

Teaching Reading in English: The Neglect of Phonics in Nigeria

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Abstract : Nigeria has not yet welcomed phonics into its primary schools. In government-owned primary schools teachers are functionally ignorant of the stories of the reading wars amongst international scholars. There are few or no Nigerian-authored phonics textbooks, and there has been no government-owned phonics curriculum either. There are few or no academic journal articles on phonics in the country and there is, in fact, a certain danger of confusion between phonics and phonetics among Nigerian publishers, authors, writers and academics as if Nigerian teachers of English and the educational policy makers of the country were unaware of reading failures/problems amongst Nigerian children, or had never heard of phonics or read of the stories of the reading wars or the annual phonics test in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and other parts of the world. It is on this note that this article reviews and examines, in the style of a qualitative inquiry, the body of arguments on phonics, and explores the effectiveness of phonics teaching, particularly, in a second-language learning contexts. While the merit of the paper is, perhaps, situated in its supreme effort to draw global attention to reading failures/problems in Nigeria and the ways the situation may affect English language learning, international academic relations and the educational future of the country, it leaves any quantitative verification of its claims to interested quantitative researchers in the world.

Keywords : graphemes, phonics, reading, reading wars, reading theories, phonemic awareness

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