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# EFFECT OF SEMANTIC-MAPPING ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LITERACY IN IREPODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KWARA STATE

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#### **Abstract**

The foundational skills of literacy are not taught effectively in the twenty-first century. There is an increase in demands for learners who are skilled in literacy and this was evident in 2017 and 2018 common entrance examination in which the performance of pupils was poor. The study investigated effects of Semantic-Mapping strategy on Pupils' Literacy academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. Seven hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. This study adopted pretest posttest control group quasi – experimental research design. The target population comprise all primary two pupils in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. Purposive sampling technique was used to select four mixed primary schools (two public schools and two private schools. Two experimental groups (One public school and One private school) and two control groups (One private school and One public school) were selected purposively for the study. Four intact classes of primary two pupils were selected for the study. One validated and reliably tested research instrument titled pupil's literacy academic performance test (PLAPT) was used. The reliability co-efficient was 0.76 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance. The study revealed that there were significant main effects of treatment on pupils' literacy academic performance ( $F_{(1:32)} = 16.544$ ; P<0.05), there was no significant main effect of gender on pupils academic performance in literacy ( $F_{(1.32 = .182; P > 0.05)}$ , there was no significant main effect of school type on pupils academic performance in literacy (F (1:32) = .1.504; P>0.05), there was no significant interaction effects of treatment and gender on pupils academic performance in literacy (F

P>0.05), there was no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on pupils academic performance in literacy ( $F_{(1.32)}=.2.151$ ; P>0.05.), there was no significant interaction effect of gender and school type on pupils academic performance in literacy ( $F_{(1.32)}=1.356$ ; P>0.05), and there was no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy ( $F_{(1.32)}=1.548$ ; P>0.05.). It was concluded based on the findings that semantic-mapping strategy were effective in teaching at primary level of education. It was recommended that teachers in the targeted area should adopt the use of Semantic-Mapping strategy as part of strategies for teaching literacy.

**Keywords:** Semantic-Mapping, Academic performance, Literacy

#### Introduction

One of the major problems confronting young learners in primary schools in Nigeria is poor academic performance in literacy and there is a large percentage of young children who cannot learn using literacy as tool for learning. In specific terms, only 33% of young children between age 6 to 14 years are proficient in literacy, this means that 33% of young children in Nigeria primary schools are literate. Report have it that, 40% of Pupils in 2017/2018 common entrance examination scored 50 marks and above while 60% scored below 50 marks in literacy questions. Record also have it that 105 millions of young children in Nigeria are out of schools and these are children that may never acquire Literacy in school. This widespread of poor academic performance in literacy is associated with many variables, such as parents' socio-economic status, teacher's qualifications and experience, teachers' personality and teaching strategies.

Literacy is the acquisition of skills such as listening, reading, writing and speaking which should be learnt proficiently at the basic level of education. It is also the ability to understand rudiments of letters which are to be learnt properly at the preschool and at the basic level of education. Thanh (2018) opined that literacy goes beyond the ability to read and write, it also includes the skills to connect, explain and clearly differentiate complex issues. In twenty first century, however, children who have good early literacy skills are known to have quality education. Learning literacy skills early with adequate support of family helps children to be exposed to high percentage of words compared to pupils who do not have such opportunities (Samantha, 2015).

According to United Nation Educational, Scientific and Catural Organization (2017), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and non-printed materials associated with varying contents. It also stressed that literacy involves a continuous learning that enables individual to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potentials that will make such individual to be useful to himself and to the community at large. The national council of teacher of English and international reading association added visual representation to the list of competencies that constitute literacy (Eno, Uduak, Alice & Isioma, 2014). Oyitso and Olomukoro (2010) submitted that literacy is an indispensable means of effectiveness, in social and economic institution that improves human development as well as way of raising one standard of living to a better status. Literacy helps an individual to be able to contribute positively and to implement right judgment among people and it also addresses the need of everyone in the society (Adedokun, 2013)

Literacy is so crucial in that it is a means of instruction in Nigeria schools from upper primary to higher institutions. The knowledge of content of school subject is transferred to learners at all levels of education through literacy medium, or how proficient a learner is, will predict school academic performance, and at the same time how he or she can cope with the language of instruction thus, there is a significant influence of literacy proficiency on learner's academic performance. Exposing children to literacy improves early language development and it is a good attempt at invest in learners reading and

writing skills in order to prevent social and behavioral problems. The level of learners' academic performance in school subject may be determined by learners' level of proficiency in literacy skills and since literacy is the language of instruction, learners' success and proficiency in the language of instruction may also determine his or her academic performance.

Aina and Olanipekun (2014) revealed that competency in literacy is the most important factor of learning excellence and performance especially in this part of the world and that reading skill in foreign language is practically determined by the learner's proficiency in the language. In spite of the role of literacy in all human spheres of life as well as in learners academic performance, evidences abound that learners still experience problems in the attempt to learn literacy skills in our schools and this is also apparent in the poor performance of learners in school examination, even their inability to compete favorably with their peers on many occasions (Samantha, 2015).

Robby (2010) highlighted some of the challenges literacy poses on pupils at the early years; these include the fear of mistakes; which is one of the main issues that determine how well pupils develop reading and writing skills. Learners at the early years also have challenges of decoding which means inability to distinguish phonemes also on many occasions slow oral pronunciation, problem of sounds recognition, inappropriate use of tenses and reading without proper expression (Klinger, 2011). Idiaka (2017) posited that often children experience difficulties in reading when faced with seemingly difficult and ambiguous language. It causes distraction that prevents learners from gaining meaningfully from what they read and such other problems includes comprehension, retention and reading. Hence, Kholi and Sharifafar (2013) recommended the use of semantic-mapping as a teaching strategy to bring about an improvement in pupils' academic performance in literacy.

Semantic-Mapping strategy is a visual representation strategy for vocabulary expansion and extension of knowledge by displaying categories of words related to one another. Also, semantic-mapping is the arrangement of shapes such as boxes, triangles, circles, or rectangles connected through lines and arrows (Kholi & Sharifafar, 2013). It contains verbal information within such shapes, it is also a knowledge representational tools that can be read from top to bottom and from general to more specific ones. It is on record that it is an instructional activity that allows for visual display of words that helps pupils to compare and contract new words to know which words can be a useful means of increasing literacy. Dbates and Tefera (2015) stated that semantic mapping is one of the strategies meant to improve learner's vocabulary in order to help pupils to recall learned words for correct use. Semantic-Mapping, involves drawing learner's attention to the interconnectivity between lexical items, it improves literacy learning performance compared to other conventional techniques. It promotes recollection of words or concepts that are known separately and in different situation.

There are so many factors affecting pupils academic performance in literacy such as anxiety, poor family structure, school type, gender (Ergikhuemen, 2015). Gender which

is one of the moderating variables of the study simply means male and female in their natural composition that may determine the role that an individual assumes in the society. Gender differences among many factors impact pupils' academic performance because gender gap reflects in many areas among learners, areas like interest; attitude, beliefs and motivation go along way to determine the failure and success among pupils (Zeynali, 2012).

Similarly, school-type is another variable for consideration in this study and it may have a great influence on pupils' academic performance. Public schools are institutions set up by federal, state and local government while private schools are set up by group of individuals or a single individual. Schools characteristics such as type, facilities and location may have a considerable influence on pupil's academic performance in literacy. In this regard, the researchers investigated the effects of semantic-mapping strategy on pupils' academic in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The low performance of pupils in literacy particularly in recent years has not been encouraging. Poor academic performance of pupils has been attributed to inadequacies and inappropriate use of instructional strategies put in place by teachers of the subject and this has been a source of concern to all the stakeholders in education simply because literacy is a core subject in primary school curriculum. This poor academic performance in literacy is apparent during competition in which young children find it difficult to express themselves orally. A study also revealed that 33% of Nigerians who falls into primary schools category can either read or write. Report have it that, 40% of pupils who sat for 2017/2018 common entrance examination scored 50 marks and above while 60% scored below 50 marks in literacy questions. In the light of this, the study investigated into the effects of semantic-mapping strategy on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

#### **Research Hypotheses**

- Ho1: There is no significant main of semantic-mapping on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.
- Ho2: There is no significant main effect of gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.
- Ho3: There is no significant main effect of school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.
- Ho4: There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara.
- H05: There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.

- Ho6: There is no significant interaction effect of school type and gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.
- Ho7: There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping, gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state.

### Methodology

This study adopted pretest, posttest and control group quasi experimental research design. The target population was all primary two pupils in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. There were 192 primary schools in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. Purposive sampling technique was used to select four mixed primary schools (two public schools and two private schools. Two experimental groups (One public school and One private school) and two control groups (One private school and One public school) were selected purposively for the study. Four intact classes of primary two pupils were selected for the study.

Pupils' Literacy Academic Performance Test (PLAPT) was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three lecturers at the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Kwara state University as well as two literacy teachers. To establish the reliability of the instrument, test retest method was used with an interval of two weeks. Afterwards, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the reliability coefficient which was established at 0.76. The data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

#### **Results**

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant main effect of semantic-mapping on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

Table 1: Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) showing the Main effect of treatment on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy

	Type III Sum		· ·			
Source	of Squares	df	Mean Square	$\mathbf{F}$	Sig.	
Corrected Model	258.523 <sup>a</sup>	8	32.315	8.592	.000	
Intercept	393.310	1	393.310	104.573	.000	
Pretest	.507	1	.507	.135	.716	
Main Effect						
Treatment	62.224	1	62.224	16.544	.000	
Gender	.683	1	.683	.182	.673	
Schooltype	5.656	1	5.656	1.504	.229	
<b>Two Way Interaction</b>						
Treatment* gender	1.060	1	1.060	.282	.599	
Treatment *school type	8.089	1	8.089	2.151	.152	
Gender * school type	5.101	1	5.101	1.356	.253	
Three Way Interaction						
Treatment * gender*	5.823	1	5.823	1.548	.222	
School type						
Error	120.355	32	3.761			
Total	9998.000	41				
Corrected Total	378.878	40				

a. R Squared = .682 (Adjusted R Squared = .603)

Table 1 shows the effect of semantic-mapping on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. There was significant main effect of treatment on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area, Kwara State. (F  $_{(1;32)} = 16.544$ , P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.000) is less than 0.05. This implies that semantic-mapping had significant effect on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Table 2: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc Pairwise Comparison of the scores within the two groups

Treatment	Mean Difference	Experimental	<b>Control Group</b>
Semantic strategy	17.962	*	
Conventional Method	13.484		*

Table 2 revealed that the significant main effect exposed by Table 1 is as a result the significant difference between Semantic Strategy and conventional method. Semantic Strategy refers to experimental groups, while conventional method is known as control group. This implies that those exposed to Semantic Strategy (17.962) performed better than those exposed to conventional method (13.484).

Table 3: Summary of estimated marginal means with the Groups

Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% conf	95% confidence intervals for difference	
			Lower	Upper Bound	
			Bound		
Semantics	17.962	.719	16.496	19.427	
Control	13.484	.564	12.335	14.632	

Table 3 revealed that the significant main effect exposed by Table 2 is as a result of the significant difference among: Semantic Strategy and Conventional method. This implies that those exposed to Semantic (Mean = 17.962) performed better than those exposed to control group had (mean = 13.484).

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant main effect of gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government Area of Kwara state.

Table 1 also revealed the effect of gender on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. There no was significant effect of gender on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State (F  $_{(1; 32)}$ =.182; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.673) is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant effect on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant effect of school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government Area of Kwara state.

Table 1 also revealed the effect of school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. There was significant effect of school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state ( $F_{(1;\,32)}=1.504;\,P>0.05$ ). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.229) is greater than 0.05. This implies that school type had no significant effect on Pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

**Hypothesis Four:** There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and gender on Pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state

Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of semantic-mapping and gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state ( $F_{(1;32)} = .282$ ; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.599) is greater than 0.05. This implies that interaction of treatment and gender had no significant effect on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State.

**Hypothesis Five:** There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of semantic-mapping and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. There was no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state (F<sub>(1)</sub>;

 $_{2.}$  =2.151; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.152) is greater than 0.05. This implies that semantic-mapping and school type had no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

**Hypothesis Six:** There is no significant interaction effect of gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of gender and school type on Pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. There was no significant interaction effect of gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state (F (1; 32) = 1.356; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.253) is greater than 0.05. This implies that the interaction of gender and school type had no significant effect on Pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

**Hypothesis Seven:** There is no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping, gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

Table 8 also revealed the interaction effect of semantic-mapping, gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender and school type on

pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state (F  $_{(1; 32)} = 1.548$ ; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.222) is greater than 0.05. This implies that treatment, gender and school type had no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.

#### **Summary of findings**

- 1. There was significant effect of semantic-mapping on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government Area of Kwara state.
- 2. There was no significant main effect of gender on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.
- 3. There was no significant main effect of school type on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.
- 4. There was no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and gender on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.
- 5. There was no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping and school types on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.
- 6. There was no significant interaction effect of gender and school types on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun local government area of Kwara state.
- 7. There was no significant interaction effect of semantic-mapping, gender and school types on pupils' academic performance on literacy in Irepodun Local government area of Kwara state.

#### **Discussion of Findings**

The study determined the effects of semantic mapping strategy on pupils' literacy academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. The research findings for this study were discussed one after the other in this section.

The finding of this study showed that there was a significant main effect of treatments on pupils literacy academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. This might be as a result of the fact that pupils exposure to teaching strategy that allow active participation and equal involvement of all the pupils in the process of teaching and learning in the study Area. This concord with the study of Abate and Tefera (2015) who reported that there was a significant difference in the performance of pupils who were exposed to Semantic-mapping as teaching strategy to those that were not, this Significant performance in Literacy in the study area might also be as result of the fact that the Strategies made pupils' to solve problems themselves that quick retention of what is learnt in the classroom. Another factor that beings about success in the two treatment might be that, semantic-mapping provided vitual representation that helps easier retention of

knowledge acquired in Literacy, and not only that each learner make a copy of what discussed in the conclusion stage for easier remembering of the concepts learned which will enhance future future academic performance.

Finding of this research study further showed that there was no significant main effect of gender on pupils Literacy academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. This implies that gender as a variable in this study has no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in Literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. This might imply that all the learners learn at the same level that does not give room for differences in the mean scores, not only that, it may as be as a result of equal opportunities given to all learners during the treatment period. This was supported by Ganiyu (2016) who postulated that there was no significant main effect of gender on pupils'academic performance in literacy. This finding was corroborated by Okoye (2008) who submitted that gender has no significant effect on pupils' academic performance. This contradicted the findings of Adigun et al (2015) who concluded that gender has a tremendous effect on pupils' academic performance Schools. However, this finding disapproved the findings of Ajayi (2017) that reported that female pupils performed significantly different than their male counterpart.

Another finding of this study showed that there was no significant main effect of school type on pupils academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. This showed that school type had no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in Literacy. This could be as a result of the time allotted for the training, it met the requirements for study but it reason why gender had no significant effect on academic performance of pupils' in literacy in the study area. This finding agreed with the findings of Alimi, Ehinda and Alabi (2012) who revealed in a study conducted that there was no significant difference in the performance based on school type. In the contrary, this finding negated that of Okon and Achibong (2015) who opined that school type has no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in Literacy. Newhouse and Beegle (2005) also concluded school type had a significant effect on pupils' academic performance in literacy.

Finding of this study further showed that there was no significant main interaction effect of treatment and gender on pupils academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. This result negates the findings of Amedu (2015) who reported that there was a significant main effect of treatment and gender on the literacy academic performance in favour of male pupils and Saidi (2012) concurred that female performance significantly better in language than male.

Another hypothesis revealed that there was no significant interaction effect of treatment and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara. This means that school-type had no significant effect on pupils' academic performance in Literacy. The finding negates the findings of Okon and

Archibong (2015) that revealed that pupils in private school performed better in academic than those in public schools.

Another finding of this study revealed that, there was no significant interaction effect of gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. This revealed that in this study, gender and school type had significant effect on pupils' academic performance. This finding disagreed with the findings of Didem and Saglam (2010) that opined that gender and school type have significant main effect on pupils' academic performance.

There was no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender and school type on pupils literacy academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. This means that there was no interaction between gender and school type on pupils' academic performance in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara state. The finding agreed with the findings of Saadu, Obafemi and Yusuf (2020) who explained that there was no significant effect of gender and school type on pupils academic performance. The findings also negate the findings of David and Mburu (2013) who revealed that school type significantly authenticate pupils literacy academic performance.

#### **Conclusion**

Semantic-mapping strategy was effective in teaching literacy in Irepodun Local Government Area of Kwara State. This implies that this strategy could be adopted in teaching literacy to improve academic performance at primary school level.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation were made

- 1. Teachers and administrators in both private and public schools should adopt the use of Semantic-mapping strategy
- 2. Teachers should enhance their professional development through seminars, workshop, conferences and other training programme that support utilization of Semantic–Mapping strategy.
- 3. The teachers should make sure that there will be no gender discriminations in schools in order to motivate all pupils during teaching and learning process.
- 1. Provision of adequate materials to public schools should be in place so as to encourage utilization of Semantic-mapping strategy to improve teaching and learning process.
- 2. Semantic-mapping strategy should be included in the curriculum for teaching literacy
- 3. Pupils should be groomed with semantic-mapping Strategy for adequate retention in literacy.

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