An investigation into the Oral Reading Miscue patterns of Yoruba/English bilingual Students in Junior Secondary Schools in Oyo State, Nigeria

By

Ojedokun, M. Iyabode (Ph.D)

Abstract

This study examined the oral reading miscue patterns of students' Yoruba/English bilingual in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) in Ibadan Metropolis. One hundred students were randomly selected from five JSS within the metropolis. They consisted of both male and female students. Two instruments were used to collect data viz: Students' Informal Reading Inventory (SIRI & 0.84) and Researcher's Inventory for Students' Reading proficiency (RISRP & 0.74). Two research questions were addressed in the study. Findings showed the following patterns of miscue in percentages: 48,16,10,11,8,4,1, and 2, for mispronunciation, substitution, omission, self-correction, insertion, repetition, reversion and hesitation respectively. It further revealed that there were no variations in the gender and linguistic preference of students. Therefore, recommendations were proffered for the improvement of the students' fluency and proficiency in English language instructions in the State and Nigeria at large.

Introduction

Basically, there are four language skills that are universally recognized by linguists and language educators. They are *listening, speaking, reading and writing.* Listening and reading are categorized as receptive skills because they help to receive and process information while speaking and writing are categorized as expressive skills. Significantly, these mutually exclusive linguistic skills are basic and indispensable in learning because they are skills that help learners seek information. Listening and speaking skills are oracy skills while reading and writing are literacy skills. One of the most significant features of post-independent period in many developing countries has been the enormous and rapidly rising demand for educational opportunities for all. It is quite obvious that illiteracy can no longer be tolerated and that the days are gone when the inability to read and write was hardly regarded as a handicap to the fulfillment of human life. It is a fact that a 21st century man who has not been given the opportunity to learn how to read and write cannot function in a proper way, and cannot live a fully human, individual and social life. It can be unequivocally stated that anybody who is not able to read will not survive in the "Global Village" where so much depends on the skills of reading and writing Kolawole (2005).

Reading is very important in the life of everyone and in every school system and is considerably vital to the attainment of literacy. Onukaogu (2002) points out that reading is the fulcrum or cornerstone of literacy and that without it there can be no literacy. With every activity of meaningful reading comes expansion of horizon of learning, hence the more a student reads, the more background knowledge he or she acquires about other ways of life, behavior and thought. Further education also depends on intensive and extensive reading because reading is basic to learning. So a child's ability to read is the centre of the educational process. It has been observed that it is only through reading that the Nigerian learner of English can meaningfully enrich his/her vocabulary. So, reading is indisputably the major key to progress in learning. According to Kolawole (2005), efficient reading makes an efficient student.

It is a simple truth that one cannot write without reading. Reading is an inherent part of the writing process and it is the basis of our system for monitoring the meaning we construct when we write (Aimunmondion, 2009). In recognition of the vital role of reading in education, it is imperative that it should be given adequate attention at all levels of any educational process. However, Kolawole (2005) revealed that students find it difficult to read for the gist, many students performed below expectation because they lack some reading skills required for effective study in the particular subject. Studies have shown that secondary school students do not have interest in reading because of their negative attitude, lack of motivation and the influence of home videos and computer games. (Maduabuchi, 2008). Poor handling of the teaching and learning of reading has equally been identified to be responsible for the poor performance of students in English language. Reading curriculum and syllabus is not separated from English curriculum and syllabus thereby undermining the importance of reading in the teaching and learning of English and even has a spill-over effect in content areas.

Various studies have confirmed that students demonstrate some hitches in reading in the second language such as interference, mispronunciation, substitution (Unoh, 1995; Obemeata, 1995; Ayodele, 2002). These hitches are also not unconnected with a lot of difficulties they face while reading English, which is a second language. Reading difficulties have been identified by Adebileje (2002) to be responsible for high dropout rate in schools, high failure rate in public examinations like WAEC and NECO, high incidence of academic underachievement in the secondary schools and high incidence of alleged examination malpractices resulting in cancellation of results. Onukaogu (2002) observes that if a child fails to master the skills of reading, the rest of his/her other education is either a flat failure or only a limping success. For this reason, teaching of the reading should not be left for the English reading teacher alone, teachers in content areas should endeavor to include the teaching of reading in their subject areas so that it will complement the efforts of the reading teacher since reading is an indispensable tool for academic success. An ill-equipped teacher cannot impart a skill he/she does not have and as such, a reading programme under such a teacher suffers (Piaget, 2007). According to Adebileje (2002), good reading habits are formed with regular application of good reading skills and attitudes. A teacher who lacks this has little or nothing to offer to his/her students.

It is evident from the above that there are linguistic problems that learners encounter in the course of reading in the second language. These problems are occasioned by interference at varying levels, though efforts have been made to correctly diagnose these problems and proffer solutions, Maduabuchi (2008) found that graphic organizers enhanced students' achievement in reading. Aimunmondion (2009) equally discovered from her study that thought-flow instructional strategy and shared reading instructional strategy enhanced students achievement in reading. One of such is miscue which is an observed response (OR) that does not match the expected response (ER). Miscue analysis was originally developed by Goodman (1973) for the purpose of understanding the reading process. After two decades of miscue research, Goodman has concluded that there is a single reading process that readers adapt depending on the value they place on their reading, the function that a particular piece of reading serves and their proficiency as readers (Goodman, Watson and Burke 2005).

The Goodman Reading Model was developed by analyzing the degree to which unexpected responses or miscue change, disrupt or enhance the meaning of a written text. (Goodman 1973) initiated the use of the term miscue in reading in order to eliminate the pejorative connotations of words such as error and mistake and to underscore the belief that all reading is cued by language and personal experience and is not simply random,

uncontrolled behavior. On the basis of this research, he developed the Goodman Taxonomy of Reading Miscues to evaluate, categorise and explain the miscue phenomena prevalent in every reader. The taxonomy, which has gone through a dozen revisions since its original development, evaluates each of the reader's consecutive miscues through a series of questions designed to gain the greatest amount of information about the causes of miscues and their influences on reader's comprehension. (Goodman,1987).

Miscue analysis allows teachers/ researchers to become consciously aware of the process of reading – to develop linguistic knowledge about reading. Those working in the field of reading should be knowledgeable about reading. Professionals must know the significance of a miscue when a reader makes one. If teachers or researchers do not understand this important concept, they may treat miscues as unnecessary phenomena that must be eliminated. Once teachers or researchers understand through examination of the reading process, that miscue reflect the reader's development, the reader's language system, and the reader's interpretation of meaning and context, then miscues can become a window through which much can be discovered about the individual reader as well as about the reading process (Moore & Gittes, 2005). The most basic contribution of miscue analysis to knowledge of the reading process is demonstration that reading is an active, receptive language process. Miscue analysis also helps researchers/teachers to analyse the oral reading of individual readers (Goodman, Watson, & Burke, 2005).

Statement of the problem

Reading skill is central to all subjects in the educational system. As important as the skill is, research has shown that most students in the secondary school level have poor reading skills occasioned by poor teaching of the skill and negative attitude of the students. Various researches have identified various factors affecting the teaching and learning of reading in the secondary school but not much has been done in the area of correctly identifying the miscue patterns of secondary school students with a view to organizing remedial programmes that would improve the reading performance of students in English language and the content areas to the best of knowledge of the researcher. This study therefore investigated, identified and classified the miscue patterns of Yoruba/English bilinguals in the junior school in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study.

1) What are the miscue patterns of Yoruba/English bilinguals in JSS?
2) To what extent do the miscue patterns vary according to gender and linguistic preference in JSS?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of expost facto type. The sample for this study was made up of one hundred junior secondary two (JS II) students randomly selected from five junior secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis. The JS II students were chosen because there was no examination in view for the students, the students were not new in the class and there is still enough time for remedial programmes that could be organized for them before they would complete their secondary school education. Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. The instruments were Students' Informal Reading Inventory (SIRI) and Researcher's Inventory for Students' Reading Proficiency (RISRP). The Students' Informal Reading Inventory was an adaptation of Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) developed by Goodman, (1987). It was however validated by using Cronbach Alpha and the reliability co-efficient of 0.84 was obtained. The instrument comprised Sections A and B. Section A was a questionnaire on Students' background information while Section B was a four-hundred word passage for oral reading.

The Researcher's Inventory for Students' Reading Proficiency (RISRP) was self –developed to mark the miscues while the students read the passage. It was developed from the adapted Students' Informal Reading Inventory. The researcher visited the principals of the selected schools to seek the consent of the principals to administer the reading inventory. The informal reading inventory was personally administered. Since miscue analysis is an individual assessment, the students were guided on how to respond to the questionnaire and were asked afterwards to read the passage one after the other without any assistance from the researcher. The researcher marked the miscues as the students read one after the other. The study lasted two weeks. The data collected were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods of frequency counts, percentages scores and t-test based on the research questions addressed in this study.

Results

Research Question I: What are the miscue patterns of Yoruba/English bilinguals in JSS?

Table 1: Summary of the Miscue Patterns Observed in Percentages

S/N	Miscue Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Omission	10	10
2.	Mispronunciation	48	48
3.	Repetition	4	4
4.	Substitution	16	16
5.	Insertion	8	8
6.	Reversion	1	1
7.	Self correction	11	11
8.	Hesitation	2	2
	Total	**100**	**100%**

From table 1, finding shows that mispronunciation as a miscue constituted the most serious problem to students' reading efficiency with 48%. Interference at the phonological level contributed mainly to the mispronunciation exhibited by the students. Substitution followed in terms of reading difficulty with 16%. The implication of this finding is that Mispronunciation and substitution constituted the most dominant miscues since they accounted for 64% of the total miscues. Self- correction, omission and insertions accounted for 11%, 10% and 8% respectively. Hesitation 2% repetition 4% and reversion 1% constituted insignificantly to the students' problem of miscues.

Research Question 2

To what extent do the miscue patterns vary according to gender, and linguistic preference in JSS?

Table 2: Patterns of Variation according to Gender

S/N	Miscue pattern	Female number	Percentage	Male number	Percentage
1.	Omission	5	10	4	8
2.	Mispronunciation	25	50	25	50
3.	Repetition	1	2	0	0
4.	Substitution	8	16	9	18
5.	Insertion	4	8	4	8
6.	Reversion	1	2	0	0
7.	Self correction	5	10	7	14
8.	Hesitation	1	2	1	2
	Total	**50**	**100**	**50**	**100**

In table 2, findings show there is no significant variation in the miscue patterns of male and female students. However, the female students miscued more than their male counterparts particularly in omission 10% (F), 8%(M) and repetition 2% (F), 0% (M). Both groups have uniform patterns of miscue: Mispronunciation, substitution, omission and self correction contributed the most serious problems to reading efficiency while repetition, reversion and hesitation constituted insignificantly to their miscues.

Table 3: T-test showing the Difference in the Miscue Patterns of Male and Female JSS Students

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	P	Remark
Female Male	50 50	6.60 6.58	7.85 8.09	0.013	98	0.99	NS

The results from Table 3 showed that the t-value is 0.013, while the degree of freedom (df) is 98 and P=0.99 since P=0.99>0.05, it implies that there is no significant variation in the miscue patterns of male and female students.

Table 4: Patterns of Variation according to Linguistics Preference

	Omission	Mis	SB	IN	RV	SC	H	Total
Mother tongue	6 12%	25 50%	9 18%	4 8%	3 6%	2 4%	1 2%	50 100%
English	5 10%	27 54%	9 18%	5 10%	0 0%	3 6%	1 2%	50 100%

In table 4, findings indicate that, there is no significant difference in the miscue patterns of students that preferred mother tongue to English as a means of communication and students that preferred English to mother tongue. The two groups are weaker in mispronunciation, substitution and omission.

Discussion of Findings

When a 'non-word' is produced in the course of reading, a reader mispronounces, the findings revealed that respondents mispronounced a lot, it accounted for 48% of the total miscues made. Unless adequate remedial programmes are organized for students to overcome to a great extent interference of the first language (L1) on the target language, (TL) Yoruba/English bilinguals will continue to mispronounce. The interference is not only at the syntactic level, but equally at the phonological level and even the stress patterns level. At the syntactic level is the fact that Yoruba distinguishes not between tenses in the language, whereas tense is marked in English language, hence a Yoruba learner of English will pronounce "ate" and 'ate' alike (past and present) because in Yoruba the two are pronounced "Je" (eat.) (Akindele and Adegbite, 2000).

At the phonological level, certain features of Yoruba interfere with the system of English in the way Yoruba readers use the language. For instance, Yoruba is a tonal language, so a Yoruba speaker of English applies the tones of his/her language to English language. All syllables in Yoruba language are stressed unlike English where certain syllables are not stressed. So Yoruba uses a syllable-timed rhythm instead of a stress-timed rhythm thus, resulting in mispronunciation. This finding corroborates the finding of Nkwodimmah (2000) who discovered that mispronunciation was the commonest reading miscue among JSS II Igbo/English bilinguals.

Substitution

Substitution is the production of a real word but not the one in the given text or in

the word given. Finding relating to substitution revealed that it came second in terms of problem to reading. It accounted for 16% of the total miscues. Yoruba language does not distinguish between long and short vowels unlike English, therefore a Yoruba reader of English will pronounce the short and long vowel the same. Due to the fact that most Nigerian languages have fever phoneme sounds than English language, Yoruba speaker tends to approximate certain vowel phoneme sounds in his language for some that sound similar to them in English, consequently, the sound /□/ in English will be substituted for /□/, / v/ for /f/, /θ/ for /t/, /ei/ for /e/ (Akindele and Adegbite, 2000)

Self-correction

Though opinions are divided as to whether immediate self correction (SC) should count as a miscue Joahna, (2006), the researcher is of the opinion that self correction is a (miscue) because it does not afford the reader a hitch free reading. When students self correct, it is a pointer to the fact that they are not proficient in reading. It was found that it accounted for 11% of the total miscue this brought (SC) self-correction next to substitution.

Omission

Omission is a situation whereby a reader leaves a word or more out of the text completely or out of a given word. The finding that students omit while reading connotes that they either find the word omitted difficult to pronounce or they have never seen the word at all, this is a pointer that at JSS II, majority of the students are not able to read and comprehend what they read as reading without comprehension is only barking at the print (Aimunmondion, 2009). Omission accounted for 10% of the total miscues. This finding is in line with the finding of Theurer (2010) who found out that Young Adult in his study were omitting some words in the course of oral reading.

Insertion

When a word that does not occur in a passage is added, this is insertion. Insertion accounted for 8% of the total miscues made. The syllable structure of English language permits the occurrence of consonant clusters, the syllable structure of English language is (c) (c) (c) (v) (c) (c) (c) as opposed to Yoruba that is (c) (v) (c) (v) structure thereby inserting vowel sounds between the consonant clusters, hence a Yoruba reader may pronounce 'bread' /bred/ as /buredi/, sprite /sprait/ as /sipiraiti/ and even add a vowel after the final consonant in the word thereby realising a word like 'ball' /b□:/ as /b□:u/ (Akindele and Adegbite 2000).

Hesitation

Inability to produce a word within a reasonable length of time constitutes a (miscue). This is due to verbal inefficiency caused by the influence of the mother tongue (Yoruba) who learns English language only as a second language. It accounted for 2% of the total miscues in this study.

Repetition

When a word or group of words is pronounced more than once or twice, it is repetition (Rp). It accounted for 4% in this study. Unlike what Nkwodimmah discovered in 2000, Repetition accounted for 10% of the total miscue of her respondents.

Reversion

Reversion is when the order of words or letters in a word is reversed. The finding showed that, reversion accounted for 1% of the total miscues made. This finding however contradicts the finding of Liwanag, (2012) who discovered that majority of his respondents were reversing the order of words in the course of oral reading.

Gender

Table 2 revealed, that both females and males have uniform patterns of miscues. Both are weaker in mispronunciation, omission, substitution, self-correction and insertion whereas, a considerable variation

of miscue patterns was expected here owing to the fact that females are believed to be more linguistically capable than males. This finding supports the finding of Nkwodimmah (2000) who discovered that both males and females in her study generally have uniform miscue patterns.

Linguistic Preference

Table 4 showed that, those who preferred mother tongue to English and those who preferred English to mother tongue have similar miscue patterns of being weaker in mispronunciation, substitution, self-correction and omission. There is no significant difference in the miscue patterns of the two groups. The finding contradicts that of Nkwodimmah who discovered that respondents who preffered mother tongue to English did better than those that preferred English to mother tongue.

Conclusion

Miscue is a problem affecting Yoruba/English bilinguals and this must be effectively tackled to ensure that students read more effectively and subsequently perform well in their academic endeavors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made: The syllabus should incorporate repeated paired strategy which emphasizes the critical importance of having many opportunities to read and practice in developing fluency. Semantic mapping is one technique of teaching word perception which makes extensive use of classroom discussion in connection with a visual display (Jiboku, 1998). Teachers should employ responsive elaboration in teaching reading, that is, using what the students already know to make sense of what they see and hear. Students should be aware of their weaknesses in reading in L_2 and should endeavor to bring to the reading process their knowledge of the language in which they read and the background experience or knowledge relevant to the content of the texts they read (Richards, 2003). Perhaps the most important factor in the process of motivating a child to read fluently is the teacher. Teachers are to serve as reading models. So if teachers themselves lack necessary training and interest required of a successful reading teacher, what happens to the students? Examples are better than precepts and teachers influence their students significantly by laying good examples, so, teachers should be encouraged to attend seminars and workshops organized for L_2 teachers so that they can improve their performance in reading and teaching reading.

It is recommended that teachers find time to get their students read orally so that they can identify their weaknesses which will in turn help teachers in planning remedial programmes for such students. Parents too should complement the efforts of teachers by going through what their children have done in school and they should from time to time encourage their children to read educative materials at home and listen to educative programmes on television and radio. It is recommended to both authors and publishers that they should appreciate the effect of text factor on readability of materials and comprehension of the L_2 readers and should endeavor to improve the texts in respect of contents and prints. The reading curriculum and syllabus should be separated from English curriculum and syllabus so that reading would be given the needed attention in schools.

References

Adebileje, A.O. (2002). Comparative Effects of Three Modes of Advance Organiser in the Reading Comprehension Performance of Secondary School Students. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of Ilorin.

Aimunnondion, M.C. (2009). Effects of Thought flow Knowledge and Shared Reading Instructional Strategies on Senior Secondary School Students' Achievements in English Reading Comprehension and Summary Writing.

Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Akindele, F. & Adegbite, W (2000) *The Sociology and Politics of English in Nigeria. An Introduction.* Ife OAU Press

Ayodele, S.O. (2002). "The Use of English in Educating Nigerian Youths: from the Problem to the Solution." An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the University of Ibadan; Ibadan: Nigeria Powerhouse Press and Publishers.

Goodman, K (1973) Miscues: "Windows on the reading process" In F. Gollasch (Ed) *Language and Literacy: The selected writing of Kenneth Goodman* (pp93-102). Vol 1.Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Goodman, Y., Watson, D. and Burke, C. (2005). Reading Miscue Inventory. Kotanah, New York: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc

Goodman, Y.M. (1987). *Reading Miscue Inventory Alternative Procedures*. R.C. Owen Pub. Inc., New York.

Jiboku, O.A. (1998). The Relative Effectiveness of Critical Reading and Semantic Mapping Instructional Strategies on Secondary School Students' Learning Outcomes in Reading Comprehension. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan.

Joahna, S.M. (2006) Reelecting on Miscue in Content Area Readings: A case of two learners. *Asia-pacific Education Research* 15.1, 183-206

Kolawole, C.O.O, (2005). The State of Reading in Some Selected Secondary Schools in South-Western Nigeria: A Preliminary Report in Issues in Language, Communication and Education. Ibadan Counsellations Books.

Liwanag, M. (2012). Reading Multimodally: Designing and Developing multimedia literacy projects through an understanding of eye movement miscue analysis (EMMA). Retrieved on 26th October, 2012 from gc.cuny.edu/ issue. com.

Loiswell, R.O. and Descamps, J. (2001). Developing Teaching Styles and Methods for Elementary School Teachers. Illinois, Waveland Press Inc.

Maduabuchi, C.H. (2008). Graphic Organizers, Students' Personal Variables and Learning Outcomes in Expository and Narrative Texts. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Moore, R.A. & Gittes, C. J. (2005) Reading Conversations: Retrospective Miscue Analysis with struggling readers, grades 4-12 Porstmouth, NH. Heinemann.

Nkwodimmah, M.C. (2000). Junior secondary two (JS) students Igbo/English bilingual miscue patterns.

Obemeata, J.O. (1995). "Education: An Unprofitable Industry in Nigeria. Postgraduate School Inter-disciplinary Research Discourse, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Onukaogu, C.E. (2002). "Developing Effective Reading Skills. In Mansaray and Osokoya eds. Curriculum Development at the Turn of the Century: the Nigerian Experience. Ibadan: Teacher Education Department, University of Ibadan.

Piaget, J.T. (2007). The Importance of Writing Well: A Justification and How-to-Guide. University of North Carolina Wilmington Retrieved on 5th May, 2009 from gc.cuny.edu/ issue.com.

Richards, J.C. (2003). Facts and Feelings Response Diaries: Connecting Efferently and Aesthetically with Informational Text. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. 19, 107-11.

Theurer, J.L (2010). Retrospective Miscue Analysis and the Socialization of One Young Adult Reader. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*. 37.1, 63.

Unoh, S.O. (1995). *Studies on Reading in English*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.