A Survey of Reading Difficulties among Undergraduates in South -West Nigeria

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Abstract
The study investigated the reading difficulties of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. Eight hundred and thirty-four undergraduates accidentally sampled were used from seven (7) universities in South-West Nigeria through stratified randomly sampling technique. The instruments used were Vocabulary Difficulty Questionnaire (RDQ), Content Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ), Reading Flexibility Questionnaire (RFQ) and Study Method and Problem Solving Questionnaire (SMPSQ). It was established from data analysis that 48% of undergraduates have some level of vocabulary difficulties while reading, 50% of them have difficulties in content analysis, 45% of them have difficulties in reading flexibility, while 39% of them have difficulties in study methods and problem solving. It was also established that there was no significant difference between the reading difficulties of male and female students.. It is recommended that literature text across literary genres should be included in the Use of English programes, since literature is a language bank. By this, the reader will acquire enough vocabulary to boost his reading efficiency, and acquire more knowledge, and facts from reading texts. More so, every Nigerian University and Colleges should be encouraged to establish reading clinics where diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties are to be carried out. Lastly, the undergraduates should be exposed to more study methods and problem solving techniques for effective reading and comprehension.

Keyword: Reading vocabulary difficulty, reading flexibility difficulty, content reading difficulty, study method, problem solving method difficulty

Introduction

Reading is a literacy skill employed by students including undergraduates to acquire knowledge from printed materials for the purpose of solving personal and societal problems. This definition refutes the notion at macro level of reading that comprehension is the end product of reading activity rather it upholds the notion that reading comprehension is not complete until it is used to solve problems. It can also be used to solve textual problems such as decoding vocabularies, phrases, answering comprehension questions, and summarizing a text. At pure linguistics level, comprehension knowledge of a text can be applied to the textual analysis of a text, such as, lexico-semantic analysis, Textlinguistics analysis of literary idiolects, and literary varieties, stylistics, discourse and pragmatic analysis of a text. At societal level, it can be used to solve social, political and economic problems. There is no any other way for the readers to do this effectively than to revitalize learners reading culture towards becoming proficient readers. The goal of every undergraduate is to excel in his studies and earn a degree at the end of his academic program. To achieve this goal, students have to engage in macro-reading with the purpose of reading as a guide to literal, study, inferential, critical, and creative reading. However, research has shown that not all students have been able to plough through these macro-reading processes successfully due to their reading difficulties. Apari (2018) defined reading difficulties as the problems readers face in conceptualizing a reading text. Moreover, he categorized them into vocabulary, content, flexibility, study methods and problem solving difficulties. But the discussions of these reading difficulties are not complete without recourse to attention, retention, and recall difficulties. Therefore, each of these difficulties is discussed in the subsequent paragraphs of this paper.

First, Vocabulary difficulty has different associated terms such as word recognition, decoding words, sight words and word attack difficulties. At the macro level, lexis is synonymous with vocabulary, which can be regarded as the total stock of words in a language. This stock of words comprises content and functional words, lexical borrowings, innovations, and local expressions (Okoh, 2007). The undergraduates need to know that the knowledge of content and functional words is needed to comprehend the syntax of a reading text without difficulty. More so, language text books are fraught with lexical borrowings, local expressions, as well as, local names. The reader of English text must be capable of identifying these words, their sources and meanings without problems. Apari (2006) noted that language textbook must be culturally loaded with familiar lexical items. By this, the undergraduates will put his experiential background into his reading processes, in order to fulfill the exigencies of reading and comprehension without difficulties. One of the causes of slow and poor reading comprehension is limited vocabulary in the readers 'repertoire'. Without rich vocabulary, it will be difficult for the reader to recognize words in their process of reading. Vocabulary development is essential in the educational system because a group of the correct technical vocabulary of one's discipline keep manifesting in the field of interest. The reader is said to be afflicted with reading difficulties when he cannot understand words and acquire meanings from reading texts. Sybil (1984) noted that vocabulary development involves the explanation of meaning through grasp of usage and a sensitivity to nuance. However, excellent performance in reading comprehension demands that the reader has adequate store of vocabulary and he is able to recognize them when he comes across them while reading.

Second, content difficulty has to do with reading activity in the subject area in the curriculum. Each subject has its content, and each of the contents, as it were, deals with specific topics. The content of a text is formed by the appropriate lexical items around the subject matter of the text in question. These items dictate the complexity, or otherwise of the text. The problem arises when the reader is incapable of making meanings out of the reading material, as a result of, his insufficient knowledge of the lexis, and the syntax of the reading text. Another difficulty the reader is likely to encounter in the content area is difficulty with the summary of the selection. It is

practically impossible for a reader to summarize a text without the prior knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, and comprehension of the text. The knowledge of the lexis, and syntax will enable the reader to read around the subject matter in the content area, and comprehend the message. Therefore, comprehension precedes summary which requires that the 'selection be reduced to a specific proportion of the original length'. It must be noted here that comprehension is not the end product of a reading activity, rather, it is the application of what the reader has comprehended to solve problems, either in answering comprehension questions, or summarizing a reading text, or textual and other socio-economic and political problems. The reader has to be equipped with essential ingredients of summary which includes: understanding, location, selection, and presentation of uses in the passage. However, success in making summary requires a thorough understanding of the text; location of information, facts and their variations from opinion, and the selection of the exact information. In other words, only the key words will be selected after which the information is presented in an acceptable format.

Furthermore, a paragraph is a piece of writing which is unified by a central, controlling idea or theme; the theme is called the key point or the topic sentence, which can be found, either at the beginning, middle, or the end of the paragraph. The key point is the nucleus of the passage, and the foundation upon which, the supporting details are built. However, every other sentence apart from the topic sentence in the passage helps to boost the understanding of the meanings inherent in the topic sentence. The macro reader should identify the topic sentence from either the first, middle or the last sentences of the paragraph and differentiate them from supporting details. With this knowledge, it will not be difficult for him to remember the gist of the passage. Moreover, in the process of reading in the content area, readers are often confronted with reading difficulties such as attention, vocabulary, comprehension, retention, and recall difficulties. These are the difficulties which distract attention, even when the reader, seems to focus on the prints, mumbles, and frustrated at unfamiliar vocabularies, un comprehend the reading text, when the brain refuses to process the message, retain the information into short term memory, instead of long term memory, and is eventually frustrated at recall stage.

Next in the series of comprehension difficulties is retention difficulty which has to do with the process of retaining reading information in the memory. Enitan (2015) noted that learning, forgetting, and retaining go together. He argued that learning is an important indicator of later performance. However, learning and retention should be considered together because when learning takes place permanently in the reader, he will retain what he has learnt through reading in his long term memory. Different techniques and learning strategies should be applied by the learner to retain what he has learnt through reading. Closely related to retention is recall difficulty. Ogbulogbo (1996) noted that recall is one of the comprehension requirements, and it means retrieval of information from the memory. Moreover, Apari (2005) agrees with Akinade (1996) that recall involves recall of details, sorting out, recognition, and decoding, recall of main ideas,recall of sequence, recall of comparism, cause and effect relationship, as well as, recall of character trait. Therefore, the reader must apply different study method and problem solving techniques (reading techniques) such as Robison's, SQ3R, Paul's O (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Recall), or Apari Wusu's SQR-SRR-U (Survey, Question, Read, Summary, Review, Recall, and Use). Reversal of all the aforementioned bring about recall difficulties.

Then, reading flexibility is the greater degree of the way reading process is organized. First, it begins with the identification of the purpose of reading, which to an extent, is the major determinant of students reading pattern, Reading flexibility also has to do with the reader's ability to adjust his reading behaviour to meet the conditions imposed by the reading materials, the purposes of reading and the reading situations. However, the purpose of reading determines the rate/speed of the reading activity, and the major reading rate often employed by undergraduates in reading for academic achievement is study reading. It requires slower reading than skim or scan readings, even though, it is necessary to increase reading speed, when study reading in order to cover enough ground within a limited time. Okwilagwe (2011) noted that readers with reading flexibility vary their reading speed to suit their purpose of reading a passage, and to fit the textual difficulty of the passage. This means that, the undergraduate should be able to read the same passage with varying rates and the textural difficulty of the passage, as well as, his purpose for reading the passage. This enables him to cover the long straight ways of passage with directness, efficiency, much thought and constant awareness of what and while reading the text.

In sum, the task of removing reading difficulties from the reading processes of a reader is study methods, and problem solving. Reading difficulty arises from the reader's inability to plan his time to consult varieties of related reading materials. This leads to psychological problem for the reader, when he becomes 'fed up' when reading prescribed books for his course. This further leads to the reader's difficulty, getting through reading assignment. The forgoing difficulties need to be removed from the reader's reading processes through study methods, and problem solving, for the reader to read and assimilate even, among friends and relatives where distraction is inevitable. While doing the forgoing, he is guided with the purpose of gathering information on a given topic, look for main points, and supporting details, then, discriminate between opinion and facts before taking positions, which is the knowledge he has acquired from his reading activity. To achieve this, the reader has to engage in the macro reading methods of note taking, key word reading techniques, semantic mapping, and reading techniques.

By and large, reading difficulty has become a major challenge in education across school levels, and ownership, except the bull is taken by the horn, by providing an urgent anecdote to the problem, the undergraduates will remain at the backwaters of reading achievement. This informs the conduct of this study.

Statement of Problem

The goal of every undergraduate is to read to learn and excel in his/her academic studies at the end of the academic programme. However, in the process of reading,

some of them find it difficult to learn and pass examinations. This is because of the reading difficulties they encounter and this also accounts for the reasons advanced for the failure of students in school subjects. Unoh (1991) reported the following high incidence of reading difficulty among students at the University of Ibadan: inability to skim, slow reading rates, misunderstanding and misinterpretation, inability to comprehend main ideas, critical evaluation, and inability to comprehend details, word power of vocabulary and retention or short time memory. Almost the same incidence of reading difficulties were detected and recorded by Chapman(1965b) in Enitan (2015),meaning that reading difficulty is a recurrent problem in undergraduate reading processes which also inhibit the way he acquires knowledge and seek information. The resultant effect is that such undergraduate receives poor grades and is easily fed with adverse effect of behavioural problems and limitation of job opportunities if he manages to graduate eventually. Reading as a complex skill follows some accredited patterns, which serve as basic requirement for recovery of information and knowledge. It is therefore the goal of this study to investigate the reading difficulties of undergraduates in south-West Nigeria in the areas of vocabulary, flexibility, content analysis, study methods and problem solving.

Purpose of Study

The purposes of this study are to determine the:

1. vocabulary difficulties of undergraduates in South - west Nigeria;
2. reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates in South-west Nigeria;
3. undergraduates' ability in context analysis; and
4. study methods and problem solving skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria.

Research Design

A survey research design was employed for the purpose of gathering data. The survey investigated the reading difficulties of male and female undergraduates in South-West Nigeria.

Population

The population for the study consisted of all 200 level undergraduate students in South-West Nigeria: Federal, State and Private Universities. The population was restricted to only the faculty of Education, Departments of language, Arts and Social Science Education.

Sampling and Sampling Technique

The study covered five states; Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti states which are predominantly Yoruba states of Western part of Nigeria where Yoruba is the language of immediate community and medium of instruction in lower primary classes (NPE,2004).From the states,seven universities were selected using stratified random technique on the bases of ownership- federal (1 university) state(5 universities) and private(1 university).The faculties were also selected by stratified random sampling technique. Participants from the three faculties were selected using incidental sampling technique in that students available during the administration of the instruments were served copies. This led to the following: Federal, 175,State,522,and private,137 making 834 participants.

Instrumentation

1. Vocabulary Difficulties Questionnaire (VDQ)

This is a four item questionnaire which was designed and used to investigate the word power of the sampled undergraduates. The items covered recognition difficulty, making sense from passage read, comprehension, retention, and summary difficulties. A reliability test of 0.62 was established in respect of the questionnaire.

Content Analysis Questionnaire (CAQ)

This questionnaire contains five items which was designed and used to investigate the content analysis abilities of undergraduates. The questions bothers on difficulties in making sense of what is read, identifying key points in the passage read, recall, and interpretation of tables.

Reading Flexibility Questionnaire (RFQ)

This is also a four item questionnaire and used to investigate the reading flexibility difficulties of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. The questionnaire covers simple reading materials such as the rate of reading, translation of reading material to MT, applying puzzle technique, and finding out whether the subjects have difficulties in differentiating between reading and studying. The questionnaire was critically examined by reading experts for face and content validity. The questionnaire was further validated using Alpha statistical formula. A reliability test was established at 0.63

Study Methods and Problem solving Questionnaire (SMPSQ)

This four item questionnaire was also designed and used to elicit information from the subjects on study methods and problem solving skills. The questionnaire was critically examined by reading experts for face and content validity.It was further validated using Alpha statistical formula, and the reliability test was established at 0.62

Research Questions

1. What are the vocabulary difficulties of the sampled undergraduates?
2. What are the reading flexibility difficulties of the undergraduates?
3. What are the content analysis difficulties of the undergraduates?
4. What are the study methods and problem solving difficulties of the undergraduates?
5. What are the significant differences between reading difficulties of male and female undergraduates in south west Nigeria?

Ho1: There is no significant gender difference in the reading difficulties of undergraduates in South West Data Analysis

Research Question 1: What are the vocabulary difficulties of the sampled undergraduate?
Table 1: Vocabulary Difficulties among Undergraduates in South West Nigeria

Table 1

S/N	Items (Vocabulary)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Mean Rank	Std.D
1	I have attention difficulty when I am reading	106 (12.7)	255 (30.6)	275 (33.0)	190 (22.8)	2.31	1	0.99
2	I have difficulty making sense of many of the books I have to study.	70 (8.4)	176 (21.1)	314 (37.6)	266 (31.9)	2.2	2	0.92
3	I have a difficulty understanding meaning that implies rather than stated specifically.	94 (11.3)	225 (27.0)	287 (34.4)	213 (25.5)	2.04	3	0.95
4	I have difficulty recognizing and understanding many words when I am reading	59 (7.1)	182 (21.8)	319 (38.2)	272 (32.6)	2.03	4	1
5	I have difficulty retelling or writing a story I have read in own words	82 (9.8)	111 (13.3)	277 (33.2)	353 (42.3)	1.88	5	0.99
	Weighted Average	**2.09**						

The mean of the options is 2.5, while the mean average of the responses to reading difficulties associated with vocabulary among undergraduates in South West Nigeria is 2.09, which is below the mean of 2.5. This implies that undergraduate students in south west Nigeria have some difficulties with vocabulary. For example; they have difficulty understanding meaning that are implied (2.20); making sense of many of the books (2.04); recognizing and understanding many words while reading (2.03); and retelling or writing a story they had read (1.88). which can be rated as 52%.

Research Question 2: What are the reading flexibility difficulties of the undergraduates?
Table 2: Content Analysis Difficulties among Undergraduates in South West Nigeria

Table 2

	Items (Content Analysis)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Mean Rank	SD
1	I turn over the page and ignore all graphs, charts and tables when I am reading.	170 (20.4)	220 (26.4)	249 (29.9)	181 (21.7)	2.42	1	0.91
2	I have difficulty retaining what I have initially read.	69 (8.3)	164 (19.7)	316 (37.9)	264 (31.7)	2	2	0.94
3	I have difficulty identifying the key points in a passage and distinguishing between these and the supporting details	61 (7.3)	142 (17.0)	301 (36.1)	324 (38..8)	1.91	3	0.97
4	I have difficulty remembering what I have initially understood	62 (7.4)	124 (14.9)	302 (36.2)	331 (39.7)	1.81	4	0.95
5	I have difficulty remembering what I have initially understood	62 (7.4)	124 (14.9)	302 (36.2)	331 (39.7)	1.81	5	1.1
	Weighted Average	**2**						

The mean of the options is 2.5, while the mean average of the responses to reading difficulties associated with content analysis among undergraduates in South West Nigeria is 2.00, which is below the mean of 2.5. This implies that majority of the undergraduate students in south west Nigeria do not have difficulties in content analysis, majority of the undergraduates *disagreed* that they ignore graphs charts and tables while reading (2.42); that they have retention difficulty (2.00); that they have difficulty identifying the key points in a passage (1.91); that they have remembering difficulty (1.87); and that they have difficulty making summary of what they have read (1.81).

Research Question 3: What is the level of content analysis of text by the undergraduates?
Table 3: Level of content analysis of text by the Undergraduates

Table 3

	Items (Reading Flexibility)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Mean Rank	Std.D
1	I have read simple reading material at the same rate as I read difficult material	136 (16.3)	267 (32.0)	229 (27.5)	188 (22.5)	2.39	1	1.06
2	If the material seems difficult and unreadable do i have to puzzle it out in my mother tongue before I can comprehend and retain it?	114 (13.7)	231 (27.7)	195 (23.4)	278 (33.3)	2.18	2	1.1
3	I have difficult y distinguishing between reading and studying	103 (12.4)	195 (23.4)	274 (32.9)	241 (28.9)	2.14	3	1.097
4	I have to translate reading material into my mother tongue before I can understand it properly	113 (13.5)	161 (19.3)	196 (23.5)	351 (42.1)	2.01	4	1.05
	Weighted Average	**2.18**						

The mean of the options is 2.5, while the mean average of the responses to reading difficulties associated with *reading flexibility* among undergraduates in South West Nigeria is 2.18, which is below the mean of 2:5. This implies that majority of the undergraduate students in south west Nigeria do not have difficulties in their *reading flexibility.* Majority of the students *disagreed* that they read both simple materials and difficult materials at the same rate (2.39); that if material is difficult, they need to puzzle it out in their mother tongue before they could understand (2.18); that they have difficulty indistinguishing reading from studying (2.14) and that they need to translate what was read into mother tongue before they could understand (2.01);. The weighted average of not having difficulty in *reading flexibility* is 2.18 which can be rated as 55%.

Research Question 3: What is the level of content analysis of text by the undergraduates?
Table 3: Level of content analysis of text by the Undergraduates

Table 3

	Items(Studying Methods/problem solving	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Mean Rank	Std.D
1	I can work effectively in a quiet library with many people around	304 (36.5)	264 (31.7)	142 (17.0)	113 (13.5)	2.88	1	1.09
2	I find it difficult to make time to consult a variety of books related to my course	146 (17.5)	305 (36.6)	194 (23.3)	177 (21.2)	2.48	2	1.05
3	I tend to feel 'fed up' and restless when I am doing he readings prescribed for my course	121 (14.5)	228 (27.3)	269 (32.3)	204 (24.5)	2.29	3	1.04
4	I have difficulty getting through the reading assignments given to me in the class	76 (9.1)	160 (19.2)	317 (38.0)	268 (32.1)	2.02	4	0.97
	Weighted Average	**2.42**						

The mean of the options is 2.5, while the mean average of the responses to reading difficulties associated with study methods and problem solving among undergraduates in South West Nigeria is 2.42, which is below the mean of 2.5. This implies that majority of the sampled undergraduate students in south west Nigeria do not have difficulties in their study methods and problem solving. They *agreed* that they can work quietly in a library with many people around (2.88) but they *disagreed* that they find it difficult to consult many books relating to their work (2.42) they do get 'fed up' and restless while reading for their course (2.29); and they have difficulty getting through a reading assignment (2.02). The weighted average of not having difficulty in *studying methods and problem solving* is 2.42 which can be rated as 61%. This implies that about 39% of undergraduates in south west have difficulty in *study methods and problem solving*.

Table 5 Group Statistics Showing Male and Female Undergraduates Reading Difficulties in South West Nigeria.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std Error Mean
Male	350	42.3086	8.73170	.46673
Female	470	42.3486	8.77944	.46497

Table 5 shows that female students with a mean of 42.35 have more difficulty in reading than the male students (43.31), although the difference in their reading difficulty was not statistically significant.

Discussions

Research Question one (RQ1) examined vocabulary difficulties of undergraduates in South West Nigeria. Table1 reveals the level of reading difficulties experienced by undergraduates under the following items: attention, making sense of reading text, understanding implied meaning, and recognition difficulties. Majority of the students agreed that they have attention difficulty when reading (mean=2.31); that they have difficulty recognizing and understanding many words while reading (mean=2.03); they have difficulty making sense of many of the books (2.04); that they have difficulty understanding meaning that are implied (mean=2.20) and that they have difficulty retelling or writing a story they had read (mean=1.88). The weighted average of no difficulty in vocabulary is 2.09 which can be rated as 52%. This implies that 48% of the undergraduates are having some levels of vocabulary difficulties while reading. Vocabulary is the same as lexis and they are words used in a particular language. For students to comprehend a text, they must recognize majority of words and be able to apply the meanings in context and situations. Although, the students are rated as high as 52% to show that they do not have vocabulary difficulties, but the 48% rating of vocabulary is still on the high side. Except, students learn to overcome these difficulties through reading habits and reading culture, it may be difficult for them to read to acquire knowledge, and apply such knowledge to both personal and societal problems. The 48% of undergraduates with vocabulary difficulties is relatively high. This means that undergraduates have limited vocabulary to cope with undergraduate studies. They are deficient in the knowledge of content and functional words, and cannot follow a syntactic arrangement in a text in order to benefit maximally, without traces of reading difficulties in a reading text. Sybil (1984) noted that vocabulary development involves the exploration of meaning, a thorough grasp of usage and a sensitivity to nuance. Excellent performance in reading comprehension demands that the reader's adequate store of vocabulary is necessary for successful reading at any level of reading.

Research Question Two (RQ 2) was used to examine the content analysis abilities of undergraduates. Majority of the undergraduates agreed that they have difficulty making summary of what they have read (mean=1.81); that they have difficulty identifying the key points in a passage (mean=1.91) that they have retention difficulty (mean=2.00); that they have remembering difficulty (mean=1.87); and that they ignore graph chart and tables while reading (mean=2.42). The weighted average number of difficulties in content analysis is 2.00 which can be rated as 50%. This implies that about 50% of the undergraduates have difficulties in content analysis. At macro level of reading, it is a necessity for undergraduates to engage in content analysis in their process of reading. In doing so, it is exigent to note that while reading, students must strive to make sense out of what is being read by reading the lines, between the lines and beyond the lines by applying different approaches to reading in the content area. They should take cognizance of the key points in the passage, and be able to recall all the facts read. By and large, their average performance in content analysis shows that the undergraduates are able to retain and recall what is read. This agrees with Schmidt and Bjak (1992) who noted that learning and forgetting must go together. In another development, forgetting and retention may vary reliably across those compounding stages of learning, meaning that the opposite of forgetting which is recall and retention must be considered together in the reading terrain.

Research Question Three (RQ3) also investigated reading flexibility of undergraduates in south west Nigeria. Majority of students agreed that they read both simple material and difficult materials at the same rate (mean=2.39); that they need to translate what was read into mother tongue before they could understand (mean=2.01); that if material is difficult they need to puzzle it out in mother tongue before they could understand (mean=2.18) and that they have difficulty in distinguishing reading from studying (mean=2.14). The weighted average of not having difficulty in reading flexibility is 2.18 which can be rated as 55%. This implies that 45% of undergraduate students are having some levels of difficulty in reading flexibilities. Okwilagwe (2011) noted that readers with reading flexibility vary their reading speed to suit their purpose of reading a passage and to fit the textual difficulty of the passage. This means that, undergraduates in south west Nigeria are able to read the passage with varying rates and the textual difficulty of the passage, as well as, their purpose for reading the passage. Reading flexibility is a necessity in reading at macro level, because the reader engages himself in reading rates depending on his purpose of reading. Slow reading rate is appropriate for study reading, and with that, the reader can identify and acquire facts from what read. Nevertheless, it is necessary to increase reading speed when study reading in order to cover enough ground of the reading material within a limited time frame.

Research Question Four (RQ4) examined study method and problem solving skills of undergraduates. They agreed that they can work quietly in a library with many people around (mean=2.88), but they disagreed that they have difficulty getting through a reading assignment (mean=2.02); that they find it difficult to consult many books relating to their work (mean=2.42) and that they do get 'fed up' and restless while reading for their course (mean=2.29). The weighted average of not having difficulty in studying methods and problem solving is 2.42 which can be rated as 61%. This implies that about 39% of undergraduates in south west have difficulty in study methods and problem solving. The undergraduates' performance in reading at this stage is a pointer that they are capable of meaningful independent reading with the ability to consider main ideas in a passage with supporting details. Moreover, they are able to apply various reading techniques, and, could, by way of problem solving engage in inferential and judgmental reading. This agrees with the position of Okebukola (2005) that Nigerian students' preoccupation with reading is not connected with the utility value of reading for posterity, and success in examinations, especially in content and in classroom. By and large, there are several methods of reading at macro level such as, note making, where the students read, and make notes from what is read, and using different reading techniques such as Apari, Wusu Jacob's SQR-SRR-U where SQR stands for Survey, Question, and Read, SRR stands for Summary, Review, and Recall, U stands for Use and Application.

Ho1 states that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates' reading difficulties in South West Nigeria. Table 5 above shows that female students with a mean of 42.35 have more difficulties in reading than the male students' whose mean is (42.31), though, the difference in their reading difficulties is not statistically significant. This finding agrees with Singh (2011) who carried out a study on the academic achievement and study habits of higher secondary school students, and reported that the boys and girls differ significantly in the study habits. Okere (2012) collaborates with the foregoing by saying that disparity between males and females manifest in unequal access to education. The enrolment ratios at primary, secondary, and even tertiary education show that girls still have much less access to formal education than boys. To arrest this situation, the Nigerian government has increased its efforts to encourage girl child education. Based on the 2005 MDGs progress report, at the primary school level, enrolment has been consistently higher for boys than girls by over 10% and with male-female ratio of 56%; 44%. However, at secondary school level, enrolment equally increased for both male and female, but on the higher side for male, while dropout rate is much for females, while at tertiary level, few women apply entry into higher institutions because few girls are completing senior secondary education. Therefore, the education of females has remained at a much lower level than that of boys. According to Conte (2000) as cited in Udoh (2001), figures provided by the United Nations speak of a pitiless plight; 70% of the poor and two-thirds of the illiterates in the world are females. In Nigeria, Okere reported that gender inequality has remained a sore point of the educational system with the low representation and full participation of girls falling behind as they move up in the education ladder.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The data emerging from this study indicates that the students in the sample have reading difficulties in vocabulary, content analysis, reading flexibility, study method and problem solving. More so, there is no significant difference in the reading difficulties of both male and female undergraduates in south west Nigeria. A great deal of efforts still needs to be put in place towards reducing reading difficulties of undergraduates in South West Nigeria. The students need to read both intensively and extensively across disciplines to develop reading habits and reading culture. Students should be encouraged to read literature of different genres for acquisition of vocabulary and language use to develop the expected reading habits and reading culture. These will go a long way in removing reading difficulties from the reading processes of undergraduates. More so, lecturers should encourage students to consult both conventional and e-library while doing assignments and class presentations. It is also important for every university, and colleges of education to establish reading clinics where students' reading problems are diagnosed and remediated.

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