

Review of: "Is the Reading Crisis in South Africa Sustained on Purpose?"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Cronje, M. 2024. *Is the Reading Crisis in South Africa Sustained on Purpose?*

Review by B. Suwarno. University of Bengkulu, Indonesia (Retired).

This seems to be a review article that provides valuable insight into the problems of reading instruction in South African elementary schools and the efforts to find their solutions.

Introduction

The questions are declared as follows:

What is the best approach for teaching initial reading in African languages?

What is the best approach for teaching ESL in the early grades?

However, the objective is stated as follows:

The main purpose of this paper is to expose the injustice done to township children

A question needs to be raised here, as the purposes/objectives of a paper are usually similar to the questions.

The methodology consists of a literature study, which is strengthened by an informal classroom investigation.

Let's see how the questions are answered in the rest of the paper.

Main Part

The main part contains two sections. In section 1, the answer to the first question is sought through a literature study.

In section 2, the answer to the second question is sought through a literature study (in sub-sections 2.1. and 2.2.) and an informal investigation (in sub-section 2.3.).

However, in the "Method" (sub-sub-section 2.3.1.), it is declared that,

The research was quasi-experimental, as intact groups of learners were used and the schools were already on two different programmes for teaching ESL. To compensate for the drawback of having to assume equality between the two groups of teachers and learners, results obtained from the test groups were compared to results obtained from samples of

similar learners at other schools on the same programmes.

A question needs to be raised here. Is this an informal investigation, as previously mentioned in the “Introduction,” or a quasi-experiment, which is a formal investigation, as stated here?

Furthermore, in the evaluation (in sub-sub-sections 2.3.4 to 2.3.6 and sub-sub-sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.2), only test results are provided, in percentages and/or raw scores. As described here, the investigation was informal.

If the investigation had been a quasi-experiment, then some elements need to be provided, such as (1) procedure, including treatment, (2) detailed statistical analysis, such as t-test for parametric data, or Mann-Whitney U-test for non-parametric data, and corresponding preliminary tests (such as a normality test).

If no treatment was given, then it was a causal comparative investigation, which still required detailed statistical tests.

Thus, a detailed explanation needs to be provided to show whether it was an informal, a quasi-experimental, or a causal comparative investigation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Here, it is stated as follows:

It is concluded that grave injustice is being done to South Africa’s non-English Grade 1 learners through the DBE’s Lesson

It is not clear if this statement constitutes a conclusion from the exposition in the preceding sections, as they deal more with the effectiveness of reading instruction.

References

Referencing needs to fully adhere to a referencing style, such as APA or another referencing style.

Final word

It is hoped that the suggestions could be useful for the article, in the effort to find the best practice for language instruction for elementary students in South Africa.