education English students.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the reading needs of students from private and public schools.

Table 4: The t-test analysis on the reading needs of students from private and public colleges of education

variables	No	Mean	Std	Df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value
Private Reading needs	198	36.60	3.73	598	1.057	1.960
Public Reading Needs	402	37.42	3.55			

Critical level of significance = 0.05

Source: The Present Study

Table 4 above has indicated that the calculated t-value is 1.057 and the critical t-value is 1.960 with 598 degree of freedom. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, Hypothesis 2 is also accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the reading needs of students from private and public colleges of education English students.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the study have established that gender and school type had no influence on the reading comprehension needs of English studies students in the six colleges of education in Kwara State. This may not be a surprise, since all the colleges used in this study operate almost similar curricula, under the supervision of the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE). Also, the students' reading needs may not be significantly different largely because of the nature of their academic programme. Lecturers' methodologies and approaches may also have affected the result.

In conclusion, the results of this study could have been different if emphasis had been placed on different combination of skills and strategies, nature of fluent

reading abilities, ability to draw meaning from a text and interpret meaning, among others. This should be the concern of future researchers.

Recommendations

The outcome of this study could be of great importance to the English language teachers in colleges of education, parents, students, government, textbook writers and curriculum developers. All stakeholders must do the right thing to improve the situation currently at hand. For instance, teachers should employ the various activities embedded at the pre-reading, reading and post-reading instructional phases of the reading process to facilitate reading comprehension instructions as well as students' comprehension abilities. Parents should buy books and encourage their children to read novels, comics, newspapers, magazines at home. It becomes necessary for students to create more time and interest in reading. Curriculum planners and developers should know the area of content in need of attention and inclusion in redesigning curriculum. Lastly, government should provide well-equipped libraries to improve students reading skills in the language.

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